

# Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative



April 12, 2023

To: Members of The Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and  
The Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs

I provide this feedback regarding housing on behalf of the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative (DDHI), a Vermont parent-run advocacy group. We are a group of over 100 parents of adults who cannot live independently due to their intellectual and/or developmental disability (I/DD). Each of us knows at least 4 other families who are unavailable to actively advocate since they are full-time caregivers for their adult sons or daughters.

For the past thirty years, Vermont has been overly reliant on the Shared Living Provider (SLP) model, also known as adult foster care. Particularly for those with higher support needs, the SLP model lacks the permanence, security, and stability our adult children need. Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) rules require individuals to have housing choices. This is lacking in Vermont.

We appreciate all the efforts made in Bill S100 to make it easier for developers to locate housing in neighborhoods and high-density areas that have access to amenities which people with I/DD need. We are not asking for new money. **We are asking for adults with I/DD to be included in Affordable Housing Development Awards, with units set aside**, such as those offered to high need populations coming out of homelessness.

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council's 2023 Housing Research Brief states 600 units are needed immediately for the I/DD community. Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) and Medicaid funding only cover staff for Long Term Service Supports, and not "bricks and mortar" housing. This leaves our disabled adult children with unmet, unique housing needs that need to be resolved through policy changes. One possible way to provide more housing for this vulnerable population would be to include language in Bill S100 Section 42 stating: **Provide supported housing for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.**

**Medicaid has technical assistance available to support partnerships between Housing and Medicaid Systems.** The Medicaid Innovation Accelerator Program (IAP) offers technical assistance to State Medicaid agencies seeking to promote community integration through Medicaid Housing-Related Services Partnerships.  
<https://www.medicaid.gov/resources-for-states/innovation-accelerator-program/program-areas/promoting-community-integration-through-long-term-services-and-supports/medicaid-housing-related-services-and-partnerships/index.html>

We, the parents of DDHI, whose adult children with disabilities need stable service-supported housing choices, as required by federal CMS Rules, urge you to take action to help the most needy and vulnerable of Vermonters.

Thank you.  
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