

# Appendix A, Summary of Recommendations

## Category 1. Highest Priority

<b>Recommendation 1: Create Vouchers Supported by State General Funds</b>	
Who	The Vermont legislature.
What	Create 75-150 state-funded housing vouchers for DDS participants modeled after, and in parity with, state-funded housing vouchers available to individuals served by the Department of Mental Health.
When	Beginning with the 2026 legislative session; maintained and expanded thereafter in the state budget.
Cost	Approximately \$1 million to \$2 million annually depending on the number of vouchers.

<b>Recommendation 2: Educate DDS participants about housing options, including Section 8</b>	
Who	DAIL, in collaboration with Case Management Organizations, DA/SSAs, advocacy groups, and the State Housing and Residential Services Advisory Committee for DDS (Recommendation 10)
What	Ensure that service participants & family members receive comprehensive and accurate information about their housing options, including Section 8 rental assistance and, if available, state-funded vouchers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create training for case managers at CMOs and staff at provider agencies.</li> <li>• Create plain language information about rental subsidy programs.</li> <li>• Create webpage(s) with comprehensive information about housing options.</li> </ul>
When	As soon as possible and in advance of Recommendation 3.
Cost	No added cost; work is within existing organizational capacity.

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**Recommendation 3: Open Waiting Lists Temporarily for DDS Participants**

Who	<p>The Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative (DDHI) and appropriate partners will initiate this recommendation, which will enlist the assistance of the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) and other Public Housing Authorities (PHAs).</p> <p>The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSA) should identify which entities (for example, DA/SSAs, case management organizations) within the DDS system of care should be tasked with assisting individuals and families in filling out applications and collecting supporting documentation, as well as tracking the results of this outreach effort.</p>
What	<p>Make a formal request to the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) asking that they open the waiting list at the next available opportunity in accordance with this plan.</p> <p>Further, ask the VSHA to coordinate with other PHAs in identifying additional opportunities for placing this population on waiting lists for subsidized housing and rental assistance.</p>
When	Once Recommendation 2 is well underway, which is anticipated to be by July 1, 2026.
Cost	No added cost; work is within existing organizational capacity.

**Recommendation 4: Invest \$10 million annually for at least five years**

Who	The Vermont State Legislature
What	<p>Invest \$10 million annually for at least 5 years in approximately 50-65 units/year of new, permanent affordable housing for people receiving DDS.</p> <p>This funding stream should be managed by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) in close collaboration with community partners, DDS stakeholders, and the State DDS Housing and Residential Services Committee (Recommendation 10).</p>
When	Beginning with the 2026 legislative session and maintained thereafter for a minimum of five years total.
Cost	\$10 million/year for five years would be a total cost of \$50 million.

**Recommendation 5: Apply for HUD’s Section 811 Program if/when available**

Who	The Vermont State Housing Authority, in collaboration with VHCB and the State DDS Housing and Residential Services Committee (Recommendation 10).
What	Apply for the Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities program through HUD if/when a Notice of Funds Available is issued by HUD.
When	As available through HUD.
Cost	No cost to apply; work is within existing organizational capacity. Cost for administering the program should be built into the grant application.

<b>Recommendation 6: Survey Need through Case Management Organizations</b>	
Who	DAIL
What	<p>Refine data quantifying the need for service-supported housing for developmental services participants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Case Management Organizations to ask individuals directly about their current and future housing needs (immediate, within 1 year, within 3 years, etc.)</li> <li>• Collect age of family caregivers and of shared living providers.</li> <li>• For planning purposes, create a matrix crossing SIS-A score, county of desired residence, and indicator of when housing is needed (immediately, 1 year, 3 years, etc.)</li> </ul>
When	As soon as possible, with an initial report due early in 2026.
Cost	No cost, work is within current organizational capacity.

<b>Recommendation 7: Map Need by County to Available Resources</b>	
Who	VHCB in collaboration with the State Housing Authority
What	<p>Map project-based Section 8 vouchers and estimated need for service-supported housing for people in the developmental disabilities services system by county.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise as information quantifying regional needs becomes more refined (Recommendation 6).</li> </ul>
When	As soon as possible.
Cost	No cost; work is within current organizational capacity.

