



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

P.O. Box 7222, Madison, Wisconsin 53707

2021-23 Executive Budget Proposal – Initial Summary of Disability Provisions 2/17/21

Home and Community Based Long-Term Care and Family Caregivers

Survival Coalition supports:

- (DHS) ADRCs. The Governor recommends providing funding to aging and disability resource centers to: (a) expand caregiver support services to address the needs of caregivers of adults with disabilities who are age 19 to 59; (b) require aging and disability resource centers to designate a caregiver coordinator and create a marketing plan to increase knowledge of programs available; (c) expand the tribal aging and disability resources specialist program, which provides liaison services between the tribes and the aging and disability resource centers to ensure that tribal members receive culturally appropriate information and can comfortably and effectively access long-term care programs and services; and (d) expand the tribal disability benefit specialist program, which is a contractual partnership between the department and the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council to provide assistance and advocacy services to adult tribal members with disabilities.
- (DHS) Hospital Services to Caregivers. The Governor recommends requiring hospitals to provide a patient or a patient's legal guardian with an opportunity to designate a caregiver who will receive instruction regarding assistance with the patient's care after discharge. The Governor also recommends adding designated caregivers to the list of individuals permitted access to information directly relevant to that individual's involvement in the patient's care if the patient or the patient's legal guardian provides consent.
- (DHS) Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral, The Governor recommends requiring the department to conduct a one-year pilot in FY22 of the Tailored Caregiver Assessment and Referral protocol, which is a care management protocol designed to support family members who are providing care to adults of any age with chronic or acute health conditions.
- (DHS) Family and Guardian Training. The Governor recommends establishing mandatory initial training requirements for guardians. The Governor also recommends providing funding for the department to award a grant to an organization with expertise in state guardianship law to

develop, administer and conduct the required guardian training in a plain language, Web-based, on-line training module that can be accessed for free, with printed versions available for free upon request.

- (DHS) Alzheimer's Family Caregiving Support. The Governor recommends providing additional community aid funding for the Wisconsin Alzheimer's Family and Caregiver Support Program. The Governor also recommends expanding financial eligibility for the program by increasing the maximum joint income an individual and the individual's spouse may earn per year from \$48,000 to \$55,000.

Workforce

Survival appreciates the Governor's inclusion of funding increases to strengthen Wisconsin's essential direct care workforce. If these budget proposals are passed, they could lead to increased wages, additional training supports, increased quality service options and bring Wisconsin one step closer to truly impacting the ongoing long-term care workforce crisis. Specifically, the Governor's budget calls for:

- (DHS) Home- and Community-Based Waiver Programs Rate Bands. The Governor recommends directing the department to develop a statewide rate band that would establish equitable and sustainable minimum rates for home- and community-based long-term care supports. The Governor also recommends requiring the department to include a proposal to implement the statewide rate band in its 2023-25 biennial budget request.
- (DHS) Direct Support Professional Training. The Governor recommends directing the department to develop and implement a pilot program to provide person-centered direct support professional training to achieve consistent standards of healthcare practice. The Governor also recommends directing the department to develop a career ladder for caregivers leading to potential certification as a nurse aide.
- (DHS) Direct Care Funding for Family Care. (\$40m 1st year, \$37M 2nd year) The Governor recommends providing funding to increase the direct care and services portion of the capitation rates the department provides to managed care organizations in recognition of the direct caregiver workforce challenges facing the state.
- (DHS) Direct Care Funding for Personal Care Services. (\$40m 1st year, \$37M 2nd year) The Governor recommends providing funding to increase support to direct care staff that provide medical services through personal care programs.
- (DHS) Home Care Provider Registry. The Governor recommends requiring the department to conduct a one-year pilot program to create a home care provider registry to support home- and community-based long-term care support programs and clients and vendors of care services. The Governor also recommends requiring the department to issue a request for proposals to select a vendor of the software platform for the registry.
- (DHS) Office of Caregiver Quality Staff. The Governor recommends providing four-year project positions to the Office of Caregiver Quality to conduct entity background checks, screen misconduct reports and conduct field investigations into misconduct allegations in regulated healthcare settings and programs.

Children's Long-Term Care and Other Children's Disability Medicaid Programs

Survival appreciates the Governor's request to serve all children with disabilities who are eligible for the children's long-term supports waiver, but is disappointed there is no investment in a statewide Disability Resource Center for Children and Families that would provide families with desperately needed information, assistance and advocacy services. This investment would reduce widening disparities in access to services across the state.

Survival supports DHS Expanding Access to the Birth to 3 Program. The Governor recommends increasing funding \$1.1 million in the Birth to 3 Program to expand services to eligible children who have a positive blood lead test above 5 micrograms per deciliter.

