

**Home Access Program
Vermont Center for Independent Living
Senate Appropriations Testimony
April 4, 2018**

Submitted to the Committee via Rebecca Buck rbuck@leg.state.vt.us

Good afternoon. My name is Patricia Tedesco and I coordinate the Home Access Program at the Vermont Center for Independent Living. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today and for your long standing support for our program and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.

Since our program's funding depends in large part on VHCB's appropriation, we ask you to provide them with full statutory funding, but certainly no less than the Governor's recommended level funding at \$16.3 million.

The Home Access Program provides accessibility modifications for Vermonters who have permanent physical disabilities. This means installing a ramp or making a bathroom accessible so people can remain in their homes and live more independently.

I've submitted a packet which includes information about some recent projects. Here's a quote from a 90 year old peer from Windsor County: *"Now that I have a ramp, I can go out (and) sit in the sun, get out for rides, I can exercise and enjoy myself so much more. The world is beautiful out there."*

Our overarching goal is to make all homes accessible so peers can remain living in their homes independently. In addition, local economies throughout the state benefit from this funding because contractors receive a livable wage and purchase materials from local suppliers.

Because of this, we request you fund VHCB at the highest level possible this year, as this is our primary funding source. VHCB's FY 19 funding level required by statute is estimated at \$20.4 million from the Property Transfer Tax. I know you are dealing with

another difficult budget year, but full funding for VHCB would help provide additional housing for people with disabilities, as well.

Currently the average cost of a home modification through our program is about \$10,000. We increased leverage funding from multiple sources which has reduced the average amount of VHCB dollars to about \$4,000 per project. Meanwhile, it cost about \$97,000 a year to live in a nursing home, so clearly our program is saving the State money in the Human Services budget.

Last year we completed 84 modifications. However, we currently have 51 people on our waiting list – some of them have been waiting for two years.

With the traditional funding levels between \$425,000 and \$475,000 from VHCB, \$100,000 from DAIL, and an additional \$200,000 through VHCB's housing bond, we expect to provide about 90 home modifications this year, which will help reduce our long and continuously growing wait list.

On behalf of our peers, we appreciate your consideration to fully fund VHCB. Thank you.

Submitted by Patricia Tedesco
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BEFORE



AFTER

Town: Hardwick

Peer age: 76

County: Caledonia County

Owns home; 38.33% HUD median income

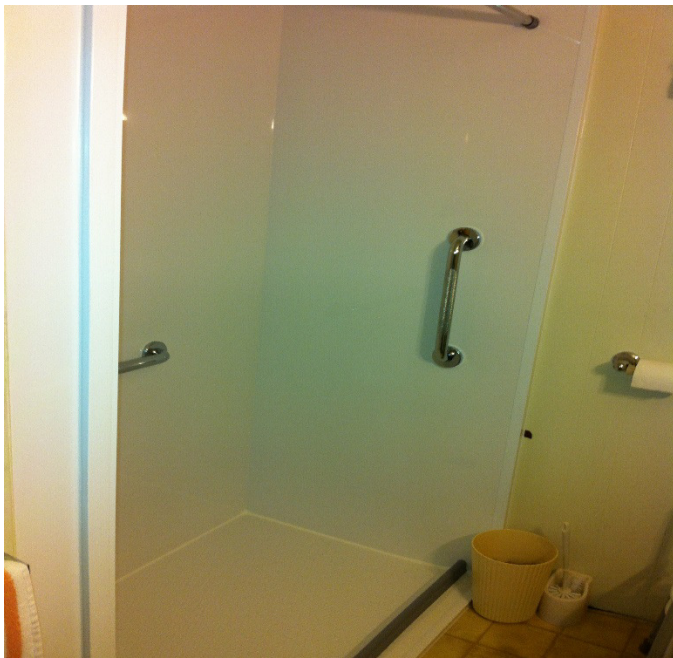
"My bathroom was a disaster, rotten floors. Bathtub had hole in it, not accessible for ambulance to get me out. Before I received the bathroom modification I was not able to keep myself as clean as I like. I was afraid of falling through the floor."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$7,591.06 (funding for ramp and bathroom)

Leveraged funds: \$7,494.72 (USDA 504 loan/grant program)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: Burlington

Peer age: 74

County: Chittenden County

Rents home; 23.5% HUD median income

"Before I received my bathroom modification, I had to lift my leg up over the tub. (It) was an inconvenience and painful at times. Now I can walk in my shower easily and without pain in my hip."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$5,061.00

Leveraged funds: \$3,766.00 (Peer \$2,000, Bath Fitter discount \$1,766)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: Weathersfield

Peer age: 90

County: Windsor County

Owns home; 42.3% HUD median income

"Now that I have a ramp, I can go out (and) sit in the sun, get out for rides, I can exercise and enjoy myself so much more. The world is beautiful out there."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$1,289.31

Leveraged funds: \$2,875.00 (value of 95 hours of volunteer labor from COVER Home Repair)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: South Royalton

Peer age: 68

County: Windsor County

Owns home; 41.9% HUD median income

"Before I had a ramp, I had to have extra help. I went from one wheelchair to another, one just to go through the doors. ... Now that I have a ramp, I can go and do things on my own. Thank you all so much. I am so thankful to you all and to all the volunteers."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$1,360.33

Leveraged funds: \$1,348.00 (value of 74 hours of volunteer labor from COVER Home Repair)



BEFORE (SF #3)



AFTER

57 year old male who rents in Bennington, Bennington Co.