<b>Recommendation 8: Licensing</b>	
Who	DAIL
What	<p>Convene a committee composed of service participants/self-advocates, families, provider agencies, and DAIL leadership to develop recommendations for improving the licensing of group settings in the DDS system of care.</p> <p>The committee’s goal should be to find a course of action that encourages the creative development of small group residential settings for those who want this option while at the same time providing strong regulations. The committee should consider if this is best achieved by creating a new licensing category; by expanding the use of the Residential Care IV license with variances; or by another means or a combination of these options.</p> <p>The committee should also consider ways that AHS Division of Licensing and Protection can, within their existing capacity, best support agencies and other groups seeking to license a service-supported residence for DDS participants.</p>
When	As soon as possible, with an interim report due to the DAIL Commissioner and legislative committees of jurisdiction in mid-February 2026 and a final report due by June 30, 2026.
Cost	Minor cost for stipends for self-advocates and families participating in this committee. Otherwise, work is within existing capacity.

<b>Recommendation 9: Set Equitable Rates for Non-Agency Operated Residential Settings</b>	
Who	DAIL through the Developmental Disability Services Division
What	In the context of payment reform, continue work to develop an equitable, consistent payment structure for non-agency operated residential settings.
When	As soon as possible, with a recommended payment structure on or before June 30, 2026.
Cost	No cost; work is within organizational capacity.

<b>Recommendation 10: Create an Advisory Committee for the Implementation of this Plan</b>	
Who	The Vermont State Legislature
What	Create an advisory group (tentatively called the State Housing and Residential Services Advisory Committee for DDSD) to advocate for and support the implementation of this plan, as well as research additional resources, policy changes, & initiatives, including those named in Category 3 of this report.
When	During the 2026 Legislative Session.
Cost	Minor cost associated with stipends for self-advocate and family representatives on the committee.

<b>Recommendation 11: Ensure Capacity within the Agency of Human Services</b>	
Who	The Vermont State Legislature
What	Ensure capacity within the Agency of Human Services to support coordinating housing-related initiatives by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to have a housing specialist on the AHS Central Office team.</li> <li>2. Convert DAIL’s limited-service position for a housing specialist to a classified position and fill this role. Use this position, in part, to support DA/SSAs and other groups seeking to create service-supported housing for the Developmental Disabilities System.</li> </ol>
When	As soon as possible
Cost	The Housing Specialist in AHS Central Office is already within the AHS Budget. The DAIL position would represent an increase of \$120,000 to the DAIL budget.

<b>Recommendation 12: Create a Housing Navigator for People with Disabilities</b>	
Who	Land Access and Opportunity Board at VHCB
What	Support a Housing Navigator embedded in the LAOB who (1) supports individuals with disabilities and their families in securing permanent, affordable, service-supported housing; and (2) supports the LAOB and its partners in system change work to improve access to housing for people with disabilities.
When	Early 2026
Cost	Budgeted request by the LAOB at \$157,500 for salary and benefits which would recur annually with customary increases for cost of living and merit.

<b>Recommendation 13: Ensure this Plan is a statewide initiative</b>	
Who	DAIL through the Developmental Disabilities Services Division.
What	Work with each Designated Agency to identify an appropriate local goal for the development of service-supported housing. Provide resources and technical support to assist each agency in meeting that goal. Technical assistance from the State could include tool kits, assistance with licensing, templates for master leasing, and other support.
When	Beginning State Fiscal Year '27.
Cost	See Recommendation 11 for cost associated with increasing DDSD’s capacity to support agency-level work on housing.

## Category 2. High Priority, Continue and Expand

<b>Recommendation 14: Workforce Retention and Training</b>	
Who	DAIL
What	<p>Continue and expand initiatives aimed at increasing the number of well-trained direct support and residential services professionals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure consistency across DA/SSAs in how they staff service-supported housing and the training received by residential staff.</li> <li>• Ensure consistency across DA/SSAs in the funding for and standards related to technology that supports residential settings. Statewide availability of these programs ensures equal access and can help stretch limited staff resources.</li> <li>• Consider staffing patterns that reward and retain the best direct support professionals as front line staff, rather than incentivizing them to move to management positions.</li> </ul>
When	Ongoing.
Cost	No added cost, work is within existing organizational capacity.

<b>Recommendation 15: Combating Ableism and Low Expectations</b>	
Who	DAIL, in partnership with Green Mountain Self-Advocates and other community partners.
What	<p>Educate widely about self-advocacy, the dignity of risk, disability rights, and the value of community inclusion.</p> <p>Fund peer support providers throughout Vermont who are trained to assist DDS participants in speaking up about their current and future residential service needs and preferences.</p>
When	Ongoing.
Cost	To be determined. Additional resources may be needed to support peer support providers.

<b>Recommendation 16: Expand Quality Assurance Activities</b>	
Who	The Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD).
What	Continue to build DDSD's capacity for quality monitoring and for sharing the results of these activities transparently with state leaders, service participants, and family members.
When	Ongoing.
Cost	No additional cost as new quality assurance staff have already been added to DDSD.