

2021 Legislative Priorities

FEDERAL

Monitor proposals that adversely impacts people with disabilities and send out timely action alerts.



Protect pre-existing condition mandate for Healthcare.



Support assistance to states to offset revenue losses.

WASHINGTON STATE

The solution to the budget deficit in Washington State cannot be solved by relying on budget cuts alone. We must have a mix of new revenue and targeted reductions in order to maintain the human services safety net that so many people rely on.

"The results of COVID have had devastating effects on state revenues. The 15% budget reduction proposals asked for by Governor Inslee have dire effects on humans and the human services safety net. The DDA eligibility reduction is a draconian way to address a budget deficit with the possibility of vulnerable people not having a roof over their head and losing jobs. This is a long term solution to a short term problem as state revenue has already started to recover."

Proposed cuts to DDA eligibility may leave 8,100 individuals without supported living services, personal care services and employment services. This will cause crisis, shift costs to other parts of state government and eliminate 10 years of progress helping people live more productive lives. 14,000 people with intellectual & developmental disabilities are already waiting for services.



Washington State should pursue federal Medicaid match for state funds appropriated for Early Intervention Services.

"Statewide primary funding was transferred from OSPI to DCYF in September 2020. This step was about 8 years in the making and maximized the amount of funding going to direct services. Advocates have said all along that this would be the next logical step after funding was transferred to increase funding for EI services."



Access Federal Medicaid match funding for Early Intervention Services. Washington State should pursue federal Medicaid match for state funds appropriated for Early Intervention Services.

Believing In Abilities. Building a Stronger Future.

Supporting recruitment and retention of qualified professionals to provide quality early intervention services to infants and toddlers.

“Early Intervention Providers have a difficult time recruiting qualified specialists including Occupational, Physical and Speech Therapists to help infants and toddlers reach developmental milestones.”



Support a funding structure that can offer competitive wages, benefits and a tuition reimbursement program or other incentives that will encourage qualified providers to enter the Early Intervention Service System.

Increase the number of young adults with disabilities that are engaged in employment services and working one year after graduation.

“This priority is the result of research and is a stepping stone to providing employment services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities prior to age 21. Our target is a 3% increase over a 5 year period with no reduction in funding for HS grads. This justifies the investment our state has made in individuals throughout their school years with an outcome that has a return on investment for the individual and government.”



Maintain investments in young adults

Support DDA budget request for 878 students with disabilities transition from high school to have the opportunity to have a job and higher quality of life.

Support the recommendations of the Transition Collaborative

Additional funding for “School To Work” Models
Regional Interagency Transition Networks Proposal
Data Share Agreements and System Navigation Supports

Maintain Employment Services to people with disabilities.

“Washington State is ranked 41st in the nation for spending on behalf of individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. The way out of this economic downturn is for people to get back to work, people with disabilities should be a part of this!”



Preserve current DDA eligibility to maintain employment for individuals.



Do not cut vendor rates as providers are already struggling to absorb impacts of COVID and have not received cost of living increases for years.

Eliminate Sub Minimum Wage Certificates for people with disabilities

People with disabilities can legally be paid less than the minimum wage in Washington State.



Sub minimum wage is a historical exemption and it is time to see people with disabilities as fully contributing citizens who are eligible for the same protections as any other employees.

HB 1706 was proposed and made it to the Senate Floor in 2019 Legislative Session. In the end the bill was amended to only apply to state employees. Several Legislators are interested in proposing a bill to eliminate sub minimum again in 2021.

Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maryland have already adopted legislation to phase out sub minimum wage for people with disabilities.

As of August, 2018, 450 people in Washington State were paid sub minimum wage. 6% of those authorized for employment/day services.

Pre-Vocational Services are phased out in Washington State as of May 2019.

Sub minimum wage is already eliminated in King Co.

Many advocates including People 1st, SAIL, DRW, Arc and other national organizations support the elimination of sub-minimum wage.

Impacts to people's benefits are being addressed at the federal and state level.