



# **State Plan**

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# **for People with Physical Disabilities**

**2022-2024**



**COUNCIL ON  
PHYSICAL DISABILITIES**



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (Council) envisions a world where all people with physical disabilities have access to the same life choices and opportunities as all Wisconsin residents. The Council specifically focuses on funding, policies, programs, and legislation that impact people with physical disabilities.

Physical disability is defined in Wisconsin State Statute § 15.197(4) as:

*“A physical condition including an anatomical loss or musculoskeletal, neurological, respiratory, or cardiovascular impairment, resulting from injury, disease, or congenital disorder, and significantly interfering with or limiting at least one of the following major life activities of a person: self-care, walking, mobility other than walking, breathing, employment, performance of manual tasks unrelated to employment, receptive and expressive language, participating in educational programs, or capacity for independent living.”*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation increased both communication, program, and physical access for people with disabilities. Yet, 31 years after the ADA was passed, people with disabilities still face disparities in health care, educational attainment, transportation, employment status, and asset accumulation. As a result, people with disabilities are more likely to be living in poverty. These issues are further exacerbated if the individual is a person of color and has a disability. Data shows:

- 61 million adults in the United States live with a disability.<sup>1</sup>
- 26% (one in four) of adults in the United States have some type of disability.<sup>2</sup>
- Disability is especially common in among older adults, women, and minorities.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Disability Impacts All of Us Infographic. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021). Disability Impacts All of Us Infographic. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>.

- One in four people with a disability is living in poverty.<sup>4</sup>
- 33.6% of working-age people with disabilities were working or actively looking for work in November 2020.<sup>5</sup>
- A U.S. household containing an adult with a disability must spend an estimated 28% more income to obtain the same standard of living as a household with no disability.



Across all racial and ethnic groups, **households with a working-age adult with a disability** had a **net worth average** of **\$14,180**, compared to **households without disability**, which have a **net worth average** of **\$83,985**.

The group with **the lowest net worth is Black households**, where the **head of household had a disability**, at **\$1,282**.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2021). Disability Statistics from the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang-Tan Institute (YTI). [www.disabilitystatistics.org](http://www.disabilitystatistics.org).

<sup>5</sup> Filanoski, K. (2020, December 4). *nTIDE November 2020 Jobs Report: Americans with disabilities remain engaged in labor force*. Research on Disability. <https://researchondisability.org/rod-news/2020/12/04/ntide-november-2020>.

<sup>6</sup> National Disability Institute. (2020). *Race, Ethnicity and Disability: The Financial Impact of Systemic Inequality and Intersectionality*. <https://www.nationaldisabilityinstitute.org/reports/research-brief-race-ethnicity-and-disability>.

In Wisconsin:

- 710,790 Wisconsinites experience a disability, representing 12.3% of the state's population.<sup>7</sup>
- 285,943 residents 65 years of age and older live with a disability. As the population ages, this number is expected to increase.<sup>8</sup>
- 320,675 noninstitutionalized residents with disabilities have an ambulatory disability, defined as having serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs.<sup>9</sup>
- 127,312 noninstitutionalized residents with disabilities have difficulty bathing or dressing.<sup>10</sup>
- 222,955 noninstitutionalized residents with disabilities have an independent living difficulty such as doing errands or visiting a doctor's office because of a physical, mental, or emotional problem.<sup>11</sup>
- People of color experience disability at higher rates than whites. In Wisconsin, only Hispanics or Latinos at 9% and Asians at 6% have a lower percentage of the population with disability compared to white alone at 12%.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey, PUMS file analysis, all ages, relationship to person in data file, retrieved 01/14/2022.

