



# Press Release

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## SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE BELLONE ANNOUNCES PILOT PROGRAM TO EXPAND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR INCLUSIVE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

Photos from the Event are Available Here

Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone today announced the creation of the Suffolk County Sewer Infrastructure Pilot program, which will provide wastewater infrastructure funding for projects designed to meet the regional need to develop new housing opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“Over the last few years, we have seen the critical need for more inclusive housing,” said Suffolk County Executive Bellone. “The goal of this program is to not only improve wastewater infrastructure across the county, but to expand the housing opportunities available for our residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities.”

“Those in Suffolk County who have children with developmental disabilities often face heartbreaking and financially impossible choices as their kids age out of a school setting,” said Suffolk County Minority Leader Tom Cilmi. “This will provide more options for those folks and help integrate those with differing abilities into inclusionary settings enriching their lives and the lives of those around them. Thanks go to Mike Kelly and Sarah Lansdale for their leadership on this vitally important issue.”

"I believe this program will assist the overwhelming need for housing for our residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities," said Legislator Bill Lindsay. "Without this vital infrastructure new housing cannot be built. I applaud the County Executive for his leadership on this issue."

Under this program, the County will provide up to \$2 million in wastewater funding for community-based integrated projects that permanently restrict units within the project to individuals eligible to receive services through the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities.

The pilot program was unanimously approved by the Suffolk County Sewer Infrastructure committee. The application, which is now live, must be submitted to the Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning. Once the application is reviewed and selected by the department, the Suffolk County Legislature and then the County Executive must approve the funding.

In order to qualify for funding, the project must include noncertified housing. Noncertified housing differs from certified housing as it is not group homes, rather noncertified housing provides flexibility, is

less encumbered by regulation and costs less than certified housing for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This pilot program will be funding noncertified housing within a multi-family apartment complex.

Additionally, applicants must provide detailed developer information, a full project description, thorough financial information, and any third party reports. The application period is rolling, and there is no fee to apply.

According to the New York Housing Resource Center, there are 25,425 adults in Suffolk County with intellectual or developmental disabilities and 63% of them live with family caregivers and of those, 25% of the caregivers over the age of 60. The program seeks to address the predicament for many families who are concerned with what happens to their child once they are deceased. Between 2012 and 2018, the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities has funded the creation of 8 units in Suffolk County for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Mitchell H. Pally, Chief Executive Officer of Long Island Builders Institute, said: “The Long Island Builders Institute strongly supports this new initiative to provide additional county funds for the development of new affordable housing for this much needed group of our residents. The need for such housing in Suffolk County is essential for the continued ability of these and all of our residents to live, work and play in our communities and these new funds will help make this happen.”

Barbara McNamara, Director of SMILE, Support My Independent Life, said: “It is important to understand that people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities are the fastest growing population in our country. This group of individuals have proven time and time again to create a more positive atmosphere when included in the community. We need to be prepared to support this incredible population in an inclusive way.”

Jennifer A. Casey, Chair, Suffolk County Planning Commission said: “The Suffolk County Planning Commission is excited that County Executive Bellone has recognized the need for inclusive housing and had the foresight to kickstart this initiative by providing an incentive for this type of housing to become a reality.”

Mike Kelly, Chair, Inclusive Accessible Supportive Housing Committee, Planning Commission said: “The urgent and growing need to provide housing for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities is imperative for our society to meet the needed lack of supply and having the ability to access infrastructure funds to offset the cost of construction will help increase the housing stock available for people with developmental and intellectual disabilities. Kudos to County Executive Bellone, County Legislature and The Director of Planning and Planning Staff for their effort and taking the lead on this important Regional initiative.”

Kathleen M. Feeley, PhD, Founding Director of the Center for Community Inclusion at Long Island University said: “Over the past decade, services for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have shifted from those that were primarily segregated to those that occur within individuals' communities, alongside their neighbors, offering endless opportunities to live productive and meaningful lives. This shift from a separate to inclusive service delivery model is one that requires support from all aspects of our communities, but one that is life changing. This initiative by Suffolk County Legislators and County Executive Steve Bellone is an extraordinary demonstration of their support for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities here in Suffolk County.”

Ed Nitkewicz, Chairman, Long Island Board, Autism Speaks said: “As a father of a 20 year old son with autism and the Chair of the Long Island Board of Autism Speaks, I am deeply concerned by the limited opportunities for inclusive living available to the developmentally disabled population. I greatly appreciate the leadership of County Executive Bellone and the County of Suffolk in supporting initiatives that recognize the needs of the growing population of young adults like my son Edward and his peers. The Suffolk County Sewer Infrastructure Pilot program will help create more choices for adults with autism and other developmental disabilities.”

John Maltby, New York Alliance for Inclusion and Innovation, said: “People with Developmental Disabilities want the same thing that everyone else does,- a home that is healthy and safe, that they have a choice in where they live, with whom they live and how they receive the supports they need. These are people who typically grew up in our community, and they want to stay where they feel they belong.”

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LIBI CEO Mitchell Pally addressing the attendees.