

OASIS · AT A GLANCE

Intentional communities (LINCs, ICW) and alternatives to group homes

Group homes run on facility schedules, not individual ones. A small number of Michigan communities flipped that arrangement, giving adults their own front door while keeping support and connection close by. Most families have never heard the names LINCs or ICW.

BY JIM PALASTY · 9 MIN READ · YOUR OWN DOOR, WITHOUT DISAPPEARING INTO ISOLATION

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MICHIGAN INTENTIONAL-COMMUNITY MODELS COVERED HERE

LINCs (Living Independent and Connected) and Integrated Community of Wellness both give adults their own apartments within a shared, supportive neighborhood. Neither runs on a facility's fixed schedule.

How it works

THREE STEPS

STEP 1

The group home tradeoff

Traditional group homes offer built-in support at the cost of privacy, autonomy, and control over your own daily schedule.



STEP 2

Intentional communities split the difference

Private living space, shared community, and individualized supports based on personal needs instead of facility routine.



STEP 3

Access runs through person-centered planning

These models get initiated through your CMH supports coordinator, not a general housing waitlist.

Questions to ask when evaluating a community

Privacy	Is this a private apartment or a shared bedroom?
Schedule control	Who sets the daily routine, staff or the resident?
Community structure	What shared spaces and activities actually exist?
Support flexibility	Can support hours flex around a changing routine?
Funding pathway	Which waiver or CLS funding covers this placement?

THE APARTMENT WITH HER OWN KEY

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Colleen's daughter spent three years in a group home built around a facility's fixed meal and activity schedule that never matched her own rhythm. A supports coordinator mentioned LINCs almost as an afterthought during a planning meeting. Colleen asked follow-up questions on the spot. Eighteen months later, her daughter had her own apartment key, a shared courtyard with neighbors she chose to spend time with, and a support schedule built around her actual day instead of a facility's.

THE KEY WAS THE WHOLE DIFFERENCE. NOBODY HAD MENTIONED THAT KIND OF ARRANGEMENT EVEN EXISTED UNTIL SHE ASKED TWICE.

What matters, at a glance

MICHIGAN SPECIFIC

Your own apartment

Private living quarters within a building or neighborhood, not a shared bedroom inside a group facility.

Shared community space

Common areas and organized social activities exist without requiring residents to live on a facility's schedule.

Funding still takes advocacy

These models exist within the waiver system, and getting placed often requires the same documentation fight as any other service request.

Individualized, not facility-scheduled

Supports are based on the person's actual needs, arranged around their life, rather than a fixed institutional routine.

Regional availability varies

Concentrated in Oakland County and the Grand Rapids area. Families elsewhere in the state may need to travel or wait.

Person-centered planning is the entry point

Requesting this housing model starts inside your CMH person-centered planning meeting, not a separate application process.

BRING THESE · CHECK AS YOU GO

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| ☐ Your family member's current CLS or waiver funding details | ☐ A list of specific questions about privacy and schedule control |
| ☐ Contact information for CMHAM to help locate regional programs | ☐ Notes from any tours or informational visits |
| ☐ A written record of your request if your coordinator needs to research it | |

YOUR MOVE

When you want to explore intentional community housing, here is where to start

- 1 Raise LINC's and ICW by name in your person-centered planning meeting.
- 2 Ask your CMH supports coordinator which models operate in your region.
- 3 Request a tour or informational visit before committing to anything.
- 4 Ask specifically who sets the daily schedule, staff or residents.
- 5 Confirm which waiver or CLS funding stream covers the placement.
- 6 Document the request in writing if your coordinator is unfamiliar with these models.

A shared courtyard is not the same thing as a shared bedroom. The difference is worth asking about by name.

RESOURCES NAMED IN THIS POST

cmham.org · <https://cmham.org>

Informational only. Not legal or medical advice. Verify current program rules before acting.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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