



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 28% of those eligible under Vermont's definition are served. . . . 3647 people
63% are receiving a range of services through a home & community based waiver . . . 2460 people
37% receive minimal supports . . . about 1440 people
Vermont's waiting list for waivers is growing

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

There are currently 318 people who are eligible on Vermont's waiting lists
That is 88% 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 emergencies 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 10%
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?

As required by Vermont's Developmental Disabilities Act, the System of Care Plan needs to include a comprehensive needs assessment with demographic information, & characteristics of both unserved and underserved individuals and populations
For the past two years the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living has not published its Developmental Services Annual Report

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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