

Federal Funding and Fiscal Policy

Address the significant unmet needs of people with disabilities and families by ensuring federal support necessary to meet the vital human needs of people with disabilities and by increasing and expanding the federal investment in research, education, training, and support and service programs that enable them to live and work as independently as possible in the community. These programs include:

- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD).
- Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LENDs) programs funded through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)'s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB).
- Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRCs), funded through the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD).
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD).
- Autism research, interdisciplinary training, and services authorized through the Combating Autism Act.
- Disability provisions within Title VII of the Higher Education Opportunity Act.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including the Early Intervention and Early Childhood Programs and Part D national programs that support the Part B state grant programs.
- Assistive Technology Act of 2004.

111th Congress Legislative Priorities

Developmental Disabilities Act

Reauthorize the Developmental Disabilities Act to extend the mission of UCEDDs to address the needs of persons with a broad range of lifelong disabilities.

Expand the areas of emphasis to include postsecondary education.

Provide a formula grant to every state for the Family Support Program under the Act with a separate appropriations line item.

Support federal funding for self-advocacy leadership activities.

Continue and enhance Title III: preparation of Direct Care Professionals.

Community Services and Supports

Mandate coverage of community-based services and supports within Medicaid. Improve the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services State Plan Option and incentivize use of community-based services.

Increase wages and benefits of direct support workers in the community.

Create a national, premium-based, non-means-tested insurance program to improve financing of long-term services.

Expand interdisciplinary training and community services for children and adults with autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities.

Provide additional resources for family supports, such as the Lifespan Respite Care Act, National Family Caregiver Support Program, and the Developmental Disabilities Act.

Reauthorize the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and strengthen primary prevention activities.

Expand the Family Medical Leave Act to cover more workers and provide paid leave.

Health

Ensure that individuals with disabilities have accessible, affordable, and comprehensive high quality health care that addresses physical and mental health needs.

Increase interdisciplinary training of health professionals in the provision of services to persons with disabilities across the lifespan.

Expand health promotion efforts to increase wellness and prevent secondary conditions associated with disability.

Improve transitions of youth with disabilities from pediatric to adult health care systems.

Improve coverage, reimbursement, and delivery of dental services for children and adults with disabilities.

Establish accessibility standards for medical diagnostic equipment.

Require public and private insurance coverage of medically necessary foods to treat inherited metabolic disorders.

Ensure adequate public and private insurance coverage for the diagnosis, treatment, and interventions of autism spectrum disorders.

Phase-out the current two-year waiting period for Medicare coverage for people with disabilities.

Research and Data Collection

Invest in a broad range of research and evaluation across federal agencies to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

Strengthen training of young researchers to conduct a broad range of basic and translational research.

Ensure continued funding for the National Children's Study to examine the effects of the environment on children's health and development.

Improve national data collection on the prevalence, well-being, and needs of individuals with developmental and other disabilities and their families.

Employment

Reauthorize and strengthen the Workforce Investment Act to better support people with disabilities and their families.

Increase resources for supported employment, workforce development programs, transition programs, and model program development.

Facilitate the use of work incentives, including model demonstrations, to integrated employment.

Exempt the AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps program payments for determining Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) eligibility and benefits.

Education

Reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)) and continue to align with IDEA to ensure accountability of all students.

Support training and research initiatives to enhance effective transition services from secondary to postsecondary education and employment.

Expand the use of transition planning to assist students with disabilities to enter postsecondary programs leading to integrated employment.

Ensure students with intellectual disabilities have access to postsecondary education, work study programs, and Pell grants.

Expand and improve in-service and pre-service personnel preparation under Part D of IDEA, NCLB, and the Higher Education Act.

Social Security

Support development of interdisciplinary teams of clinicians to assist adjudicators with eligibility determinations for disability benefits.

Require the Social Security Administration (SSA) to minimize overpayments by establishing a more efficient and effective system to collect earnings reports and adjustments.

Secure appropriations for SSA to reduce backlog and to build capacity to authorize model demonstrations.