A range of housing options

(Excerpted from the manual used in Autism Housing Pathways' daylong housing workshop)

Knowing the individual's support needs, as well as available funding and assets, makes it possible to begin to look at potential housing models. Autism Housing Pathways has attempted to capture the out-of-pocket housing and support costs to families for a variety of models. Where a cost of "$0" is indicated, bear in mind that there are still costs for recreation, transportation, etc. Please note that all numbers are estimates, may change, and that neither Autism Housing Pathways, nor its officers or directors guarantee their accuracy. Further, we make no guarantees that the funding streams are always available in a given situation, or that they may be combined in the ways described.

The options presented do **not** include:

- Adult Foster Care or Shared Living taking place in a home owned or rented by the caregiver;
- A campus-type model.

These exclusions do not represent a value judgment about any of these models. They are excluded because they don't fit easily into what we are trying to convey: a continuum of staffing patterns where public money can be used for supportive services in settings where the individual should not need to move due to a change in caregivers.

A model only hinted at is one where one or more individuals with developmental disabilities live in one unit, while another unit or units are rented to tenants without disabilities, in order to bring in funding to defray costs. This will become more important as new Dept. of Labor regulations regarding minimum wage and overtime start to affect AFC and Shared Living.

Use of a Section 8 housing voucher is the key to affordability for many of these models. In addition, out of pocket costs will go down for many (but not all) families when an individual moves from SSI to SSDI. For this reason, many families may need to wait for the SSDI transition to afford housing. During this waiting period, families eligible for Adult Family Care may choose to save the AFC stipend to accumulate a down payment.

Remember that DDS funds cannot be used in any setting with more than 5 individuals per unit.

Footnotes in illustrations have the following meaning:

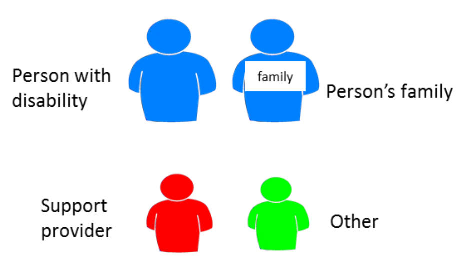
[1] Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

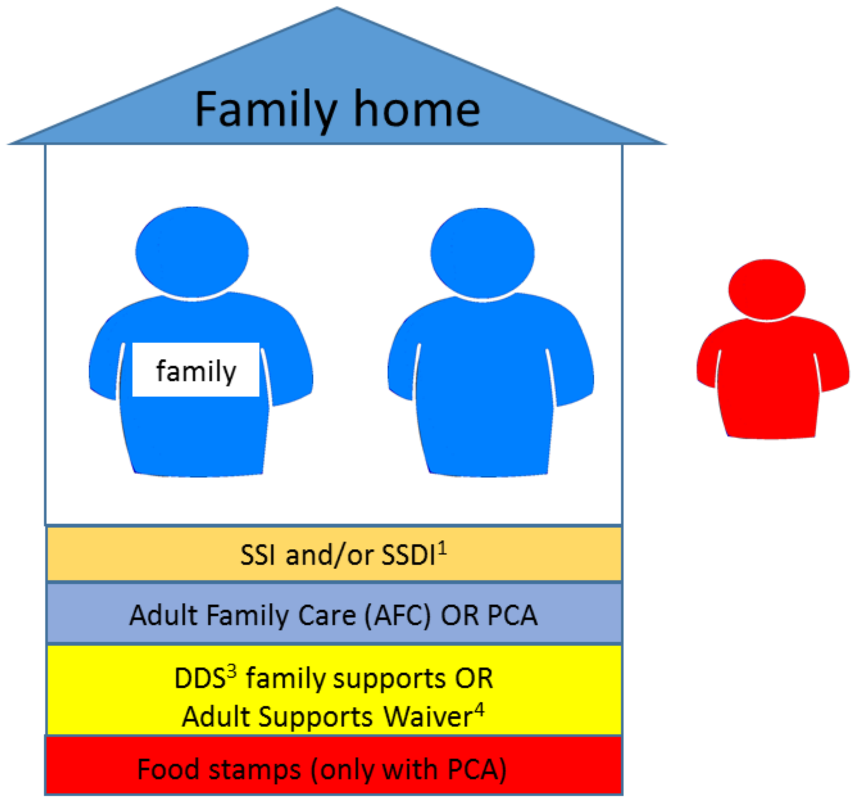
[2] May also use some other type of housing voucher, such as a voucher from the Mass. Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) or the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP)

