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State of Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities

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August 12, 2004

Tammy Wourms
Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority
Post Office Box 1728
Madison, Wisconsin 53701-1728

Dear Ms. Wourms:

The Council on Physical Disabilities has five recommendations concerning the use of WHEDA's unrestricted general reserves for fiscal year 2005.

- The Council recommends that funds be allocated to continue and expand a home modification program to increase the accessibility of housing to homeowners and renters with disabilities.
- The Council recommends development of a process to tie Section 8 vouchers with the home and community-based Waiver programs administered by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. Such a process would insure that housing is available to people with disabilities wanting to move out of a nursing home.
- The Council recommends that WHEDA continue to invest in projects and developments that result in very low rents for persons who are dependant on Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Many WHEDA tax credit projects reach low-income individuals, but do not keep rents low enough to be afforded by persons on SSI, for example.
- The Council recommends that WHEDA incorporate "visitability" requirements into single-family home development. The two most important needs of people with mobility problems are getting into a home and fitting through the interior doors, especially in the bathroom. "Visitability" requires at least one entrance with no steps, and interior doors that are wide enough to get a wheelchair through. This design is beneficial to residents of a home as well as to visitors, thus expanding opportunities for social interactions for people with physical disabilities.

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- The Council recommends that WHEDA continue investing in housing that is integrated, so people with disabilities can live in the mainstream of their communities.

Please let the Council know if we can in any way help you achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

JorJan Borlin
Chairperson