



Texas

For people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities.



PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES: 89TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Arc of Texas advocates for public policy that prioritizes community-inclusion for Texans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This overview covers one of our four policy pillars.

QUALITY OF LIFE

We believe Texans with IDD have the right to live and thrive in their communities. Ensuring access to home and community-based services, inclusive housing, and opportunities for full participation fosters meaningful and connected lives. We must eliminate barriers to community involvement through education, employment, and social engagement supports.

See three related policy priorities below.

1. Increase Access to Home and Community-Based Services

- HCBS provide tailored support to Texans with IDD, including personal care and assistance (e.g., help with activities of daily living), residential services, supported employment, specialized therapies, home modifications for accessibility, and more – promoting independence and quality of life, and empowering people to thrive in community.
- **175,000+ Texans with IDD are on interest lists, waiting up to 15 years for crucial HCBS.**

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- *Increase funding to reduce HCBS interest list wait times and ensure timely access to services.*
- *Improve interest list management for more effective service delivery.*

2. Address the Direct Care Workforce Crisis

- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) provide essential community-based care to Texans with IDD, but this workforce is in crisis. The hourly pay of \$10.60/hour makes it impossible to recruit and retain workers, endangering availability of HCBS services needed to live independently.
- DSPs providing community-based care are paid significantly less than their counterparts in State Supported Living Centers (SSLCs). Community-based DSPs deserve parity with their counterparts at SSLCs where starting pay is over \$17.00 an hour.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

- *Strengthen the direct care workforce by increasing the minimum wage of direct support professionals assisting people with IDD in the community from \$10.60/hour to \$17.00/hour.*

3. Expand Access to Mental Health Services

- People with IDD are at a higher risk of mental health conditions and are confronted with inequities in appropriate care. Limited availability of specialized services and trained professionals, as well as financial constraints are just some of the challenges in this field.
- One promising approach is the expansion of the outpatient biopsychosocial model (OBI), which accounts for the interconnectedness of biological, psychological, and social factors in assessing and treating mental health conditions, providing a holistic approach to care. By incorporating OBI through local IDD authorities, communities can create more integrated and accessible mental health services for Texans with IDD.

PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- *Fully fund the Health and Human Services Commission Legislative Appropriations Request to expand outpatient biopsychosocial (OBI) model services to all local IDD authorities.*



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