

Supportive Living in Wayland

Background

There is a growing need in Wayland and surrounding communities to serve residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities in a local setting. There are currently few options for residents and their families who are seeking long-term housing with supportive services. Many parents and families find themselves in a crisis situation as they search for a permanent home where their son or daughter will be able to live independently with the support they need to be successful.

One of my biggest memories is of parents coming to me saying they had raised their children to adulthood, without the state having to pay, and now they need to know how to plan for their child's care when they are no longer living or no longer able to care for them. It is a huge problem. Their son's sister is already aware that she will have to take over for her mother at some point. – Name Withheld

Today, when a young adult with a disability graduates from Wayland High school, they often continue to live with their parents. Education entitlements (M.G.L c. 766) end when the son or daughter turns 22 years of age. After turning 22, there are no entitlements and no guarantees. Some eligible individuals may receive residential funding from the Department of Developmental Services, likely as part of a vendor contract for services in another community, frequently at a significant distance from Wayland (currently, there is only 1 vendor-operated group residence in Wayland). This separation adds a burden to both the young adult, who is unfamiliar with new surroundings, and to the parent(s) who spend an inordinate amount of travel time meeting their adult child's needs.

Some individuals may continue living at home with their parents and receive limited funding to pay for a day program and transportation. Parents must be tireless advocates and managers, keeping track of all paperwork, supervising staff, organizing schedules, maintaining a budget, and coordinating all medical appointments. In the back of their mind is always the worry about what will happen when they become older and can no longer provide support for their adult child in their home.

Data: Demand > Resources

In 2020 there were 468 students in the Wayland school system with Individualized Education Plans. Of the 468, 17% (78 students) have higher needs, leading to partial inclusion in the classroom, "substantial" separation from the classroom, or enrollment in separate schools, residential facilities, or staying home.

Wayland School System

For FFY2020, the new state target for % of Students with IEPs served in Full Inclusion is 65.49%, the target for % of Students with IEPs served in Substantially Separate placements is 13.32%, and the target for % of Students with IEPs served in Separate Schools, Residential Facilities, or Homebound/Hospital placements is 6.44%.

| | Enrollment | District Rate | State Rate | State Target |
|---|------------|---------------|------------|--------------|
| Enrolled students with IEPs | 468 | -- | -- | NA |
| Full Inclusion (inside the general education classroom 80% or more of the day) | 390 | 83.3% | 66.2% | 65.5% |
| Partial Inclusion (inside the general education classroom 40%-79% of the day) | 46 | 9.8% | 13.7% | NA |
| Substantially Separate (inside the general education classroom less than 40% of the day) | 12 | 2.6% | 13.5% | 13.3% |
| Separate Schools, Residential Facilities, or Homebound/Hospital placements (does not include parentally-placed private school students with disabilities) | 20 | 4.3% | 6.5% | 6.4% |

Special Education data are suppressed for enrollment counts fewer than 6.

Housing for adults with developmental disabilities is scarce, yet the need grows greater every day. It makes so much sense, when possible, to make housing available in the communities in which our children were raised. Wayland could be a community that offers that opportunity for its residents with special needs.

Some individuals with disabilities who do not qualify for, or do not receive, residential funding from the state, opt for Wayland Housing Authority's (WHA) elderly/disabled public housing, which serves non-elderly disabled residents under 80% Area Median Income and targets residents under 30% Area Median Income. However, there are no direct services available at the WHA and often these folks fall through the cracks socially and emotionally.

We were fortunate to be living in Wayland when, more than 30 years ago, our first child was born with Down syndrome. Fortunate because Wayland schools and community programs received him with open arms. However, more recently, when we began looking for housing that would provide him with an appropriate level of much needed independence we had to look outside the community that had served us so well for so long. We finally found a placement...nearly an hour away in a town that may one day become his "community" but for now is full of strangers. – Name Withheld

Currently WHA has 24 non-elderly disabled residents living in public housing. Increasingly, the newly leased residents with disabilities are in their early twenties.

| Wayland Housing Authority Resident Member Status 1/23/23 | | |
|--|---------------|--------|
| Status | Total Members | % |
| Non-Elderly / Disabled | 24 | 11.48% |

Public Housing = Inadequate Solution

Given the lack of supportive services, public housing is generally not a long-term solution for individuals with disabilities as their parents age. [Note: The Section 8 program, which the WHA also operates, and which generates a portable voucher, is a good option for families since a voucher may be used for a supported living arrangement with a non-disabled roommate, although again – there are very few options close to Wayland. In addition, the wait-time for a Section 8 voucher is approximately 7 years *with a Wayland preference*.]

Many parents approach public housing out of desperation. Although the WHA can adequately meet shelter needs, many residents with a disability have found that living in a public housing apartment can be very isolating, leading some adult residents to struggle with a lack of purpose, and/or lack of community.

Appeal

Affordable housing advocates, housing authority staff, and community members interested in the well-being of *all* residents feel it is important for people to have choices about their living situation. Many adults want to live independently, but they need critical supportive services to achieve that goal, such as meal planning, transportation, community engagement, and other supportive services. They also want to live in an inclusive community setting with common space for group activities.

Solution: Supported Living in Wayland

Supported living is an investment in our youth and families and would enable families to have more choices for their adult children with disabilities.

The developer would obtain permission from the town to construct the property using a friendly Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit or Planning Overlay District, build the property and hire property management to deal with all management aspects of the property including leasing, maintenance, repairs, tenant issues, and more. The Department of Developmental Services would then contract with an area vendor agency to provide supportive services and case management for individuals as per the contract.

Over time, fewer segregated residential facilities have given way to increased supported living communities, as individuals and families advocate for more individualized and integrated living opportunities.

