

# A GUIDE TO THE DSO HOUSING TOOLKIT

Helping adults with developmental disabilities, and their caregivers, explore individualized housing options.



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# About this guide

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This guide will help introduce you to Developmental Services Ontario's (DSO) Housing Toolkit and provide an overview of the resources that are available to help adults with developmental disabilities, and their caregivers, explore individualized housing options.

## **Background and purpose of the Developmental Services Ontario (DSO) Housing Toolkit**

In 2018, DSO introduced a housing navigator role (funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services) across the 9 DSO agencies to help people, their caregivers and support networks learn about individualized housing options.

DSO staff consulted with many different people to come up with the resources available in the DSO Housing Toolkit.

The toolkit is an online library of housing resources that will help you create a housing plan either while waiting for, or instead of, traditional funded residential services.

The types of resources that are available in the library reflect what people in similar situations told DSO were important to them when creating a housing plan. The resources are easy to use and are available online at [dsontario.ca](http://dsontario.ca) in downloadable, audio and video format (some pieces are also available in print form). The library will continue to grow as new information is added, it is recommended you check-in frequently to stay updated.

You may also connect with your local DSO for help finding housing resources from the toolkit.

## **Developmental Services Ontario (DSO)**

DSO is the access point for adult developmental services funded by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) in Ontario. There are 9 DSO agencies located across the province; serving different counties and regions.

If you have a developmental disability, live in Ontario, and are 18 years old you must apply through your area DSO to see if you are eligible to receive adult ministry-funded supports available in your community. It is recommended that you call your area DSO when you turn 16 to learn about the services available to you at age 18.

# Steps to help you develop your housing plan

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The toolkit has been organized into 6 main steps to make it easier to find information and tools to help you develop your housing plan.

## 1. Exploring and understanding housing needs and wants



The first part of the toolkit is the exploration and discovery phase. It includes resources that guide you through the first steps involved in creating a housing plan. It covers the following topic areas:

### a. Creating your vision

Explore how to create a vision that explains your hopes and dreams for the future. Learn how to use the information collected in the DSO application package to help develop your vision. Downloadable worksheets and templates will help you work through and describe where you hope to be and who you hope to be in the future.

### b. Understanding strengths and needs

This section includes tools that will help answer the question; what do I have and what do I need?

Use helpful tools to determine where different types of supports will be required for you to live as independently as possible.

A checklist will keep you on track and help you prepare for the planning journey ahead.

### **c. Technology for independence**

Learn how new technology can help increase independence. This section will review and compare new technologies that can help with learning new skills, giving reminders, cooking, tracking finances, and monitoring safety. Learn how to use technology to safely lower the hours needed for a support worker and decrease related costs.

### **d. Building a support team**

Building a support team is very important when creating a housing plan. Learn about the differences between natural and formal supports and how to connect to other services for support. You will also learn how to identify where you may need some extra help so that you can expand your support team to help you.

## **2. Reviewing housing options and locations**

The second part of the toolkit includes resources that guide you through different housing options such as renting, social housing, purchasing or building a home, renovations and what to do if there is no housing available in your area.



Learn how to make the choices that are right for you by using tools that will compare where you want to live and how your budget fits in with the various available options.

### 3. Financing the plan



In this part of the toolkit, you will create a budget that fits your daily support needs. By using different charts and tables, you will be able to identify your current support needs, how much they cost, and compare them to your income.

You will also find information about available housing grants and funding in this section.

### 4. Managing housing supports

There can be many steps involved in managing your housing supports once they are in place. This section will review the options with you and provide you with tips and resources to get you started and help you understand the managing process.



### 5. Building a plan that will support change



This part of the toolkit will help you figure out how the plan will continue to work, as natural supports change and grow over time. You will learn how to develop community circles or microboards and be introduced to estate planning.

## 6. Learning from others

Finally, every good plan is based on a successful model. In this section you will gain access to other successful housing models developed in your area or around the world to help you build your plan. Review other housing toolkits, guides and resources from successful housing initiatives.



### Stay tuned!

Don't forget to visit the housing section on our website at [dsontario.ca](http://dsontario.ca) and to subscribe to our newsletter to receive toolkit updates, invites to upcoming events, webcasts, and to listen to our podcasts.

# Exploration tool



## All about me and my housing needs

This worksheet is the first step you need to take to create your housing plan. It will identify what people like and admire about you, what is important to you, and how needs can be supported.

## Here's some things to think about when answering the questions on the next page.

### Question 1: What people like and admire about me.

- a. The gifts I bring to the world.
- b. The skills I have.
- c. The strengths others appreciate in me.

### Question 2: What is important to me about my home?

- a. Location—community, neighbourhood, close to certain amenities?
- b. With whom—roommates, alone, family, friends?
- c. Type of home—house, condo, apartment, rent or own?
- d. What to avoid in a home—stairs, loud neighbourhood?
- e. Important layout—accessibility, large bathroom?

### Question 3: How to best support me in my home.

- a. How much and what kind of support will I need to live my most independent life?
- b. What do my support people need to know and do to help me stay healthy and safe?
- c. What do my support people need to know and do to value me?
- d. What do my support people need to know and do to make sure that what is important to me is not overlooked or forgotten?

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date created:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1.** What people like and admire about me.

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**2.** What is important to me about my home?

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**3.** How to best support me in my home.

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# Contact us

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If you need help going through the DSO Housing Toolkit call your area DSO below, or visit [dsontario.ca](https://www.dsontario.ca) to connect online.

## **DSO Central East Region**

Serves Durham, Haliburton, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland, Peterborough, Simcoe, and York.  
1-855-277-2121

## **DSO Central West Region**

Serves Dufferin, Halton, Peel, Waterloo, and Wellington.  
1-888-941-1121

## **DSO Eastern Region**

Serves Ottawa Region, Prescott-Russell, Renfrew, Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry.  
1-855-376-3737

## **DSO Hamilton-Niagara Region**

Serves Brant, Haldimand-Norfolk, Hamilton, and Niagara.  
1-877-376-4674

## **DSO North East Region**

Serves Cochrane, James Bay Coast, Muskoka, Nipissing, Parry Sound, and Timiskaming.  
1-855-376-6376

## **DSO Northern Region**

Serves Algoma, Kenora, Manitoulin, Rainy River, Sudbury, and Thunder Bay.  
1-855-376-6673

## **DSO South East Region**

Serves Frontenac, Hastings, Lanark, Leeds & Grenville, Lennox & Addington, and Prince Edward.  
1-855-237-6737

## **DSO South West Region**

Serves Bruce, Chatham-Kent, Elgin, Essex, Grey, Huron, Lambton, Middlesex, Oxford, and Perth.  
1-855-437-6797

## **DSO Toronto Region**

Serves Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, and Toronto.  
1-855-372-3858

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**CONNECT WITH US!**  
**dsontario.ca**

