



# Communities for All

April 2026

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# Communities for All (CFA) Project



- ✓ Dakota County Initiative for Disability Inclusion
- ✓ Two-year pilot project
- ✓ Part of the Workforce Shortage Workgroup efforts
- ✓ Funded by a Legislative Appropriation

## Goals

Foster welcoming communities in Dakota County.

Ensure individuals with disabilities have opportunities in all aspects of community life.

Remove barriers to allow for meaningful relationships and authentic belonging.

## Change Attitudes

Foster a culture of dignity, understanding, and respect for all people

## Inclusive Programing

Events and activities are welcoming and encourage the participation of people of all abilities.

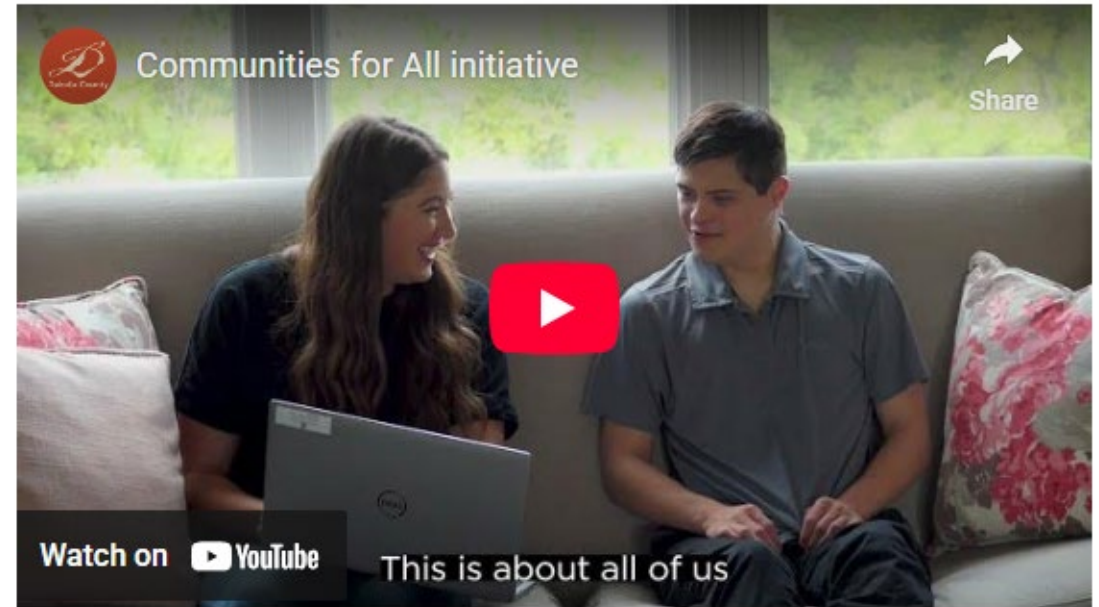
## Accessible Spaces

Ensure spaces and resources are accessible for all community members



# Outcomes

1. Empower people with disabilities to fully engage in community life.
2. Provide training and resources to create inclusive environments.
3. Support businesses and organizations in becoming more accessible.
4. Measure the impact and explore expansion opportunities.



