



**ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES
FOR INDEPENDENCE**
CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

and



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Home and Community Based Services Manager

Accessible Resources for Independence

Who is Accessible Resources for Independence?

- ▶ A private non-profit that serves as the Center for Independent Living in both Howard and Anne Arundel counties. We offer support and services to all people of disabilities at any age.
- ▶ We are one of the 7 Centers for Independent Living in Maryland and one of over 400 Centers for Independent Living in the United States. Centers for Independent Living (CIL) are non-residential, consumer-controlled, community-based, and cross-disability organizations. As such, the majority of our Board of Directors and staff are people with disabilities. We believe that people with disabilities have the right to control and direct their own lives.
- ▶ CIL core services include;
 - ▶ Advocacy
 - ▶ Peer Mentoring
 - ▶ Independent Living Skills Training
 - ▶ Information and Referral
 - ▶ Transition Services (Support youth in exploring secondary education or employment, and those with disabilities in institutions or facilities looking to get back into the community)

Housing Barriers

- ▶ Having a disability can make it difficult to gain and/or retain employment. Because of this, many people rely on monies from the Social Security Administration (SSA) to pay for basic necessities like housing. For those who have a work history, payments from the SSA average between \$700 to \$1700 per month. For those without a work history the most a person can receive is \$771 per month.
- ▶ With the average cost of a one bedroom apartment in Maryland at \$1,256 per month, it is very difficult for a person on a limited income to afford this on their own, not to mention the additional cost of utilities, food and other essentials.

Housing Barriers

- ▶ The housing options for a person on a fixed income include;
 - ▶ Applying for the Section 8/ Housing Choice Voucher waitlist, if the waitlist is open and accepting applications.
 - ▶ Apply for the Public Housing waitlist.
 - ▶ Look for private income based or subsidized apartments (limited availability).
 - ▶ Renting a room, which can be risky if you don't know the person you are sharing a home or apartment with.

RoomSurf.com

- ▶ In 2018 Accessible Resources for Independence (ARI) applied for the Leadership Howard County's Community Impact Project to assist ARI in addressing areas of need in the populations that ARI serves. One big area being affordable housing for people with disabilities.
- ▶ There was discussion about creating an online platform to match clients who are looking for a compatible roommate to split the cost of rent that a client would otherwise not be able to afford by themselves.
- ▶ It was suggested that an online platform that is already in use could be an easy way to get this idea off the ground and several members of the Leadership Howard group had mentioned Roomsurf.com - a roommate matching website for college students.
- ▶ The Leadership Howard group reached out to RoomSurf to ask if it would be feasible for ARI to utilize their platform, but adjust the questionnaire used in matching the clients who choose to create a profile. RoomSurf said YES!

RoomSurf.com

- ▶ Go to www.roomsurf.com
- ▶ Select the box that says “Get Started Here” and you will have the option to either Sign up with Facebook or with an email.
- ▶ You then will be asked to create a username and password and profile.
- ▶ The website will ask you the question “What college are you attending?” and there will be a drop-down list and you would select “Accessible Resources for Independence”.
- ▶ Take the roommate compatibility quiz where you can answer questions about personal living habits and preferred living habits for a potential roommate.
- ▶ You can then view any matches through your “Dashboard” or profile and communicate with them through Roomsurf.

Need more information?

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