Medicaid

Survival Coalition supports:

- BadgerCare Expansion (design public option health plan could be a Medicaid Buy In, waiver authority, premium assistance between 138-200% FPL).
- (DHS) Authority to Submit Federal Waivers. The Governor recommends repealing legislative oversight of the federal waiver submittal process to preserve the constitutional authority of the executive branch, ensure the efficient management of the Medicaid program and provide timely benefits to Medicaid recipients.
- (DHS) Authority to Submit State Plan Amendments. The Governor recommends repealing legislative oversight of the state plan amendment process t
- (DHS) Medicaid Dental Access Incentive Payments. The Governor recommends increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates for dental providers who provide services to Medicaid and BadgerCare Plus patients to increase access to dental services under the Medicaid program.
- (DHS) Medicaid Autism Treatment Rate increase. The Governor recommends increasing expenditure authority to provide a rate increase for autism treatment services provided under the Medicaid program.

Mental Health

Survival Coalition supports the Governor's proposed investments in mental health services, including expansion of the Opening Avenues to Reentry Success (OARS) program, which reduces recidivism by supporting people with mental illness returning to the community through access to case management, housing, psychiatric treatment, medication, and other assistance; establishes a behavioral health treatment program for those who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind to receive treatment directly from a behavioral health provider; and addresses access to telehealth services, including telepsychiatry, by adopting a telehealth parity law to ensure equitable access for those with private insurance.

Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

Employment

Survival supports the following:

- (DWD) Project SEARCH, The Governor recommends transferring \$250,000 GPR from the department's Wisconsin Fast Forward program to Project SEARCH to provide greater resources for young adults with disabilities.
- (DWD) Increase Vocational Rehabilitation Resources. The Governor recommends increasing funding for the state match for the Title 1B formula grant and providing 1.0 FTE position to continue to support vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with significant disabilities.
- (DWD) Family and Medical Leave. The Governor recommends expanding current state law, which provides 12 weeks of family and medical leave, as follows: (a) applying the law to employers with at least 25 employees, instead of 50 employees; (b) permitting leave to be taken to care for a grandparent, grandchild or sibling with a serious health condition; (c) expanding the definition of "qualifying exigency" to include deployment of a spouse or child, and an unforeseen or unexpected closure of a school or child care facility; (d) expanding the definition of "serious health condition" to include medical quarantine to allow workers to take Family and Medical Leave Act leave when under a medical quarantine, or caring for someone under quarantine, regardless of whether the person is exhibiting symptoms or not; (e) reducing the number of hours an employee is required to work before qualifying to 680 hours, instead of 1,000 hours; and (f) extending the statute of limitations for filing a complaint regarding law violations to 300 days, instead of 30 days.

Transportation

- Transit Capital Improvement Grant Program - The Governor recommends funding a transit capital improvement grant program - \$10 million in each year. 10/622
- The Governor recommends increasing funding for employment access and mobility programs in each year of the biennium. - \$4 million in each year.
- The Governor recommends increasing paratransit aids by 2.5 percent in each year of the biennium
- The Governor recommends increasing funding in the specialized transit assistance program in each year of the biennium. \$22,900 yr. 1 and \$46,300 yr. 2 11/623
- The Governor recommends changing the fund source for tribal elderly transportation grants from tribal gaming revenue to the transportation fund and increasing funding for the program. - \$21,800 yr. 1 and \$44,700 yr. 2. 16/628
- The Governor recommends providing funding to implement automatic voter registration. See Elections Commission, Item #1. 19/631
- This budget also reinstates powers to local communities for nonmotorized travel that used to be part of everyday operations. By including **provisions for complete streets and the ability to use eminent domain for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure**, local municipalities are once again empowered to support all modes of transportation infrastructure. Included in this budget is another **\$75 million for local multimodal transportation projects** that combine elements and jurisdictions that make funding from existing programs difficult.

Special Education

Survival applauds the substantial increases proposed for special education funding and student mental health, totaling \$763 million across the biennium, and bringing special education funding up from the current 29% reimbursement to 50%. Students with disabilities have faced particular challenges during the pandemic, combined with chronic underfunding in special education, so the package of increased mental health supports, and special education funding comes at a crucial time.

Specifically, the Governor's budget includes:

- An increase of \$718 million for special education funding, bringing the state's commitment up from the current level of 29% reimbursement to 50% by the second year and providing an increase in high cost special education funding as well.
- An increase of \$54 million in funding for student mental health, including funding across all categories of pupil services (social workers, counselors, psychologists, and nurses) and an increase in grants for school-based mental health.
- An increase of \$1.5 million to help students with disabilities transition into the workforce and postsecondary education.

Voting

Survival Coalition supports access to voting by funding automatic voter registration to improve accessibility to the polls and to keep voting information accurate and updated.

Other Provisions

Survival Coalition also supports the following items in the proposed Governor's budget:

- (DHS) Licensure of Dental Therapy. The Governor recommends creating a new license for dental therapists to increase the number of dental providers and dental services provided across the state, especially in regions designated as dental provider shortage areas.
- Within Department of Administration, a recommendation requiring the State Bureau of Procurement within the department to amend written language translation contracts to allow same-day translation of an unlimited number of words by September 1, 2022, or sooner if practicable.
- (DOA) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Initiatives: (a) creation of a cabinet-level chief equity officer within the Office of the Secretary that will collaborate with agency equity officers within other agencies to identify opportunities to advance equity in government operations, including determining how current government practices and policies impact communities of color and individuals with disabilities;
- (DOA) Expansion of the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program. The Governor recommends expanding the Wisconsin Supplier Diversity Program to include supplier certifications for disability-owned business enterprises and lesbian-, gay-, bisexual- and transgendered-owned business enterprises....

