

# Supported Living

## A Guide to Supported Living Concepts and NC Innovations' Supported Living Service Definition

Developed by North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

November 2016





## An Introduction to this Packet

The North Carolina Innovations waiver will include a Supported Living service definition that enables people with significant disabilities the opportunity to live in their own homes. To assist Local Management Entities – Managed Care Organizations (LME-MCOs), provider organizations, people<sup>1</sup> and their supports in thinking about the Supported Living concept, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will be supporting a number of learning opportunities. This packet is intended to provide interested stakeholders with a starting place for understanding the Supported Living philosophy and the specifics of the NC Innovations waiver Supported Living service definition.

### *What's in this packet?*

- General description of Supported Living concept
- How Supported Living differs from traditional Residential Services.
- Supported Living Resources
- The NC Innovations Supported Living service definition
- FAQs.

---

<sup>1</sup> Various terms are used to describe a person using Innovations services (beneficiaries, members, consumers, etc.). This document references a person or people using Innovations services as “person” or “people.”

## What is Supported Living?

North Carolina adopts the Supported Living description first proposed in “*Supported Living: What’s the Difference?*”<sup>2</sup> This paper identifies Supported Living by supports that facilitate four basic outcomes. A person who experiences a disability partners with an organization, family, friends and community resources to experience life in a way that results in:

- A safe and decent home of one’s own
- Personalized Assistance
- Choice
- Support from others who care about and respect the person.