68.4% of HUD median household income

"Scott was in a nursing home. This ramp brought him home." Wife of peer (peer uses wheelchair)

Funding sources:

\$3,000.00 Reeve QoL grant

\$ 600.00 Choices for Care

\$1,500.00 Money Follows The Person

\$3,886.66 Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)



BEFORE (NR #4)



AFTER

65 year old male who rents in Island Pond, Essex Co.

61.9% of HUD median household income

"I needed a ramp to help me get outside. Now it is easier for me to get outside. Thank you very much for helping me to get the ramp." (uses wheelchair and walker)

Funding sources:

\$3,000.00 Reeve QoL grant

\$ 760.88 Choices for Care

\$4,137.14 Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)



BEFORE (SG #5)



AFTER

61 year old female who rents in Bennington, Bennington Co.

26.3% of HUD median household income

(uses walker and wheelchair)

Funding sources:

\$3,000.00 Reeve QoL grant

\$ 808.00 Choices for Care

\$ 192.00 Peer donation

\$4,520.12 Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)



BEFORE (HH #6)



AFTER

77 year old female who rents in Westford, Chittenden Co.

41% of HUD median household income

"I applied to VCIL's Home Access Program because I wanted to go home. Before I received (this) ramp, I had to live in a nursing home." (uses wheelchair)

Funding sources:

\$3,000.00 Reeve QoL grant

\$ 808.00 Choices for Care (2017)

\$ 700.00 Choices for Care (2018)

\$ 700.00 University of Vermont Fire & Falls Program

\$3,724.04 Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: Rutland

Peer age: 63

County: Rutland County

Rents home; 22.44% HUD median income

"I live in an apartment in Rutland, Vermont, and there (were) wooden steps and I have to use a walker and I use oxygen tanks in a portable carrier. It was extremely difficult to enter and exit my apartment... Now that I have a ramp, I can enter and exit my apartment by walking down my ramp and my son does not have to lift my walker and oxygen tank down the wooden steps and then help me down the steps which in bad weather was more difficult."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$9,706.82

Leveraged funds: \$1,000.00 (Vermont Eastern Star Homes \$800, American Legion \$200)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: St. Albans

Peer age: 63

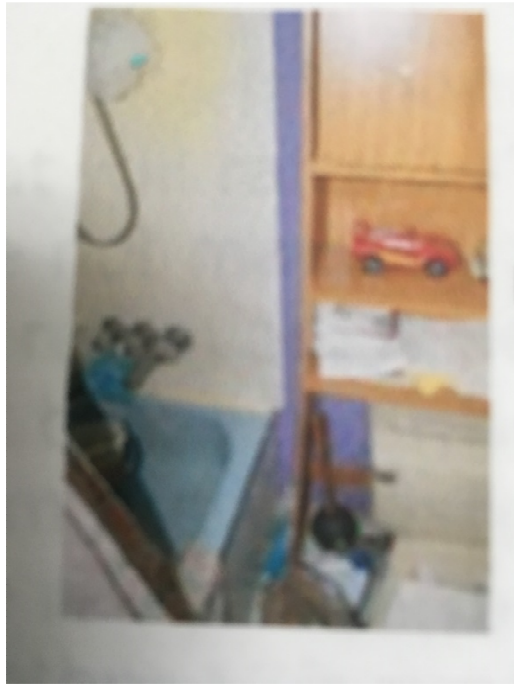
County: Franklin County

Owns home; 35.6% HUD median income

"My dream has been fulfilled by VCIL and the modification of my bathroom has enabled me to shower daily without the fear of falling. ... VCIL has made it possible for me to remain independent in my home."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$8,456.89

Leveraged funds: \$0 (peer was on wait list for two years)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: Lincoln

Peer age: 67

County: Addison County

Owns home; 32.9% HUD median income

"Before I received the bathroom modification I had to use the commode in the night and now I use the toilet. (It) makes me feel good to be on my own. I am not such a pest to my husband and my kids. ... Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$4,842.19

Leveraged funds: \$9,007.81 (USDA 504 grant \$7,500, internal USDA 2016 statewide grant \$1,507.81)



BEFORE



AFTER

Town: North Clarendon

Peer age: 60

County: Rutland County

Owns home; 39.89% HUD median income

"Now that I have a ramp I can walk freely without "occasional" – rarely – pain. I feel now liberated in that the fear and what felt like pathetic maneuvers to accomplish getting in and out of my house are gone, which makes leaving and returning to my home more desirable than the dread before."

VCIL (VHCB) funds: \$10,156.38

Leveraged funds: \$1,250.00 (Carris Corporation \$1,000, church \$250)