



Attorneys for special needs planning.

Supporting Individuals with Disabilities: Urgent Policy Priorities

We Have Solutions to Support Our Families and Communities

More than **60 million Americans**—or **18% of the U.S. population**—live with a disability. As life expectancies increase and diagnoses rise, the demand for services continues to outpace availability.

- **1 in 6 children** (ages 3–17) has a developmental disability.
- **1 in 35 children** has been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder.
- Many individuals with disabilities require long-term support to live independently and thrive in their communities.
- We have identified successful programs and services to support our families, but we need funding for them.

We Can Address the Workforce Shortage Now

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (2023):

- 497,354 individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities are on state waitlists for home and community-based services (HCBS).
- Nearly 75% of case management service providers report difficulty connecting people to essential supports due to critical workforce shortages.
- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide vital assistance with daily living, employment, and community integration. However, chronic underfunding and low wages have led to a severe shortage, jeopardizing the well-being of people who depend on these services.

Congress Must Act Now

We urge Congress to take immediate action to:

- ✓ Increase federal funding for **Medicaid HCBS programs** to reduce waitlists.
- ✓ Pass legislation to **strengthen the direct care workforce** through higher wages, workforce development initiatives, and mandate states allow parents to be compensated for services provided through these programs.
- ✓ Ensure sustainable long-term investments in **community-based services** so individuals with disabilities can live with dignity and independence.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities!