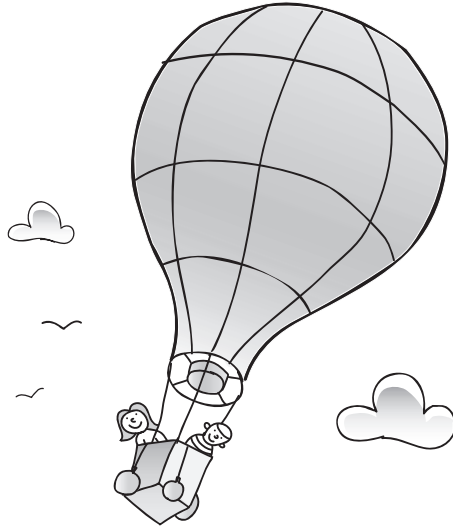


Tri-Counties Regional Center

# Living Options

A guide to Community Living Options for  
Adults with Developmental Disabilities  
and their Families.





***“Persons with developmental disabilities will live life as full and active members of their community.”***

-TCADD/TCRC VISION

In accordance with our vision, our core “life quality enhancement” value, civil rights, and Lanterman Act priorities, Tri-Counties Regional Center:

*Gives high preference to those supports and services which would allow minors with developmental disabilities to live with their families, adults with developmental disabilities to live as independently as possible in the community, and all consumers to interact with persons without disabilities in positive, meaningful ways. (TCRC Policy 5100: General Philosophy and Standards)*

We believe adults with developmental disabilities should live in the residence of their choice — with their families, with friends, or alone — and engage in activities of their choice: work, volunteering, education, or socializing. We attempt to help people have meaningful relationships with friends and co-workers, so they are seen as valuable, contributing members of their communities.

Choosing where to live is an important decision, but can be a hard decision to make as you balance the advantages of different options. This guide will answer many of the questions that you and your family probably have about living arrangements. We have also included other resources, which may help you in making your decision.

Reading this guide, however, is only the beginning. You’ll need to talk to and work with your family members, friends, co-workers, service coordinator, and other people in the community to make your vision come true.

Handwritten signature of James L. Shorter

James L. Shorter,  
Executive Director

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **What To Do If You Are Thinking of Changing Your Living Arrangement:**

Talk to your Service Coordinator	1
What is Person-Centered Planning?	1
What is Circle of Support?	1
What we believe	1

## **Living Arrangement Options:**

What is a “living arrangement”	2
With your family	2
On your own in Independent or Supported Living	3
In a licensed community care facility	3
In a foster or adult family home	4
In a facility with special health care or habilitation services	4
Who pays for my living arrangement?	5

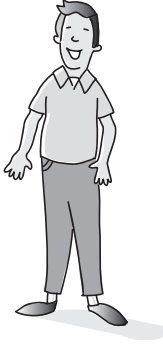
## **Choosing Options:**

How do I choose a supported living service provider?	8
How do I choose a licensed community care facility, a foster home, or a facility that provides special health care or habilitation services?	11
What are my rights?	13
What should I do if I’m not satisfied with the services I receive?	14

## **Affordable Housing Resources**

## **Appendices**

Worksheet for choosing a facility	17
Worksheet for choosing a supported living services provider	21



# What To Do if You Are Thinking of Changing Your Living Arrangement

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## Talk to your Service Coordinator

Making changes in your living arrangement is a big step. But you don't have to make that kind of important decision all by yourself. So, if you are thinking about changing your living arrangement, it would be a good idea to talk to your TCRC service coordinator. Your service coordinator will work with you to create an Individual Program Plan (IPP).



## What is Person-Centered Planning?

Person-Centered Planning is a process that helps you look at your hopes and dreams for the future and figure out the support you need from family, friends, community, and service organizations. Your Individual Program Plan (IPP) will list the steps that you need to take to help you achieve your dreams.

**Remember:** The plan starts with small steps! You don't have to do it all at once!

Best of all, you don't have to do it by yourself. There are all kinds of people who would like to help you achieve a good future. The goal of the Individual Program Plan is to build a circle of people who are interested in helping you to achieve your dreams. We call those people who are interested your "Circle of Support."

## What is a Circle of Support?

A Circle of Support is made up of the focal person (that's you!) and might include your family members, neighbors, friends, employer, teachers, service providers and your regional center service coordinator. In fact, it can include anyone that you invite to be a member.

