



# DISABILITY RIGHTS CENTER

The Protection and Advocacy System for People with Disabilities in Arkansas (P&A)

## AFFORDABLE ACCESSIBLE HOUSING LIMITED FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ARKANSAS—BUT, CHANGE MAY BE COMING

People with disabilities often endure extended periods of homelessness because of the lack of affordable accessible housing.

A major obstacle to recent state and federal efforts, pursuant to the *Olmstead v. L.C.*, Supreme Court decision (1999), the Money Follows the Person initiative, the Permanent Supportive Housing Investment Act, the Community Choice Act, and the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports Act, is the lack of affordable, accessible housing for people who would choose to live in their communities.

The commitment to integration of people with disabilities into their com-

munities is stronger than ever. It has been demonstrated to be, not just better for individuals with disabilities, but also financially responsible.

Numerous federal initiatives attempt to address the current services and funding systems that force people with disabilities into institutions and homelessness.

These initiatives need to be supported by initiatives designed to increase the stock of affordable accessible housing.

The federal government's increasing involvement in housing funding and finance of housing provides an unprecedented opportunity to improve the avail-

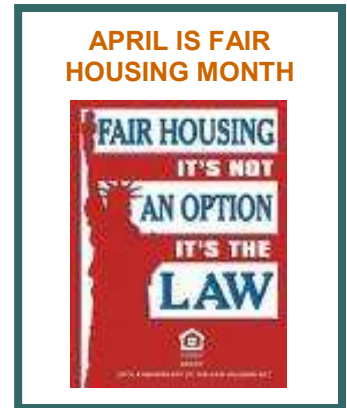
ability of affordable accessible housing, by enforcing and expanding existing tools.

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, federal funds allocated to **Arkansas** for housing include:

**\$132.3 M.** for the low-income housing tax credit program.

**\$20.5 M** for the HOME program. The HOME program provides assistance to tenants whose incomes are 60% or below of the area median income, adjusted for family size.

To read about these housing initiatives go to [http://recovery.arkansas.gov/where\\_housing.html](http://recovery.arkansas.gov/where_housing.html)



### Up Coming Events

- Earth Day—April 22, 2009
- April is Autism Awareness month
- All Out for Autism Race—April 18, 2009
- Arkansas Fair Housing Summit, April 22 & 23, 2009 at the Hilton Metro Center, 925 South University Avenue in Little. For more information & to download an information form, visit: <http://www.arkansasfairhousing.com/events.php>

## ARKANSAS RANKS AMONG THE WORST STATES IN AID TO HOMELESS CHILDREN

The National Center on Family Homelessness released a report on March 10, 2009, naming Connecticut the best and **Arkansas**, Texas, Georgia, New Mexico & Louisiana among the worst in addressing homelessness among children.

According to the report, one in 50 children in America experience homelessness, with this number surely to rise given the state of the econ-

omy and the increasing number of foreclosures & job losses. The criteria used to rank the states included: child homelessness per capita, risk



for child homelessness, child well-being, & state policy & planning. Children experiencing homelessness are far more likely to experience hunger, chronic health problems, & problems in school, including dropping out.

The report offered 19 recommend actions for governments to improve, including more federal spending on low-income housing, (Cont. p.4)

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## DRC is Living Green

- Monofilament fishing line: 600 years
- Plastic beverage bottles: 450 years
- Disposable diapers: 450 years
- Aluminum can: 80-200 years
- Styrofoam cup: 50 years
- Tin can: 50 years
- Leather: 50 years
- Nylon fabric: 30-40 years
- Plastic film canister: 20-30 years
- Plastic bag: 10-20 years (???)
- Plywood: 1-3 years
- Waxed milk carton: 3 months
- Newspaper: 6 weeks
- Paper towel: 2-4 weeks
- Cigarette filter: 1-5 years**

**Cigarette butts and filters are the most littered item in America.**

Research shows that individuals who would never consider littering an aluminum can, a piece of paper or other items may be littering cigarette butts. They may be surprised to be called litterers. But dropping partially-smoked cigarettes, cigarette butts, matches, lighters and packaging to the ground is littering. These items become litter when not disposed of properly. Cigarette litter is an emerging litter problem in communities around the country. Lack of awareness, lack of ash receptacles, and the increase of outdoor smoking add to the visible impact of cigarette litter.



The above information was taken from

### List of common items and how long they take to "break down" in the environment.

Glass bottle 1 million years

## Universal Design in Arkansas

The U of A /Fayetteville Universal Design Project, initiated by the Governor's Task Force on Supported Housing, is a pioneering attempt to develop Universal Design housing standards and design prototypes, & to implement the project through state agencies.

"Arkansas is the first state to take this proactive approach, & we're hoping it can become a national model," Korydon Smith said. "Our state leads the nation with the highest poverty rate and third-highest disability rate, so it's essential that we provide affordable, inclusive housing for eve-

ryone." "No one else is working to implement inclusive design into state housing policy," Smith said.