[3] Department of Developmental Services

[4] May also be Community Living Waiver, but not combined with AFC or PCA

Key:

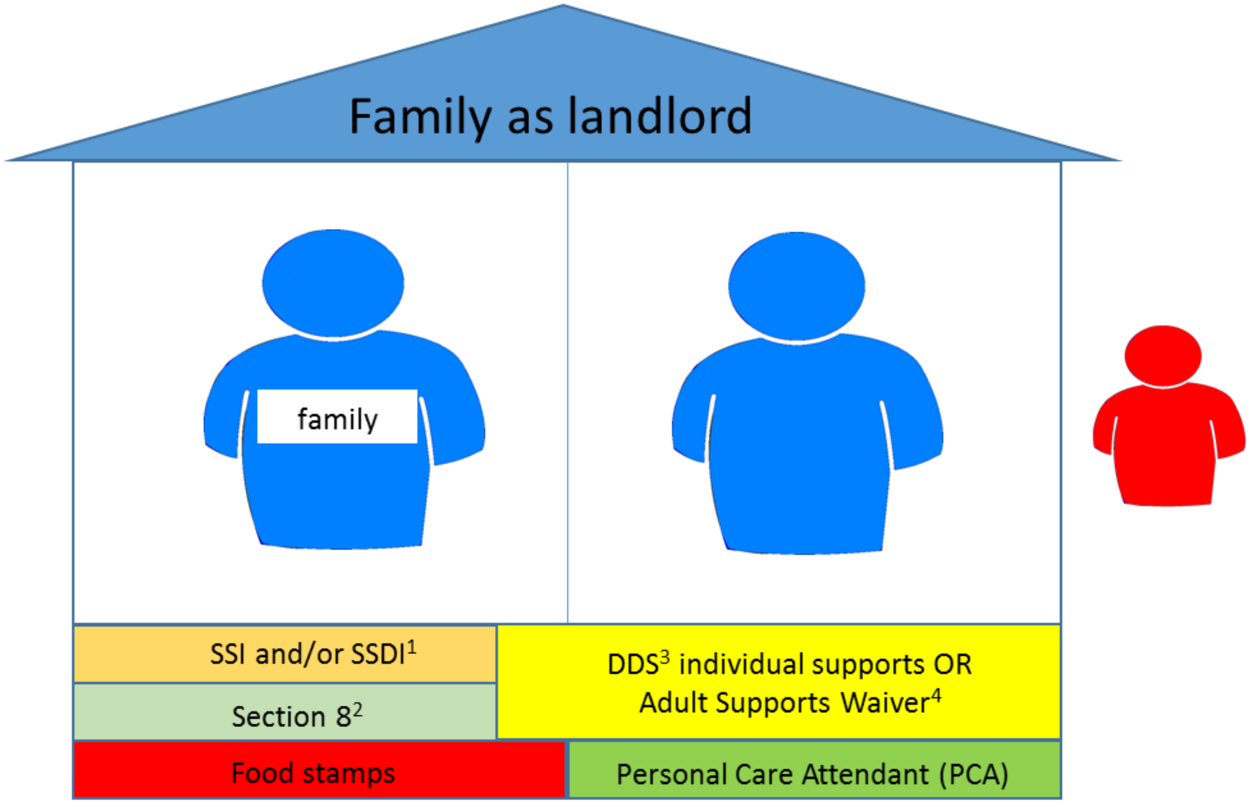




In this arrangement, the individual lives in the family home.

Actual monthly costs:	
Food (if food stamps are not used):	$ 300
Non-clinical respite (30 hours/week x 4 weeks x $15/hr):	$1,800
Total costs	$2,100
Less (assuming AFC, not PCA):	
Value of AFC	$ 760
SSI	$ 576
Total cash subsidies	$1,336
Total monthly out of pocket	$ 764

This arrangement is more economical than just about any situation where a Section 8 voucher is not available, but is fundamentally unsustainable unless a sibling or other family member steps in when the parents are unable to provide care. It also does not provide any separation for the individual. Further, if the goal is for the individual to eventually live elsewhere, saving the AFC stipend will mean the out of pocket cost is actually $1,524 per month.



In this arrangement, an individual lives in an apartment attached to the family home and has a personal care attendant to come in.