## What We Believe

1. Part of growing and maturing is changing things about ourselves and the world around us. Your vision should challenge you to grow. Still, as you plan your vision, be honest with yourself. And be realistic.

If your singing voice sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard, then maybe it's not a real option for you to become a Country Western singer! Maybe you could collect Country Western tapes and learn line dancing. And then teach your friends!

If your only income is SSI, then it's probably not an option for you to live in an apartment or house by yourself. But maybe you could live in an apartment or house with a roommate to share expenses.

2. Planning your vision isn't a once-and-for-all kind of thing. Your vision will probably change over time, as you learn more about yourself, your hopes, your talents, your needs, and your responsibilities.





## Living Arrangements Options

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### What is a “living arrangement”?

It’s where, how, and with whom you live.

You are an adult. You probably make a lot of your own decisions. One of those decisions is choosing where to live. When it comes to making that choice, you have many options to choose from. You could choose to live:

- 1. With your family.**
- 2. On your own, away from your family, with services and supports that help you (we call this option “Supported Living”).**
- 3. In a licensed community care facility with other adults with developmental disabilities.**
- 4. In a foster care or adult family home.**
- 5. In a facility that provides special health care or habilitation services — if you need them.**

That’s at least five options. But it’s really more, because each option has options. Let’s take a closer look...



### 1. With your family . . .

If you are an adult with special needs, the regional center can help you find services and supports to help you live a meaningful, productive life. Like most adults that we serve, you probably have a job, go to school, participate in some type of day activity, or volunteer. If you don’t, your regional center service coordinator is just a phone call away. Your service coordinator can help you find work or schools.

But what about the times when you aren’t at work or school or volunteering? There are all kinds of social and recreational opportunities and groups that you might want to join. Your regional center service coordinator can tell you about them. Tri-Counties Regional Center also sends you newsletters and mailings about social and educational opportunities.

If you have special health needs, the regional center may be able to arrange for nursing care to help you remain at home.

If you would like to learn skills which will make you more independent while you’re still living with your family, our regional center may be able to arrange for independent living skills instruction so that you can learn all kinds of important things, such as how to budget your money, how to shop, or how to use the bus system to get around until you decide to move out on your own.



## 2. On your own in Independent or Supported Living . . .

Many people choose where and with whom they want to live. They decide what to do and when to do it. They turn a home into a place they really like. Many adults with developmental disabilities want the same things. If you choose independent or supported living as your living arrangement, you will live in your own home — whether it’s an apartment or house that you own, lease, or rent. You’ll live by yourself or with someone else you choose. And, you’ll decide whether to live independently without supports or to receive the supports you want and need (like budgeting, paying bills, or cooking, etc.).

Maybe you’ve been afraid to think about living independently because you thought you had to do it all by yourself. Yet, everybody needs some support in order to live on their own.

The support you need to live on your own may be exactly what good friends or family members offer each other. For example: transportation to and from church or synagogue, help with getting furniture for your new place, cooking lessons, etc. We call those “natural supports.”

Additional support may be available from other organizations, such as personal care assistance offered through In-Home Support Services (IHSS). We call this kind of support “generic support.”

Also, Tri-Counties Regional Center may arrange for other services and supports including training or help in learning or performing daily living skills such as budgeting, menu planning, homemaking, etc.

What kind of support do you think you need? Someone to help you learn how to shop, cook, or budget your money? Assistance with planning your doctor appointments? Do you have physical challenges (such as using a wheelchair) so that you need help with transferring, bathing, and dressing?

The most important point to remember if you choose this option is:

**“You’re not alone!”**



## 3. In a licensed community care facility . . .

A community care facility is licensed by the State of California to provide services and supports for adults with developmental disabilities. If you choose to live in a community care facility, in most cases you will be living with three to five other adults with special needs. Plus, you may share a bedroom with another person. Staff members also stay in the facility to provide care and supervision. In addition to having meals provided, you’ll receive training and support in self-care, daily living activities, and other skills based on your talents and your needs. You will also socialize and go on outings in the community with the other residents.

There are many different facilities to choose from. Each facility offers something different. Some specialize in helping residents with physical disabilities,



behavior challenges, or other special needs. Others teach independent living skills. You'll probably have several licensed community care facilities to consider.