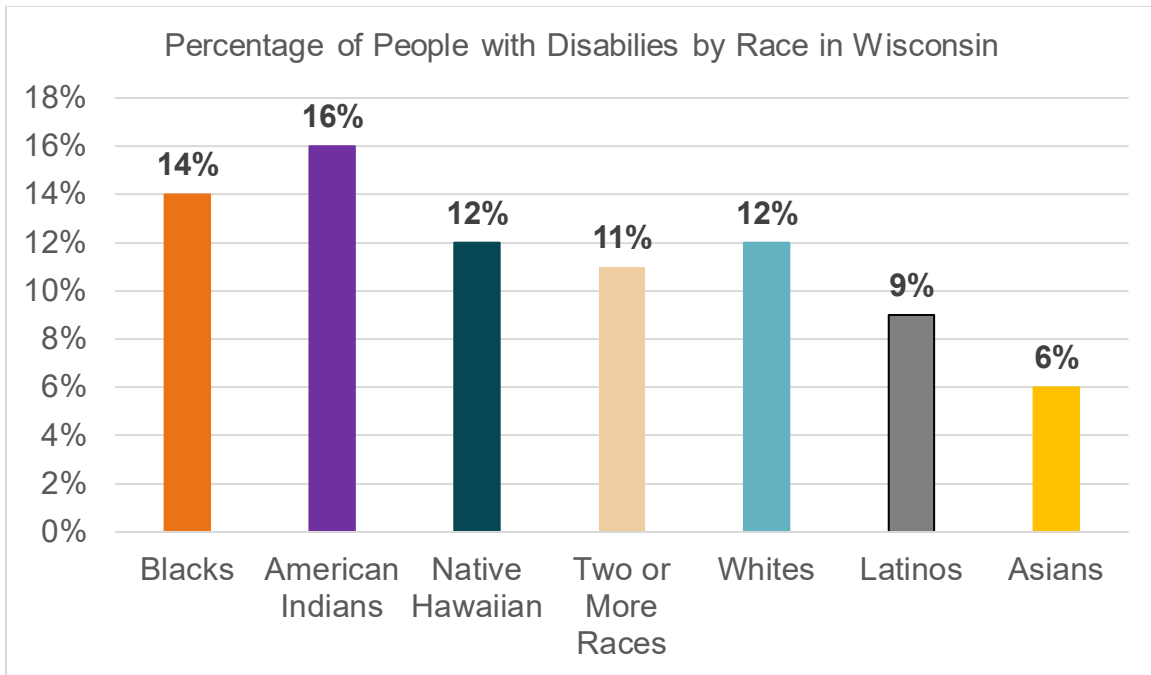
<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey, retrieved 1/6/2022.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Five-year Average Estimates.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Five-year Average Estimates.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



**Chart Data Source:** U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Five-year Average Estimates.

32% of residents with a disability live at below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (200% of the Federal Poverty Level is \$46,060 for a family of 3 in 2022).<sup>13</sup> Although disability most adversely impacts older adults and people of color, disability affects every demographic and location. It is not contained to urban settings, nursing homes, or institutions. This State Plan is a call for action to plan now for the future needs of all of Wisconsin residents, as an investment in our individual and collective futures.

Although there are support programs and services to assist people with disabilities to live independently, many of these programs have income and asset limits, span across different service systems, and force many people to remain living in poverty to qualify.

It is the Council's hope that by raising awareness and educating legislators and stakeholders about the issues faced by people with physical disabilities and providing possible solutions to these issues that action will be taken!

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2014-2018, Five-year Average Estimates.

The Council's State Plan focuses on statewide programs, policies, and funding aimed at improving the quality of the lives of people with physical disabilities and ensuring they have access to the same opportunities as everyone else.

## State Plan Priority Areas

The Council has identified priority areas in its State Plan that are critical to people with physical disabilities:

- **Emergency Preparedness**
- **Employment**
- **Living Independently** (includes housing and long-term support)
- **Transportation**

In each State Plan priority area the Council identifies goals and provides background information as to why the Council has chosen to address that priority area. The Council identifies strategies and policy recommendations for addressing these goals in its annual work plan.

Separating these priority areas allows us to highlight the issues that, while they are common to many individuals with disabilities, cannot describe the needs of all people with disabilities. As the definition of physical disability suggests, we are a diverse group with a tremendous amount of untapped potential. By helping individuals reach their potential we make Wisconsin a much stronger, healthier, and more vibrant place to live.

It is necessary to acknowledge our need for collaboration with other groups who have goals that coincide with those of this Council. While this has happened in the past, it has become increasingly necessary and important to protect the population we represent.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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## Background Information

Wisconsin is still reeling from the devastating effects of COVID-19 on our citizens and our economy. In addition, 2020 brought record storms, tornadoes, drought, and heavy rains. The western part of the country struggled with fires that burned with such intensity that we saw the smoke all the way to Wisconsin. This state also has a history of devastating fires. The Chicago fire may have made history, but the Peshtigo fire on the same day devastated northeastern Wisconsin with loss of property and lives. Our world is changing, and we must be prepared to meet the challenges both as a state and as individuals.

While many Americans are now dealing with social isolation and financial insecurity, individuals with disabilities were already struggling with these issues prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the words of one survey respondent in Wisconsin, “the pandemic has pulled back the curtain on the depth of the need for our local disability community.” More collaboration is needed in many areas.

Specifically, action needs to be taken to ensure that people with disabilities have physical and communication access to health care services, public health information, and water and sanitation services. People with disabilities are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 because of the barriers created by social distancing, lack of access to information, and disruptions to the services they rely on to remain alive, healthy, and thrive.

### **State Plan Emergency Preparedness Goal**

*To raise awareness among people with disabilities, partners, family members, and stakeholders about the need to plan for emergencies and natural disasters. The Council must address the issue of awareness not only to make a plan but for stakeholders to see people with physical disabilities as partners in the planning process.*



# EMPLOYMENT

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## Background Information

In the U.S., work is the key to greater independence and autonomy. There are 20 million working-age adults (ages 18–64 years old) living with some type of disability in the United States. This is 10% of the population.

