

# Housing Summary Report

This report summarizes the key results for the housing priority (Goal 2) of Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan. Findings are based on data collected and compiled as part of the full evaluation. Those are summarized in Appendix A of the evaluation report.

## Goal

2

Nebraskans with disabilities will have access to safe, affordable, accessible housing in the communities in which they choose to live.

92% of other states’ Olmstead Plans that were reviewed included housing.

“I think success is any additional unit we can put on the market that is accessible and that does meet the universal design standards. No matter how many units it is, one unit is more units than we have had before.”

## Vision for the Goal

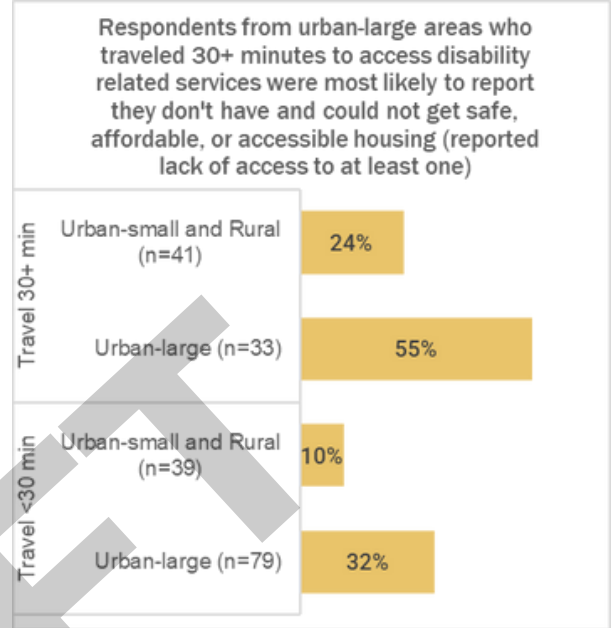
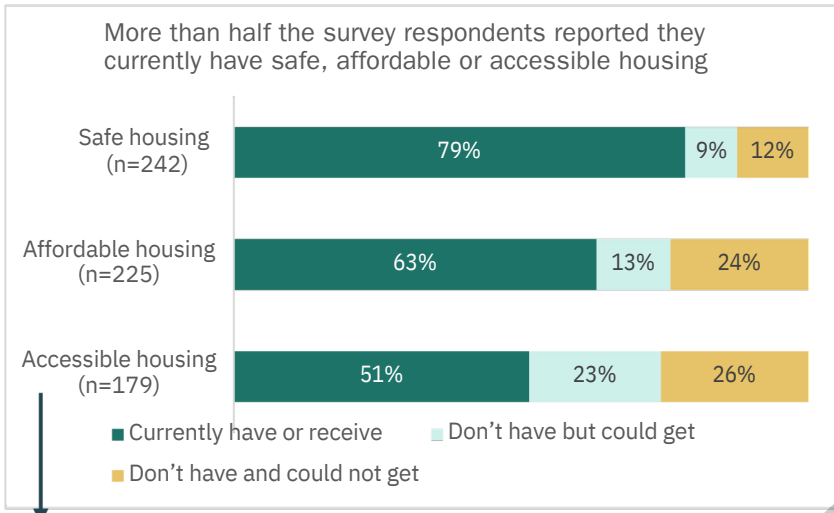
Focus group and interview participants who discussed community supports would like to see:

- An increase in the number (not just percentage) of accessible units
- Inclusive development
- Buy-in from the state legislature and governor to prioritize housing needs, which could include contributing state general funds specifically to housing for people who are most vulnerable
- An increase in the number of people with disabilities who can have their home rehabilitated so they can remain in their current housing if they choose.
- Work toward shortening the amount of time from referral to having home modifications completed.
- More people who are falling through the cracks due to income being served - particularly those who aren’t quite Medicaid eligible but for whom having services would keep them in their homes.

## Public Experiences

From the survey of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers:

- People were more likely to report having safe and affordable housing than accessible housing.
- About one-fourth reported they don’t have and could not get accessible and affordable housing.
- Significantly more (55%) living in urban-large counties who reported traveling more than 30 minutes to access disability related services noted they did not have and could not get safe, affordable, or accessible housing compared to those living in urban-small and rural areas (10%).



Accessible housing was defined on the survey as places that people with disabilities can enter and use, such as those with wider doorways, low countertops, grab bars, assistive technology, etc.

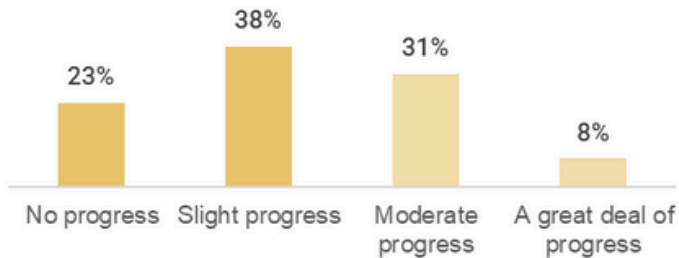
## Progress Toward & Perception of Outcomes

3/6 Goal 2 benchmarks for FY23 (July 2022 – June 2023) were met.