#### **4. In a foster or adult family home . . .**

Maybe you'd like to live in a family setting. Some homes are similar to community care facilities, but are certified to serve only one or two adults. These homes are under the supervision of licensed foster home agencies. If you choose this option, you'll be included as a "member of the family" and you'll participate in family activities. If you have special needs, such as behavioral challenges or you need more training in daily living skills, Tri-Counties Regional Center will work with the foster home agency to make sure you receive the special services and supports you need.

#### **5. In a facility that provides special health care or habilitation services . . .**



Nursing and Habilitation facilities are licensed by the California Department of Health Services. This option may be the one for you if you need nursing care, ongoing supervision by a doctor, and habilitation and therapy services available where you live. Staff may have training in nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or similar fields.

Usually six or fewer people live in a health care facility where staff members are on duty 24 hours a day. In addition to the nursing and habilitation services, you also receive "active treatment" training in self-care and independent living skills as well as socialize, go on outings in the community, and take part in outside activities.



## Who pays for my living arrangement?

First let's talk about a few basics:

**SSI/SSP** — As a person with a disability, you probably qualify for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/State Supplemental Program (SSP), a payment made by the federal government and the State of California to provide for the living costs of people who have disabilities (If you don't receive SSI/SSP, ask your service coordinator to help you apply for it).

You must use your SSI/SSP to help pay for your basic living expenses — whether you live with your family, in your own house or apartment, or in a licensed community care setting.

**P&I** — People who qualify for SSI and who live in community licensed homes usually receive **Personal and Incidental Money (P&I)** every month as part of their SSI payments. You can use your P&I for clothing, entertainment, or whatever you want.

**IHSS** — You may be eligible for **In-Home Support Services (IHSS)**. IHSS is money from the State of California to hire someone to come into your home to help if you are physically disabled or need other kinds of personal assistance or supervision.

**You** — If you have a job and are making a salary, then you will probably use part of your salary to pay for your basic living expenses — just as other people do! If you are an adult, your parents are not required to pay those expenses if you do not live with them, though they may help you if they are able (however, "gifts" from family could affect SSI/SSP benefits).

**Regional Center** — Your regional center receives money from the State of California to provide you with all kinds of services and supports such as:



The service coordinator who works with you and your family;

Workshops and training sessions to teach you all kinds of things: your rights and responsibilities, building friendships and relationships, how to create a social life, how to become more independent;

Newsletter and training materials like this guide;

Independent living skills instruction;

Supported living services and supports.

Very often, all or part of the services and supports you receive are paid for by the regional center.



## Medi-Cal

If you are eligible for SSI, you are also eligible for Medi-Cal.

**Medi-Cal** is funded by the federal government and the State of California. It pays for many medical expenses.

## Other

You may be eligible for many other services or supports — such as:

- **Bus and rail passes at reduced cost;**
- Services from the California Department of Rehabilitation to help you find and keep a job, etc.

There are too many services and supports to mention in a small guide like this. Ask your regional center service coordinator about what services might be available to you, and ask to see the **Tri-Counties Regional Center Menu of Community Services**.

Now let's get more specific.

### **If you choose to live at home with your family:**

You'll probably be eligible to receive some SSI/SSP benefits to help your family pay for your living expenses. If you're making a salary, you may use that money any way you choose.

You may require special services, such as someone to train you how to use the bus, a nurse to do a health assessment, or some kind of in-home health services. The regional center will coordinate and pay for those kinds of services if they are not available from other resources such as private insurance or Medi-Cal.

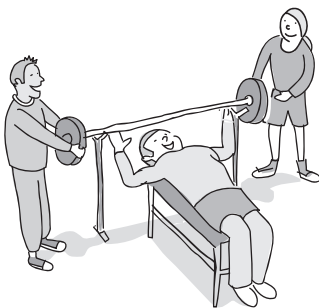
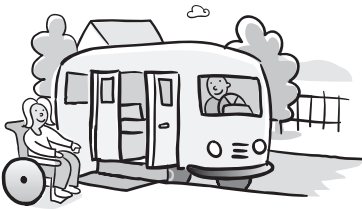
### **If you choose to live on your own in a supported living situation;**

You may receive SSI/SSP benefits and/or you may have income from a job. You will be expected to pay for your own rent, utilities, and food with that money. That's the way it is with adults — we pay our own way!

You may need special services and supports to live independently. Maybe some of your family members or friends can provide a few of those supports.

If you have physical disabilities or other special needs, you may qualify for IHSS money, allowing you to hire someone to come into your home to provide personal assistance or supervision.