Actual monthly costs:

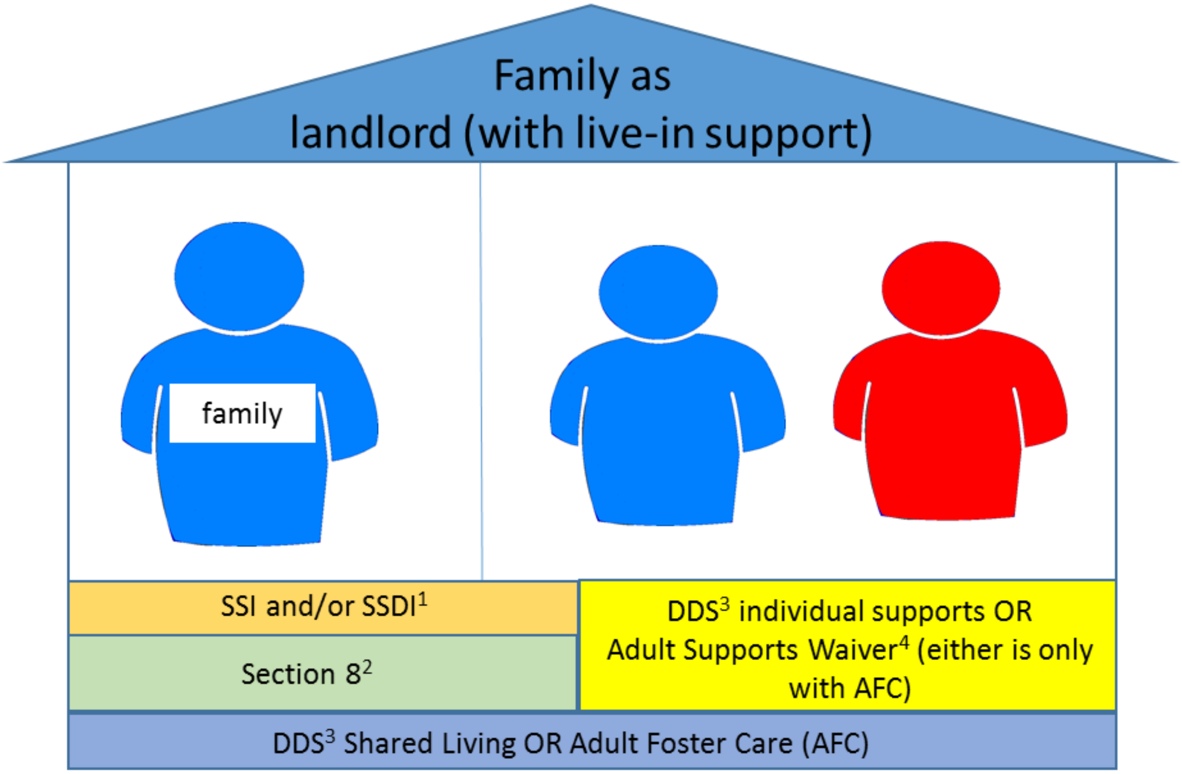
Payments on construction loan for 450 sq. ft. apartment	$ 950
Food not covered by food stamps:	$ 175
Non-clinical respite (30 hours/week x 4 weeks x $15/hr):	$1,800
Total costs (not including utilities, etc.)	$2,925

Less:

Section 8	$1,007
Food stamps	$ 125
SSI (30% or $254 must go toward rent)	$ 847
Total cash subsidies	$1,979

Total monthly out of pocket (not including utilities, etc.) $ 946

This arrangement is more costly, but still relatively economical for someone who can get by with PCA, some DDS supports and some respite. Note that a family that saved the Adult Family Care stipend while waiting for Section 8 and used that money toward the construction of the apartment would have a much lower loan payment – or even none at all, if the entire stipend was saved for 10 years. (The assumption for the loan is construction costs of $200/sq. ft.; Discover's online home loan calculator was used: https://www.discover.com/home-equity-loans/monthly-payment-calculator/ .) Passage of S. 2202 would also allow families to borrow up to $50,000 for this purpose, potentially at 0% interest with payment deferred until the property is no longer used for housing for a person with a disability. If both options were available and used, this might become a break-even proposition.

