



Developmental Disabilities **2023 State Legislative Priorities**

Thank You for Your Continued Support

King County thanks the Legislature for its continued support for children with developmental delays or disabilities, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), and their families.

King County's intentional efforts to become an anti-racist county includes a commitment to center our work on the communities of People with Disabilities, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. King County used a community informed approach to develop the following 2023 priorities.



King County Developmental Disabilities Legislative Priorities for 2023:



1. Increase funding for services that are linguistically accessible and culturally relevant.



2. Fund the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Employment and Day Rate Study recommendations.



3. Improve access and eliminate barriers to quality supports and services for families with young children with delays and disabilities.



4. Fund services for students leaving high school.



5. Invest in the Housing Trust Fund and other revenue sources to support community-based housing solutions.



6. Invest in intellectual and developmental disabilities behavioral health supports.

Transforming How We Do Business

King County continues to hear from Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities on the need for the county to co-create systemic changes that result in equitable outcomes for these communities, especially individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) or delays and their families.



Increase Funding for Linguistically Accessible & Culturally Relevant Services

The Intersection of Disability and Race

Many residents with disabilities who are also Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) have reported to King County that they face barriers to getting their needs met from the developmental disabilities, healthcare, behavioral health, and education systems, and that they experience racial, cultural, and language biases.

Learn more about the demographic trends of King County [HERE](#).

28%

of King County residents over the age of five speak a language other than English at home.

Nearly
40%

of these residents report they do not speak English very well or at all.

23%

of King County's population arrived here from another country as of 2018

Priority

Fund Strategies that Increase Language Access



- Fund service providers to ensure all families, regardless of income and insurance, can receive interpretation services.
- Invest in the translation of all necessary developmental disability services documents in each family's preferred language.



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Representation lifts the individual's and families' burden of needing to explain culture and racial experiences, and it allows for open dialogue that is relevant, relatable, supportive and without implicit bias.



Fund the DSHS Employment and Day Rate Study Recommendations

Priority

Increase rates to stabilize provider networks to ensure community members access to services.

Employment services help people with IDD find and keep competitive jobs in the community. Community Inclusion Services provide opportunities to engage in community-based activities.

Ensure livable wages to recruit and retain Employment and Day Program staff; **the reimbursement rate has remained the same since 2011 while the cost of living has increased 20%.**



The statewide staffing shortage has resulted in reduced or suspended services for many people with disabilities. **Almost 67% of provider agencies statewide are at service capacity due to staffing challenges.**

Priority

Increase the County Administration Rate to 10%



30
Years

- The County administration rate for developmental disabilities has **remained at 7 percent for 30 years.**
- During this time, the complexity and scope of work has changed significantly.
- Additional resources are needed to support quality services.



Improve Access and Eliminate Barriers to Services for Families with Young Children with Delays and Disabilities

Priority

Eliminate families' out of pocket costs at the federal level while allowing providers to bill private insurance. Washington is one of only two states that requires parents to pay out of pocket costs for Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Part C (ESIT) Services.



Remove Cost Burdens on Families

Not having access to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) puts children with delays and/ or disabilities at a huge disadvantage. Out-of-pocket costs for ESIT services are an inequitable barrier to participation in services.

Increase Medicaid Reimbursement Rates for Developmental Disabilities

Medicaid reimbursement rates are significantly below the costs of providing developmental services for children. Increasing these rates helps to ensure that service providers are fully funded to provide the developmental services under the federal IDEA.

Fully Fund Special Education Services

Special education services are required under IDEA and state law. Underfunded services for children transitioning from ESIT services to school district services are resulting in dropped and delayed access to services.



Fully Fund the *Complex Needs Grant*

Childcare facilities are often financially unable to support children with disabilities or complex needs. The *Complex Needs Grant* gives funds to licensed childcare programs to improve accessibility.

In its first year, the grant received applications totaling **\$86 million**, but only had **\$7.35 million** in funding. Fully funding this grant will help our families.



Fund Services for Students Leaving High School

Priority

Fund Basic Plus Waiver services to support employment, health, and safety needs in the community. These services are essential to students transitioning to adulthood.

Maintain the Gain: Build on Existing State and King County Investments

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), schools serve students with I/DD from age 18 through the school year students turn 21. This investment helps students with I/DD prepare for employment, ongoing learning, and community life. It is also when students can participate in DDA's Job Foundation program as well as the King County School-to-Work (S2W) program. Participants in these programs are four times more likely to remain employed and be included in the community after high school.

Create a New Generation Of Taxpayers

Individual Supported Employment services for people with I/DD after age 21 require Basic Plus Waiver funding. Employment services are cost effective, create a new generation of taxpayers, help establish independence, and can reduce dependency on other long-term government supports.

Support is Needed for Community Participation

The Basic Plus Waiver offers a variety of services not available through other resources. These include Community Inclusion, transportation, behavioral health, behavior support, caregiving, and necessary therapy services.





Invest in the Housing Trust Fund and Other Community-Based Housing Solutions

Priority

Invest in the Housing Trust Fund and other revenue sources to support community-based housing solutions. These investments are needed to ensure people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families have stable housing that is accessible, equitable, safe, and affordable.



A Statewide Affordable Housing Crisis

An estimated **37,000 adults** with I/DD are facing housing insecurity.

Aging Caregivers Face a Dilemma

Statewide, there are **14,856 adults** enrolled in DDA who are living with a relative, including **288 clients over 62 years**. Aging caregivers don't know where their adult family members with I/DD will live or who will provide their care when living at home is no longer an option.

Accessibility and Diversity of Housing are Key

Investments in housing are needed to build a diverse stock of affordable homes. A wide range of options is important and should include scattered site housing, Adult Family Homes, single family homes, and apartment units in locations across the community.



Support Services are Needed to Live as Independently as Possible

Housing stability depends on accessible, affordable homes and also support services. Supported Living and other services funded by DDA help individuals live in their own homes and are essential, especially for people transitioning to their communities from institutions or hospital settings



Invest in I/DD Behavioral Health Supports

Individuals and families need a range of available behavioral health supports. The response to the growing behavioral health crisis must include I/DD informed comprehensive and accessible options in addition to out-of-home services.



Behavioral Health Crisis Highlights I/DD Needs

People with I/DD are part of the growing behavioral health crisis, which has highlighted the need for I/DD informed behavioral health services in the community.

Providers need the training to support the complex physical and behavioral health needs of I/DD clients, resulting in clients with I/DD continuing to be hospitalized even when medically cleared for discharge.

People with I/DD experience barriers in accessing the behavioral health prevention, intervention, treatment, and follow-up services and supports that are available in the community.



Priority

1. Ensure therapies are designed for people with I/DD.
2. Fund alternatives to long-term hospitalization. It is costly and not meant to be a long-term solution.
3. Invest in community-based crisis stabilization and other housing support services.
4. Invest in a continuum of integrated behavioral health services for people with I/DD. Bridge service gaps and expand services.