

Dear Vermont State Legislature:

My name is Lauren Arcuri and my family and I have lived in Stannard, Vermont, since 2005.

I'm writing to voice my fervent support for \$10.82 million to implement the housing being developed in Act 186's Pilot Planning Grants and an ongoing, annual pipeline that will fund the development of stable, service-support housing for adults with developmental disabilities.

My son Jacob Ware is a resident of St Johnsbury. He has a developmental disability and is medically complex. He is among the most vulnerable population in the State of Vermont, yet his needs have received the least attention and services from the state. Jacob is non-speaking and unable to advocate on his own behalf. There are many other young adults like Jacob in Vermont who do not have a family member like myself to advocate for them. Their voices tend to be left out of the conversation around housing and support for people with developmental disabilities.

Adults with I/DD like my son Jake have HCBS funding provided by Medicaid for services, as well as entitlement benefits (SSA benefits). This makes them more stable long-term tenants as well as costing fewer state dollars than other populations that have been repeatedly funded over the years.

Some facts about I/DD services and housing supports in the State of Vermont:

- Since Brandon Training School was closed in 1993, there has been virtually no money invested by the State of Vermont in service-supported housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).
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- The State of Vermont needs to immediately create 602 new units of service supported housing. (2023 VTDDC Housing Research Brief)
- 9% of individuals who have I/DD are either homeless or at risk of homelessness. (Vermont Care Partners)
- The State of Vermont failed to meet their obligations under Federal Medicaid Rules, and now have 2 Corrective Action Plans to demonstrate that HCBS recipients have true choice, including choices in housing. The three Act 186 Pilot Planning Grants are contained in the latest Corrective Action Plan. DAIL did not request funding for building the Planning Grant projects.
- 1999 Olmstead Act directed states to develop a fiscal plan to include housing for people with I/DD in their state budgets, yet there are no targets in Vermont.

Thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing the changes in Vermont as the state begins to fund stable, service-supported housing for my son Jake and his peers.

Thank you,
Lauren

Lauren Arcuri | freelance writer
she/they