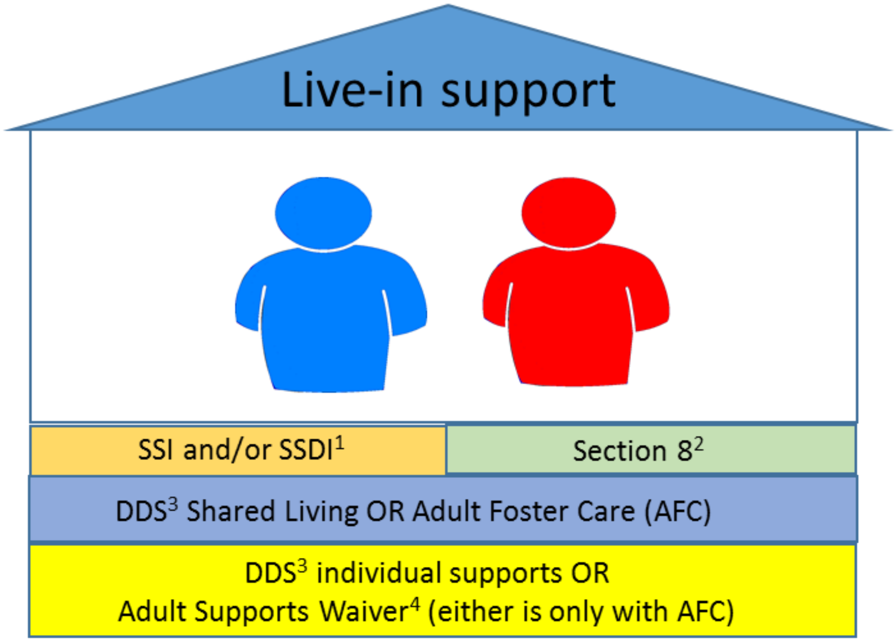


In this arrangement, an individual lives either in an apartment attached to the family home, with either a Shared Living Provider or AFC provider, or in the main part of the house with a provider and housemates. In the latter case, Mom and Dad have downsized to the attached apartment. A person's DDS supports can be used for skill-building or individualized outings.

Actual monthly costs (for AFC Level I):		Per person, 3 people with a disability + caregiver
Payments on construction loan for 900 sq. ft. apartment ($30,000 in savings were used as well)	$1,600	$1,600 (total for 4 beds)
Food not covered by food stamps:	$ 175	$ 175
Amount to make stipend equivalent to minimum wage	$ 623	$ 0
Non-clinical respite (AFC only) (30 hours/week x 4 weeks x $15/hr):	$1,800	$ 600 (=1/3 share)
Total costs (not including utilities, etc.)	$4,198	$2,375
Less:		
Sec. 8 (roommates may be paying cash or using Sec. 8)	$1,567	$2148 (total for 4 beds)
Food stamps	$ 125	$ 125
SSI (30% or $229 must go toward rent)	$ 763	$ 763
Total cash subsidies	$2,455	$3,036
Total monthly out of pocket (not including utilities, etc.)	$1,743	$ 0

This arrangement makes clear the impact of the new Dept. of Labor rules ("amount to make stipend equivalent to minimum wage"); note that the Mass. minimum wage will be going up again to $11. Having one housemate (instead of two) would result in a cost somewhere between the two examples. Someone receiving Level II AFC would not need additional funds to make the stipend equivalent to minimum wage, taking the out-of-pocket cost for one person to about $1,000 plus utilities. In a Shared Living arrangement, the stipend does not require any additional funds to be equivalent to minimum wage.

In this example is was necessary to save $30K toward the accessory apartment, as a home equity loan could only be obtained for $150K. Had a family saved all of the Adult Family Care stipend while waiting for Section 8 and used that money toward the construction of the apartment, they would have a much lower loan payment. (The assumption for the loan is construction costs of $200/sq. ft., with repayment over 10 years; Discover's online home loan calculator was used: https://www.discover.com/home-equity-loans/monthly-payment-calculator/ .) Passage of S. 2202 would also allow families to borrow up to $50,000 for this purpose, potentially at 0% interest with payment deferred until the property is no longer used for housing for a person with a disability. If both options were available and used, out-of-pocket costs might be as low as $500 plus utilities.



