



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

131 West Wilson Street, Suite 700, Madison, Wisconsin 53703
(608) 267-0214 voice/tty • (608) 267-0368 fax

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WISCONSIN DROPS IN NATIONAL RATINGS OF QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES State Disability Organizations Make Recommendations for Improvement

Contact: Survival Coalition Co-Chairs

Maureen Ryan, Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers, Inc.; 608-444-3842
Beth Swedeen, WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities; 608-266-1166
Tom Masseur, Disability Rights Wisconsin; 608-267-0214

A new report which tracks the progress of community living standards for people with disabilities shows Wisconsin has dropped in rank from 20th to 27th in the nation over the past year. The United Cerebral Palsy's [Case for Inclusion Report](#), which has been published since 2006, examines data and outcomes for all 50 states and the District of Columbia (DC). The report ranks each state on a set of key indicators, including how people with disabilities live and participate in their communities, if they are satisfied with their lives and how easily the services and supports they need are accessed.

- Read the full report here: http://www.ucp.org/the-case-for-inclusion/2011/images/The%20Case%20for%20Inclusion%202012_Full%20Narrative_final%200.pdf
- Find state specific scorecards (including Wisconsin) here: http://www.ucp.org/the-case-for-inclusion/2011/state_scorecards.html

While Wisconsin ranks relatively high in its support of families with a member with a disability (12th), and reducing waiting lists (15th), the state ranks in the bottom half of the country in promoting productivity and employment opportunities (37th); in tracking quality and safety (31st); and promoting independence (28th).

Wisconsin's low employment ratings for people with disabilities can be tracked to its falling numbers in competitive and supported employment – options which improve the productivity of individuals with

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations is a cross-disability coalition of more than 40 state and local organizations and groups. For more than 20 years, Survival has been focused on changing and improving policies and practices that support people with disabilities of all ages to be full participants in community life.

disabilities, allow them to work in their communities, pay taxes and reduce reliance on public supports. Wisconsin's scorecard shows the state's investment in supported or competitive employment reduced from 16% to 13% from 2006 to 2009. The state lags behind the national average of 20%. More recent numbers compiled in the state show Wisconsin's community integrated employment rate for working age adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the long-term care system is just 14%. For people with physical disabilities this number is as low as 3%.

The state can also attribute a lower national ranking to its continued operation of two large state facilities which, according the report, house 449 residents at a cost of \$288,350 per person per year. Wisconsin's exceptional institutional spending continues while other states have reinvested resources in community supports for people with disabilities. As of 2010, 11 states have no state institutions to seclude those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia and DC. In addition, Minnesota closed its last remaining institution in June 2011, and another 12 states have only one institution each. Since 1960, 205 of 354 state institutions have been closed, according to the University of Minnesota's Research and Training Center on Community Living.

In addition, Wisconsin ranked low in its quality assurance measures for people with disabilities. The report's authors note it is critical for states to participate in a comprehensive quality assurance effort that can be benchmarked against the national average and to track a state's progress for critical person-level outcomes. In addition, adequate quality assurance for states like Wisconsin who offer managed care must ensure provider accountability.

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations recommends that Wisconsin policymakers take immediate action to reverse backward trends and improve Wisconsin's national standing. Specifically, Wisconsin should:

- Develop a long-range plan to consolidate the two statewide developmental disabilities institutions (Southern and Central Centers).
- Enact an Executive Order and Legislation to make Wisconsin an Employment First state.
- Continue the commitment to end waiting lists for children by funding an additional 1,000 children during the next biennium.
- Expand the state's long-term supports programs - Family Care/IRIS/Partnership/PACE - statewide to all 72 counties.
- Provide targeted training and support to workers who provide employment supports to people with the most significant disabilities.
- Reverse the state's trend in home and community-based waivers toward more congregate living (group homes etc.) while directing dollars to community supported living.

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