

**Founding
Members:**

- The Arc of
Virginia

- Partnership for
People with
Disabilities

- Virginia Board
for People with
Disabilities

- Virginia Office
for Protection and
Advocacy

2025 E. Main Street, Suite 107
Richmond, Virginia 23223
804-649-8481

Virginia Alliance
for
Community

Reform Now: Community for All

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Alliance Proposal for Reform

States that have moved forward to transition to community supports for persons with intellectual and other developmental disabilities have done so because elected leaders stepped up and provided leadership to make "Community for All" a reality. Once it has committed to a community system of supports, no state has ever gone back to segregated state institutions. Why? It's clear. Individuals with disabilities and their families want community-based services.

1. **Question: What has happened since the Governor and General Assembly approved bond funding to rebuild CVTC and SEVTC in April 2008 that now requires a change to a community-based housing model?**

Answer: Investing significant dollars in outdated institutional models quickly caught the attention of the advocacy community and has been viewed as a step back for the Commonwealth. When training center rebuilding was included in the budget, advocates, including The Arc of Virginia, the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, the Partnership for People with Disabilities, and the Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy began to explore how the state could use this as an opportunity to transform the system in a morally and fiscally responsible manner.

2. **Question: What does the Alliance propose instead of the facility rebuild approach?**

Answer: The state provided its first commitment to community housing by diverting \$18.5 million of the approximate \$66 million allotted to the CVTC and SEVTC rebuild/renovation: \$10 million for CVTC residents and \$8.5 million for SEVTC residents. We applaud this important first step but, unfortunately, it does not go far enough. We propose that all of the capital outlay dollars and all future capital outlay dollars for housing be used to transition the Commonwealth from an institutional model of support to one that is community-based and not to rebuild or renovate state Training Centers.

3. Question: Aren't current residents and their families entitled to choose to stay at the Training Centers?

Answer: While the state is required to guarantee the right to ICF/MR level of care, there is no entitlement to receive such services at a large institution. In fact, many states have moved toward elimination of institutional models of care altogether. Equivalent supports may be provided in the community through ICF/MR group homes and/or Medicaid Waiver services.

4. Question: What about health and safety issues which were given as the major reasons for approving the bond funds?

Answer: There is no question that there are serious concerns about the health and safety of residents at the Training Centers; however, there is no reason why the state cannot meet these life safety needs by transitioning to community-based group homes just as expediently as would occur in large-scale renovations.

5. Question: Can community homes handle the special needs of the Training Center residents?

Answer: Training Centers are licensed as ICFs/MR. Currently there are over 31 community-based ICF/MR group homes located around the Commonwealth. These residences operate under the same regulations and service requirements as the Training Centers, but have the capability of providing a life in the community instead. Additionally, over 8,300 people with intellectual disabilities use services through the Medicaid ID/MR Waiver which has the same eligibility criteria as an ICF/MR.

6. Question: Doesn't it cost a lot more to have small homes spread around the community rather than have one big central complex?

Answer: The average cost per person in a Training Center is \$194,000 per year up from \$167,000 just last year; the average cost of a community ICF/MR is \$116,665. The cost of services through the Medicaid ID/MR Waiver is even lower, with an average cost of \$67, 516 per person per year, \$95,000 for those who reside in congregate settings like group homes.

7. Question: What will be the impact on current Training Center employees?

Answer: It is up to the state to determine the impact on employees. Other states have developed arrangements that result in redeploying institutional staff to similar jobs in the community.

8. Question: What will be left on the current Training Center sites?

Answer: Some space on the current campuses could be used to continue to host administrative offices and outpatient therapeutic services such as dental, occupational therapy and physical therapy until such services are widely available in local communities.

9. Question: What about the special medical, dental, and therapy needs of the Training Center residents? How will they be addressed?

Answer: Over 8,000 people with intellectual disabilities already receive medical and therapeutic supports in the community through the Medicaid Home and Community Based Waivers. The state should continue to serve as the safety net with regards to unmet significant medical needs such as skilled nursing. These services, however, should be delivered in the community. Dental care is a concern for all Virginians with intellectual disabilities, regardless of where they live, because dental services for adults are not covered by Medicaid. Dental clinics at the training centers should be kept open until this service gap is resolved.

10. Question: How does the decision about the Training Centers affect those individuals on Medicaid Waiver waiting lists?

Answer: The policy and fiscal implications of these decisions are significant. Right now, more than 1,300 people are being housed at the Training Centers at a price tag of over \$250 million per year. In the community, over 2,600 people could be served on the ID waiver (this is assuming all individuals would choose congregate settings—an unlikely scenario) for the same cost. Changing the policy direction of the state Training Centers is directly correlated with the state's ability to reduce the waiver wait lists and strengthen Virginia's community-based system of support.

BOTTOM LINE:

- It is NOT reasonable to segregate people in institutions when experience and research prove that even people with significant disabilities and intensive needs can be supported in the community. The Commonwealth needs to commit to a Community for All policy.
- It is NOT reasonable to continue to invest scarce public dollars operating large, inefficient state institutions when there is a better and more fiscally prudent way. The Commonwealth needs to halt plans to rebuild Training Centers and leverage community housing money in order to significantly expand limited state dollars.
- It is NOT reasonable to deny persons with disabilities the right to live among us in the community if needed supports are provided. The Commonwealth needs to adopt a reform plan that provides for innovative, person-centered supports in the community.

Now is the time for disability reform in Virginia. It is no longer morally or fiscally responsible to invest in segregated settings for our citizens with disabilities.