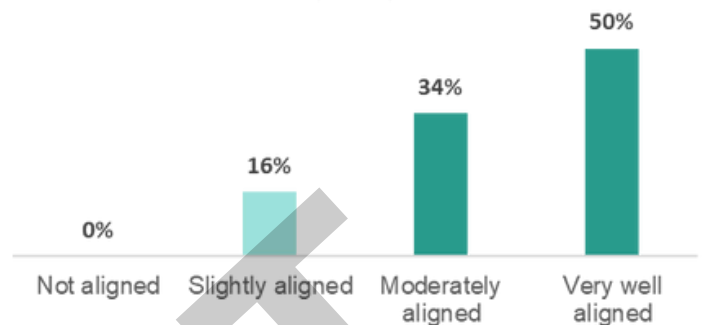
Symbol	Description
✓	Benchmark met
➡	Benchmark in progress
▲	Progress is delayed or pending
■	Benchmark not met
No Report	Data was not available

Benchmarks for Goal 2		FY23 Status	FY24 Status
1	Increase community-integrated housing opportunities for persons with serious mental illness (SMI) by 4% from FY23.	✓	✓
2	Increase the number of projects invested in by five (5) percent through the joint Low Income Housing Tax Credit and federal housing resources available through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) which meet universal design standards.	✓	✓
3	Increase training and education on home accessibility modification programs within Nebraska for both Medicaid and non-Medicaid eligible populations.	✓	➡
4	Increase the number of home modification assessments completed by Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) by one percent over the baseline for the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers.	■	➡
5	Increase the number of people with disabilities receiving state-funded rental assistance by 150.	■	➡
6	Increase the number of housing projects funded through the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) that prioritize accessible units for people with disabilities.	✓	✓

More than 60% of workgroup members who responded to the survey felt there was a **no or slight progress** made toward the housing goal (n=26)



About four-fifths of key partners felt the outcomes were **moderately or very well aligned** with the housing services goals (n=32)



## Facilitators & Barriers

Factors that aid the workgroup and partners with making progress on the data goal as well as the challenges to progress were identified through focus groups, surveys, and interviews.

### Facilitators to Progress

- ✓ There is a large group of stakeholders involved in the housing work, providing more opportunity for collaboration and comprehensive approaches. Some partners are focused more broadly on services, some cover specific disabilities, and others have a targeted knowledge base.
- ✓ State agencies and state elected officials have been vocal about their support for additional housing because they've seen how housing impacts individuals and businesses.

### Barriers to Progress

- Lack of housing options. There is limited availability for deeply subsidized housing, especially in rural areas. Much of the stock of affordable housing that's available is pre-1960, which is what makes it affordable but likely not accessible.
- Increased expenses for housing developments. This is especially true in rural areas where there's an added transportation cost for materials.
- Lack of contractors. *"In this economy, contractors have all the work they've ever wanted, so it's like pulling teeth getting them to come work for us."*
- Reluctance among developers to design fully accessible units in the event they do not have someone apply that needs it.

## Noted Successes

Partners reported specific wins that occurred within these Olmstead Plan goal areas.

- Advocacy provided by the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. They have worked with renters and landlords to find stable housing, particularly for people who are eligible for Section 8 housing.
- Scoring for the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund through the Department of Economic Development incorporated whether an applicant took accessibility into consideration or included design features for those who may need modifications. This has generated conversation among the scoring team regarding whether the applicant is accounting for the needs of those with disabilities: *“There’s more conversation around it than there were in years past.”* Even within Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA), efforts have been made to better understand integration and mindfulness of design.
- Various nonprofits are starting to do more work in the housing arena. There has been a greater recognition of how important housing is among the people being served by nonprofits. *“They were focused on services before and realized in order to be able to serve all the people that they’re working with, how important housing is as part of that matrix.”* This has led to more robust collaborations to ensure agencies can access tools and resources for those who need housing. The goals and activities taken on by the housing workgroup are driven by consumer voice.
- COVID and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was allocated to support housing. This has, in turn, supported development projects, with several being completed.

## Recommendations

- 1 Work to **define key terms within the housing goal, such as accessible and affordable.** This can help create common language among workgroup members and other stakeholders. Not only will this help ensure everyone is on the same page with what the terms mean, it may also help workgroup members, key partners, and stakeholders better assess the degree to which goals are being met toward those outcomes. Revisit the outcomes with the responsible agencies to ensure the programs included match the
- 2 **Revisit the outcomes with the responsible agencies to ensure the programs included match the intent of the Olmstead Plan.** One stakeholder noted their existing programs don’t directly align with the plan, and it may help to determine whether the program needs to be modified or if the plan does.
- 3 One thing that has facilitated success in this goal area is state agencies and elected officials being vocal about their support for additional housing. Some partners also mentioned that success in this goal area would mean having buy-in from the state legislature and governor to prioritize housing needs, ideally leading to the contribution of state general funds to housing for people who are most vulnerable. With that being the case, **it may be helpful for the workgroup to prioritize bringing on a member from the governor’s office and/or creating an action step around working with the state legislature to gain buy-in over time.**
- 4 **Identify areas of crossover between agency goals and points of collaboration to avoid the perception that each agency is working toward “their own thing.”** Part of this could be accomplished by incorporating information sharing, reporting on goals, and problem-solving across the agencies as part of the standing workgroup meeting agenda.