The regional center can also provide supports such as someone to help you with budgeting, shopping, cooking, housekeeping, etc. In some cases, the regional center may assist you in finding someone to offer you support, such as a person who checks in with you on a regular basis.



**If you choose to live in a licensed community care setting:**

Chances are that your SSI/SSP will not cover the entire cost of your living expenses. The regional center receives money from the State of California to pay for what your SSI/SSP does not cover.

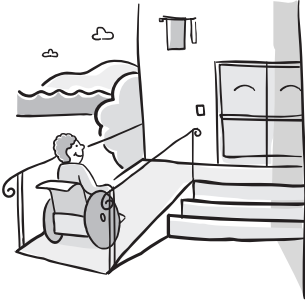
You will also receive a monthly P&I check (Personal and Incidental money) which you can choose to use for clothing, entertainment, or whatever you want.

**If you choose to live in a facility that provides special health care or habilitation services:**

Your costs are covered by Medi-Cal, which is money from the federal government and the State of California. If you are not eligible for Medi-Cal, but you need to live in a facility that provides health care or habilitation services, then it's possible that the regional center may pay for your living expenses. Check with your service coordinator if you have questions about Medi-Cal eligibility.

Two worksheets are included in the back of this guide: things to look for “**When you are Choosing a Facility**”, and things to look for “**When Choosing a Supported Living Provider.**”

We hope that this guide is helpful to you as you look to your future. You have many options. You have a whole world in front of you — **your world!**



## Choosing Options

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### How do I choose a supported living service provider?

Let's say you've decided that this option is the one for you. What happens next?

Your regional center service coordinator will probably give you a list of supported living service providers to meet with before you make your choice. Your service coordinator will select them based on talks that you have had about where you want to live, what you want to learn, and the kinds of services and supports you need.

It's a very good idea for you to meet with all of the service providers on the list. Remember, these are important meetings - you may be meeting some of the people who are going to work with you as you become more independent! You don't have to have these meetings all by yourself. You can invite a family member or friend, if you want.

Following are some things to do, things to look for, and some questions to ask (you'll also probably have some things to do, things to look for, and questions of your own to ask):

#### 1. Make sure to talk to the service providers.

Ask the service providers questions about themselves. Questions like:

"Do you like your job?"

"What kinds of experience have you had working with people with disabilities?"

"How long have you worked for this supported living program?"

Ask the service providers questions about their services and supports. Questions like:

"Who do you serve?"

"What services and supports do you provide?"

"What training do you offer?"

"Is there anyone you wouldn't serve?"

"What are some of the living arrangements where consumers reside?"

"Can I see one?"

"Do you serve consumers who live in different ways?"

"Alone? With a roommate? Living with a spouse or significant other? With their children? In apartments? In houses? Renting a room from someone? In mobile homes?"

"How are consumers involved in their neighborhoods? Please give me some examples."





“If I need a roommate, will you help me find one? How much will I be involved in choosing a roommate? How do you handle issues like smoking/non-smoking roommates? Different lifestyles such as late night persons and early morning persons; casual and neat; social and stay-at-home; gay and straight, etc.? Do you try to match up roommates with the same interests and values?”

“What do the people you support do during the day? Work? School? Stay home? Raise their children?”

“What do the consumers that you serve do for fun? How would you help me meet new people and have a good social life?”

“Is it okay for someone to receive supports from a variety of different providers? What other agencies, services and supports do you work with?”

Sometimes services and supports are best when they are provided by different people and programs, such as counseling from a specialist, personal assistance from a program, sexuality and relationship education from a community college, social and recreational programs from the local park and recreation program, guidance about food and menu planning from a registered dietician, etc. Again, the more variety the better. It is important to find out how much the supported living service provider knows about available services. Does the provider know about the regional center, counseling, In-Home Support Services, Dial-a-Ride, community college, etc.?

“How do you feel about using natural supports and other community supports to help enhance a person’s life? Please give me examples of how you’ve done this.”

“How do you handle emergencies? What would happen if I didn’t want some of the services or supports that you suggest?”

## **2. Talk to other consumers who receive supported living services from the providers you’re looking at.**

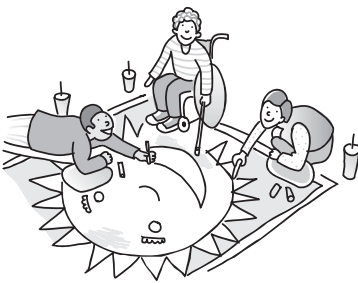
**Ask the consumers questions about themselves.** Questions like:

“How long have you lived in supported living? Do you like it? What do you like about it? What don’t you like about it?”

