



Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

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TO: House Appropriations Committee

RE: Comments on the 2026 Budget Adjustment Act

FROM: Susan Aranoff, J.D., Senior Planner and Policy Analyst

DATE: January 14, 2026

My name is Susan Aranoff. I am the senior planner and policy analyst for the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council. It is a pleasure to see you here today. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council (hereafter “VTDDC”) is a statewide board created by the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights (hereafter “the DD Act”), first adopted by Congress in 1970. Our constituents are Vermonters who have an important stake in the cost, quality, and availability of both traditional healthcare and disability-specific long term services and supports. An estimated 86,000 Vermonters experience a developmental disability as defined by the DD Act, with approximately 5,100 receiving some type of community-based support through Medicaid.

VTDDC is charged under federal law with engaging at the state level in “advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities that... contribute to the coordinated,

consumer-and-family-centered, consumer-and-family directed, comprehensive system that includes needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.”

The VTDDC is concerned about state spending that impacts the ability for Vermonters with disabilities to live and thrive in Vermont. Although the Council is housed in the Agency of Human Services, we have a memorandum of understanding with AHS guaranteeing our independence.

I am free therefore to advocate on behalf of Vermonters with disabilities and their family members, regardless of what is in the Governor’s budget adjustment proposal.

Vermont State Housing Authority

The Vermont DD Council supports the Vermont State Housing Authority’s rental assistance preservation efforts. State Support for Rental Assistance is essential for providing safe, stable, accessible housing to those who can’t afford market rate rents in Vermont.

A Voucher Contingency Fund

The VSHA requests that the legislature create a voucher contingency fund to achieve the following:

1. Preserve and stabilize over 8,000 existing vouchers households.
2. Prevent the involuntary termination of households from Public Housing Authority Housing Choice Voucher programs due to funding shortfalls.
3. Funds would be administered by the Vermont Agency of Administration.
4. Use of these funds by local public housing authorities would be in compliance with HUD rules and regulations.

This is a one-time request to stabilize the current voucher program.

Land Access and Opportunity Board

The VT Developmental Disabilities Council is an appointing authority to the Land Access and Opportunity Board. The LAOB is improving the chances that service supported housing for people with disabilities will be developed in Vermont. The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council supports the Governor's restitution of one million dollars to the LAOB's budget.

Conclusion

Please invest the peoples' money in the people who need it the most.