Universal Design, a movement that expands upon the concept of accessibility for people with disabilities to serve as diverse a group as possible. Moving beyond ad hoc, retrofit solutions that segregate people with disabilities, Universal Design strives to develop inclusive and aesthetically pleasing designs. The challenge, according to Smith, is to achieve maximum functionality without resorting to cookie cutter solutions and restrictive codes that limit creativity.

**According to Korydon Smith, U of A / Fayetteville Assistant Professor of Architecture, "Universal design strives to be**

**a broad-spectrum solution that helps everyone, not just people with disabilities."**



## Fair Housing Versus Unfair Housing

The Fair Housing Amendments Act of 1988 requires newly constructed private multi-unit housing to meet minimal accessibility requirements.

The Rehabilitation Act applies the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS) to federally-funded housing and requires 5% of units to be fully accessible (a much higher standard than FHAA).

DRC receives phone calls weekly from people with disabilities who have been discriminated against by their landlords on the basis of their disability. The majority of the calls involve a person with a disability who needs a reasonable accommodation like handrails in the bathtub or a ramp into the front door, or a designated parking space. Most often what the

caller needs doesn't require an apartment that is considered "totally" accessible"; rather, the person can manage quite nicely with some minor accommodations. There are programs in **Arkansas** that can help pay for accommodations. [Contact Susan Pierce, the DRC housing advocate, for information on accessing these programs & assistive technology devices](#)

## Governor Beebe Signs Bill Creating Housing Trust Fund

On March 30, Governor Beebe signed into law SB 396, to create an Arkansas Housing Trust Fund. This bill is now Act 661.

The lead sponsor of the legislation was Senator Joyce Elliott. Housing Arkansas, a group of 78 organizations, including **DRC** and numerous individuals advocating for affordable housing, worked hard to make a housing trust fund in Arkansas a reality.

While Act 661 creates the Arkan-

sas Housing Trust Fund, this was enabling legislation only, with no provisions for how the trust fund will be capitalized/funded.

Housing Arkansas sent a letter to the Governor thanking him for his support and counsel in helping to pass the enabling legislation and asked for his help in finding funding for start up costs and continuing operation of the trust fund.

To read Act 661 and review all legislation tracked by DRC during the legislation session go to: <http://>

[www.arkdisabilityrights.org/publicpolicy.html](http://www.arkdisabilityrights.org/publicpolicy.html)

### Governor Beebe



## USDA Rural Development Multi-family Housing Rental

The USDA subsidizes over 15,000 section 515 rural multi-family apartment complexes throughout the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Properties are classified as Elderly or Family and provide unit sizes from studio to 4 bedroom.

The properties are serviced by approved Management Agencies who provide required annual ten-

ant certification processing for their residents.

To search for a USDA Rural Development Multi-Family housing unit in **Arkansas** visit the USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Housing Rentals site at: [http://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/select\\_state.jsp?home=YES](http://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/select_state.jsp?home=YES)

**“Adults and senior citizens with disabilities are often forced to reside in institutions, such as nursing homes - not because they require health, personal care, and independent living services – but because private housing is not affordable and accessible to them.”**

## HUD Federally Assisted Housing

### Subsidized Apartments

HUD helps apartment owners offer reduced rents to low-income tenants. To apply, contact or visit the management office of each apartment building that interests you.

### Public Housing and Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8)

To apply for either type of help, visit your local Public Housing Agency (PHA). Some PHAs have long waiting lists, so you may want to apply at more than one PHA. Your PHA can also give you a list of locations at which your voucher can be used.



To find a listing of the PHAs in Arkansas go to: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/pih/pha/contacts/states/ar.cfm>

### Privately-Owned Subsidized Housing

To search for privately-owned subsidized housing in Arkansas, go to: <http://www.hud.gov/apps/section8/step2.cfm?state=AR%2CArkansas>

The 4 Independent Living Centers in Little Rock, Hot Springs, Pine Bluff and Fayetteville are good resources for housing information at: <http://www.ar-ilc.org/cils.htm>

**The Protection and Advocacy  
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*This DRC Brief is on our website and is available upon request in other formats such as Braille, large print, disk and in Spanish*

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(Continued from page 1—homeless children)

assisting renters & homeowners, & more spending on child care for homeless children. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, federal funds allocated to **Arkansas** for homeless education include:

- \$700 K for homeless education For McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act grants to states to provide services to homeless children, including meals and transportation.

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*Please contact us any time with suggestions on how to improve our website or newsletter. We welcome your suggestions. If you do not have access to the internet and would like to receive information or publications from DRC, please contact us. If you do not wish to receive future newsletters or other mailing or email, please let us know. Visit our website: [www.arkdisabilityrights.org](http://www.arkdisabilityrights.org) to see the DRC Housing Priorities for 2009.*

*Thanks!*

*Nan Ellen D. East*

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