



# VERMONT DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

## What you really need to know about developmental services in VT

### *Who is served, and who isn't*

Vermont eligibility is based on either IQ (70 or under) or autism diagnosis  
VT's definition of developmental disability leaves out people with significant functional developmental disabilities  
Even with that narrow definition fewer people are being served than people realize  
Only 30% of those eligible under Vermont's definition are served. . . . 4029 people  
About 19% are receiving a range of services through a home & community based waiver . . . 2539 people  
Vermont's waiting list for waivers is growing

### *Who is on the waiting list, and why is it growing?*

There are currently 287 people who are eligible on Vermont's waiting lists  
That is 58% more people waiting for supports than in 2006 (169 people)  
To get supports eligible people must also meet Vermont's System of Care [SOCP] priorities  
Virtually all SOCP priorities are based on dire situations like homelessness or death of caregiver  
People with significant impairments who do not meet SOCP priorities are on the wait list  
The only changes in the SOCP priorities in the last 10 years have made access more difficult  
People do not leave the wait list unless there is an emergency, and new people are added each year

### *What happens to students in special education when they leave school?*

There is a narrow exception that provides support to students leaving school with a paid job  
Funding for the student priority is tenuous and needs to be requested each year  
Due to lack of funding the minimum age to get supports has been raised to 19  
There was funding for 71 of an estimated 100 eligible graduates in 2011-12.  
Students without jobs do not get funded short of an emergency  
(There is no similar priority for adults who find jobs. They stay on the wait list.)  
What happens? Youth are at high risk for incarceration, mental health issues and substance abuse  
In 2006 VT Dept. of Corrections reported 50% of the incarcerated under 24 were eligible for special education  
***"This [situation] wastes the educational investment the state has made not to mention the individual's life and potential contribution."*** (From VTDDC Survey Comments)

### *What happens to adults waiting for services?*

Without employment supports like job coaches people are unable to find and maintain employment  
Without community supports people are home with aging caregivers (at least 22% live with parents over 60)

### *What about funding?*

Level funding means cuts for individuals due to increases in the cost of care  
Since 2006 people already in the system have experienced cuts totaling 7.5%  
All people served lost some supports – hundreds suffered direct service cuts  
Each year a majority of new caseload funds goes to those already served with new needs, not new people  
Investing in supports decreases the social and economic costs of later incarceration & emergency services

### *How does the system work for individuals and families?*

People identified information as a priority need in all recent Vermont studies and surveys  
Vermonters say they don't know where to start, or how to navigate complicated systems  
People have to rely on each other to know where and how to ask for help  
***“Often families need to know what to ask for, rather than being upfront what they qualify for.” (VTDDC 2006 Survey)***

### *What else do we need to know?*

Vermont's Developmental Disabilities Act requires that every 3 year System of Care Plan be based on a comprehensive needs assessment with demographic information, & characteristics of both unserved and underserved individuals and populations.

### *What can we do?*

Listen to what people with developmental disabilities & families say they need  
Provide specialized information, referral & assistance to help people navigate  
Offer a transparent application process  
Assess needs and set priorities based on complete information  
Increase and allocate funding so that people can be as independent and self-sustaining as possible

### *For more information contact*

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