Despite the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which is focused on compliance and basic access to physical structures and support programs, people with disabilities continue to experience barriers to employment and financial stability.

Beyond the human costs of not working, the financial costs of not working are compounded for people with physical disabilities. National data shows that a United States household with an adult with a disability in the household must earn 28% *more* income to obtain the same standard of living as a household with no persons with disabilities living in it. This equates to a person with a disability needing an additional \$17,690 a year at the median household income. Supporting employment inclusion for people with physical disabilities is also an opportunity for Wisconsin in terms of tax and business revenue(s). Whether the goal is to volunteer, work part-time, or to be employed full-time, people with disabilities need to have equal access and opportunities to work.

### State Plan Employment Goal

*To educate stakeholders about the need for increased access, resources, and options for competitive integrated employment at a self-sufficient wage for people with physical disabilities, including self-employment options for people with disabilities.*

# LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

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## Background Information

Few people would argue against community inclusion, independence, and cost-savings. People with physical disabilities want to be able and to enjoy the benefits of community involvement, which may include employment (full or part-time), volunteering to give back to the lives of other Wisconsin residents, and community engagement through social connectedness. The result of investments in people with physical disabilities is in greater respect, greater contributions to their local community, and potential cost savings in terms of demands for other services..

## Housing

First you need a place to live, then support services and transportation. Housing is basic to the ability to live independently. As a Council we will work with others to continue to promote universal design with visitability<sup>14</sup> as a minimum standard. People with physical disabilities have the human right to have visitors who can access their home. Without accessible housing and universally designed living, people with physical disabilities are isolated from their communities.

The need for accessible rental housing, home ownership opportunities, and home modifications are growing daily as more people age acquire a disability or survive accidents and other trauma.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the caregiver crisis and caregiver support needs to the forefront as individuals were forced into institutions. We strongly believe that nursing homes

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<sup>14</sup> The concept of visitability does not offer a completely accessible house, but rather an opportunity for a person with a disability to visit a home without having to be lifted up stairs and the ability to use a first floor bathroom. Visitability standards require: one zero-step entrance (one level access at grade without a step at the threshold); an outward opening entrance door with 32 inch clear passage space and path inside; and a wheelchair accessible bathroom on the ground floor (requires outward opening door with 32 inch clear passage and path inside, and if applicable depending on location of bathroom, the hallway to have 36 inch clear passage). Visitability not only permits a person with a disability to visit their neighbors but also allows people to age comfortably in their homes without the need for extensive renovations if disability should occur as part of the normal aging process.

are always the last resort for our population, the majority of whom want to stay in their homes and communities, resulting in better quality of life and cost-savings.

### **State Plan Housing Goal**

*To increase awareness of and improve access to affordable, accessible, visitable, and integrated housing for people with physical disabilities.*

## **Long-Term Care**

People who experience a physical disability want to participate in their communities of work, health, and recreation. Yet people with physical disabilities very often require the assistance of others in order to be able prepare for work, volunteer, and get to appointments. These issues were prominent prior to the pandemic, and the consequences of the pandemic have torn back the curtain on what was already a significant problem to reveal health risks, needs, and opportunities.

The personal care workforce that provides essential human-focused services so that people with physical disabilities can live independently has been undervalued for far too long. We desperately need to increase wages and provide training and career pathways for care providers who do this necessary work for Wisconsinites in both urban and rural settings. Many Wisconsinites were faced with the difficult choice of having to work themselves for income, which negatively impacts the lives of people with disabilities, or care for their loved one, which further reduces the available labor market and weakens Wisconsin's strong economic capacity.

### **State Plan Long-Term Care Goal**

*To promote equal access to affordable and quality home health or personal care services, regardless of setting (work, community, or institution).*

# TRANSPORTATION

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## Background Information

Access to accessible transportation is vital to independent living and community integration for people with physical disabilities. The Council recognizes this is important not only for people who drive, but for the thousands of people all over the state who depend on other forms of transportation including paratransit and volunteer drivers. The Council is advocating for coordinated accessible, affordable, and multimodal forms of transportation that will enhance the quality of life for all individuals with disabilities in this state.

