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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living awards second innovative housing pilot planning grant to Champlain Housing Trust

Waterbury, Vermont. The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) is pleased to award Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) one of three [Act 186](#) pilot planning grants to develop new and innovative housing options for individuals with developmental disabilities. Act 186 of 2022 appropriated \$500,000 for housing and residential service pilot planning grants.

DAIL has awarded Champlain Housing Trust a grant of up to 173,500.00 for this work. CHT has been successfully creating housing in Chittenden County for 40 years, has greatly benefited local communities, and has impacted the lives of many individuals. CHT has joined forces with Howard Center and Champlain Community Services to create a valuable partnership that collaborates with parents on the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative (DDHI).

DDHI is an advocacy group led by parents who aim to develop stable and service-supported housing communities for their adult children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). The group consists of over 100 families from various parts of Vermont, and they all have children with IDD. Many of these families are seeking support for their adult children who have IDD and other challenges, such as communication difficulties, complex behavior, limited mobility, or severe medical needs. Some of these adult children require constant care and support. As these families age, they recognize the importance of having stable and supportive housing for their loved ones.

The DDHI leadership team consists of Karen Price, Marla McQuiston, Jennifer Townley, Collins Reading Twing, Katie Tormey, and Laurie Mumley. They are an essential part of the CHT planning team, and Act 186 grant recipients state, "The DDHI is honored to be involved in the Pilot Planning Grant for Chittenden County. We look forward to working on a new choice of

supported peer housing for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including those with high support needs. We are excited to participate in effecting systemic changes that support the integration of our vulnerable family members into the communities where they choose to live”.

The DDHI leadership team is committed to supporting all aspects of the grant to ensure that the goals of the project meet the specific needs of residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The project goals include the following:

- Collecting information to help organizations, families, and housing providers create supportive homes for people with IDD.
- Develop a resource guide that will provide useful tools and technology that can support both residents and staff.
- Create a resident resource guide that will provide.
 - Guidelines on how to adjust and live harmoniously in the housing community.
 - Tips on how to become involved in the local community.
 - A list of daily activities that cater to different residents' interests and help them form friendships.
- Provide a list of pros and cons with recommendations for potential properties to support residents with different needs.
- Develop a list of funding resources that will create affordable permanent housing for individuals with IDD.

Additionally, the plan aims to develop 8-12 permanent and supportive housing units for individuals with developmental disabilities in Chittenden County, Vermont. The project will specifically focus on promoting an inclusive environment that supports the specific needs of this community.

The Act 186 pilot planning grant will enable CHT to collaborate with subcontractors from A. Harte Consulting Firm, Duncan Wisniewski Architecture Firm, and the University of Vermont. DAIL commends Champlain Housing Trust, the Developmental Disabilities Housing Initiative leadership team, Howard Center, and Champlain Community Services for their ongoing efforts in creating new and innovative housing for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The pilot planning projects established by Act 186 will profoundly impact individuals with disabilities. Through collaboration with the State of Vermont, DAIL, stakeholders, advocates, and self-advocates, housing solutions can be developed that provide individuals with disabilities to live their lives with independence and dignity.

About the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL):

Our mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability - with dignity, respect, and independence.

<http://dail.vermont.gov/>

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