

HOUSING NEWSLETTER

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What's Inside

Welcome to ADAPT Community Network's Housing Newsletter! In these quarterly newsletters, you will receive information and resources on a variety of housing related topics. In addition, you will find information about free upcoming events and resources.

Housing Assistance Services

ADAPT's Housing Assistance Services program provides advocacy, information, and referral services for a variety of housing needs. To qualify, the applicant must have established eligibility through the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and live with family in New York City. Please note the HAS program does not rent apartments nor does it provide financial assistance.

Contact Us

Our **Project Connect** program was created to provide people with disabilities and their loved one's information on programs, services, and supports that are available at ADAPT or through our network of partners, affiliates, and friends.

✉ projectconnect@adaptcommunitynetwork.org

☎ 877-827-2666

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Photo credit: Jefferson Siegel/ New York Daily News

NYC Rent Guidelines Board: What You Need to Know

The NYC Rent Guidelines Board oversees nearly 1 million rent stabilized residential units in New York. The rent stabilization system, enacted in 1969, protects tenants from sharp rent increases year to year and needless eviction. The board consists of 9 members who vote annually on whether to raise, lower, or keep the maximum rent the same for these 1 million units. The office spends most of the year collecting and analyzing data from New Yorkers with the goal of understanding what changes need to be made to preserve the relationships between tenants and landlords in New York. During this time the rental board staff makes suggestions to the board based on their research findings, and the board eventually comes to a decision on whether to allow for city-wide rent increases, amongst other items. However, these decisions only come after a series of hearings in the springtime, in which New York residents (landlords and tenants alike) are allowed to give public testimony about their experience renting in New York. This year saw a highly contentious lead-up to the final votes which occurred in June, with protestors coming from around the city to put the heat on board members

with loudspeakers, horns, drums, chanting and other disruptive tactics. Despite this strong opposition from protestors (including some elected city officials), the board still approved rent increases.

A maximum rent increase of 3% for one-year leases was approved; for two-year leases a maximum increase of 2.75% for the first year and 3.2% for the second year was approved.

The protests weren't a complete failure, as the board was initially talking about increasing the maximum rent by almost 16%. Nevertheless, this change will likely lead to an increase in evictions in the next year, especially for low-income individuals and families. Public hearings have concluded for 2023 but they will start up again in March of 2024. To find out more about how you can make your voice heard, you can visit the NYC Rent Guidelines Board website at <https://rentguidelinesboard.cityofnewyork.us/>.

"THE [HOUSING ASSISTANCE SERVICES] PROGRAM IS GREAT. MY HOUSING ADVOCATE WAS VERY HELPFUL AND UPDATED ME ON EVERYTHING. I NOW LIVE IN A THREE BEDROOM, TWO BATHROOM APARTMENT AND I LOVE IT." – BARBARA H.

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Credit: Understanding, Getting, and Improving It.

In today's world, credit is more important than ever. A credit report includes information on where you live, how you pay your bills, and whether you've been sued or have filed for bankruptcy. Having good credit enables you to take out loans, pay for mortgages, rent apartments, open new bank accounts, pay for student loans, and more. With bad credit, it is much more difficult to do any of these things, in addition to making it much harder to get a credit card. Credit essentially acts as the determining factor of your financial trustworthiness. Landlords use credit to determine whether their tenant is reliable- and a bad credit score could create challenges in finding a new place to live. Generally, credit scores that are above 550 suggest that an individual is credit-worthy, while scores under that suggest that they are not, and credit scores above suggest that the individual is more reliable and trustworthy than average. Nationwide credit reporting companies sell your credit information to creditors, insurance companies, and employers. There are many struggles that come with bad credit, but possibly the

worst is the increased interest rates. When lenders see that you are unlikely to pay them back in a timely manner, they put more pressure on you to get their money back at an appropriate time. The best ways to ensure good credit are paying your loans back in time, not getting close to your credit limit, and fact check your credit reports. Additionally, the more credit history that you have, the more trustworthy you become in the eyes of lenders and creditors. To find out more about how you can manage your credit, visit the NYC financial empowerment centers at <https://bit.ly/44ocQfC>.

The NYC financial empowerment centers offer free financial advice to all New Yorkers. They can help to create a budget, set up a spending plan, open a bank account and more.



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Program Spotlight: Family Reimbursement



ADAPT Community Network's Family Reimbursement program provides critical financial support to eligible individuals with disabilities and their families. These funds cover the cost of goods/services that are not obtainable through other funding sources such as: clothing, summer camp, respite, and adaptive equipment. The program assists families with needs that often make all the difference in caring for a family member with a disability at home. Families can apply once per fiscal year (July 1st-June 30th). Please contact **Project Connect** (see p.1) for more information.



Rosie and Starr Ford (pictured above)

The Ford Family Succeeds with ADAPT

When Rosie Ford and her family first connected with ADAPT, they did not have a permanent place to live. In early 2020, Rosie and her daughter Starr had recently moved to Queens to live in an apartment with Rosie's boyfriend, but when the relationship ended, Rosie was no longer able to pay for her previous apartment due to increased costs and lack of financial assistance, Rosie was forced to explore other options. Meanwhile, Rosie's son was living close by with relatives, waiting for Starr and his mother to secure a new home so he could move in. Both Starr and Darin require support for their IDD's, and Starr uses a walker to get around while Darin is legally blind. This living situation did not allow for the proper level of care that these individuals require. A Housing Advocate was assigned to the family once an application was received and OPWDD eligibility was verified. The Housing Advocate was able to complete housing applications both online and on paper, in addition to researching subsidies and grants they were eligible for.

After applying for years, the family was selected for further review for five housing lotteries within weeks of each other. The family was eligible for one of the lottery apartments via Housing Connect this past June of 2023. The Ford family signed their lease and moved into their new apartment in Long Island City, Queens! Mrs. Ford stated, **"Thank you for the constant support and for not giving up on helping me and my family, I thank you for the bottom of my heart."**

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Future Dates to Remember

Family Connect webinars are free. Spanish and Mandarin interpretation are provided. Please click on link below or call 718-436-7979 Ext. 704 to register. Registration is required.

Thursday, 1/11: "Autism Speaks Resources and The Autism Speaks Response Team" on Thursday, January 11th 10 am – 11 am. Andrew Nelson from Autism Speaks will be our speaker. To register click on

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_VeWTIOhETyWX4lbyEsDg9Q

Thursday, 1/18: "Guidelines for Determining the Need for a One-to-One Aide" Thursday, January 18th 10 am – 12 pm. Tina Beauparlant Regional Manager/Education Specialist Parent to Parent of New York State will be our speaker. To register click on

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Mq5GdpsXQhWKxjyncTtHxw

Thursday, 1/25: "Summer Options for Young People with Disabilities" Thursday, January 25th 10 am – 12 pm. Gary Shulman will be our speaker.

Registration is required. To register click on

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_NhT9WueeQQ2lv6e_B8bDyg

INCLUDEnyc's annual virtual fair is free. We're looking forward to connecting with you at the INCLUDEnyc Fair! Learn more about organizations and programs supporting young people with disabilities. There are more ways to connect this year!

Saturday, 2/10: To register click on <https://www.airmeet.com/e/baad1020-58ab-11ee-91f9-45bc84ee56cc?preview=true> or visit www.includenyc.org.

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