

2010-11 PRIORITIES

MAHO's Accessible Housing Resource Center (AHRC) will seek to improve housing options for people with physical disabilities by:

Primary

*** Providing online accessibility information**

MAHO will develop a dedicated Web site to disseminate information about accessible housing and the AHRC. This Web site will be unique in that the information will be geared to consumers, families, and caseworkers, not housing professionals. Features of the Web site could include:

1. Specific, searchable web pages with comprehensive accessibility information and descriptions of accessibility features. A wiki may be utilized in the future to organize information.
2. Links to good information available online, including instructional videos
3. Blog on accessibility information and current issues, updated by Board and staff, providing an opportunity to readers to post comments and discuss accessibility concerns

*** Development of a physical location for the AHRC at Circle Vistas**

A model accessible kitchen and bathroom will be constructed in the current Circle Vistas Community Room to provide people with an actual place where they can go to learn about accessibility. Resource material about accessibility will be produced for those visiting the Center. Trained volunteers and MAHO staff will be available by appointment or at regularly scheduled times to assist visitors and provide training sessions. When New Circle Vistas opens in 2012, the Accessible Housing Resource Center will be transferred to the model training suite in that building.

*** Advocacy and outreach to decision makers**

MAHO will work to improve accessible housing policies through advocacy at all levels of government, including local communities. Advocacy will occur primarily through membership on relevant Boards and Commissions as well as outreach to decision makers. They would also benefit from the accessibility information online and at the model unit. We would also investigate the possibility of MAHO becoming an official government resource on accessibility.

Secondary

*** Collaborating with other organizations through a coalition**

As a housing agency and a disability agency, MAHO crosses into both worlds; we also share many interests with agencies serving seniors. This creates unique opportunities to collaborate with other organizations. Current collaborative activities will be continued. A new opportunity is to pursue creating a more permanent coalition of agencies starting in one of three areas: disability, seniors, or housing.

*** Presenting seminars, classes, and in-service trainings on accessibility**

MAHO has provided information and training on accessibility to consumers, caseworkers, advocates, housing professionals, and students. Given the logistics and promotion necessary to produce our own seminar series, MAHO will now promote Executive Director Steve Hansler as a presenter to other organizations. If a permanent location for the AHRC is established, then seminar opportunities would change and this issue should be revisited.

*** Joint ventures with other organizations**

MAHO has shared interests with disability and housing organizations, as well as agencies that serve seniors. This creates unique opportunities to pursue joint ventures with one or two agencies. Possibilities for joint ventures could include development of an accessible house or housing, educational programs, and/or accessibility adaptations.