

# DISABILITY FUNDING

## BACKGROUND

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

Federal disability programs help people with disabilities live **independent, self-directed lives in the community**—supporting education, employment, housing stability, family supports, and protections of basic rights.

A core responsibility of Congress is **appropriations**—providing annual funding to federal agencies to operate these programs.

## ISSUES

### Fully Fund Developmental Disability (DD) Programs, such as:

- 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)
- Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program (Autism CARES Act)

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 trusted information and resources with people with disabilities, their families, government agencies, and providers;
- Protect civil and human rights by investigating abuse and neglect, ensuring access, and advancing accountability across systems (health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, voting, and criminal and juvenile justice);
- 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 supports and services;

- Provide leadership training to interdisciplinary health professionals to be able to screen, diagnose, and develop evidence-based interventions.

## **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 2025, 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 and stable funding that supports people with disabilities in the community.

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

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at (202) 387-1968  
 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