

Mixing Populations in State Elderly Housing Projects

Anecdotal reports over the years indicate conflict exists in public housing facilities shared by the elderly and disabled non-elderly. Both federal and state law currently allows non-elderly disabled individuals to reside in senior housing built with government funds.

Connecticut has 195 state-funded elderly projects containing over 7,000 units. State law allows both elderly and disabled people to qualify for units in state funded senior housing projects. Connecticut's statutory definition of "elderly" includes persons certified as totally disabled by any federal board or agency (C.G.S. §8-113a(m)). Disabled tenants may include physically disabled, mentally retarded, and mentally ill individuals, who may also have alcohol and substance abuse histories.

Federal law also allows non-elderly disabled to reside in senior units and prohibits discrimination because of a disability in federally funded projects. Most of Connecticut's housing projects have been built with federal funds and therefore are subject to federal law. However, initiatives to address the concerns about mixing populations have been permitted by the federal government including the use of designation plans.

Area of Focus

This study would examine the policy of mixing disabled and elderly populations in state-funded housing projects. Specifically, it would focus on problems arising between elderly and non-elderly disabled tenants as well as explore the options and alternatives.

Areas of Analysis

- Determine the trends of mixing populations in state-funded projects including the percentage of units occupied by non-elderly disabled, vacancy rates, and waiting lists.
- Describe and quantify the problems of elderly and disabled population mixing.
- Review the eligibility requirements, process for filling vacancies, screening criteria, and eviction policies used in state-funded housing.
- Compare policies, laws, and remedies on the federal level and in other states, most notably Massachusetts.
- Evaluate the remedies and solutions employed in Connecticut to date.
- Examine the range of the possible alternatives or initiatives and identify any prohibitions or restrictions to potential solutions.

Areas Excluded from Analysis

This study will not address the issue of mixing populations in federal elderly housing projects.