



For Immediate Release

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**First Place® AZ to Conduct Greater Phoenix Housing Market Analysis for
Individuals with Autism and Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities**

First Study to Provide Comprehensive Insights into Housing Needs

PHOENIX (July 19, 2022) — [First Place® AZ](#), an Arizona nonprofit with the vision of ensuring housing, healthcare and community options are as bountiful for people with autism and other neurodiversities as they are for everyone else, is launching a comprehensive market analysis to determine the housing needs and preferences of adults with autism and other intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) in Phoenix.

The [Greater Phoenix Housing Market Analysis](#), conducted by the [First Place Global Leadership Institute Center for Real Estate & Community Development](#), is the first-ever study to comprehensively address housing needs of adults living with autism and I/DD. The analysis will collect market data, identify barriers and explore how public, private, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors can work together to respond to market demand.

Adults with autism and other I/DD face a critical shortage of housing options and access to supports they need to thrive. In 2021, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) [reported](#) a 54.2% increase in the number of individuals with an ASD diagnosis served by their non-Arizona Long-Term Care System (ALTCS) health plans. This compares to a 4.3% increase of all other members and recognizes the rapidly increasing population of children diagnosed with autism: one in 44 today compared to one in 2,500 30 years ago. The result is a burgeoning population of adults living with autism.

AARP [reported](#) that the number of U.S. caregivers for adults over age 50 increased from 34.2 million in 2015 to 41.8 million in 2020. An increase since 2015 in both health and functional needs of older adults also correlates with the aging population.

“Among the looming questions for parents like me is, ‘Where will my loved one live, who will care for them and how will they thrive when I’m no longer here?’” says Denise D. Resnik, First Place AZ founder and president/CEO and mother of an adult son with autism. “Through the First Place Global Leadership Institute, we aim to make supportive housing options more accessible, affordable and attainable. The Greater Phoenix Housing Market Analysis will provide insights into what members of this population need and want and help us design a blueprint for making more housing options a reality.”

First Place AZ is forming a 15-person leadership advisory group to oversee the analysis of research conducted through online surveys taken from August 4 through 22. Individuals with autism and I/DD and their family members are invited to participate. Community and civic leaders and housing analysts will also weigh in. A kickoff meeting will be held Thursday, Aug. 4 at 6:30 p.m. (PDT). Those interested in participating can [register here](#). [Make Waves Family Foundation](#) and [Dominium](#) are providing partial funding for the analysis; additional sources are being sought.

Results will be presented at the 11th First Place Global Leadership Institute Symposium Oct. 19 through 21, to be held in person and via webinar. These symposia bring together pioneering leaders from across the U.S. and around the world who are focused on advancing a new generation of housing and community options.

The First Place Greater Phoenix Housing Market Analysis leverages the 2020 groundbreaking study, [*A Place in the World: Fueling Housing and Community Options for Adults with Autism and Other Neurodiversities*](#), which provides the guiding narrative for supportive housing solutions. The foundational nomenclature for housing and service delivery models set forth in the report establishes best practices and guiding principles, and helps drive crucial partnerships that address pressing needs resulting from the current housing crisis. “The study is the foundation to make it possible for housing developers, support providers and technology innovators to grasp the needs of this market and facilitate major marketplace and policy advances based on data,” says Maureen Casey, director of The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation Center for Public Policy and the Colonel Harland Sanders Center for Applied Research at the Global Leadership Institute. *A Place in the World* is named for the [2016 PBS NewsHour](#) series featuring Greater Phoenix as “the most autism-friendly city in the world.”

The Greater Phoenix Housing Market Analysis is modeled after a recent study led by Inclusive Housing Denver titled, [“Identifying Housing and Support Needs of Denver County Residents with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities at Risk of Displacement or Homelessness.”](#)

“It is absolutely necessary that this population with unique supportive housing needs be identified, recognized and prioritized as part of all equity, inclusion and diversity efforts,” says Desiree Kameka Galloway, First Place AZ advisor and lead consultant for Inclusive Housing Denver. “The study creates the opportunity for Denver County to become a national leader in neuro-inclusive community development. We want the same for Greater Phoenix and more markets across the U.S.”

First Place–Phoenix, First Place AZ’s \$15.4 million, 81,000-square-foot, 63-apartment property, is a residential community with a suite of supports and amenities for individuals with autism, Down syndrome, traumatic brain injury and other neurodiversities. Ushering in a new era of housing and community options for special populations, First Place–Phoenix combines apartments, the Transition Academy residential life skills program and the Global Leadership Institute to expand more independent, community-integrated living options. The nonprofit has also teamed up with Foundation for Senior Living to offer two intergenerational affordable housing properties for adults with autism and seniors.

For more information or to get involved, email info@firstplaceaz.org or visit firstplaceaz.org.

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About First Place® AZ

First Place AZ, a charitable 501(c)(3), is advancing innovative residential and community options for adults with autism and other neurodiversities through its vision for fueling a new wave of real estate and community development. First Place–Phoenix, the nonprofit’s flagship property, is an 81,000-square-foot apartment community set in the heart of the urban area and recognized by PBS NewsHour as “[the most autism-friendly city in the world.](#)” The First Place Global Leadership Institute leverages this award-winning property to serve as an R&D site, supporting the replication of residential and post-secondary education models and fostering collaboration among the public, private, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. Read First Place’s groundbreaking 2020 report, [A Place in the World: Fueling Housing and Community Options for Adults with Autism and Other Neurodiversities.](#)