- (DOA) Office of Digital Transformation and the Wisconsin Front Door Initiative. The new office, among other projects, would establish the Wisconsin Front Door on-line services hub, a comprehensive portfolio of state resources in a consolidated and centralized format
- (DATCP) Broadband Consumer Protections. The Governor recommends modifying current law to protect broadband customers by requiring broadband service providers to meet certain service requirements, including prohibiting a broadband service provider from denying service to residential customers on the basis of race or income. See Public Service Commission, Item #6.
- (DCF) Internet Assistance Program. Creating an Internet assistance program to aid low-income households in paying for monthly Internet subscriptions. The Governor also recommends providing \$20 million annually for the program, funded with \$10 million from GPR and \$10 million in TANF funding. The Governor further recommends adding a 1.0 FTE position to support the program. See Item #3; and Public Service Commission, Item #5.
- (DHS) Translate the Department of Health Services Web Page into Multiple Languages. The Governor recommends providing funding to implement the National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services by ensuring the department's Web page is translated into multiple languages.
- (DHS) Windows Plus Program. The Governor recommends providing ongoing funding for the Windows Plus Program, which provides lead-safe renovation to high-risk areas in homes built before 1950 that are occupied by low-income families.
- Public Service Commission Broadband Expansion Funding: The Governor recommends increasing funding for the commission's broadband expansion grant program to over \$150 million over the biennium, including: (a) a total of \$74.8 million in FY22 and \$72.9 million in FY23 in general purpose revenue funding; and (b) a minimum of \$2 million annually in funding that is already budgeted from the universal service fund as part of a larger investment in broadband in the state. The Governor also recommends providing funding and position authority for an additional position in the State Broadband Office to assist with the expanded broadband grant program. The Governor further recommends creating a new general purpose revenue appropriation to cover all of the costs of the State Broadband Office.
- Public Service Commission Supporting Municipal Broadband: The Governor recommends modifying statutory provisions that discourage municipalities from providing broadband service to residents in broadband "unserved" and "underserved" areas. The Governor also recommends modifying current law to allow these same municipalities to apply for grants under the broadband expansion grant program.
- Public Service Commission Broadband Infrastructure Owned by Electric Utilities and Cooperatives. The Governor recommends modifying current law to allow electric cooperatives and utilities to install, maintain or own broadband infrastructure on an eligible easement.
- Public Service Commission Broadband Line Extension Grant Program. The Governor recommends providing funding to establish a broadband line extension grant program, which will provide grants or financial assistance to eligible households to subsidize the cost of a line extension from existing broadband infrastructure to a residence.
- Public Service Commission Internet Assistance Program. The Governor recommends providing funding to the Department of Children and Families to support the creation of an Internet subscription monthly subsidy program for low-income households. The Governor recommends providing \$20 million annually for the program, funded with \$10 million in general purpose

revenue and \$10 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funding. See Department of Children and Families, Item #3.

- Public Service Commission Broadband Customer Protections. The Governor recommends modifying current law to protect broadband customers by requiring broadband service providers to meet certain service requirements, including prohibiting a broadband service provider from denying service to residential customers on the basis of race or income. See Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Item #30.
- Public Service Commission Broadband Planning and Leadership Grant Program. The Governor recommends providing funding to the commission to support the creation of a broadband planning and leadership grant program to assist communities as they develop plans to expand broadband service and access. The Governor also recommends creating a grant resource team within the Department of Administration, which will, in part, provide technical assistance to communities in navigating state and federal broadband grant processes. See Department of Administration, Item #27.
- Public Service Commission Broadband Granular Mapping Data Requirements. The Governor recommends modifying current law to require Internet service providers to provide broadband coverage mapping data on a more granular level than required by the Federal Communications Commission. The Governor also recommends providing funding and position authority to the commission to assist with the more comprehensive broadband mapping efforts.
- Department of Revenue. Caregiver Tax Credit. The Governor recommends creating a nonrefundable individual income tax credit for qualified expenses incurred by a family caregiver to assist a qualified family member. For the purposes of the credit, a qualified family member must be at least 18 years of age, must require assistance with one or more daily living activities as certified by a physician, and must be the credit claimant's spouse or related by blood, marriage or adoption within the third degree of kinship. The credit is equal to 50 percent of qualified expenses in the taxable year and is limited to \$500 for most filers and \$250 for married-separate filers. The credit is subject to income limits that phase out the credit between \$75,000 and \$85,000 in income for single and head of household filers and \$150,000 and \$170,000 in income for married-joint filers. The credit first applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2020. The fiscal impact is an estimated decrease in tax revenue of \$100.4 million in FY22 and \$102.5 million in FY23.

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