

Plain Language: AUCD Disability Policy Priorities 2021



COVID-19 Relief

The health and economic problems caused by COVID-19 are often worse for people with disabilities than people without disabilities¹.

- Give people with disabilities, their families, and the people who work with them a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible.
- Help people with disabilities live in the community with Home and Community-Based Services rather than in nursing homes.
- Protect the education rights of students with disabilities and their families during COVID-19.



Healthcare

People with disabilities of all ages have to overcome many challenges to receive good healthcare services and stay in good health².

- Provide more money and resources to improve healthcare systems that support people with disabilities.
- Lower the cost of medicine to make it easier for people with disabilities who need it.
- Advocate for flu shots, COVID-19 shots, and other vaccines to protect the health of people with disabilities, their families, and the workers who support them.
- Help health and community organizations to better understand and respect the needs of people with disabilities.
- Provide better access to good mental health services for people with disabilities.



Education

Education laws like the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA) provide important rights, services, and protections for students with disabilities and their families.

¹ <https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20060780>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/relatedconditions.html>

- Pass the Keeping All Students Safe Act ([KASSA](#)) so that students with disabilities can be safe in school.
- Make sure that K-12 schools have all of the money and resources they need to best support students with disabilities.
- Support college programs for students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.
- Renew the Assistive Technology Act of 1998, which helps students with disabilities get the technology supports they need.



Workforce and Employment

People with disabilities have a harder time finding good paying jobs than people without disabilities. Over 100,000 people with disabilities continue to work in sheltered, separated workshops for money below the [minimum wage](#)³.

- Support the [Transformation to Competitive Employment Act](#) that allows employers to pay workers with disabilities below minimum wage.
- Provide money and resources to support the direct support professionals (DSP) workforce.



Social Justice

The disability community includes people of all races, genders, sexual orientations, and other identities.

- Pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which supports additional voting protections and rights.
- Collect information on how race affects how people with disabilities receive supports and services.
- Make sure the rights and needs of people with disabilities are included in all areas of federal and state legislation.



Appropriations

All AUCD network centers and programs are affected by the annual federal [budget and appropriations](#) process.

- Continue to advocate for funding for AUCD's programs:
 - University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities;
 - Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities;
 - Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers;
 - Projects of National Significance; and
 - Transition Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.

³ <https://www.usccr.gov/files/2020-09-17-Subminimum-Wages-Report.pdf>