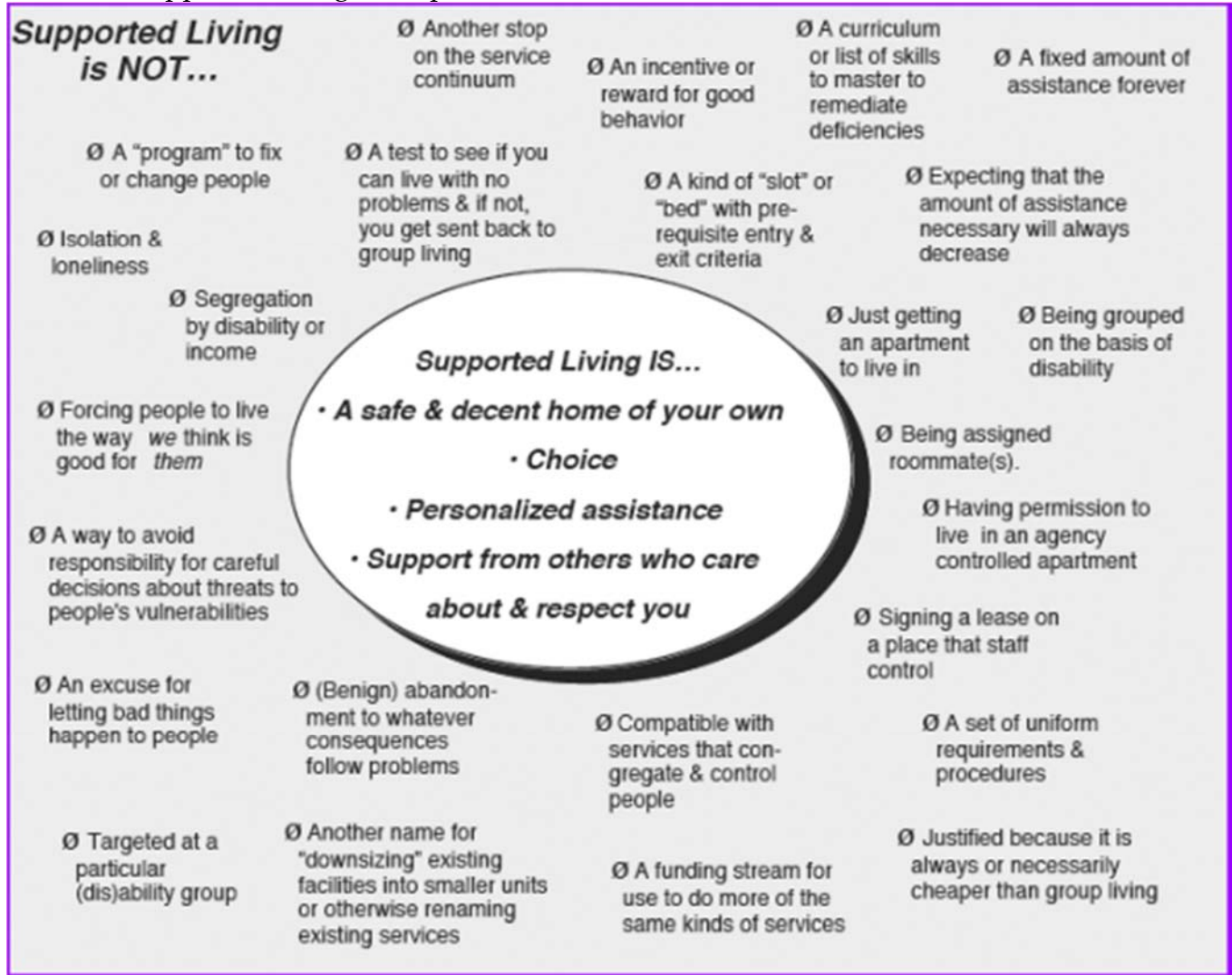
---

<sup>2</sup> *Supported Living, What’s the Difference?* O’Brien, John; 1993; Syracuse University  
<https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels2/pdf/90s/93/93-SLD-RSA.pdf>



### Supported Living is Not...<sup>3</sup>

The examples listed in the shaded part of the chart below reflect common misunderstandings about the supported living concept.



<sup>3</sup> Supported Living, What's the Difference? O'Brien, John; 1993; Syracuse University  
<https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels2/pdf/90s/93/93-SLD-RSA.pdf>



## How Does the Supported Living Concept Differ from Traditional Residential Services?

Because Supported Living involves assisting a person where he or she lives, it can be tempting to view it as a Residential service. Residential services has traditionally been the term for services provided in a residence owned or controlled by a provider agency or contractor, often with several individuals living together. While residential providers may also provide quality Supported Living services, the two structures are different. The following outlines the differences between Supported Living and Residential services.

The Topic	The Supported Living Approach	The Residential Approach
Where People Live	A person lives in a place any typical person without a disability could live. A person doesn't have to own the place for it to be considered his/her own home. If a person chooses to change service providers, the change doesn't impact their ability to stay in their home.	A person chooses the place they wish to live, which will be owned and/or managed by a provider agency. If the person decides to switch service providers, they are typically required to leave the residence.
How Staff are Identified	Companions are hired specifically for the person and are jointly selected by the person, the provider and if applicable, family/natural supports. Recruiting methods are tailored to meet the person's staffing	Providers decide which support staff is needed to effectively meet the needs of each person living in the residence. Residents do not typically decide who the staff will be.

## Supported Living



The Topic	The Supported Living Approach	The Residential Approach
	preferences.	
How Supports are Structured	Supports are structured based on the person’s interests, preferences and needs. Each person may have a different staffing pattern, based on their scheduling needs and preferences. If two or more people live together, staffing supports may be able to be shared but should still reflect the specific interests and scheduling priorities of each person.	Support services work to accommodate the schedules of the people they serve but may require residents to be “out” of their residence certain hours or follow standardized staffing schedules.
Commitments Made to People	People, their families and support organizations partner together and develop joint agreements and commitments to each other. While this partnership may end, the intent for the partnership is to be long-term, potentially lifelong. As issues or disagreements arise, the partners come together to discuss and resolve them productively. If the partnership between the person and the provider	There is typically a strong commitment made to people, but services may end, based on changes in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person’s needs</li> <li>• Provider’s priorities</li> <li>• Provider’s ability to meet the person’s needs</li> </ul> Typically, if a person does not follow organizational policies, the person’s ability to stay in the residence may be jeopardized.



## Supported Living



The Topic	The Supported Living Approach	The Residential Approach
	ends, the person remains in his/her home.	
Types of Supports Provided	The organization providing Supported Living services sees its role as a “partner on the life journey,” assisting the person in accessing tools and resources needed to make a full, person-centered life possible. Supports are flexible to meet the person’s changing needs or circumstances.	May be responsible for assisting with one area of a person’s life (“residential” or “day”). May coordinate with other providers but may not take a holistic approach to supports.
How Roommate Relationships are Managed	People choose roommates based on their preferences and mutual need. Household responsibilities are managed depending on the individual circumstance and the roommate agreements. The organization may help facilitate this process but does not control or dictate the requirements. NOTE: Roommate Agreements are required as part of the Supported Living service definition.	People who live together may each have agreements with the residential provider agency, outlining the residential rules and organizational policies. Roommates do not always make agreements with each other about how the residence will operate. A residential provider may be mindful of how well roommates get along, but typically the provider manages who lives in the residence.