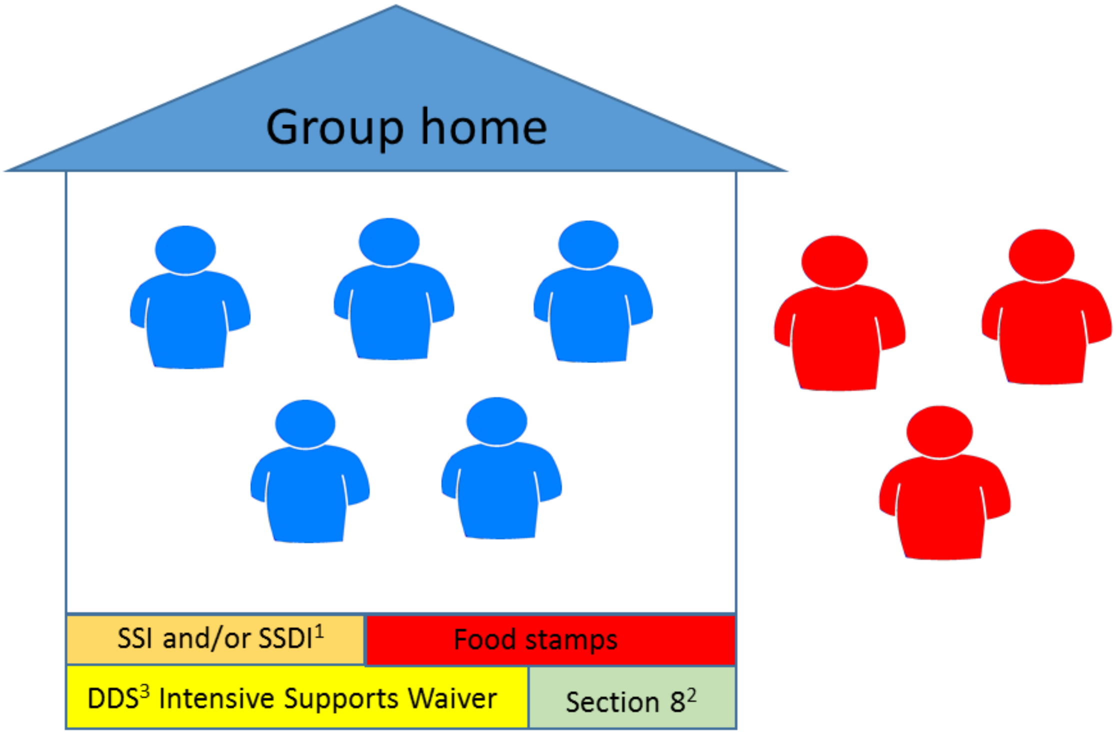
In this arrangement, an individual lives in either a condo or home owned by the family, or in an apartment with a Section 8 voucher, with either a Shared Living Provider or AFC provider. There may also be one or two additional housemates. A person's DDS supports can be used for skill-building or individualized outings.

Actual monthly costs (for AFC Level I):		Per person, 3 people with a disability + caregiver
Mortgage payment on 2 bed condo ($20K down/closing) or 4 bed house ($30K down/closing)	$1,550	$2,500 (total for 4 beds)
Food not covered by food stamps:	$ 175	$ 175
Amount to make stipend equivalent to minimum wage	$ 623	$ 0
Non-clinical respite (AFC only) (30 hours/week x 4 weeks x $15/hr):	$1,800	$ 600 (=1/3 share)
Total costs (not including utilities, etc.)	$4,148	$3,275
Less:		
Sec. 8 (roommates may be paying cash or using Sec. 8)	$1,567	$2148 (total for 4 beds)
Food stamps	$ 125	$ 125
SSI (30% or $229 must go toward rent)	$ 763	$ 763
Total cash subsidies	$2,455	$3,036
Total monthly out of pocket (not including utilities, etc.)	$1,693	$ 239

This arrangement makes clear the impact of the new Dept. of Labor rules ("amount to make stipend equivalent to minimum wage"); note that the Mass. minimum wage will be going up again to $11. Having one housemate (instead of two) would result in a cost somewhere between the two examples. Someone receiving Level II AFC would not need additional funds to make the stipend equivalent to minimum wage, taking the out-of-pocket cost for one person to about $1,000 plus utilities. In a Shared Living arrangement, the stipend does not require any additional funds to be equivalent to minimum wage.

In these examples $20K and $30K were saved for the down payment and closing costs for the condo and the house, respectively. Either of these could be achieved by saving the Adult Family Care stipend while waiting for Section 8. A 5% down loan from Fannie Mae (permitted for a parent of a person with a disability) is assumed. (The assumptions were a $250K condo, and a $450K house, both with a 30 year loan at 4% interest, 1.25% property tax and .5 PMI.) The primary challenge is qualifying for a loan, as the landlord's income from Section 8 can be used to pay a mortgage, but cannot be used to qualify for a loan.

