

## 2019-2021 Biennial Budget Recommendations for Wisconsinites with Disabilities.

Disability Rights Wisconsin supports the following recommendations in the Governor's 2019-2021 Biennial Budget. These programs and services are vitally important to Wisconsin adults and children with disabilities and support opportunities to live, work, learn and enjoy life in the community.

### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Every family deserves to be supported. Families of children with disabilities need not face waiting lists, barriers, or a lack of information about where to turn for help.



#### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Eliminate waiting lists and fund services for every child with a significant disability, who is eligible, for the Children's Long-Term Support waiver.
- Implements a statewide contract for children's long-term care intake which includes family navigators, benefits specialists and children's disability ombudsman.
- Expand Birth to 3 Program funding for kids exposed to lead.

### EDUCATION

Children with disabilities have experienced an erosion of quality special education services due to flat funding for special education categorical aid over the last decade while costs have increased by 60%.



#### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Increase special education funding by \$600 million by funding the reimbursement to local school districts for special education from 24% to 60%.
- Increase mental health funding in schools by \$63M for access to mental health services for school age children, additional services staff, and training for staff and parents.
- Increases the transition readiness grant to provide \$3.5 million annually to prepare students with disabilities for community employment and independence after high school.

### JUVENILE JUSTICE

Wisconsin youth with disabilities are overrepresented in the juvenile justice system.



#### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Returns 17-year-olds from adult court system to the juvenile court system and provide \$5 million in funding for counties.
- Increase funding for redesign of the youth justice system, for smaller, more community-based facilities, allowing the closing of Lincoln Hills and Copper Lake.
- 14-bed expansion at the Mendota Juvenile Treatment Center for youth in the justice system.

### CAREGIVER CRISIS

In Wisconsin a shortage of professional direct care workers has created a crisis for people with disabilities, older adults, and their families. Low wages and lack of access to benefits are key reason for the shortage.



#### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates for personal care services by 1.5% per year.
- Increases rates paid to nursing homes/ intermediate care facilities by 2.5% per year.
- Provides an additional \$14.7 million per year to Family Care direct care providers.
- Expands Family Medical Leave by reducing employer size to 25 and including more types of family members.

## ADULT CORRECTIONS

Individuals with mental illness are overrepresented in our criminal justice system. Estimated say over 50% of the prison and jail population have a history of mental illness or substance abuse.



### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Expands Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program statewide and increases capacity southeastern WI
- \$2 million for Treatment Alternatives and Diversion (TAD) Program Expansion:
- Funds a new unit at the Wisconsin Resources Center to serve the mental health and alcohol and drug abuse needs of inmates at Department of Corrections.

## EMPLOYMENT

Employment is an important part of the life and every person who wants to work can work with the right supports including people with disabilities.



### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Automatic minimum wage increases but does not include subminimum wage and caregiving workforce
- Changes to Unemployment Compensation law to make it easier to get benefits.

## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation programs are important to an independent life in the community. Caregivers also often depend on public transportation to provide care.



### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Increases general transit aids by 10%
- \$6M increase to Specialized Transportation aids and a 10 % increase for paratransit aids.
- No Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) reform included
- Clarifies local governments can agree to work together on transit services that cross county or municipal borders.

## HOUSING

Many people with disabilities struggle to find accessible, affordable, housing. A high percentage of those who experience housing insecurity or homelessness have significant mental health needs.



### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- \$3.75 million to expands programs to relieve homelessness and promote Housing First from the recommendations from the Interagency Council on Homelessness.
- Recommendations includes grants for homeless prevention, case management to support diversion from the homeless system to housing, state shelter subsidy grant, case management services program, Skills Enhancement Program, Housing Navigation program and runaway and homeless youth shelters.

## MENTAL HEALTH

People need access to services and supports to address their mental health needs and support recovery.



### BUDGET RECOMMENDS:

- Increased Medicaid rates for physician's & medical clinics providing mental health, behavioral health and psychiatric services
- Creates a grant to fund five regional crisis stabilization centers.
- Provides some state funding for Medicaid crisis intervention services delivered by counties for treatment of mental illness, intellectual disability, substance abuse, and dementia.
- Creates a new medical admissions unit at Winnebago Mental Health Institute