## Supported Living



The Topic	The Supported Living Approach	The Residential Approach
How People Manage Their Money	Money management arrangements are determined by the person, the support organization and an authorized representative. The provider may be the representative payee, but also assist people in managing and controlling their own resources. The level of supports provided depends on the needs of the person.	In a provider-managed residence, typically the provider is the representative payee for each resident and provides a stipend or allowance each month.
Relationship between Family and Provider	The role of the family depends on the person and specific circumstances. Some families may have very little involvement in a person's life or supports while other families can be key partners in Supported Living, assuming roles and responsibilities related to the person's household and support. A Supported Living provider tailors the services provided to the circumstance.	While longstanding, trusted relationships may exist between a person's family and provider, families may have input into how services are managed but are not typically engaged in practices related to staff hiring, or residence management.







**“We are providers that supports people according to Supported Living principles already. How does the Supported Living service definition impact us?”**



There are people with developmental disabilities currently living according to Supported Living principles across North Carolina. Some receive Innovations waiver services and some do not. Yet, most of these folks do not require “wrap around” or “24/7” services. The Supported Living service definition is not intended to complicate things for people who are already living in their own place but rather provide people on the Innovations waiver who may not have typically had the support levels necessary to live in one’s own home an increased opportunity to do so.

**Where can I get more information?**

The Department of Health and Human Services is committed to sponsoring opportunities that encourage collective learning about Supported Living concepts and the Innovations waiver Supported Living definition. Providers are encouraged to build their own competencies. Supported Living is grounded in the person-centered thinking philosophy and providers are encouraged to refer to resources on person-centered thinking that have been circulated and available throughout the state. Here are a few resources to get you started:

NC-Sponsored Learning and Resources	Supported Living Philosophy and Concept
<p><i>Supported Living: Making a Difference</i>, a learning collaborative jointly sponsored by NC Council on Developmental Disabilities and NC Money Follows the</p>	<p><i>Supported Living, What’s the Difference?</i> O’Brien, John; 1993; Syracuse University  <a href="https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels2/pdf/90s/93/93-SLD-RSA.pdf">https://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels2/pdf/90s/93/93-SLD-RSA.pdf</a></p>



## Supported Living



NC-Sponsored Learning and Resources	Supported Living Philosophy and Concept
Person Demonstration Project. <a href="http://nccdd.org/supported-living-making-the-difference.html">http://nccdd.org/supported-living-making-the-difference.html</a>	
<i>Supported Living: Making a Difference</i> , a learning collaborative jointly sponsored by NC Council on Developmental Disabilities and NC Money Follows the Person Demonstration Project. <a href="http://nccdd.org/supported-living-making-the-difference.html">http://nccdd.org/supported-living-making-the-difference.html</a>	Inclusion Press: A Clearinghouse for Resources and Tools about Person-Centered Supports and Resource: <a href="http://www.inclusion.com/inclusionpress.html">http://www.inclusion.com/inclusionpress.html</a>
Person-Centered Thinking, NC Developmental Disabilities Training Institute <a href="http://ddti.unc.edu/PCT_about.asp">http://ddti.unc.edu/PCT_about.asp</a>	Center on Human Policy, Organizational Innovation and Transformation Series, Syracuse University <a href="http://thechp.syr.edu/resources/oit-series/">http://thechp.syr.edu/resources/oit-series/</a>
North Carolina Housing Finance Agency: <a href="http://www.nchfa.com/">http://www.nchfa.com/</a>	Neighbors International: <a href="http://www.neighbours-international.com/">http://www.neighbours-international.com/</a>

### The NC Innovations Waiver Supported Living Service Definition

Nearly all services in the Innovations Waiver can be used in conjunction with Supported Living service to assist a person in building a full life. There are certain services a person cannot receive if s/he is receiving Supported Living services and



Graphic by John O'Brien, presented as part of *Supported Living What's the Difference?* presentation, April, 2016





some services cannot be billed at the same time as Supported Living services. Please refer to the Supported Living service definition found on page 108 of the North Carolina Innovations, Clinical Coverage Policy 8-P, available at: [https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P\\_1.pdf](https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P_1.pdf) for specific guidance and restrictions.

**Supported Living can include and should expand a person’s natural community— family, friends, neighbors and others who care about them.**

## **Frequently Asked Questions about the NC Innovations Waiver’s Supported Living Service Definition**

### **Supported Living Definition**

**1. What is the Supported Living service?**

Supported Living is a service to support successful community living in unlicensed residences that are owned/leased by the person.

**2. Where can I find the NC Innovations Waiver, including the Supported Living service definition?**

Please review North Carolina Innovations, Clinical Coverage Policy 8-P, available at: [https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P\\_1.pdf](https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P_1.pdf)

**3. What does the Supported Living service definition do?**

- a. Increases and maintains life skills,
- b. Provides a supervision/staffing plan that ensures health and safety while increasing opportunities for self-sufficiency and self-determination within the community;
- c. Ensures full membership in the community; and





- d. Provides transportation to/from activities when not reimbursed through another service or funding source

**4. How does the Supported Living definition work with your Individual Budget Guideline?**

Supported Living is not included in the Base Budget.

**5. How are Supported Living service levels determined?**

Supported Living levels are determined by the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) levels as outlined in the Innovations Waiver.

- a. Level 1: Levels A, B
- b. Level 2: Levels C, D
- c. Level 3: Levels E, F, & G

**Why is that important?**

- a. Individuals are assigned to Supported Living levels that meet their support needs based on their SIS level.
- b. If an individual has support needs that exceed her/his Supported Living level, an individual rate for service established the LME-MCO may be appropriate consideration.

For more information about the SIS, please refer to North Carolina Innovations, Clinical Coverage Policy 8-P, available at: [https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P\\_1.pdf](https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P_1.pdf)

**6. Will Supported Living services be an option for persons receiving self-directed services?**

At this time, Supported Living cannot be self-directed using the Agency with Choice or Employer of Record models. The person may self-direct other services.

**7. Can an individual with a legal guardian access the Supported Living service?**

Yes. In some situations it may be necessary for the legal guardian to sign the lease/mortgage agreement. Depending on the type of guardianship:

## Supported Living



- a. A beneficiary may sign the lease/mortgage agreement,
- b. A beneficiary with their legal guardian may sign the lease/mortgage agreement,
- c. The legal guardian may sign the lease/mortgage agreement without the beneficiary

**8. Can an individual access the Supported living services with a co-signor who is not the guardian?**

Yes.

**9. Would a Special Needs Adjustment be required to make staff changes?**

A Special Needs Adjustment is not a change in the Supported Living level, but can be used for the following reasons:

- a. The person's current circumstance is time limited but requires additional support at a higher level and the current rate does not cover the cost.
  - i. For example, the person has a serious injury, illness or behavioral/mental health crisis requiring additional support on a temporary basis. A Special Needs Adjustment may be approved for up to 90 days and may be extended for an additional 90 days;
- b. The person needs a roommate and requires a Special Needs Adjustment until one moves in. A Special Needs Adjustment may be approved for up to 90 days and may be extended for an additional 90 days;
- c. The person is transitioning from a higher level of care setting, i.e. inpatient hospital or ICF/IID and a rate adjustment is needed to ensure success during the transition process;
- d. People who require a continued Special Needs Adjustment due to medical or behavioral health issues may be reassessed for appropriateness of level.

**10. Does the Supported Living service have a daily rate?**

Yes.

**11. How old do you have to be to receive the Supported Living service?**

18 years of age or older.

### **Household Composition and Roommates**



A Guide to Supported Living Concepts and NC Innovations' Supported Living Service

Definition

November 2016, 1<sup>st</sup> Ed.



**12. What if the person has more than two minor children? Can the three-person limit be expanded in that case?**

The three-person limit applies to adults residing in the home.

**13. Can a person live with someone who has been assigned a different Supported Living level?**

Yes.

**14. Can a person live with someone who has a different Supported Living Provider?**

Yes.

**15. Can two people receiving NC Innovations live together under Supported Living?**

Yes.

**16. Can another relative other than a spouse or minor live with the person?**

People receiving Supported Living services can live with:

- a. Relatives receiving Supported Living such as a Spouse and/or a minor child.
- b. An unrelated friend who is not receiving Supported Living.

**17. Does the three-person limit apply to a nondisabled roommate who is not a live-in caregiver?**

Yes, only three people may live in the home.

**18. If a recipient is married and has a child would they be able to have a live-in caregiver based on the three-person rule?**

Yes. The rule is three adults.

**19. If there are three roommates, do they all have to receive Innovations Waiver services? So for example, two housemates receive Innovations and one housemate receives services through (b)(3) waiver services or state funding.**

No. The roommates do not all have to receive NC Innovations Supports. For example, one person could receive NC Innovations and another person could be supported with (b)(3) funding or have no services provided. For information about (b)(3) services,

please see:

**20. What should be included in the roommate agreement?**

The roommate agreement is person and circumstance specific, based on the preferences of the roommates and their supports. Each roommate agreement should be tailored to meet the specific circumstances and wishes of the roommates. For additional guidance about roommate agreements, please see “Considerations for Supporting People in Developing their Roommate Agreements.”

