

Open Doors for Multicultural Families (ODMF) provides culturally and linguistically relevant information, services, and programming to culturally and linguistically diverse families of persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The families we serve are often immigrants, refugees, Black, Indigenous or people of color (BIPOC).

The Multicultural Village: A Community Housing Solution

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) and their families experience high rates of housing insecurity. **In addition to a lack of available housing, the housing system in Washington state currently offers limited options which fail to recognize and respond effectively to the needs of people with disabilities.** A lack of responsive housing options exacerbates the exclusion and isolation of people who already navigate issues of inequitable access. Families often provide full-time support to their family member(s) with disabilities, while living in places that are too small, inaccessible, and far from basic needs and services. **The barriers to housing are even greater for diverse communities.**

"I have had neighbors that didn't understand disabilities. In my culture, disability is not talked about. The lack of sensitivity and inability to understand my problem raising my child was difficult for me."

~ A Somali parent



Housing for the BIPOC Community with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Washington is home to culturally and linguistically diverse people with disabilities and their families. The current housing system does not understand their housing needs and preferences and fails to invest in housing options that meet the needs of the BIPOC community. The housing system and housing design reflect the western norm of individualism and prioritizes community voices which reflect western values. Examples of how the current system is failing our BIPOC community are as follows:

- Multigenerational households and large families struggle to obtain housing with adequate space due to housing developers focusing on building single-or two-bedroom units.
- People with limited English proficiency struggle to navigate the complex housing system and access housing without language support and housing navigation assistance.
- Alternative housing, such as residential group homes, disconnects people from their culture of foods, language, and community.

Assessment of Community Needs

In 2022, ODMF conducted surveys and focus groups with families/care givers, people with disabilities and service providers to understand the primary challenges and needs of diverse communities related to housing.¹ The priorities of people with disabilities and their parents/caregivers are depicted in Fig. A of the appendix. People with disabilities highlighted needs such as **easy access to groceries and retail, a neighborhood that is safe and friendly to people with disabilities, and convenient access to public transit.** Parents and caregivers share similar priorities while also asking for programs and services. People with disabilities and their families strongly emphasize a desire for engagement with community and support for activities of daily living. The barriers which disconnect BIPOC communities from housing and services can be reduced by understanding the unique challenges they experience. **Here are highlights of the surveys:**

¹ See Appendix for additional survey information

BIPOC/IDD Community Barriers to Housing



Housing insecurity: 24% of the households surveyed report they are at risk of losing their home.

Financial hardship: 81% of survey participants report choosing between paying housing costs and other needs such as medicine, therapy, food, or entertainment at least “sometimes”.



Low Income: 54% of households report an income below \$35,000 per year.²

Limited Space: A lack of 3+ bedroom apartments to accommodate larger households.³

Multigenerational: 45% of people with IDD want to live with their family in the future. 85% of parents of adults with disabilities want them to live in the same household.



Multiple disabilities: 27% of households have more than one member with a disability.

Housing Needs: A variety of housing options are needed for diverse communities. 66% of households surveyed reported that their current housing arrangements did “not at all” or only “somewhat” met their needs.⁴



A Community Centered Solution to Housing

ODMF is collaborating with its partners to design and build **an inclusive** residential housing community centered on the needs of multicultural persons with disabilities and their families. **The vision of the Multicultural Village is an intentionally designed community which is culturally responsive, and accessible for people of all abilities while celebrating and sharing cultural understanding.** The goals of this residential housing development are:

- **An inclusive** community where people with and without disabilities, and their families live together and celebrate their different abilities
- Easy access to basic needs such as healthcare, public transportation, retail, and groceries
- Culturally and linguistically responsive programs and services for people with IDD on site
- Accessible facilities and amenities for fitness/wellness, recreation and socializing for people of all abilities

The Multicultural Village is one community housing option that meets the housing needs of the BIPOC/IDD community.