**Ask the consumers questions about their supported living service provider’s services and supports.** Questions like:

“Do you think your service provider is doing a good job providing you with services and supports to help you live independently? What services and supports are you receiving? What help have you received (such as training in budgeting and grocery shopping, assistance in making sure your bills get paid on time, helping you to become your own SSI/SSP payee, etc.)?”

“Do you have a roommate? Did your supported living service provider help you find a roommate? Were you very involved in finding your roommate?”





“Do you believe that the staff respect you and your rights? Was there ever a time when a staff member told you that you couldn’t do something? How respectful are staff when you make a decision they disagree with? Can you socialize with whomever you wish?”

“How’s your social life? Do you go out with other consumers? Friends who are not consumers? What community supports do you use (such as church, local parks and recreation programs, neighborhood coffee house, health club, etc.)? Did your provider help you with this?”

### **3. Ask to be taken to see some of the places where consumers are living.**

Are those places in neighborhoods with other houses and apartments? Are they near shopping centers or malls? If you use the bus, are they near bus lines? Do they feel like safe neighborhoods? Have you thought about which city or neighborhood you hope to live in?



That’s a lot of questions to think about, isn’t it? That’s why we’ve included a chart in the back of this guide to fill out when you visit different supported living service providers. It will help you keep track of things you like and things you don’t. We hope that using the chart will help you make important decision about your supported living service provider.

What if you don’t like any of the supported living service providers — or you’re not quite sure? Ask your service coordinator to suggest more options for you to look at.



## How do I choose a licensed community care facility, a foster home, or a facility that provides special health care or habilitation services?

Let's say you've decided that one of these options is the one for you. What happens next? Your regional center service coordinator will probably give you a list of several facilities to visit so that you can choose where you want to live. Your service coordinator will select these facilities based on talks that you have had about where you want to live and what services and supports you want.

It is a very good idea for you to visit all the facilities on the list. Remember, these are important visits — you may be seeing the place where you are going to be living! Also, you don't have to go alone; you can take a family member or friend with you.

Following are some things to do, things to look for, and some questions to ask (you'll also probably have some things to do, things to look for, and questions of your own to ask):

### 1. Make sure you talk to the service providers in the facility.

Ask the service providers questions about themselves. Questions like:

“Do you like your job? What kind of experience have you had working with people with disabilities? How long have you worked here?”

Ask the service providers questions about the facility and the services and supports it provides. Things like:

“What do the people who live here do? What happens during the week? What happens on the weekends? What do you teach people to do? What do you do for fun?”

“What are the house rules? Bedtimes, smoking policies, pets, visiting hours?”

“How do you encourage consumers to make decisions and choices? How do you choose social activities? How do you choose the menu?”

### 2. Make sure you talk to the consumers who live in the facility.

Ask them questions about themselves. Questions like:

“Do you like living here? How long have you lived here? What's best about living here? What do you like least about living here?”

Ask them questions about the facility. Questions like:

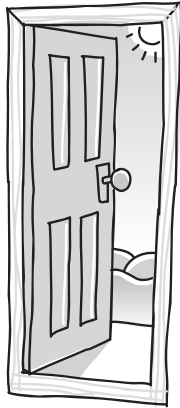
“What do you do here? What have you learned? What do you do for fun?”

“How are you encouraged to make decisions? Who decides your social activities? Who plans the menu?”

These are very similar to the questions that you asked the service provider. Are the consumers' answers similar to the answers of the service provider?







**3. Look at the inside of the facility.** Do you like it? Do you like the living room, dining and kitchen areas? Does it look comfortable? Pretty? Like a place that you would enjoy living? Are there pictures on the wall? Is the furniture comfortable? Are there games, magazines, radios, CD/tape players, televisions, and VCRs?

What about the bedrooms? Do the bedrooms look “personalized” — that is, does it look like the bedrooms were decorated by the people who live in them? Do they have photos and pictures on the walls? Their own books or magazines? Their own collections and hobbies? Their own radios, CD/tape players, televisions, and VCRs?

**4. Look at the outside of the facility and the neighborhood.** Is the facility in a neighborhood with other houses? Is it near a shopping center or mall? If you are religious, is it near your place of worship? If you use the bus, is it near a bus line? Does it feel like a safe neighborhood? Could your family members and friends get to the facility easily for visits with you?



