

Advancing Independence and Community Integration for All: Supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities Through High-Quality Home and Community-Based Services

The President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities Report to the President (September 2024)

Overview: The [President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities \(PCPID\)](#) aims to improve the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) by promoting independence and community inclusion. The committee selected the topic of strengthening home and community-based services (HCBS) infrastructure for its report to the President. The principles established by members to guide the development of the report were the following:

- **Enhance self-advocacy:** Invest in opportunities for people with disabilities to speak up for their needs.
- **Promote person-centered planning and thinking:** Focus on individual preferences and community inclusion.
- **Ensure equity:** Make sure everyone, especially those facing extra barriers, can access services.
- **Individualize supports:** Offer flexible care options tailored to each person.
- **Create seamless navigation:** Make it easier to find and use services. Improve current systems to meet the unique needs of individuals with I/DD.
- **Leverage technology:** Use the [Technology First](#) framework when discussing support options.

Four Focus Areas of the Report:

1. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs):

- **Challenges:** There is a shortage of [DSPs](#), the professionals who assist individuals with I/DD in daily activities. They often have high turnover and poor training. People may also mistakenly view the DSP role as low-skilled.
- **Recommendations:** Develop career pathways, improve wages, and provide better training and support for DSPs.

2. Employment:

- **Challenges:** People with I/DD face difficulties finding and keeping jobs. There are not enough supports, as many individuals with I/DD want to work but lack the opportunities and resources.
- **Recommendations:** Increase funding for job support programs, promote competitive integrated employment, and encourage entrepreneurship among people with I/DD.

3. Community Living:

- **Challenges:** There is limited access to affordable, accessible housing. People with I/DD often face safety concerns and barriers to using technology and transportation.
- **Recommendations:** Expand housing options, improve safety protocols, and increase access to assistive technology and transportation services.

4. Federal Support Programs:

- **Challenges:** Current federal programs have outdated asset limits that discourage savings and marriage among people with I/DD. There are barriers to moving between states with Medicaid benefits.
- **Recommendations:** Increase asset limits for Supplemental Security Income, eliminate waiting periods for Medicare, and improve the flexibility of Medicaid benefits across states.

Conclusion: This report urges the government to act on these recommendations to ensure that individuals with I/DD have the necessary supports to live independently and fully participate in their communities. By addressing the challenges in HCBS, employment, community living, and federal support programs, we can create a more inclusive society where people with I/DD thrive.