Advocates want to work with the Town of Wayland to identify a low- and moderate-income supported living community, whether through stand-alone new construction, or through the Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit process, which could provide supported living units within a larger development.

To make the proposal financially feasible for residents, the units should be tiered between 30%-80% Area Median Income. Residents could therefore use their SSI and/or Section 8 Housing Voucher to pay rent and utilities. All other services would be provided using funds from residents' Medicaid budgets through the area service agency.

Next steps:

1. Establish sub-committee consisting of individuals from Town staff, affordable housing committee(s), school committee, Metrowest Center for Independent Living, [others?] to further assess need and propose viable solution.
2. Identify a developer and service agency.
3. Host public forum – review Housing Production Plan goal, and proposed solution.
4. Committee works with developer and agency on financing, including possibility of project-based Section 8.

For more information on supported living in Wayland, contact Brian Boggia, Wayland Housing Authority 508-655-3610 x11 or bboggia@waylandhousing.com

Further Reading

40 Cutting Edge Rental Apartments including 10 Apartments for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities <https://reganddevelopment.com/current-developments/bear-woods-apartments-canton-ct-40-cutting-edge-rental-apartments-including-10-apartments-for-people-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities/>

Lavender Field Apartments <https://reganddevelopment.com/current-developments/lavender-field-apartments-bloomfield-ct-integrated-affordable-housing-with-supported-apartments-for-people-with-intellectual-and-developmental-disabilities/>

Definitions

Below is information provided by Deb Johnson, the DDS Area Office Director, pulled from the DDS RFR for 3 different types of residential services the Department funds. In-Home Supports (sometimes called individual supports) would be the model that would be for folks living in their own apartment (as in the St. Ann's development). I'm including other models in case there is interest in doing a different type of model down the road.

1. In-Home Supports consists of services and supports for a variety of activities that may be provided regularly, but less than 24 hours per day, that enable the individual to live independently and in the least restrictive setting in the community. Participants receive support and supervision in establishing, living in, and maintaining, on an on-going basis, a household of their choosing that meets their habilitative needs. Services may include:

- Teaching and fostering the acquisition, retention, or improvement of skills related to personal finance, health, shopping, use of community resources, community safety, and other social and adaptive skills which enable the participant to live in the community
- Training and education in self-determination and self-advocacy, which prepare participants to exercise control and responsibility over services and supports they receive as they become more independent, integrated, and productive in their communities.
- Room, board, and the cost of facility upkeep and maintenance are excluded.

2. Adult Long Term Residential services (also known as GROUP HOMES)

- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) and Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) purchase housing with 24-hour support for individuals with intellectual disabilities, individuals with acquired brain injury, individuals with a wide range of disabling conditions (e.g. cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries), individuals who have sustained a traumatic brain injury and individuals who are blind, deaf/blind, individuals with autism, or multi-disabled individuals. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) will serve as lead Agency for this procurement. Services RFR allow individuals with a wide range of medical, behavioral, or physical challenges to enjoy all the benefits of community living.
- These activities comprise programs that provide individuals with 24-hour seven day a week supports to assist them with the necessary daily living, physical, social, clinical and/or medical support.

3. Shared Living (placement services)

- The Department of Developmental services (DDS), Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC), and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind (MCB) intend to purchase placement supports for individuals with intellectual disabilities, individuals with a wide range of disabling conditions (e.g. cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries), individuals who have sustained an acquired or traumatic brain injury as well as individuals who are blind, deaf/blind, individuals with autism, or multi-disabled individuals. This service is also identified by the term "Shared Living" services.
- This service enables individuals with a wide range of medical, behavioral or physical challenges to enjoy the benefits of community living. This Service Class comprises programs that provide recruitment, placement, training and oversight of caregivers and living situations for individuals who either live in the home of a designated care provider who is a single person or member of a family unit or live in their own homes with a designated care provider.
- Designated care providers are responsible to provide supervision and ongoing support in areas of daily living, maintaining optimal health care, creating and enhancing relationships with chosen family member and friends and other areas of assistance specified in individuals' ISP's.

Department of Developmental Services (DDS) Middlesex West 2020

The DDS Middlesex West Area office serves 2,130 Individuals from fourteen towns, Framingham, Northborough, Westborough, Hudson, Marlborough, Southborough, Sudbury, Wayland, Natick, Dover, Sherborn, Ashland, Holliston, Shrewsbury, and Hopkinton. The Area office is located in Framingham in an EOHHS center that also houses DTA and DCF.

Services

88 group residences

- 29 in Framingham
- 7 in Holliston
- 8 in Natick
- 1 in Wayland
- 1 in Sudbury
- 5 in Hudson
- 12 in Marlboro
- 1 in Southboro
- 5 in Northboro
- 12 in Westboro
- 7 in Hopkinton

10 Day programs

- 1 Hopkinton
- 1 Westboro
- 3 Ashland
- 3 Natick
- 2 Northboro

2 Family Support Centers

- 1 Natick
- 1 Marlboro

1 Autism Center - Framingham

Count of Active/Eligible

- Number served – 1,498
- Number served under 22 – 509
- Number served 22 + - 989
- Number served with Autism only – 85
- Number served with Intellectual disability – 1,408
- Number served T22 Class of FY19 – 56
- Number served T22 Class of FY20 - 46
- Number served that Live at Home – 630
- Number served in 24/7 homes– 406
- Number served in shared living – 41
- Number served in Community based day supports -298
- Number served in employment – 157
- Number served in Individual Supports – 98
- Number self-directing services - 16

Area Office

- 13 Adult Service Coordinators, average caseload – 67
- 1 Transition Coordinator caseload - 86
- P/T Children's Coordinator caseload - 395
- 2 Autism Service Coordinator, caseload - 43