

**Home Access Program
Vermont Center for Independent Living
Senate Appropriations Testimony
April 6, 2017**

Good afternoon. My name is Patricia Tedesco. I coordinate the Home Access Program at the Vermont Center for Independent Living (VCIL). I appreciate the opportunity to be here with you today.

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

Along with the peers we work with and VCIL staff, I want to thank you for your past support of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB). This is our primary funding source.

We request you fund VHCB at the highest level possible this year. We appreciate the Governor has recommended a \$1 million increase for VHCB at \$16.3 million - we are asking you to support this. We also ask you to support his proposal for a \$35 million revenue bond to help make significant progress on the state's affordable housing shortage over the next three years. This will 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 \$7,676 per project. Meanwhile, it cost about \$97,000 a year to live in a nursing home.

We have started using modular ramp systems. These ramps generally cost less than stick built ramps and give people more options - especially if they need to move from one apartment to another.

Local economies throughout the state benefit from this funding as well because contractors receive a livable wage.

With the traditional funding levels of \$425,000 to \$475,000 from VHCB and \$100,000 from the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, VCIL's Home Access Program is able to provide about 70 home modifications a year. Last year we were able to provide 71 projects for 63 people. However, right now we have 64 people on our waiting list - some of them have been waiting for two years.

Since the Home Access Program funding depends in large part on VHCB's appropriation, we ask you to provide them with the Governor's recommended \$1 million increase for a total appropriation of \$16.3 million.

I've submitted a packet to each of you which includes data from last year and some photographs of projects.

Lastly, I want to express our deep concern for a provision in the House budget that gives AHS Secretary Al Gobeille broad authority to cut \$1.25 million in grants to nonprofit organizations that provide essential services to vulnerable Vermonters, potentially including people with disabilities. This could result in cuts to the \$100,000 the Home Access Program receives through the DAIL budget, which would decrease the number of modifications we could fund next year. Please reject the House language and cut.

Thank you for your time, I know you have difficult decisions to make.

Submitted by Patricia Tedesco
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Data from FY 16 with \$545,000 funding

\$445,000 from the state of Vermont Housing, funded through the property transfer tax and \$100,000 from Vermont's Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living.

63 peers served, 71 projects: Average VHCB/DAIL spent per project:

33 bathroom mods

35 ramps

2 entrance mods

1 platform lift

PLUS average leverage funding **\$2.5K**

\$7,676



Stats on the 63 peers who were served

Household median income:

26 0% - 30%

24 31% - 50%

3 51% - 60%

10 61% - 80%

Average income: 39%

Own or Rent:

17 rent ~ 46 own



Average Age: 60

New Applications Rec'd: 98

Value of in-kind: \$28,99

Leverage funding: \$181,245

Peers on Waiting List: 64

**83 year old female
COPD, Arthritis**

BATH TO SHOWER CONVERSION



**66 year old female
Cerebral Palsy**

**HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF THE
NORTHEAST KINGDOM VOLUNTEER
LABOR PROJECT**



71 year old male
Muscular
Dystrophy
Osteoarthritis

NOTE GRAB BARS AND WALL MOUNTED
SINK REPLACING VANITY SINK



42 year old female
Chronic Back Pain
(cannot stand w/o
pain)

RETIRED SENIOR VOLUNTEER PRORAM
VOLUNTEER LABOR PROJECT



66 year old female
Dystonia
(neurological
disorder)

RAMPS: FOR EVERY INCH OF RISE
THERE NEEDS TO BE ONE FOOT OF RAMP



60 year old male
20 surgeries
broken bones from
car accident

VCIL IS MOVING TOWARDS MODULAR
RAMPS WHEN PEERS RENT AND FOR
MOBILE HOME PARKS

