

2021 Legislative Reception

January 27, 2021



Welcome!

Sponsoring Organizations

Office of Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Community Employment Alliance

Self-Advocates in Leadership

Allies in Advocacy

People First of Washington

Washington State
Developmental Disabilities
Council

The Arc of Washington
State

Governor's Committee
on Disability Issues and
Employment

Washington State
Rehabilitation Council

Washington State
Independent Living
Council



Agenda

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Zoom Basics (5 minutes)
- Overview of Cross-Disability Issues (45 minutes)
 - Transportation
 - Accessible and Affordable Housing-
 - Residential Supports
 - Employment
 - Community Access
 - Behavioral Health
 - Personal Care
- Questions and Discussion with Legislators (30 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)



Zoom Basics

- Microphones are muted and cameras are turned off.
- We are recording the webinar and will share a link after the event.
- You can access live captioning by clicking on “caption” at the bottom of your screen.
- Questions can be posted in the Q/A box, which will be monitored by our tech team. Due to time limitations, not all questions will be addressed.
- Please call or text:
 - If you experience ongoing technical difficulties.
 - If you wish to ask a question and feel more comfortable communicating via the telephone.



Zoom Basics

- One person speak at a time
- Identify yourself when speaking
- Use respectful language
- Use plain language and avoid acronyms



Transportation

Leigh Spruce &
Blake Geyen

Overview of Challenges and Priorities

- People with disabilities require transportation to live independently.
- There's a disparity between where people can afford to live and the availability of bus service.
- People with disabilities should have access to accessible transportation options 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- Transit funding relies heavily on regional sales tax.
- Available, affordable, and accessible rural transportation must be provided.
- Medicaid only allows transportation for medical appointments and to the nearest grocery store.



Accessible and Affordable Housing

Shawn Latham

Overview of Challenges and Priorities

- Average Rent in Puget Sound for 1 Bedroom is \$1,295
- Median prices of homes in WA is \$397,900 up from \$246,300 in 2010.
- It's hard for people on average incomes to pay rent & hard for some to get disability vouchers.
- Section 8 wait times are 2 to 3 years and longer for some Counties in Washington State
- 96.09% of all housing stock in the United States is not accessible to people with mobility impairments (Bo'sher et al., 2015)

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- Help support and finance more low income housing options.
- Increase the number of Senior & Disability Housing Choice Vouchers.
- Support and finance services to make current and new housing options more accessible.



Accessible and Affordable Housing, cont.

Heidi Hayward

Heidi's Story

- Domestic Violence shelters and homeless shelters are not accessible
- Disabled people need more access to DV shelters, not less.
- Housing agencies need more resources to be fully accessible
- The eviction moratorium made the lack of affordable housing even worse
- Less than 1% vacancy in Skagit County
- Counties need more money for emergency housing, especially during the pandemic



Residential Supports

Amal Grabinski

Overview of Challenges and Priorities

- Funding for increased costs related to COVID-19
- Wage stabilization for direct support professionals
- Supporting people to live in communities of their choosing

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- Affordable housing crisis impacts access to living options and qualified support staff
- Persistent outcome gaps between people with and without disabilities— employment, education, recreation, health, community inclusion and engagement
- Women of color make up the largest demographic of direct support professionals



Employment

Ivanova Smith

Overview of Challenges and Priorities

- Workers with disabilities getting paid equitably, at least minimum wage
- Abuse and segregation in the workplace
- Workers with disabilities getting restricted because of COVID

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- Because many people with disabilities are under-employed or unemployed, many are forced stay in poverty and are not paid equitable wages.
- Income caps on SSI also hinder them
- Many supports are tied to Medicaid



Picture of Ivanova getting first paycheck in a segregated job

Overview of Challenges and Priorities



Community Access

Karen Atwood

CULTURAL & LANGUAGE & AUDITORY BARRIERS Results in:

- Poor access to medical & behavioral care in our health system
- Lack of qualified medical and mental health interpreters or caregivers in Caregiver or individual provider services
- Lack of Adult family homes with 100 percent access (staff with sign language skills, assistive communication technology available, appropriate social support)
- Alienated and isolated deaf, deafblind, hard of hearing senior citizens in assistive living homes, adult family homes or nursing homes
- HIGH RISK for misdiagnosis from the comprehensive psychological & neuropsychological evaluations and forensic assessments, often results in catastrophically inaccurate placements
- Limited assistive communication technologies available in public places
- Limited or lack of inclusion in most policies and proclamations from the legislation and the office of governor's
- Lack of inclusion and equity on several levels of state wide services, government, education, legal and health.

