

Dear Members of the House & Senate Committees on Appropriations:

My name is Jenn Townley and I am a member of the *Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative (DDHI)* and serve as a family member on the *Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council*. My husband and I currently live with our 28-year-old son with a developmental disability who receives home and community-based services, yet he desires to have choice in where and with whom he lives and to have the necessary support needed to live more independently in his community. His community and peers are important in his service-supported housing decision.

In 2025, a Committee was created by Act 69 to generate a State plan to develop housing for individuals with a developmental disability with a range of support needs. The Committee's *The Road Home Report* outlines recommendations and the path forward so that Vermont can close the gap on the 600+ units needed. I am writing to request the following recommendations outlined originally in the Act 69 *The Road Home Report* be included for funding in the FY2027 Budget to address the housing gap for my son and other adults with I/DD:

1. **New \$5-10M in funding for the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board to develop service supported housing for adults with I/DD to continue to expand housing options for this vulnerable population.** There is no money in the Governor's Budget for housing for adults with I/DD. The S.328 Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Bill also supports this funding at \$3M.
2. **Creation of a new permanent position within DAIL to support housing development and housing process for families and clients that participate in Medicaid home and community-based services.** The S.328 Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Bill also supports this funding.
3. **New \$1-2M of state funded rental assistance for participants in DAIL's home and community-based service programs,** similar to other state-funded rental assistance for participants in Dept. of Mental Health and other AHS programs. There's an immediate need for \$500K for state funded rental assistance vouchers to support tenants in service-supported housing that the legislature has already invested in along with other I/DD projects in the VHCB pipeline. Adults with I/DD cannot afford market rate rent given their limited income (i.e. social security benefits and maybe a job) and depend fully on rental subsidies like the Section 8 Housing Vouchers currently frozen by HUD.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of DDHI families struggling to find service-supported housing options for their adult children with I/DD with higher support needs. **I implore you to please include these 3 asks in the FY2027 Budget so that my son and other adults with I/DD can have true choice in service supported housing in Vermont and help close the housing gap for this vulnerable population.**

Sincerely,

Jenn Townley – Williston (DDHI / VDDC family member)