

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.

To eliminate disparities and ensure cultural and language supports are in place to serve King County's diverse population, we ask legislators to use a racial, social, and economic justice approach in developing policy.

Preserve and Protect the Safety Net for Individuals with Disabilities Across Their Lifespan

Recommended Actions:

- **Maintain** current eligibility criteria for state Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) paid services to ensure people with I/DD continue to access Medicaid State Plan and Waiver services including employment, community inclusion, respite, personal care, and residential services.
- **Maintain** interpreter services provided by the State Health Care Authority (HCA), including video interpretation services to ensure effective delivery of essential services.

As a cost savings measure, DDA has proposed changes to eligibility standards to reduce the number of individuals receiving DDA paid services statewide. Approximately 2,200 individuals in King County will be impacted, with an estimated 800 people at risk of losing employment or community inclusion services. DDA Medicaid Waiver services are necessary to maintain basic health, safety, and quality of life. Impacts of eligibility changes could include increased use of emergency services and hospitalizations, thus increasing costs in other state and locally funded programs and eroding the existing I/DD service infrastructure statewide.

HCA interpreter services are critical for Medicaid eligible, linguistically diverse populations to equitably access essential services. Roughly 27 percent of families using Early Support for Infants and Toddlers need access to video interpretation allowing the family, provider, and interpreter to be in separate locations for effective services.

Invest in Employment and Housing for People with Disabilities to Support Economic Recovery

Recommended Actions:

- **Protect** employment funding and ensure all State DDA eligible students leaving high school in 2021-2023 are added to the Basic Plus Waiver in order to receive employment and other needed services.
- **Increase** the supply of affordable housing, including housing for individuals with I/DD and their families, through investments that include \$250 million for the Housing Trust Fund.

Washington State's Employment First policy ensures people with I/DD have the opportunity to work. Employment services allow people with I/DD to participate in providing essential services to their communities and help drive Washington's efforts to rebuild its economy. To continue the contributions that people with I/DD make to the workforce, state investments in special education should ensure students leaving high school have access to employment services. All people with disabilities must also be paid at minimum wage or higher.

In addition, more investment in housing options and supportive housing services are needed. Affordable and accessible housing is essential to enable people with disabilities to contribute socially and economically to the communities where they live.

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