# Grounding: Community Assessment



Photo credit: Joy Collaborative 2025

## How

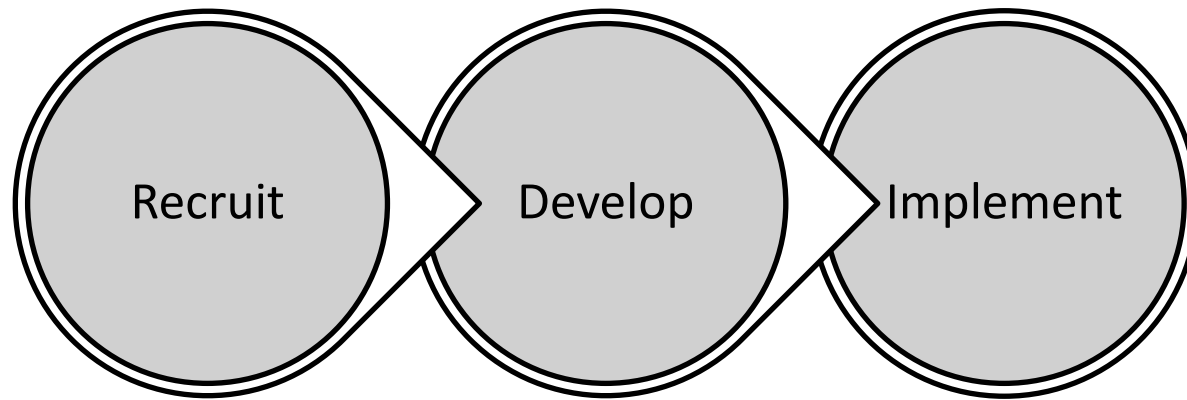
- [2025 Dakota County Community Assessment](#)
- Qualtrics survey
- DAC Input
- Partner feedback and evaluation

## Why

- Ground the work
- Explore barriers
- Identify actionable strategies

# Training, Education, Outreach Partners

## Josie's first trip to the Fair



- Build interest
- Accessible Application Process
- Engage identified partners

- Support design of program content & roles
- Provide tools and resources
- Strengthen partner capacity & communication

- Launch programming with partners
- Support delivery & monitor progress
- Gather feedback



# Education Partners

- [MSS](#)
- [National Alliance on Mental Illness MN \(NAMI\)](#)
- [Minnesota Stroke Association](#)
- [Peacemaker MN](#)
- [PROACT, Inc.](#)



Credit: Peacemaker, MN 2026



Credit: MSS 2025

# City and School Partners

## Cities

[Eagan](#)

[Farmington](#)

[South St. Paul](#)



Adult Changing Station, Rambling River Community Center, Farmington, MN

## Schools

[Oak Ridge Elementary](#)



Communication Board, Cedar Pond Park, Eagan, MN

# Advocacy and Connection Partners

- [Advocating Change Together \(ACT\)](#)
- [Find Love Safely](#)



Credit: ACT, 2025



# Inclusive Program Partners

## Inclusive Programs

- [MVTA](#)
- [Therapy Ops](#)
- [Kindercare Burnsville](#)
- [Branch Outdoor](#)
- [Cow Tipping Press](#)
- [Dakota County Ag Society](#)



# Mobile Sensory Spaces & Sensory Kits



## Mobile Sensory Units

- Created by a licensed OT
- Deployed by Parks and Libraries
- Staff trained on Sensory Integration and use of the space

## Sensory Kits

- Sensory and communication tools
- Created for case manager home visits

**“I love the sensory kits! I’ve used it for every meeting since I picked it up.”**

*-Angel D. Dakota County Case Manager*

# Mobile Disability Inclusion Museum

An engaging display celebrating the journey to increase the independence, productivity, self-determination, integration, and inclusion of Minnesotans with developmental disabilities and their families.

Created by the [Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disability](#).



