

Policy Profile

2024 Colorado State Legislative Session Wrap-up

Submitted by Petri Brill, Individual Advocate

The 2024 legislative session came to end in May and what a jam-packed session it was! The Arc of Aurora, in conjunction with our disability partners, played an active role this session, ensuring that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities continue to be represented and supported by legislation that improves lives and increases community accessibility. Perhaps the crown jewel of this session is legislation that created the first ever [Colorado Disability Opportunity Office, lovingly shortened to CDOO](#). One of the first of its kind across the United States, this bill ensures that Colorado prioritizes the rights and opportunities of all people with disabilities by developing a state office responsible for continuing innovation and ingenuity.

Here are a few of the many things this new office will provide:

- Serve as a resource for state agencies, private and nonprofit organizations, and the public concerning disability issues in Colorado;
- Convene and coordinate a disability technical advisory committee;
- Ensure that goals of full societal integration for individuals with disabilities are met by meeting with stakeholders from entities around the state related to disabilities and with state agencies to develop recommendations on the administration of grants, restructuring of disability-related entities, and collaboration on overlapping aging and disability issues and other cross-agency efforts; and
- Submit recommendations to the governor and state agencies.
- Implement a statewide strategy to facilitate economic stability for individuals with disabilities; promote successful economic, social, and community integration; and identify and address issues related to integration;
- Work toward enhanced inclusion and equitable opportunities for individuals with disabilities, as well as address concerns raised by disability populations;
- Coordinate with other entities to identify and eliminate barriers to prosperity for individuals with disabilities.

Other successes, worthy of a highlight include bills that:

- Address abbreviated school days by directing the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to define, track, justify, and report on the use of abbreviated school days across all school districts, such as requesting a parent to pick their child up early due to “behavior” or “staffing issues”.
<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1063>
- Improve motor vehicle access for Individuals with Disabilities, which offers a number of fixes, such as ensuring ride share companies indicate if they have accessible vehicles, improves electric vehicle charging station accessibility, further clarifies that accessible parking shall not be blocked, and gives authority to parking officers to investigate complaints of parking issues.

<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/hb24-1161>

- Clarify and build a publicly offered training regarding Individual Education Plans (IEPs), parental and student rights, by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) in plain language.

<https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb24-069>

While not everything we were hoping for passed this session, awareness was created and illuminated issues of disparity for those with disabilities and we will see these proposed bills come back again in 2025. Specifically, we will be keeping our eyes out for bills focused on creating more accessibility within the community, including the Denver International Airport, ensuring public meetings more accessible, awareness around special education issues including suspension and seclusion, and improvements to Guardianships and Conservatorship processes. Join us in fighting the good fight!

Be on the lookout early fall as The Arc of Aurora and THINK+change will be producing its third annual Plain Language Voter Guide for the upcoming fall election. You can expect a comprehensive review of what will be on your ballot and streamlined language to help us all understand the issues.

Your voice matters and we want to make voting as accessible and easy as possible! If you have any questions about the legislative session, the upcoming election, or voting in general feel free to give me, Petri Brill, a buzz at the office: 720-213-1420, ext. 104.

We hope you enjoy the rest of your summer and look forward to seeing you soon!