

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

About The Arc of North Carolina

The Arc of North Carolina, Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization, committed to securing for all people with developmental disabilities the opportunity to choose and realize their goals of where and how they learn, live, work and play. The organization currently provides an array of innovative services to people with developmental disabilities including advocacy, community support, case management, employer of record, supported employment, life guardianship and housing.

The Arc of North Carolina Housing Services

The Arc of North Carolina believes that all people should be empowered to live in accessible, affordable housing in inclusive communities of their choosing. Since 1978, in an effort to provide alternatives to large institutions, The Arc of North Carolina has developed over 200 residences that are operated in partnership with local organizations. Of these residences, 211 are group homes with 5-6 residents, and 15 are small, supervised apartment buildings, together serving more than 1300 residents. The Arc continues to develop innovative self-controlled housing options, including 4 scattered-site duplexes and 8 scattered-site condominiums in 2006 and 2007. Through the housing program, The Arc of North Carolina has helped countless individuals with developmental disabilities move from housing that is more restrictive to homes where they can achieve greater independence and have more opportunities.

Opening Doors Initiative

In 2005, The Arc of North Carolina launched the Opening Doors Initiative to increase the range of self-determined housing options available in the community with appropriate in-home support. Central to this initiative are five regional **Housing Resource Service Coordinators** who are tasked with promoting self-determined housing choices through education and training, community outreach and partnership building, and the development of new housing stock.

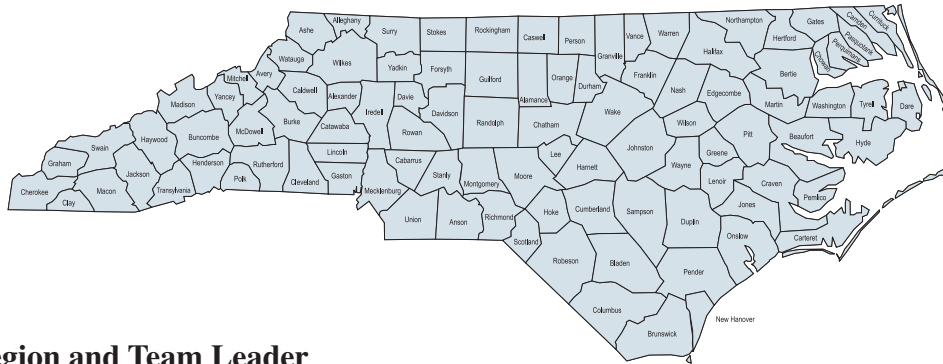
The goals of the Opening Doors Initiative are to:

- ◆ Collaborate regionally with housing and disability stakeholders to advocate for increased access to existing housing resources.
- ◆ Promote and/or participate in the development of new resources and innovative housing opportunities. This includes the production of rental housing stock, as well as advocating for rental subsidies and homeownership assistance programs for people with disabilities.
- ◆ Assist individuals with developmental disabilities and their families by offering workshops and one-on-one assistance on housing wants/needs and navigating the housing system to fulfill their housing dreams.

The Arc of North Carolina

Housing Resource Coordinators

As part of their Opening Doors Initiative, The Arc of North Carolina has five regional Housing Resource Coordinators who can provide information on the variety of housing resources available in your community. **If you have questions on the material presented in this guide, or need further assistance in navigating your local housing system, please contact the coordinator in your area.** For updated contact information, visit The Arc's website at www.arcnc.org or call 800-662-8706.



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Self-Determined Housing

Self-determination is the right of people with disabilities to make choices about their own lives, to have the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else, and to speak and advocate for themselves. It is a growing practice in North Carolina in many fields including employment, supportive services and housing.

In the housing arena, self-determination refers to people with disabilities having control over their housing choices. This includes not only control over where one lives, but also with whom one lives and what services one receives.

People who have housing choices and the right to chose where they live are more likely to:

- ◆ Live near friends, family, shopping, employment, transportation and recreation opportunities that facilitate inclusion in the community
- ◆ Be able to decide if/when they want to move
- ◆ Be able to make their own rules and have choice regarding roommates and staff, as well as basic things like meals and television
- ◆ Be able to choose a service provider, and not have services dictate where they live
- ◆ Be able to change their service provider without having to move
- ◆ Be more independent and able to be themselves

One important way to increase control over housing is through direct rental or home ownership. The subsequent chapters of this guide provide information and tools on both rental and home ownership options.