**Live-In Caregivers**

**21. How will having a live-in caregiver through this service differ from Residential Supports?**

Residential Supports are provided in a residence owned/rented by a provider agency or an employee of a provider agency. Supported Living is provided in a home that is owned/rented by the person. The home is NOT the home of the live-in caregiver and their name is not on the lease.

**22. Who pays for the live-in caregiver’s share of the home, food expenses, etc.?**

This is included in the rate paid to the provider agency.

**23. Is a person expected to pay the provider for room and board expenses or the room and board expenses of a live-in caregiver?**

The person is responsible for his/her living expenses. A person shall not be required to use his/her personal income to compensate or reimburse the supported living provider for any reason, including covering the live-in caregiver’s expenses.

**24. In situations where a person receiving this service needs to evict a live-in caregiver, and is required to wait for the process to complete, will they be limited to receive Supported Living services from a caregiver that does not live in the home? What if they require 24/7 awake support? Will a Special Needs Adjustment cover this cost? What if the cost pushes the projected budget over \$135,000?**

The home is NOT the home of the live-in caregiver and their name is not on the lease. Therefore, the live-in caregiver does not have tenancy rights. The cost of NC Innovations services cannot exceed \$135,000. The adjustment does not change the Level designated for the person, but adjusts the Level to meet one or more of the following circumstances:

- The individual is in circumstances that are time limited but that require support at a higher level than described by the Level and the current rate does not cover the cost. For example, the person has a serious injury or illness or behavioral or mental health crisis requiring additional support on a temporary basis. A special adjustment may be approved for up to 90 days and may be extended for an additional 90 days.
- The person needs a roommate and requires a special adjustment until one move in. A special adjustment may be approved for up to 90 days and may be extended for an additional 90 days.
- The person is transitioning from a higher level of care setting, i.e. inpatient hospital, ICF/IID, and a rate adjustment are needed to ensure success during the transition process.

**25. Does the care provider's share of rent and food come out of the service rate?**

This is included in the rate paid to the provider agency.

**26. For on-site support, if the person lives in an apartment or next to a caregiver, does the caregiver have to be in the physical apartment?**

A live-in caregiver must live in the home of the person receiving Supported Living services. A staff person could live next door to the person staffing support.

**27. Can a live-in caregiver be an unpaid friend or other natural support?**

- a. A live-in caregiver is defined as an individual unrelated to the person who provides services in the person's home through the Supported Living provider agency.





- b. A roommate, such as a nonfamily member, can provide non-Innovations support, but is not considered a live-in caregiver.

### **Staff Supports**

#### **28. How does sharing staff between roommates work?**

The majority of people on NC Innovations services do not need one-to-one services 24 hours per day. One staff person could assist two people throughout the day based on their needs and schedule.

#### **29. How will I, as staff, be monitored in providing this support?**

The staff person would be monitored/ supervised as outlined by their supervision plan with the provider agency. The Care Coordinator would monitor the provision of services as defined in the person's ISP.

### **Supported Living While Living with Family in/on Family Property**

#### **30. Can a family member or friend who is not receiving services, nor providing services, be permitted to live in the person's home?**

Individuals receiving Supported Living can live with the following family members: other relatives receiving Supported Living, a Spouse and/or a minor child. A person receiving Supported Living can live with an unrelated friend who is not receiving Supported Living. It may be that the individual chooses to have a roommate with whom to share expenses.

#### **31. Can the person live in an apartment in the family home (a basement apartment) or a house on the family land?**

The home must have a separate address (not a P.O. Box) and separate utilities from any other residence located on the same property.

#### **32. If the home is owned by a person's family or legal guardian, does the person served have to be on the title?**

A person's eligibility to use Supported Living services is not impacted by whether their



name is on the title. In some situations it may be necessary for the legal guardian(s) to sign the lease/ mortgage agreement. Depending on the type of guardianship:

- a. A person may sign the lease/mortgage agreement,
- b. A person with their legal guardian may sign the lease/mortgage agreement,
- c. The legal guardian may sign the lease/mortgage agreement without the person.

### **Associated Service Definitions**

**33. Can Community Transition be used to aid in the purchase of transportation when moving into their home (like a wheelchair accessible vehicle)?**

No.