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- Accept the fact that communication access is not cheap and should not be considered as **prohibitive cost** at the expense of individuals with hearing losses. Consider itemize communication access in the budget for each advocacy organization, state agencies and legislation
- Enhance community engagement with Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing and DeafPlus individuals

Being Deaf, Hard of Hearing or DeafBlind is a *cultural identity*, not merely a matter of hearing loss.



Community Access

Debra Kahn

Overview of Challenges and Priorities

- Barriers in receiving qualified interpreters with skills and knowledge of the DeafBlind culture and communication needs in our health system
- Challenges to safely cross many streets that do not have Accessible Pedestrian Signal (APS); lack of sidewalks means lack of choices on where to live; only ONE Orientation & Mobility trainer in WA knows American Sign Language means others have to use interpreters
- Need to hire DeafBlind Braille and Braille Tech teachers to provide Braille lessons and computer skills training for DeafBlind individuals aged 55 and over; websites and smartphone apps are not always accessible to Braille display users and DeafBlind with low vision

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- Accept the fact that communication access is not cheap and should not be considered as **prohibitive cost** at the expense of individuals with hearing losses. Consider itemize communication access in the budget for each advocacy organization, state agencies and legislation
- Enhance community engagement with Deaf, DeafBlind, Hard of Hearing and DeafPlus individuals
- ADA lacks Support Service Provider (SSP), Medical Communication Facilitator (MCF), Communication Facilitator as they provide essential communication access to DeafBlind individuals. ADA needs to revise to recognize and include SSP, MCF, CF. The outcome will be beneficial, cost effective and **non-time consuming advocacy!**



I want to maintain my autonomy which means I need the training to advance my employment opportunity and at the same time I want to feel safe to cross the streets on my own.

~Debra Kahn~



Behavioral Health

Richelle Madigan

The lack of intensive residential inpatient options for WA children:

- Traumatizes children & their families
- Creates public safety risks
- Costs millions of dollars in emergency care and out of state treatment expenses
- Disproportionately impacts BIPOC children
- Contributes to the disproportionate incarceration of disabled children
- Results in boarding of children in emergency rooms
- Creates long delays to access care for Medicaid families and limits timely access to those in upper income brackets



“If I can’t make [the system] work despite unbelievable privilege, I can’t even imagine how this is for families who face obstacles when they try to get help.”
Anna McCartney, parent



Fast Fact: WA has 92 residential beds or 6 beds/100,000 children.

If we assume we need only 1 bed/school district, we’d have at least 294 beds in our state.

Personal Care

Corinna Fale

Overview of Challenges and Priorities

- 21,668 people with Home Care Services just from DDA
- 71% of DDA clients live with family
- Hard to find providers especially qualified ones. There are not enough independent or agency providers.
- Providers often do not have enough training especially working with individuals with challenging behaviors or that have physical barriers.

Addressing the Issue through an Equity Framework

- More places like Baker View Apartments
- More training for providers who work with people with Physical barriers that use Hoyer lifts or other lift equipment
- More in-home care hours
- Better pay for all Home Care Providers
- More accountability for providers who break rules or laws especially at agencies.



Questions and Discussion with Legislators

- Please type your question in the Q/A box.
- If you prefer to share your question via telephone, please call.
- We will address as many questions as possible during our available time.
- Participants are encouraged to contact their legislators to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas.



Resources

Legislative Advocacy

Helpful links that may help with effective participation in the Legislative Process in Washington State when testifying or visiting the Legislature

[Find Your Legislator](#)

[Glossary of Legislative Terms](#)

[House and Senate Member Rosters](#)

[How a Bill Becomes a Law](#)

[How to Testify in Committee](#)

[Overview of the Legislative Process](#)

[Washington State Elected Officials](#)

[Washington State Government Agencies, Boards and Commissions](#)

[TVW - Washington State's Public Affairs Network](#)



Thank you!

We will be sending a post-event survey to get feedback to make future events even stronger.

