

**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

Virginia has a unique opportunity to reform its historical focus on large, state institutions and fully transition to a true community-based system of support for its citizens with developmental disabilities. The proposed rebuilding of Training Centers represents a major retreat from forty years of state public policy in this direction. The assumption that individuals with developmental disabilities need to live in institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is simply wrong. It has been proven—all across Virginia and nationwide—that if supports are there, people can live in homes and apartments. Failure to establish a clear commitment to a future of community living compromises the state's ability to improve the service delivery system to one that is morally and fiscally responsible. The time for Virginia to act is now. There is a better way!

### Summary of Proposed Reform Initiative:

- ◆ Utilize capital outlay bond funds currently budgeted for rebuilding/renovation of Training Centers to **build, acquire, and/or renovate** community-based housing to include home and community-based waiver homes, sponsored placements and other options that provide homes for a maximum of 3-4 individuals per residence.
- ◆ Employ a **flexible approach** to the acquisition of community housing by combining the expertise of state housing and economic development agencies with local programs experienced in developing community housing. **Require scarce state dollars to be leveraged** through innovative approaches to acquiring community housing as other states do successfully.
- ◆ Disperse and **integrate** housing throughout the local catchments areas of the Training Centers instead of on large institutional “campuses” using a new model of public/private partnership that maintains the state role in serving as the safety net but does so **in the community**.
- ◆ Address pending health and safety issues by providing, **as a priority**, community-based homes and services for those residents currently living in Training Center housing units cited for health/safety concerns.

- ◆ Maintain and upgrade state **oversight of community programs** including licensing, utilization reviews, human rights, Inspector General reviews, quality of care standards, and involvement of the Virginia Office of Protection and Advocacy (VOPA).
- ◆ **Transition current Training Center staff** to jobs in the community providing housing, day services, medical/specialty and other supports. Concern over job loss has been successfully addressed in other states.
- ◆ The transition to a community model would be phased in over a **multi-year, but defined timeframe**, setting as priorities individuals who have immediate life/safety risks in current buildings.

## **Policy and Fiscal Rationale for Reform**

- ◆ State policy for 40 years has called for Virginia to shift from institutions to community supports for persons with developmental disabilities. However, Virginia has been slow to respond and continues to segregate individuals inappropriately in expensive state institutions (Training Centers). Virginia is currently **46<sup>th</sup> among the states in its funding for community-based services**, despite the fact that for decades, studies have shown that small, community homes and sponsored placements offer a better quality of life than institutional settings.
- ◆ Training Center costs continue to rise and have now reached an **average of \$194,000 a person a year**.
- ◆ **Community care through the ID/MR waiver for persons living in small residential settings**, primarily waiver group homes, **costs \$95,000 per person annually**—half the cost of institutional care for individuals with equivalent levels of need.
- ◆ Results of a 2009 **independent assessment of Southeastern Virginia Training Center (SEVTC) residents**, completed after the current Administration and General Assembly made its SEVTC rebuild decision, concluded that individuals with the very same level of support needs as SEVTC residents are being served successfully in integrated community settings. The **SEVTC rebuild equates to a cost of \$306,000 per person** in capital outlays alone.
- ◆ All of the Training Centers currently or in the near future will require **major renovation or replacement**. State capital outlay costs to “fix” all Training Centers could easily reach **\$150 million or more** in today’s dollars alone.

- ◆ People with developmental disabilities and their families want community supports, not institutional placements. That is why over 5,000 people on the Developmental Disability (ID/MR) Waiver waiting list and over 800 people on the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver waiting list, who are legally entitled to ICF/MR level of care, **continue to wait** for community-based support. If these waiting list families opted for institutional care—it would cost the state over **\$543 million per year** for their care.
- ◆ Today, over 17,000 Virginians with developmental or developmental disabilities are **living at home with parents age 60** or over, compounding Virginia’s future problem.
- ◆ Maintaining state Training Center beds now means **fewer community housing** slots available in future years. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent at state Training Centers over the past 25 years with no up-front state dollars for community housing until 2009. Continued investment in state institutions **disregards the current and future need** for long-term housing supports in the community.
- ◆ Many states, including Virginia, continue to move persons to the community. Other states have **successfully eliminated the use of state institutions** in a planned manner to ensure that residents who need skilled care or who have challenging behaviors continue to receive needed services.
- ◆ **Federal policies that drive funding** are shifting to community supports. Medicaid funding of large institutions is expected to be increasingly at risk in the future.
- ◆ The future of Virginia’s Training Centers is **a statewide issue**. Thousands of people with developmental disabilities and their families will be affected for decades to come by the outcome of Virginia’s decisions regarding the Training Centers.
- ◆ Persons with developmental disabilities have a right to live in the community, and the state has a right and responsibility to commit to **a true community-based system**. Transitioning from state institutions to community supports is a **civil rights** issue for persons with developmental disabilities.
- ◆ **Now is the time** to focus on the right policies, with the right costs, for the right reasons. Spending to rebuild or renovate Training Centers is the wrong policy, for the wrong reason, at the wrong cost—now and in the future.