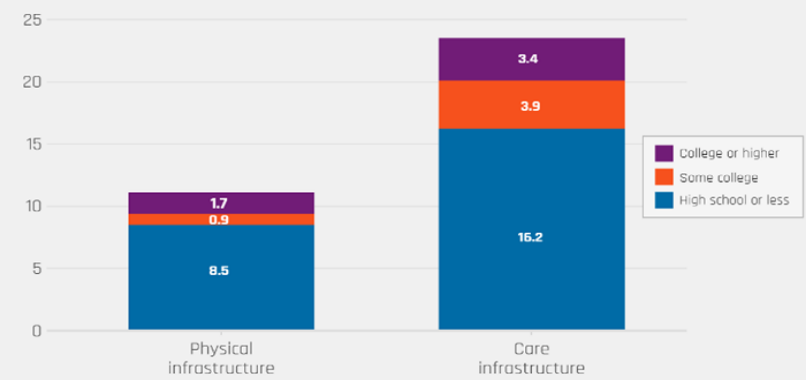


## Invest in Care Infrastructure

Over the last decade, Texas has made significant investments in road, water, and energy infrastructure. But as more than one thousand people move to Texas every single day, a strategy to expand and improve the state's care infrastructure is crucial. Strong families are the foundation of a healthy society. Care infrastructure includes the policies, resources, and services necessary to help Texas families meet their caregiving needs. As Texas is blessed with a historic surplus, there is no better time to consider investments to benefit the growing economy and families through care infrastructure.

### Investment in care infrastructure could yield twice as many new jobs as investment in physical infrastructure

Estimated new jobs in the United States, by education level, per \$1 million of spending



Source: Rania Antonopoulos and others, "Investments in Care: A Strategy for Effective and Equitable Job Creation." Working Paper No. 610 [Levy Economic Institute of Bard College, 2011].

 Equitable Growth

## Interest List Reduction

Goal: Ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive long term services and supports in a timely, appropriate, and community-based manner.

- To fully reach Texas' goals for building stronger families, Texas should acknowledge the out-of-pocket and opportunity costs associated with becoming a parent of a child with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and advance policies that support families.
- Ensuring family caregivers have the resources they need to continue to support disabled people in the community is critical to containing the rising costs of health care.
- Plank 152 of the platform of the Texas Republican Party called on the legislature "to invest in and fully fund home and community-based services (HCBS) as a pro-life policy, and to enact associated policy solutions to protect, preserve, and defend the sanctity and dignity of human life. We urge the Legislature to address any loopholes that fail to protect or provide appropriate home and community-based supports and access to care for children and people with disabilities. In addition, we ask that families be provided with information about life-affirming social and medical services available to them in Texas as alternatives to abortion and costly institutional care.
- Reinforce the dignity of work by expecting and empowering people with disabilities receiving public benefits to participate in the labor force, both to contribute to society and to model the virtues of consistency, conscientiousness, and self-sufficiency. All Medicaid waivers offer services to support employment goals and skills.

## Raise Direct Care Worker Wages

Goal: Increase the base wage for direct care workers to \$17/hour.

- The Arc of Texas supports Governor Abbott's 2024-2025 budget priority recommendation for the "88<sup>th</sup> Legislature provide the funds necessary to increase the rates paid to maintain safe and comfortable homes for some of our most vulnerable Texans"
- People with disabilities may rely on direct care workers to assist with daily tasks in order to retain more independence and experience an improved quality of life in community settings. The work required is demanding, and the State should adjust the current rates in order to attract and retain quality caregivers, so that all Texans have the care that they need to remain healthy and independent.

## Intensify Special Education Funding

Goal: Change special education funding to a service intensity-based system.

- To fully reach Texas' goals for academic success for students with disabilities, Texas should move to an intensity-based funding formula that considers each student's educational arrangement and specialized services required.
- This formula should include multiple tiers and service groups to effectively account for the unique, individualized needs of students with disabilities.
- The Arc of Texas supports Governor Abbott's 2024-2025 budget priority recommendation that the "88<sup>th</sup> Legislature align special education funding with the student-first school finance system established in House Bill 3 by implementing the recommendations of the Texas Commission on Special Education Funding, which include transitioning to a service intensity-based formula system, investments in the special education educator workforce, and increased funding for evaluations."



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