² See Figure D

³ See Figure B

⁴ See Figure C

Appendix

The following are charts representing survey responses to questions asked by Open Doors for Multicultural families to the BIPOC/IDD community and their families. The three hundred and fifty-four survey responses gathered represent the needs of one thousand two hundred and seventy-six people including four hundred and forty-one people with IDD from diverse cultural backgrounds. The providers survey represents a population of 8,150.

Figure A

Neighborhood amenity priorities of **people with disabilities** and **parents and caregivers**.

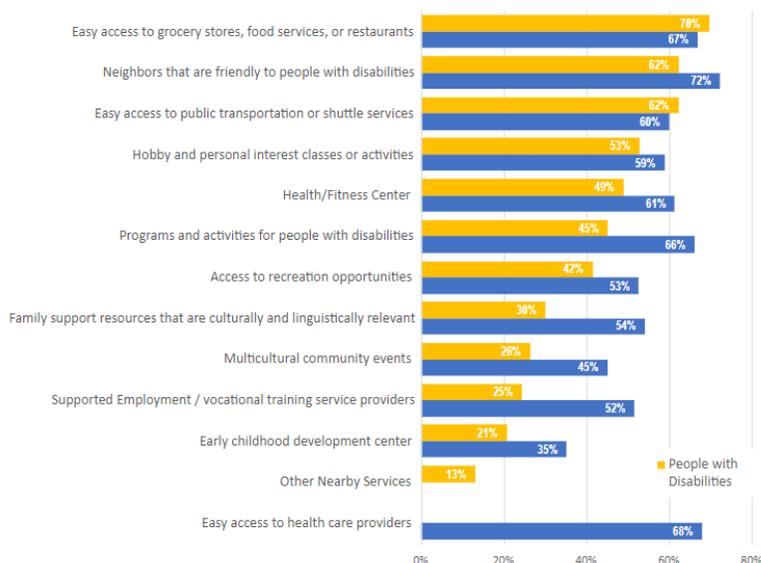
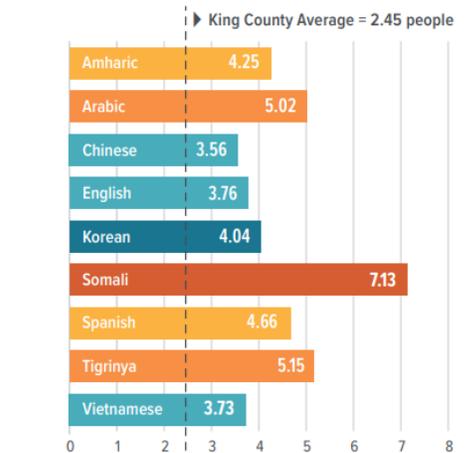


Figure B

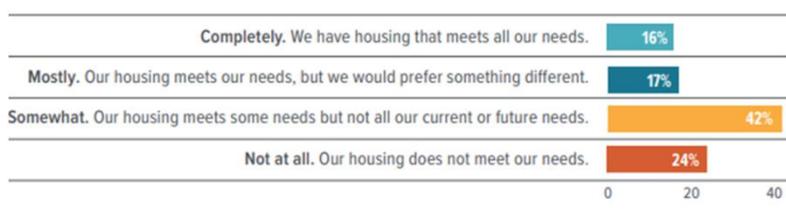
Households are larger than the King County Average



Source: Housing Needs Survey of parents and caregivers of people with disabilities, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, 2021

Figure C

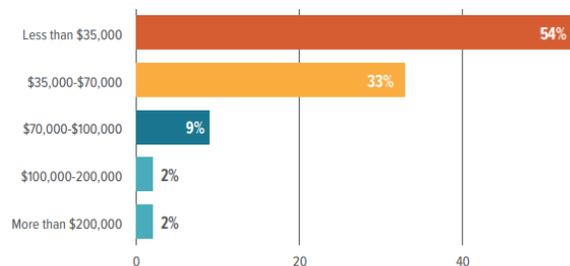
Many households need a different housing option



Source: Housing Needs Survey of parents and caregivers of people with disabilities, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, 2021

Figure D

The majority households have very low incomes



Source: Housing Needs Survey of parents and caregivers of people with disabilities, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, 2021

Contact

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