



The Disability Community Budget Priorities

PA State Budget 2026/2027

The disability community came together to identify key funding needs in the state budget. Our goal is to ensure all people with disabilities have access to services they need, the opportunity to live in the community, and the freedom to make their own choices. The participating organizations agreed to the following priorities.

1. Maintain Medicaid services.
2. Provide fair wages for all workers.
3. End waiting lists for services.
4. Ensure access to education, housing, transportation, and employment.



#MedicaidIsMoreThanMedicine

As new rules are implemented, people with disabilities, their families, and the workforce that supports them must be protected from harm. Medicaid pays for essential in-home services to keep people healthy and safe through Home and Community-Based Services.

Waivers offer direct support, transportation, employment, therapies, and more. Living in the community is a human and civil right. As changes come – People with disabilities need to keep our homes, our supports, and our healthcare.

The Disability Budget Coalition Asks:

1. Protect essential services.
2. Ensure fair and consistent eligibility.
3. Maintain the hours people need to live and work in their communities.
4. Eliminate waiting lists and ensure timely access to supports.
5. Promote community living and prevent institutionalization.

Department of Human Services

Office of Developmental Programs (ODP)

The proposed funding will maintain current services. The coalition supports:

- \$77 million for home and community-based waiver programs.
- \$30 million for Waiting List Initiative – serving 1,250 new people statewide.

Office of Long-Term Living (OLTL)

The proposed OLTL budget does not include increases needed to stabilize the attendant and direct care workforce. Without action, people with disabilities risk losing staff, losing hours, and losing the support they need to live at home and in the community of their choice. Advocates ask for funding to increase direct care workers' wages:

- Increase wages in the CHC waiver, OBRA waiver, and Act 150 program by \$3 per hour to agency model provider rates.
- Align agency model workers' wages with those in the Participant Directed model which received an increase last year.

Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS)

The proposed budget will continue the current program. There are no increases to the county funds. The Coalition supports:

- \$13.9 million increase to continue current program.
- \$3.2 million increase in funding for 40 CHIPPs to serve individuals ready for discharge from State Hospitals in the community.

Ensure access to housing, transportation, education, and employment!

Department of Education

Bureau of Special Education Services (BSE)

The \$50 million proposed by the administration falls short of the cost of inflation and the analysis of need by leading experts.

- Advocates ask for an increase of \$72.9 million for special education funding.
 - Addresses shortfalls and increasing student needs.
 - Invest in inclusive education and ensure access to mandated services.

Infant and Toddler Early Intervention (EI)

Advocates ask for increased funding of \$116 million to serve more children and families and to stabilize the workforce.

- EI funding will serve additional children and reduce long term special education costs and will implement rate increases from 2025 study.

Department of Community and Economic Development

Advocates support the proposal to create a Deputy Secretary for Housing within the department to coordinate programs and implement plans to increase affordable and accessible housing statewide. Coalition members support funding for these essential programs:

- Homeowners' Emergency Mortgages Assistance Program
- Tenant-based rental assistance
- PA Housing Finance Agency
- Keystone Communities Program
- Whole-home Repairs Program

Advocates ask to expand the Supportive Housing Pilot in the Office of Developmental Programs.

The pilot saves money compared to residential services and shows positive outcomes.

Enacting legislation (HB 700) will ensure ongoing resources are available to expand this model statewide and make it permanent.



Department of Labor and Industry

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)

An increase of \$1 million for vocational rehabilitation services is proposed in next year's budget. Currently, OVR has implemented the "Order of Selection", or a waiting list for employment services.

- We support funding increases to end waiting lists for employment services and the \$1 million increase for vocational rehabilitation services.

Department of Transportation

We support the proposed public transit investment to support people with disabilities who rely on public transportation.

- PennDOT's recent Shared Ride Study (People with Disabilities and Seniors) indicates that the system has a funding gap.
- Amtrak service disability (ADA) station upgrades must continue.

Coalition Members and Supporting Organizations

The Arc of Pennsylvania
Institute on Disabilities at Temple University
Liberty Resources, Inc.
Project Beyond Diagnosis
Speaking for Ourselves
Pennsylvania Statewide Independent Living Council
Roads to Freedom Center for Independent Living (RTFCIL)
Vision for Equality, Inc.
Joan Steinberg, Family Member and Brain Injury Advocate
The PA Waiting List Campaign
Disability Rights Pennsylvania
The Provider Alliance
PA Inclusive
PA Coalition for HCBS

