

**Home Access Program
Vermont Center for Independent Living
Senate Appropriations Testimony
April 5, 2016**

- Thank you for the opportunity to be here with you today.
- My name is Patricia Tedesco and I live in Woodbury. I coordinate the Home Access Program at the Vermont Center for Independent Living.
- For 33 years, the Home Access Program has been providing access modifications for Vermonters who have low income and permanent physical disabilities. These modifications allow folks to live independently in their homes and have access to their community. Primarily, we put in ramps or modify bathrooms, like removing the bathtub and installing a roll-in shower. In your packets, I have included photographs of some recent projects.
- On behalf of the peers we serve and the staff at VCIL, I want to thank each of you for your support of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), through which we receive most of our funding.
- Because our peers receive assistance based on funding through VHCB, we request you fund VHCB at the **highest** possible level. We appreciate that the Governor has recommended - and the House has approved - level funding for VHCB at \$14M. Given another difficult budget year, we respectfully ask you provide VHCB as much of its **full, statutory** share of the

Property Transfer Tax as possible, which is estimated at \$19.3M for next year.

- The average cost of a home modification through our program is about \$10,000 compared to the approximate yearly cost of \$97,000 for someone with disabilities to live in a nursing home, so our program is saving the State Medicaid dollars. For almost all projects, we are able to secure partner funding from other resources.
- Last year, with an additional \$206,000 from Choices for Care savings, we were able to decrease our waiting list, but it continues to grow each week. Right now we have 65 people waiting, sometimes waiting for two years.
- Since October 1, we have completed 30 home modifications statewide and we have another 30 in progress, helping Vermonters continue to live in their homes.
- With the traditional HAP funding levels of \$425,000 to \$475,000 from VHCB and \$100,000 from the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, we are able to provide about 65 home modifications a year, although our waiting list continues to grow - with about 12 new applications a month.
- Since the Home Access Program funding depends in large part on VHCB's appropriation, we ask you to provide them with the **highest possible** funding level **above** the Governor's recommended 14 million dollars.
- Thank you for your time, I know you have difficult decisions to make.



before



after



before



after



before



after



before



after