

SHA-NJ Releases New Integrated Community Project Toolkit for Municipalities
Updated ICP Toolkit to Enhance NJ Community Inclusion for Individuals with Disabilities/Barriers

SOUTH ORANGE, NJ: Today, the [Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey \(SHA\)](#) released the second edition of its **Integrated Community Project (ICP) Toolkit for Municipalities**. This updated resource is designed to help local communities to increase their community involvement for individuals with disabilities or barriers; these groups may include people with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, mental illness, people in substance abuse recovery, people who are aging, and/or exiting homelessness. SHA compiled a comprehensive set of resources, best practices, and strategies for municipalities and community leaders to better engage all citizens in every aspect of community life. The Toolkit for Municipalities is a digital resource.

According to the latest U.S. Census, approximately 42.5 million people, or 13% of the U.S. population, live with some form of disability. In New Jersey, according to the Centers for Disease Control, over 1.6 million, or nearly one in four adults at 23%, live with a disability. The COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately affected individuals with disabilities, with disrupted access to supports and limited social interaction due to isolation. Now, community leaders have a renewed opportunity to strengthen their communities to support inclusivity and expand involvement. SHA works towards a future in which people with lived experience of disabilities and barriers will have access to community facilities and live in affordable and supportive housing.

The first edition of the Toolkit for Municipalities was a product of the ICP and developed with [the expertise of individuals with lived experience](#) who guided the decisions around its content. [The Integrated Community Project \(ICP\)](#) has the goal of increasing capacity of people with disabilities and barriers to become fully engaged in their communities. At the release of the second edition, a total of twenty-four municipalities in New Jersey contributed to new updates and best practices. Working with municipalities, people with lived experience helped lead the effort guiding municipal staff and elected officials in using the Toolkit to make changes.

"SHA is so excited to release this update of our Toolkit for Municipalities," said Diane Riley, Executive Director, Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey. "We know that the new resources available will help expand inclusion giving our municipal leaders the tools to involve more people with a variety of barriers in the life of their communities. Through the evolution of this Toolkit, we hope this resource will continue to improve lives for many years ahead."

For more information about the ICP Toolkit for Municipalities and the ICP project, contact Kate Kelly, Associate Executive Director, at kate.kelly@shanj.org or visit www.shanj.org/sha-integrated-community-project/. SHA is grateful to our funders who have supported us in envisioning, improving, and promoting the ICP and its resources. Visit the Integrated Community Project link above for more information about our funders.

About The Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey: [The Supportive Housing Association of New Jersey \(www.shanj.org\)](#) unites its diverse coalition of members engaging development, resources, and information to sustain supportive housing systems within New Jersey. Since 1998, our statewide mission seeks to enhance lives and accessibility to enable independent living within our communities.

####