



Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential

2021/2022 Advocacy Priorities & Issue Areas

LEAP advocates for systems change to promote Independent Living for all people who live with disabilities. Our policy agenda drives our advocacy and service efforts in the areas of: Home and Community Based Services, Employment, and Access to Benefits and Resources needed to achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

Independent Living (IL) encompasses health (including long-term services and supports – LTSS), education, economic stability, employment, and community inclusion, including supports such as accessible housing, transportation and access to assistive technology. LEAP works in coalitions and independently to monitor, improve, and educate consumers, stakeholders and decision makers about policies that impact Independent Living.

PROMOTE ACCESS, QUALITY AND SCOPE OF HOME AND COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES (HCBS)

- Improve **ACCESS** to Medicaid, particularly home and community-based services (HCBS)
 - Participate in coalitions in Northeast Ohio and statewide for stronger advocacy and coordinated education of policymakers and consumers
 - Provide input and recommendations to The Administration for Community Living (ACL) regarding policies related to persons with disabilities
 - Advocate for continuation and expansion of Personal Assistance Services & Supports (PAS) by adding Attendant Services and Supports to state Medicaid plans (so that it would be available as a 'Medicaid card' service to individuals with an institutional level of care)
- Improve **QUALITY** of Home and Community-Based Services(HCBS) under Medicaid
 - Monitor and seek improvements to Ohio Medicaid managed care, particularly the use of person-centered planning, self-direction, care coordination and choice of provider
- Advocate for enhance **SCOPE** of services in Home and Community-Based Services for: Disability Benefits Coordination, Employment, Community Inclusion, Community Coaching, Disability Community Advocate, Non-Medical Transportation, Community Transition, Assistive/ Adaptive Technology, Access to Personal Care Assistance (include 1915(i))

PROMOTE EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC STABILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Promote inclusion of adults with disabilities, including transitioning youth, in Ohio's workforce
- **March 2021:** The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education (Department) has received requests for further clarification of the definition of "competitive integrated employment," particularly with respect to: (1) the criterion for an "integrated employment location" (i.e., the integration standards for the location of the employment) in the definition of "competitive integrated employment" for purposes of the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program; **and** (2) how the criterion for an integrated employment location in the definition affects a VR program participant's ability to exercise informed choice.



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- Per the new proposal, individuals with disabilities would have to earn at least minimum wage and work in the community in a setting where they interact with people without disabilities to the same extent that typically-developing employees do in order for work to qualify as competitive integrated employment. What's more, employees with disabilities must have similar opportunities for advancement as employees without disabilities who have comparable positions.

PROMOTE ACCESS TO BENEFITS AND RESOURCES

- Benefits Navigation: Advocate for the utilization of subject matter experts to ensure that individuals have the necessary and accurate information to make the right benefits decisions
 - Educate consumers and advocates on Medicaid eligibility and HCBS waiver options
 - Facilitate access as a model Single Entry Point agency under Ohio Medicaid's 'No Wrong Door' program
 - Continue to educate consumers and advocates about financial work incentives especially Ohio's Medicaid Buy-In for Workers with Disabilities (MBI-WD) and STABLE (Achieving a Better Life Experience)
- Assistive Technology: Promote the elimination of barriers in assistive technology policy to increase the availability of and access to assistive technology devices and services for people with disabilities
 - Support access to assistive/adaptive technology needed to live independently via Medicare, Medicaid and the health insurance Marketplace
- Housing: Support expansion of accessible housing and non-discrimination under the Fair Housing Act
 - Support for the Ohio Housing Trust Fund and Section 811 Rental Assistance Program
- Transportation: Support state and local policies that expand availability of accessible transportation

EQUITY AND NONDISCRIMINATION

- In this and all its work, LEAP supports policies and actions that advance the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the *Olmstead* Decision in all community rights, including voting