**5. What about the food?** Does the food look tasty? The meals well-balanced? Ask to see a menu for the week.

That’s a lot of questions to think about, isn’t it? That’s why we’ve included a worksheet in the back of this guide to fill out when you visit each facility you are considering. It will help you keep track of what you like and what you don’t. We hope that using the worksheet will help you make important decision about the licensed community care facility where you would like to live.

What if you don’t like any of the facilities — or you’re not quite sure? Ask your service coordinator to suggest more facilities for you to look at.



## What are my rights?

People with developmental disabilities have rights. It's the law! The law is written in language that might be a little difficult to understand, so we've put the law into words that we hope will be easier to understand.

As a person with developmental disabilities, you have the right:

- To treatment and habilitation supports and services in the least restrictive environment;
- To dignity, privacy, and humane care;
- To participate in an appropriate program of publicly supported education, regardless of severity of disability;
- To prompt medical care and treatment;
- To religious freedom and practice;
- To social interaction and participation in community activities;
- To physical exercise and recreational activities;
- To be free from harm, including unnecessary physical restraint or isolation, excessive medication, abuse or neglect;
- To be free from hazardous procedures;
- To make choices in your own life: where and with whom you live, your relationships, the way you spend your time (including education, employment, and leisure), how you make plans for your personal future and decide what services and supports you need.

**If you choose to live in a licensed community care facility, a facility that provides special health care or habilitation services, or a foster home, you also have these rights:**



- To wear your own clothes, and purchase and use your own things;
- To have storage space for your things;
- To see visitors;
- To be close to a telephone or make and receive private calls;
- To be given paper, envelopes, and stamps if you wish to write private letters and to receive private letters (including e-mail);
- To refuse shock therapy;
- To refuse behavioral therapy that causes pain or trauma;
- To refuse the kind of surgery that would change your brain's intellectual or emotional functions, to make choices in your daily living routines: who you spend time with, and leisure and social activities;
- To inform the regional center about how satisfied you are with your services (and have this information taken into account);



- To actively participate in developing your Individual Program Plan (IPP) so that the services and supports you receive are based on your needs and wishes.

**If you choose supported living, you also have these rights:**

- To choose where and with whom you live;
- To be in charge of the character of your home and the way it looks;
- To choose and change your vendors and direct service providers;
- To participate actively in developing your Individual Program Plan so that the services and supports you receive are based on your needs and preferences;
- To receive services appropriate to your changing needs and preferences without having to move from your home;
- To inform the regional center about how satisfied you are with your services (and have this information taken into account);
- To terminate (end) services without affecting your eligibility for other services from the regional center;
- To receive information that will help you make important life decisions.

**What should I do if I'm not satisfied with the services I receive?**



**Quality Assurance.**

Here at Tri-Counties Regional Center, those are two very important words. They're important because we put a lot of effort into quality assurance.

**What does that mean?**

1. When you talk about quality, you talk about how good something is.
2. When you talk about assurance, you talk about making sure of something.

When we say that we believe in quality assurance at TCRC, we're saying that we try to make sure that all of the services and supports that you receive are as good as they can possibly be.

1. We do that by offering training sessions and workshops for service providers.
2. We also have TCRC staff members who work closely with service providers to provide them with support to make sure that they are providing quality services and supports.
3. We also have volunteers (consumers, family members, and friends) who work with TCRC staff members to review different services and supports.



We hope that you are pleased with your service provider and the services that you're receiving, whether you live at home with your family, in a community licensed facility, a foster home, a facility that provides nursing or habilitation services, or in supported living.

**But things don't always go exactly as they should.**

Even when things go wrong and you are not satisfied with the services that you are receiving, there are things you can do. There are steps you can take.

1. You can talk to your service provider about what you don't like.
2. You can talk with the other people receiving services and see what they think and what they'd like to do to make things better.
3. If numbers one and two don't work, you can call your TCRC service coordinator for help. Your service coordinator may speak to one of the TCRC staff members who works with service providers to make sure that services are the best possible.

The most important thing we want you to know: if you are not satisfied with the services and supports you are receiving, we at TCRC want to know because we are here to help you.



## Affordable Housing Resources

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Even with good, independent living or supported living services available, a significant question still remains: “How do I find affordable, permanent housing options in my local community?”