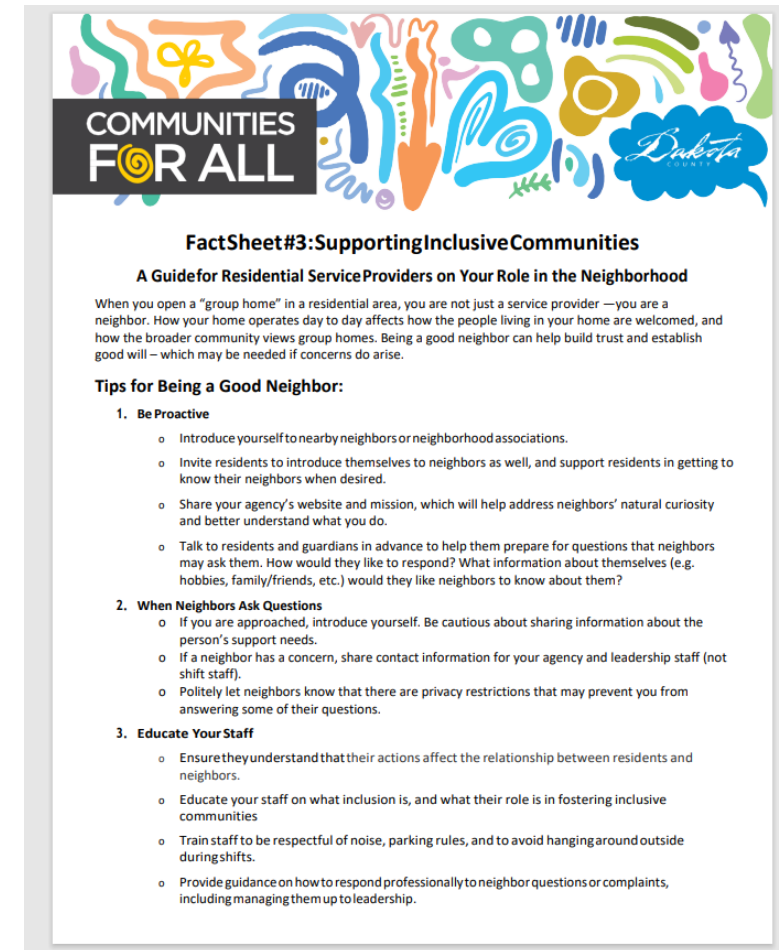
# Neighborhood Fact Sheets

## Highlights

- The importance of Good neighbor relationships to build inclusive communities.
- Why people with disabilities choose to live in the community
- The types of homes they live in
- Working together, so everyone feels welcomed and respected

## Five Fact Sheets

1. History and Advocacy
2. What are group home
3. Supporting inclusive communities
4. Talking to your neighbors
5. Being a good neighbor applies to everyone.



**COMMUNITIES FOR ALL**

**FactSheet#3: Supporting Inclusive Communities**

**A Guide for Residential Service Providers on Your Role in the Neighborhood**

When you open a "group home" in a residential area, you are not just a service provider—you are a neighbor. How your home operates day to day affects how the people living in your home are welcomed, and how the broader community views group homes. Being a good neighbor can help build trust and establish good will—which may be needed if concerns do arise.

**Tips for Being a Good Neighbor:**

- 1. Be Proactive**
  - o Introduce yourself to nearby neighbors or neighborhood associations.
  - o Invite residents to introduce themselves to neighbors as well, and support residents in getting to know their neighbors when desired.
  - o Share your agency's website and mission, which will help address neighbors' natural curiosity and better understand what you do.
  - o Talk to residents and guardians in advance to help them prepare for questions that neighbors may ask them. How would they like to respond? What information about themselves (e.g. hobbies, family/friends, etc.) would they like neighbors to know about them?
- 2. When Neighbors Ask Questions**
  - o If you are approached, introduce yourself. Be cautious about sharing information about the person's support needs.
  - o If a neighbor has a concern, share contact information for your agency and leadership staff (not shift staff).
  - o Politely let neighbors know that there are privacy restrictions that may prevent you from answering some of their questions.
- 3. Educate Your Staff**
  - o Ensure they understand that their actions affect the relationship between residents and neighbors.
  - o Educate your staff on what inclusion is, and what their role is in fostering inclusive communities
  - o Train staff to be respectful of noise, parking rules, and to avoid hanging around outside during shifts.
  - o Provide guidance on how to respond professionally to neighbor questions or complaints, including managing them up to leadership.

- **Dentist Outreach Efforts**  
Oral Health Task Force
- **Website Educational Content**  
Disability and inclusion basics, People First language, Understanding Ableism
- **Videos**  
Creation of Introductory and compilation videos
- **Swag & Events**  
Sponsored and participated in community events

## Not the end of Emma's Day at the Dakota County Fair



## Progress

- New and innovative ideas
- Positive response & support
- Collaboration & creativity
- Embedding disability, not an add-on or afterthought

## Barriers

- Short timeline
- Engaging businesses
- Budget constraints
- Current climate/impact of state & local events

## How do we sustain the work?

- Website Information
- Embedding disability
- Continue partnerships

## How do we expand the work?

- Further inclusion & welcoming spaces
- Create new partnerships
- Build on the momentum, message, mission, and brand created by the Communities for All project

# Contact and Resources



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