While this model is written as an ownership model, it could be done as a rental model using Section 8 vouchers, avoiding the need to qualify for a mortgage. Savings are still important, as there is the matter of first and last months' rent, and the security deposit.



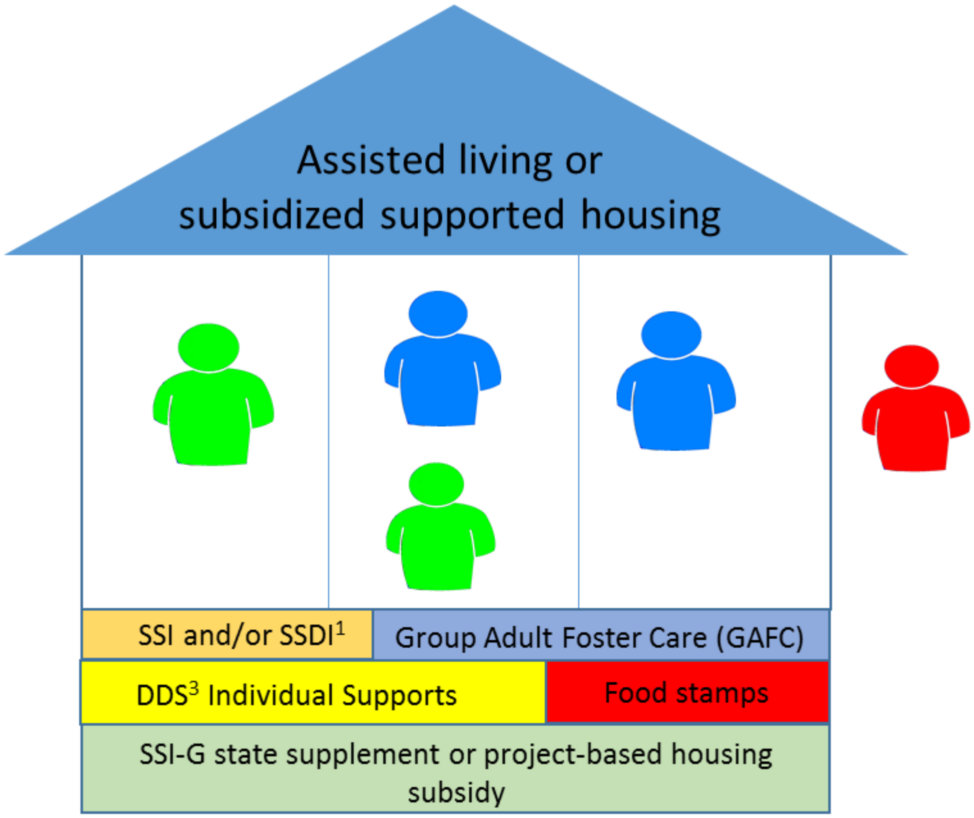
In a licensed group home owned by a service provider, costs to the individual/family are very straight forward: the individual pays 75% of his/her income to the provider for rent and services. The individual/family will need to pay out of pocket for recreational expenses (e.g., going out to eat, bowling, etc.) and personal items (toiletries, clothes, etc.). If an individual has a Section 8 voucher, they must still pay 75% of their income to the provider, however, the house budget will benefit from the Section 8 payment. As these budgets tend to be very tight, this money is very welcome. Sometime Section 8 cannot be used in these settings, if the provided purchased the home with assistance from the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development.

If families purchase a house together, and lease it to a service provider to function as a licensed group home, they will want to set the rent at a price point that will cover the mortgage and, ideally, property taxes and insurance. Families will want to chip in a payment every month (similar to a condo fee) to build a kitty for repairs and maintenance.

To purchase a house, families will need to each contribute an amount up front equal to their share of the down payment, the closing costs, and any renovations. Families buying together are not eligible for the 5% down Fannie Mae loan, and will need to have at least 20% down. Depending on the arrangement, it may be considered a commercial loan, and they will need 25% down, with a mortgage term of 25 years.