### Renting

According to the Department of Developmental Services, the best source of information on renting a home is at: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. You can research this and other resources on DDS website [www.dds.cahwnet.gov/](http://www.dds.cahwnet.gov/) under Guides, Resources and Reports: Affordable Housing, or the HUD website ([www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov)), or call HUD directly at their local office in Los Angeles (213) 894-8000.

### Home Ownership

For general information and resources the **National Home Of Your Own Alliance** is excellent. [Http://alliance.unh.edu](http://alliance.unh.edu) will link you to local and national resources. A new federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) rule which became effective October 12, 2000 will permit some individuals and families to use Section 8 vouchers for home ownership. This new rule may assist people with low incomes and disabilities to purchase their own homes. There are specific requirements for housing units and for participants in the Homeownership Program, and there are special allowances for persons with disabilities. A complete copy of the new Section 8 rule can be viewed and downloaded from <http://alliance.unh.edu/section8final.html>.

Another excellent resource is the **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Affordable Housing Guide**, (Buying a Home) [www.hud.gov](http://www.hud.gov).

### Advocacy Organizations

**The California Coalition for Affordable Housing for Persons with Developmental Disabilities** is a coalition initiated by individuals who have had a long-time concern with providing affordable, safe and accessible housing for persons with developmental disabilities and their families. The statewide California Coalition is a group of agencies, organizations, and parents of persons with developmental disabilities, professionals who fund, coordinate and/or provide direct services for people with developmental disabilities. For more information, contact CCAH, 2220 Capital Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95816 or call (916) 447-7341.

**CHANCE Coalition for Housing Accessibility Needs, Choices & Equality** is a collaboration of community members, service providers and government agencies. Their mission is to provide information and support to families and caregivers of persons with developmental disabilities. They have established an e-mail e-group on the internet. If you are interested in participating in their parent group, please contact JoAnn Davis at (805) 683-1606 or Glenn Berry (805) 963-1683 x15.



## When You Are Choosing A Facility Worksheet

Use this chart when you visit a community care facility, foster home, or facility that provides special health care or habilitation services. It has questions to ask and things to look for. Fill in the chart after, or even during, your visit — or you can ask someone to help you fill it out. It will help you compare all of the facilities you've visited so that you can make an informed decision — that means a choice you make based on what you have seen and heard.

Because you may visit several facilities, we suggest that you go to a copy machine and make several copies of this chart so that you can use a different chart for each facility you visit.

First, talk to the service provider at the facility. You might want to ask these questions:

### 1. About your service provider:

Do you like your job? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked here? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked with people with developmental disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of jobs have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. About the home and its services and supports:

What do the people who live here do? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you teach people how to do? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do for fun? What do you do on the weekends? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the House Rules? \_\_\_\_\_

May I have a copy? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you help consumers to make decisions and choices? \_\_\_\_\_

Who decides what the special activities will be? \_\_\_\_\_

Who plans the menus? \_\_\_\_\_

Afterwards ask yourself, "Are these rules I can live with?" \_\_\_\_\_

Next, **introduce yourself and talk to some consumers who live in the facility.** First ask them about themselves:

Do you like living here? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived here? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like best about living here? \_\_\_\_\_



What do you like least about living here? \_\_\_\_\_

Then, ask those consumers questions about the facility:

What do you do here? \_\_\_\_\_

What have you learned to do here that you didn't know how to do before? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do for fun here? \_\_\_\_\_

How does your service provider help you to make decisions and choices? \_\_\_\_\_

Who decides what social activities you do? \_\_\_\_\_

Who decides what goes on the menu? \_\_\_\_\_

Now, look around at the inside of the facility, ask yourself these questions:

Do I like the way the house looks?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Is it clean?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Is the temperature comfortable?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Does the furniture look nice and comfortable?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Are there pictures on the wall?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Are there games, magazines, puzzles, radios, televisions, VCRs, etc. for entertainment?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Ask if you may look at the consumers' bedrooms. When you do, ask yourself these questions:

Do the bedrooms look like they "belong" to the consumers who live in them? \_\_\_\_\_

Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Are the bedrooms decorated by the people who live in them?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Do they have their own photos or pictures on the wall?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Do they have their own books and magazines, collections and hobbies?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Do some have their own TVs or cd/tape player, etc.?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Would I like to have a bedroom like the bedrooms in the facility?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Ask to see a menu. Ask yourself these questions :

Does the food look tasty?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_



## When Choosing a Supported Living Service Provider Worksheet

You can use this chart when you visit a supported living service provider. It has questions to ask and things to look for. Fill out the chart after, or even during, your visit — or ask someone to help you fill it out. It will help you compare all of the providers you've visited so that you can make an informed decision — that means a choice based on what you have seen and heard.

