

New State Legislation in 2022

The Colorado Legislature ended their general assembly session in late May. Several bills that passed with relevance to the intellectual /developmental disabilities (I/DD) community, which are signed by Governor Polis, are noted below. This does not include all bills of interest or relevance.

Consumer Right to Repair Powered Wheelchairs (HB22-1031) The bill affords owners of power wheelchairs greater flexibility in finding and using repair services. The bill requires a manufacturer to provide parts, embedded software, firmware, tools, or documentation, to independent repair providers and owners of the manufacturer's powered wheelchairs to allow an independent repair provider or owner to conduct diagnostic, maintenance, or repair services on the owner's powered wheelchair. Sponsors: B. Titone (D) | D. Ortiz (D) / R. Zenzinger (D) | J. Cooke (R)

Inclusive Higher Education Opportunities (HB22-1107): Creates an inclusive higher education grant program to provide inclusive higher education programs at state education institutions for students with I/DD. Sponsors: M. Young (D) | M. Bradfield (R) / J. Cooke (R) | J. Bridges (D)

Behavioral Health Crisis Response System (HB22-1214): The bill requires crisis programs to meet minimum regulatory standards that include mental health and substance use disorder standards, that youth can be provided with mobile and walk in clinic crisis services without parental consent, and ensures that people with IDD can also access crisis services. Sponsors: M. Young (D) | R. Pelton (R) / C. Kolker (D) | K. Priola (R)

Creation of the Department of Early Childhood and Universal Preschool Program (HB22-1295): Early Intervention and other existing programs are now under this new state department. The bill establishes that in the year before entering kindergarten, eligible children can receive 10 hours of free preschool per week, and three- to four-year-olds with a disability must be offered services in alignment with the child's individualized education plan. Sponsors: E. Sirota (D) | A. Garnett (D) / J. Buckner (D) | S. Fenberg (D)

Achieving A Better Life Experience (ABLE) Saving Accounts (HB22-1320): This bill modifies (and improves) the tax benefits of the ABLE accounts for the 2023, 2024 and 2025 tax years, allows a person other than the individual with the disability to open and be an authorized signatory to an ABLE account, and prohibits the state from filing a claim against the ABLE savings account upon the account owner's death for outstanding payments due for qualified disability expenses. Sponsors: C. Kipp (D) | C. Larson (R) / R. Zenzinger (D) | R. Woodward (R)