

### Vermont Center for Independent Living

- Statewide nonprofit
- Founded in 1979
- Cross-Disability
- Independent Living Movement
- Central Office: Montpelier
  - Branch offices:
    - Bennington
    - Brattleboro
    - Rutland
    - Morrisville
    - Burlington



Photo: VCIL Staff holding organizational banner in front of and on ramp.

### Definition of Independent Living

Independent living is the right of all persons, regardless of age, type or extent of disability to:

- Live in the community, as opposed to living in an institution;
- Have the same range of choices as everyone else in housing, transportation, education and employment;
- Participate in the social, economic and political life of their communities;
- Have a family;
- Live as responsible, respected members of their communities, with all the duties and privileges that this entails; and
- Unfold their potential


### Application Process - Disability

- Permanent physical/mobility disability
  - Examples: multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's, stroke, osteoarthritis, COPD
  - Uses wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane
  - Verified by peer's medical professional directly from our office (by fax)



### Application Process: Household Income

- At or below 80% HUD median income
  - All people living in the home – sharing the bathroom and kitchen
  - Peer income = caregiver income (not doubled)
  - All income – even reverse mortgage income



### Application Process – Own or Rent?

- Providing proof of ownership
  - Landlord Acknowledgement Form: people who rent
  - Landlord Acknowledgement Form: mobile home lot
  - Homeowner's property tax bill



### Application Process – Who helps peer?

- Alternative contact information
  - Area on Aging case manger (60+)
  - Long term supports and services case manager
  - Emergency contact; caregiver; roommate, etc.



### Acceptance Process

- "Acceptance to wait list" letter
- "Possible donor" letter
- VCIL Peer Advocate Counselor referral, if applicable.



### The hunt for money begins!

- Owns home/land, <80% = NeighborWorks referral
- Owns home/land, 62+, <50% = USDA referral
- Rents home = ask landlord to contribute
- Receiving long term supports/services = ask for \$825
- Veteran? Specific disability? (example: MS)
- VCIL Peer Advocate Counselors help with leverage \$



### The hunt for money continues!

- Volunteer groups building ramps around the state:
  - Habitat for Humanity in the Northeast Kingdom
  - COVER Home Repair in White River Junction
  - Value of labor calculation = leverage funding (\$50/hour crew leader and \$25/hour for crew members)



Montpelier, Vermont is the only U.S. state capital without ...



**Project Process**



- Access Consultant: Initial Inspection (photos/form)
- VCIL Coordinator: Scope of Work
- Scope of Work: 3 geographically close contractors
- Bid deadline: 4 weeks
- Award bid – Contract – Build – Final Inspection

80 year old female with cancer, stroke



83 year old female  
COPD, Arthritis

BATH TO SHOWER CONVERSION



71 year old male  
Muscular  
Dystrophy  
Osteoarthritis

NOTE GRAB BARS AND WALL MOUNTED SINK REPLACING VANITY SINK



52 year old male  
with neuropathy,  
arthritis & diabetes

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



66 year old female,  
circulatory disorder,  
uses powerchair



80 year old female with diabetes and amputation



Until 1996, Vermont was the only state without ...



Lessons learned...in no particular order!



- Sending an "acknowledgement letter" to peer when we receive his/her application greatly reduces phone calls asking "Did you get my application?"
- Asking for peer's case manager's name, phone, email on the application; copy that person on emails throughout process.
- Asking about layout of the home - what is on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor?
- Including Bath Fitter financing plan info with application

Lessons... "We've got a FORM for that!"

- Landlord acknowledgement form for peers who rent also provides contact for landlord (sometimes they want to be present for the Initial Inspection and we always ask if they would be willing to contribute towards the project! ☺)
  - Some peers own their mobile home, but not the land it is on. For ramps, we ask for the landlord's acknowledgment, not bath mods.
- Statement of Responsibility peers sign at the contract stage outlines they pay for any basic maintenance for the bath mod or ramp after the Final Inspection has been completed.
  - For peers who rent, we also have the landlord/property owner sign.

Lessons learned - about getting paid!

- VCIL's primary funder has a cap of \$15K per peer per fiscal year. We instituted a \$13,500 cap per peer per fiscal year to allow for Change Orders if they become necessary.
- Have peer pay his/her personal funding portion up front before project begins.
- With leverage funding contributions from churches, community service organizations, etc., get specific contact information about WHO writes the check and WHAT is the payment process (once a week, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.?)



Data from FY 18 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 (\$373,000 on projects).

- 66 peers served:** Average spent per project: \$5,651
- 34 bathroom mods**
- 27 ramps**
- 1 entrance mods**
- 3 platform lifts**



### Stats on the peers who were served

<u>Household median income:</u>	<u>Average Age:</u>	64
21 0% - 30%		
25 31% - 50%	<u>New Applications Rec'd:</u>	106
3 51% - 60%	<u>Peers on Waiting List:</u>	40
4 61% - 80%	<u>Leverage funding:</u>	\$102,458
Average income: 36%	<u>Value of in-kind:</u>	\$25,223
<u>Own or Rent:</u>		
24 rent ~ 29 own		



Vermont is the largest producer of maple syrup in the U.S., producing over 500,000 gallons a year



### Ongoing projects to support our work

- Host annual training for contractors and funding partners on ADA guidelines/VCIL's specifications and on disability awareness, using people first language, etc.
- Build and support working relationships by meeting with NeighborWorks homeownership centers and other funding partners - streamline process/better outcomes.
- Testify at Vermont's house and senate appropriations committee hearings, providing evidence of need.
- Review process as we go, modify when needed!



### VCIL Programs & Services

- Meals on Wheels
- Wellness Workforce Coalition
- Sue Williams Freedom Fund
- Equipment Distribution Program
- Vermont Interpreter Referral Service
- Home Access Program
- Deaf Independence Program
- AgrAbility
- Community Access



### VCIL Social Media

[www.vcil.org](http://www.vcil.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VTCIL>  
<https://www.facebook.com/youthtransition>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VCIL>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/VTCIL>

### Presenter Contact Information

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