### **State Plan Transportation Goals**

*To promote accessible, safe, and affordable transportation for all people with physical disabilities, wherever they choose to live.*

*To raise awareness about accessible parking requirements and improve enforcement of illegally parked vehicles.*

# APPENDICES

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- **Appendix A: About the Council**
- **Appendix B: About the State Plan**
- **Appendix C: State Health Improvement Plan Framework and CPD State Plan Alignment**

## APPENDIX A: ABOUT THE COUNCIL

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The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (Council) was created by the Wisconsin State Legislature in 1989 to address the needs of people with physical disabilities. The combined efforts of consumers, advocates, and legislators led to Wisconsin State Statute § 46.29, establishing the 14-member Council, and assigning the Council the following responsibilities:

- Develop, approve, and continue modification of a state plan for people with physical disabilities.
- Advise and make recommendations to state agencies on funding, programs, policies, and legislation that impact people with physical disabilities.
- Promote public awareness about the abilities of and barriers to people with physical disabilities.
- Encourage the development of programs and policies that prevent physical disabilities.
- Submit recommendations in an annual report to the state legislature on imposed ordinances related to accessible parking and motor vehicle use by people with disabilities (Wis. Stat. § 346.50 (3m)).
- Consider all questions and matters concerning people with physical disabilities arising within the Council or brought to the Council for review.
- Form committees for consideration of policies or programs for people with physical disabilities.
- Meet at least four times annually.

*The Council envisions a world where all people with physical disabilities have access to the same opportunities and life choices as any other Wisconsin resident.*

To achieve this vision, the Council promotes programs and policies that enable people with physical disabilities to:

- Be included and integrated in their communities.
- Make their own life choices.
- Enter, re-enter, or remain in the workforce to the maximum of their capacity.
- Participate in improving and evaluating services.
- Utilize beneficial assistive technology.
- Access transportation and parking.
- Access affordable housing that is visitable.

To learn more about the Council, please visit our [website](https://dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd) (dhs.wisconsin.gov/cpd).

The Council is administratively attached to the Department of Health Services.

## APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE STATE PLAN

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The Wisconsin Council on Physical Disabilities (Council) in Wisconsin State Statute § 46.29 is required to develop, approve, and continue modification of a state plan, for services for people with physical disabilities that encompasses services delivered or overseen by the following entities:

- Department of Public Instruction
- Department of Transportation
- Department of Workforce Development
- Division of Personnel Management in the Department of Administration
- Department of Safety and Professional Services
- Office of the Commissioner of Insurance
- University of Wisconsin System
- Wisconsin Technical College System
- Board on Aging and Long-Term Care

Physical disability is defined in Wisconsin State Statute § 15.197(4) as:

*“A physical condition including an anatomical loss or musculoskeletal, neurological, respiratory, or cardiovascular impairment, resulting from injury, disease, or congenital disorder, and significantly interfering with or limiting at least one of the following major life activities of a person: self-care, walking, mobility other than walking, breathing, employment, performance of manual tasks unrelated to employment, receptive and expressive language, participating in educational programs, or capacity for independent living.”*

The Council specifically focuses on funding, policies, programs, and legislation that impact people with physical disabilities as defined in Wisconsin State Statute § 46.29.

As a result, the State Plan for People with Physical Disabilities mainly focuses on funding, policies, programs, and services for people with physical disabilities (as defined in Wisconsin State Statute § 15.197(4)) and overseen and delivered by the entities listed above. This does not preclude the Council from having additional goals within its state plan or from making broader recommendations to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities.

# **APPENDIX C: STATE HEALTH PLAN FRAMEWORK AND CPD STATE PLAN ALIGNMENT**

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# State Health Improvement Plan Framework and CPD State Plan Alignment

## VISION

All people and communities in Wisconsin have the opportunities and supports they need to reach their full potential

### Foundational shifts

Institutional and systemic fairness (addressing the “-isms”, including structural racism)

Representation and access to decision-making (shifting and sharing power)

Community-centered resources and services (includes funding and community input)

### SHIP Priority areas

#### Social and community conditions (SDoH)

- Economic well-being
- Quality dependent/ child care
- Healthy housing

**Physical, mental, and systemic safety** (including trauma, violence, systemic oppression)

**Person and community centered health care** (including dental and other care)

**Social connectedness and belonging** (including civic engagement)

**Mental and emotional health and well-being** (including substance use, treatment and care)

### CPD State Plan Priority Areas

- Employment
- Transportation
- Living Independently (includes housing and long term-support)

Emergency Preparedness

- Living Independently (includes housing and long term-support)

# CPD STATE PLAN GOALS AND STATE HEALTH IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SHIP)

## CPD State Plan Goals

- Emergency Preparedness
- Employment
- Living Independently, which includes Housing and Long-Term Support
- Transportation

## Living Independently sample goal

*It is essential that partnerships further the specific needs of people with disabilities, created by careful planning for current and future statewide policy and practice needs.*

*Accessible, safe, affordable housing and long-term support services which promote autonomy, well-being and wholeness also serves community and public health interests.*

## State Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

- Social and community conditions (SDoH)
- Physical, mental, and systemic safety
- Person and community centered health care
- Social connectedness and belonging
- Mental and emotional health and well-being