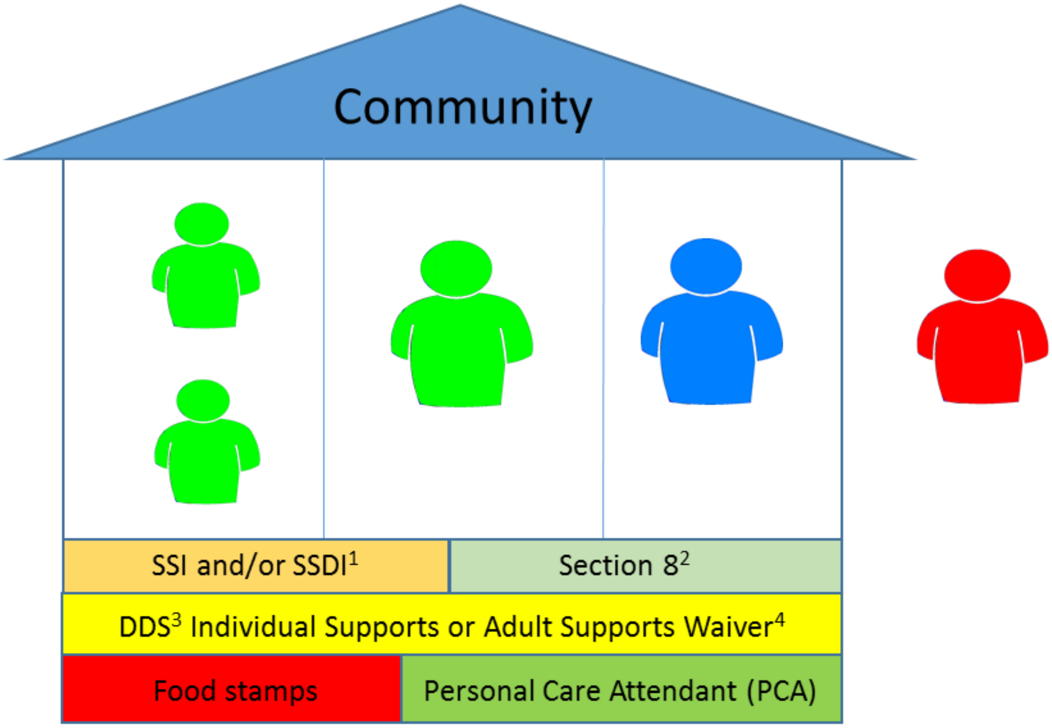
Many individuals prioritized for a group home will have been in a residential school, and so not in a position to save an Adult Family Care stipend. They will need to have saved at least $35K (most likely more) on their own.

Doing a full-scale group home is prohibitively expensive for those who are not prioritized, as the lightest staffing pattern starts at about $85K/person per year.



In this arrangement, an individual lives in either an apartment in project-based subsidized housing, or in a unit in a licensed assisted living facility. There must be a Group Adult Foster Care (GAFC) agency that serves the property. A mobile Section 8 voucher cannot be used in this setting. Either a subsidy is attached to the unit (examples might be a project-based Section 8 building or state elderly housing), or, in the case of an assisted living facility, an individual could tap into SSI-G, which pays a higher rate than normal SSI, in lieu of a housing subsidy. GAFC pays for 1-2 hours of drop-in services per person per day (a provider serves up to 10 individuals). There must also be someone available in an emergency 24 hours per day. A person's DDS supports can be used for skill-building or individualized outings. (A waiver cannot be used in instances where Group Adult Foster Care is used.) Note that one meal per day must be provided in assisted living, but food stamps cannot be used if more than 50% of food in a day is provided. This is an unusual model, but has potential for future development.

Actual monthly costs, including rent, drop-in services, food not covered by food stamps:	$3,000-$5,000
Less:	
GAFC	$1,226
Food stamps	$ 125
SSI-G	$1,175
Total cash subsidies	$2,526
Total monthly out of pocket	$474-2,474



In this arrangement, an individual lives in an apartment and has some life coaching. A new option that at least one national organization is pioneering is a call center able to answer questions 24/7.

Actual monthly costs:	
Rent	$1,261
Food not covered by food stamps:	$ 175
Call for support	$ 100
Life coaching (1 hour/week x 4 weeks x $100/hr):	$ 400
Total costs (not including utilities, etc.)	$1,936
Less:	
Section 8	$1,007
Food stamps	$ 125
SSI (30% or $254 must go toward rent)	$ 847
Total cash subsidies	$1,979
Total monthly out of pocket (not including utilities, etc.)	$ 0