Because you may visit several providers, we suggest that you go to a copy machine and make several copies of this chart so that you have a different chart for each provider you visit.

**First talk to the service provider.** Ask questions.

### 1. About your provider:

Do you like your job? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked here? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like best about your job? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you worked with people with developmental disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

What kinds of jobs have you had? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. About the supported living services and supports:

What services do you provide? \_\_\_\_\_

Who receives your services? \_\_\_\_\_

What training do you offer? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you refuse services to anyone?  Yes  No If yes, Who? \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the living arrangements where your consumers reside? \_\_\_\_\_

Do the consumers live in different ways such as alone, with roommates, with spouses or life partners, with children? \_\_\_\_\_

Do the consumers live in apartments or houses? \_\_\_\_\_

How are the consumers involved in their neighborhoods? \_\_\_\_\_

If I need a roommate, will you help me find one?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

How do you handle issues with consumers with different lifestyles such as smoking/non-smoking, early morning/late night people, straight/gay, casual/neat, etc.? \_\_\_\_\_

What do consumers do during the day? \_\_\_\_\_

School?  Yes  No; Work?  Yes  No; Volunteer?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

What do the consumers do for fun? \_\_\_\_\_

Is it okay for the consumer to receive supports from a variety of different providers?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

What other agencies, services, and supports do you work with? \_\_\_\_\_

What natural supports like family members, friends, churches, and clubs do you rely on? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you handle emergencies? \_\_\_\_\_

What would happen if I didn't want some of the supports or services that you suggest? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Next, ask the provider to take you to visit one or several consumers that the provider serves.**

**First ask consumers questions about themselves:**

How long have you lived in supported living? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you like it? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like best? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you like least? \_\_\_\_\_

**Next, ask the consumers some questions about the supported living provider:**

What do you like about the services and supports from your supported living provider? \_\_\_\_\_

What don't you like about the services and supports from your supported living provider? \_\_\_\_\_

What services and supports are you receiving? What has your provider helped you learn? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a roommate?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Did your provider help you find a roommate?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Does the provider respect your rights?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Was there ever a time when a provider told you that you couldn't do something?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Does your provider treat you with respect?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

What do you do for fun?  Yes  No

Where do you socialize?  Yes  No

Does your provider help you with your social life?  Yes  No

What community supports do you use such as church, local parks and recreation programs, health clubs, etc.?

Now, **look at the neighborhood where consumers are living**. Ask yourself these questions”:

Is the home or apartment in a neighborhood with other homes or apartments?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Is the home near where I could work, go to school, or volunteer?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Is it near a shopping center or mall?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

If I wanted to go to church, temple or mosque, are there places of worship nearby?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Is there a bus line near?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Do I feel safe in this neighborhood?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Could my friends and family travel easily to visit me?  Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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**TCRC Santa Barbara**

520 East Montecito Street, Santa Barbara, CA 93103-3278  
(805) 962-7881 • FAX (805) 884-7229 • (800) 322-6994

**TCRC Ventura County**

500 Esplanade Drive, Suite 500, Oxnard, CA 93030-2119  
(805) 485-3177 • FAX (805) 988-9521 • (800) 664-3177

**TCRC Simi Valley**

1919 Williams Street, Suite 201, Simi Valley, CA 93065  
(805) 522-8030 • FAX (805) 522-8142 • (800) 517-2524

**TCRC San Luis Obispo**

3450 Broad Street, Suite 111, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-7102  
(805) 543-2833 • FAX (805) 543-8725 • (800) 456-4153

**TCRC Santa Maria**

302-304 West Carmen Lane, Santa Maria, CA 93458  
(805) 922-4640 • FAX (805) 922-4350 • (800) 266-9071

**TCRC Atascadero**

Hotel Park Business Center, 6005 Capistrano, Suite E, Atascadero, CA 93422  
(805) 461-7402 • FAX (805) 461-9479 • (800) 771-6898

Prepared by **Suzanne Amstutz**

**Bernie Schaeffer**, *Manager Department of Training and Information*

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**Tri-Counties Regional Center**

**Tri-Counties Association  
for the Developmentally Disabled**

520 E. Montecito Street  
Santa Barbara, California 93103