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Delay Is Ordered in Home Closing

By CLARE ANSBERRY

The closing of a group home for five adults with developmental disabilities, originally scheduled for Tuesday, has been delayed until next Monday, while the nonprofit agency operating the home studies other options.

The home and its residents were featured in a [page-one article](#) in The Wall Street Journal on Friday.

John Foppe, executive director of Breese, Ill.-based Community Link, which runs the home, said he received calls and emails from readers wanting to know how they could help keep the facility open.

The agency said it could no longer afford to run the home, which is located in Highland, Ill. Its main source of funds, the cash-strapped state of Illinois, owed the agency \$1.4 million. Community Link had reduced costs and made other cuts before deciding it had to close the home.

The five residents, who had formed a family unit over the years, were to be split up and moved to three other homes. One Journal reader in Florida offered her home so the five adults could remain together, according to Community Link. Several people had made donations through FirstGiving.com.

"We have decided to hold off with moving the clients for a week so we can explore these developing possibilities," Mr. Foppe said.

Mr. Foppe said he isn't sure the home would be viable long term. The state's current funding structure for providing residential services to those with developmental disabilities favors larger settings, even though experts in the field say smaller settings are better at offering privacy, choice and independence. The state's Division of Developmental Disabilities is studying ways to restructure the funding mechanisms for those services to address that situation.

Illinois came in last -- 51st -- among all states and the District of Columbia in providing small residential settings for people with developmental disabilities, according to the 2008 State of the States in Developmental Disabilities compiled by the University of Colorado. About 30% of Illinois residents with developmental disabilities live in homes with six people or fewer, compared with a national average of 70%.

In terms of fiscal effort -- spending for such community services per \$1,000 of statewide personal income -- Illinois ranks 43rd.

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