

# DISABILITY FUNDING

## BACKGROUND

It is in the nation's interest to provide adequate funding for programs that support people with disabilities to live independent and self-directed lives in the community.

One of Congress' main responsibilities is providing federal agencies with funding to pay for the programs they run. This process is called appropriations.

Federal agencies use their funding to provide education, employment, housing, family support, research, transportation, and many other important programs.

Federal programs provide essential supports and services for people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives.

Congress should fully fund programs under the: (1) the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (the DD Act), and (2) the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## ISSUES

### **Fully Fund Developmental Disability (DD) Act Programs**

DD Act programs required by law include:

- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils)
- Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As)
- University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs)
- Projects of National Significance (PNS)

These programs work together to support the needs of people with disabilities by:

- Creating programs and advocating for policies that empower individuals with developmental disabilities;
- Playing a critical role in quality assurance and as innovators in the development of community programs and solutions;
- Providing training and technical assistance, research, evaluation, and analysis;
- Sharing information and resources with people with disabilities, their families, government agencies, and providers;
- Guarding against abuse; advocating for rights; and ensuring access and accountability in health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, voting, and within the juvenile and criminal justice systems; and

- Investing in innovative demonstration projects, including collecting and analyzing data on people with developmental disabilities, such as where they live, where they work, the wages they earn, and the costs and outcomes of long-term services and supports.

## **Fully Fund Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

When IDEA was passed in 1975, Congress promised to provide states with 40% of the “excess cost” of educating students with disabilities. Congress has never come close to this number. In 2024, the funding level was about 11% of the cost, leaving states and localities to fill the funding gap.

There are three major funding components to IDEA:

- **Part B (majority of funding):** Grants to states for **school-aged children** and children in preschool
- **Part C:** Grants to states for **early intervention programs** for infants and toddlers (birth through age 2) with disabilities or developmental delays
- **Part D:**
  - Grants to operate **Parent Training and Information Centers**, which help train and support parents of children with disabilities
  - Grants to schools, colleges, and universities to train new and existing educators to support students with disabilities—often referred to as **“personnel preparation”**

## **WHAT SHOULD CONGRESS DO**

- Fully fund the DD Act programs.
- Support full funding for IDEA programs.
- Ensure that budget and appropriations laws provide adequate funding that supports people with disabilities in the community.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT**

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 Association of University Centers on Disabilities at (301) 588-8252 • Autism Society at (301) 657-0881  
 Caring Across Generations at info@caringacross.org • Disability Belongs at Action@DisabilityBelongs.org  
 National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals at 518-605-7160  
 Self Advocates Becoming Empowered at SABEnation@gmail.com TASH at (202) 817-3264 • The Arc at (800) 433-5255  
 United Cerebral Palsy at (800) 872-582