**34. How does an MCO assess the person's ability to meet Community Transition expenses? Is this looking exclusively at the income/assets of the member or are the means of natural supports included?**

This is looking exclusively at the income/assets of the individual and not at the income/assets of the natural supports.

**35. How is Community Transition billed? Who makes the purchases?**

This may be done through the Community Guide agency, through a purchase order from the MCO, or through the Financial Management Service (FMS).

**36. Is the Community Navigator role a required component to Supported Living (as with self-direction) or just recommended?**

Community Navigator is not a required component of Supported Living but is a complimentary service.

**37. Can a person receiving Supported Living services also receive Community Networking, Day Supports or Supported Employment?**

Yes. However, Supported Living services may not overlap with Community Networking, Day Supports or Supported Employment services.

**38. Can a beneficiary use the assistive technology service definition when receiving Supported Living?**

Yes.

**39. How does the Community Navigator function interface with the Supported Living service definition?**

The roles and responsibilities are defined in the Community Navigator definition, which can be found in NC Clinical Coverage Policy, 8P for the NC Innovations Waiver: [https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P\\_1.pdf](https://ncdma.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/documents/files/8P_1.pdf) . The extent to which the person uses the Community Navigator is based on her/his support needs and preferences. For example, a person may use their Community Navigator to assist with locating rental options for a personal residence.

**Provider Requirements**

**40. Who helps the person find housing?**

The person, his/her supports and service providers can all assist in securing housing. Individuals not yet receiving Supported Living services who require assistance identifying and securing housing may rely on Supported Living service providers or a community navigator to assist them. Assistance in securing housing for an individual who is not yet receiving Supported Living staffing services is not reimbursable under the Supported Living definition at this time.

**41. What are the documentation requirements for this service?**

Documentation requirements for Supported Living service follow the documentation standards outlined in the *Records Management and Documentation Manual for Providers of Publicly-Funded Mental Health, Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities, Substance Use Services and Local Management Entities-Managed Care Organizations* (RMDM). RMDM is available at: <https://ncdhhs.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/RMandDM%20Appendix%203rd%20Edition%209-1-16%282%29.pdf>

**42. What will the monitoring tool be?**

This is non-facility based service. The Care Coordinator would monitor the provision of services and health and safety per the individual's ISP and the monitoring tool (care coordination).

**43. Is the Health/Safety Check sheet required?**

No.

## Living in One's Own Home

### **44. How will a person pay to move and buy the things they need to live on their own?**

The Community Transition service under the Innovations waiver may be available to assist with moving costs when moving from an institution, residential setting or family home. A Community Navigator can also assist with finding other funding options.

### **45. What if the person using Supported Living services doesn't pay his/her rent?**

People are financially responsible for paying their rent/ mortgage and could face consequences if they fail to do so. However, Supported Living providers are expected to help beneficiaries understand the potential consequences and to assist them in being a good tenant. Additionally, housing subsidies may be available to assist the person in meeting his/her financial responsibilities.

### **46. What if this arrangement is more isolating than anticipated?**

Supported Living is about assisting a person to build the community networks s/he wants and needs. If the person feels isolated, the person team should assist them with discovering his/her wants and preferences. They should also help them build his/her community relationships. A person considering moving into his/her own home for the first time may need assistance in understanding how it will be different than his/her current living arrangement, including how their social network and activities may change.

### **47. What if the person using Supported Living services gets evicted?**

The person and his/her team would work to develop a plan and goals to assist the person with being successful in his/her own home. It is important to remember that Supported Living is not the right option for everyone on the NC Innovations waiver and the person is expected to follow the rules and regulations of the rental unit. The Supported Living provider does not have the authority to "evict" a person using Supported Living services. If a person is evicted, it is the responsibility of the Supported Living provider to assist the person with finding a different living arrangement.



**48. Are efforts being made to determine how to overcome obstacles to ownership, such as being adjudicated incompetent, or having the home count as an asset that affects disability income?**

A person's primary residence does not affect her/his disability income. The Division of Medical Assistance (DMA) and NC Money Follows Person Demonstration Project (NC MFP) are working with the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NC HFA) to provide resources on home rental and ownership for individuals with disabilities. For more information about housing resources, please see the NC HFA website at:

<http://www.nchfa.com/>.

Additionally, DMA and NC MFP are partnering with the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities to support a long-term learning community to strengthen collective understanding on addressing the various dynamics experienced under the Supported Living definition. For more information on this initiative, Supported Living: Making the Difference, please see: <http://nccdd.org/supported-living-making-the-difference.htm>