



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

P.O. Box 7222, Madison, Wisconsin 53707

February 17, 2021

Contacts:

Beth Swedeen, (608) 220-2924; beth.swedeen@wisconsin.gov

Lisa Pugh, (608) 422-4250; pugh@thearc.org

Kristin Kerschensteiner, (608) 267-0214; kitk@drwi.org

SURVIVAL COALITION SUPPORTS GOVERNOR'S INVESTMENTS IN THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

(MADISON) – The Wisconsin Survival Coalition of more than 25 disability organizations supports the investments in the state's disability community outlined in Governor Tony Evers' proposed biennial budget. We thank the Governor for listening to and incorporating the needs of people with disabilities and their families in this budget proposal.

Survival Coalition will continue to conduct an in-depth analysis of the Governor's budget and will provide additional comments on provisions that impact people with disabilities in the weeks ahead.

In brief, Survival Coalition supports:

- Various investments proposed to benefit family caregivers, including targeted family caregiver supports through Aging and Disability Resource Centers, an expansion of the Family Medical Leave Act provisions and improved hospital discharge instructions.
- Investments in the direct care workforce, including transparent rate setting and rate increases to various provider types that hire direct care workers to help bring the profession to a living wage.
- A commitment to children with significant disabilities to ensure that all eligible children are served and an enhanced investment in Birth to 3 programs. (We remain hopeful for a commitment to investment in Disability Resource Center for Children and Families.)
- A focus on Medicaid improvements that expand access to BadgerCare, autism treatment and dental care access as well as personal care services.
- Investments in mental health that include expanding the successful Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program, the creation of a behavioral health treatment program for those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind and adoption of a telehealth parity law to ensure equitable access for those with private insurance.

- Funding to expand programs that support employment opportunities for people with disabilities through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), including youth through Project SEARCH and school transition programs.
- Significant transportation investments that support non-drivers and those who rely on public transit and specialized transit in their communities and tribes.
- Education investments to support students with disabilities, including significantly increasing the state's special education funding support for local districts as well as mental health funding.
- Voting improvements that include funding automatic voter registration.

In addition to these items the Survival Coalition supports the Governor's efforts to address disparities and equity issues that have worsened through the pandemic.

Most proposed budget items impacting the disability community can be found in our [Survival 2021-23 Executive Budget Proposal – Initial Summary](#) document.

We look forward to working with the governor and legislature to find agreement and support for their constituents and all residents with disabilities in the state.

Real Lives, Real Work, Real Smart, Wisconsin
Investing in People with Disabilities