



Advocacy Toolkit:

Protect Disability Services in Maryland

Save Our Supports! Your Voice Matters! Take Action Today!

Maryland's proposed budget cuts to disability services put vital supports at risk for thousands of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and their families. These cuts could reduce access to essential programs such as personal supports, employment services, and community living assistance—jeopardizing the independence and well-being of people with disabilities across our state.

Advocacy is a powerful tool, and your voice can make a difference! This toolkit is designed to help you effectively communicate with your state legislators to **urge them to protect funding for disability services**. Whether you're reaching out as a self-advocate, family member, service provider, or concerned community member, this guide will equip you with the resources and confidence to take action.

Inside This Toolkit, You'll Find:

✓ Key Facts & Talking Points

Understand how the budget cuts impact disability services and why funding must be preserved.

✓ How to Contact Your Legislators

Find out who represents you and how to reach them.

✓ Letter & Email Templates

Use pre-written templates to make your message clear and impactful.

✓ Phone & Meeting Guide

Learn how to effectively communicate your message in calls or meetings with legislators.

✓ Social Media Advocacy

Discover ways to amplify your voice online with sample posts and hashtags.

✓ Tips for Sharing Your Story

Personal stories are powerful—learn how to craft and share yours.

Together, we can stand up for Marylanders with disabilities and ensure they have access to the services they need to thrive. **Let's make our voices heard!**

Take Action Now!

Navigate through the toolkit to discover how you can help protect disability services in Maryland.



Urgent Call to Protect Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Services

Stop the Cuts, Protect Lives!



The Issue

Governor Wes Moore's proposed **FY25 & FY26 budget** includes severe **funding cuts to DDA services**, jeopardizing essential supports for **thousands of Marylanders with developmental disabilities (DD)**. These cuts would **limit access to care, reduce service availability, and place immense strain on families, caregivers, and providers**.

Programs at Risk

The proposed FY25 budget reductions total **over \$200 million**, directly impacting services that enable people with disabilities to live independently and participate in their communities.

Critical Cuts Include:

\$54.2M

Revision of **Dedicated Hours Policy**, forcing people in Community Living to **exhaust shared hours before receiving dedicated support**.

Elimination of the **Geographical Differential Rate**, disproportionately affecting providers in high-cost areas.

\$56M

\$36.5M

Self-Direction Wage Allowance Adjustment, reducing pay flexibility for self-directed caregivers.

Elimination of the **Wage Exception Process**, capping wages for self-directed support staff.

\$4.7M

\$2.8M

Elimination of **Low Intensity Support Services (LISS)**, a lifeline for many families.

Utilization of **Waiting List Equity Funds**, diverting resources meant to support people waiting for services.

\$15M

Restoration of Individual & Family Directed Goods & Services Spending Cap, further restricting access to needed supports.

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Urgent Call to Protect Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Services

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The Human Impact

These cuts are not just numbers; they represent real people who rely on these services every day.

"Without my one-on-one support, I can't go to work, be independent, or even do basic things like grocery shopping. I don't want to lose the life I've built."

— *Bridget, a person supported through Community Living*

"As a caregiver, I'm already stretched thin. If my son loses his support hours, I don't know how we'll manage. The system is supposed to help people live with dignity, not take it away."

— *Michael, a parent of a child with disabilities*

The Ask: Protect DDA Funding

We Urge Legislators To:

1. Reject these cuts and maintain full funding for essential DDA services.
2. Ensure equitable access to community-based supports so that no Marylander is left behind.
3. Advocate for sustainable funding to uphold Maryland's commitment to people with disabilities.

Maryland must not balance its budget at the expense of its most vulnerable citizens. Protecting DDA services is not just a financial decision—it is a moral imperative.

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KEY MESSAGES

REGARDING PROPOSED CUTS TO DDA FUNDING

1. The Budget Cuts Are Devastating to DD Services

- Governor Moore's proposed FY25 and FY26 budgets include **over \$170 million in cuts** to the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA).
- These cuts directly impact people with disabilities, their families, and the workforce that supports them.
- Programs at risk include **community living supports, self-direction services, low-intensity supports, and funding for people currently on the waiting list.**
- Without adequate funding, **people with disabilities will lose essential services that allow them to live independently, work, and engage in their communities.**

2. How These Cuts Impact People & Families

- The proposed **\$54.2 million cut** in community living supports means people could lose dedicated one-on-one hours of support, making it harder to participate in daily life activities.
- The **\$36.5 million reduction** in self-directed services limits the ability of people and families to hire and retain caregivers, leaving them without essential personal supports.
- Eliminating the **\$56 million geographical differential rate** will make it even harder to recruit and retain direct support professionals (DSPs), especially in high-cost areas.
- These cuts could **push families into crisis, forcing them to take on additional caregiving responsibilities without support.**

3. Our Workforce Will Be Impacted

- DSPs and provider staff play a vital role in supporting people with disabilities. **These cuts could make it harder to maintain a strong workforce and quality services.**
- Cutting the wage exception process and self-direction funding **will make it harder for people to get the support they need for daily life.**
- Maryland has an ongoing DSP workforce crisis, and these budget reductions will **drive more staff out of the field, worsening the shortage.**
- **We cannot provide quality services without a strong workforce—this budget jeopardizes that.**



KEY MESSAGES

REGARDING PROPOSED CUTS TO DDA FUNDING

4. The Governor's Budget Prioritizes Other Sectors While Ignoring DD Services

- The administration is investing **\$750 million in economic growth initiatives and \$128 million in industries of the future**, yet they are failing to fund **essential services that people with disabilities rely on today**.
- The state is preserving a **\$2.05 billion rainy day fund** while cutting funding for people with disabilities—**if supporting vulnerable communities isn't a priority now, when will it be?**
- The budget shifts spending to programs the administration claims are "high-priority," but **why are disability services being deprioritized?**
- If these cuts pass, **people with disabilities will be left behind while other sectors receive increased funding**.

5. The Time to Act Is NOW!

- We **must** make our voices heard to stop these cuts.
- **We need EVERYONE**—staff, families, people receiving services, and supporters—to show up in force.
- We must tell our legislators: **These cuts are unacceptable. Fully fund DD services now!**

How Staff Can Advocate

- ✓ Help spread the word – Encourage families, DSPs, and community members to attend.
- ✓ Engage with legislators – Visit their offices before or after the rally and share how these cuts impact people.
- ✓ Stay informed – Keep up with advocacy efforts and changes that are happening in real-time.

🚩 This is a fight for the future of DD services in Maryland. Let's stand together and make sure our voices are heard. 🚩

Social Media Advocacy Guide

Raise Your Voice & Protect Disability Services in Maryland



Social media is a powerful tool for advocacy. By sharing posts, stories, and calls to action, you can help mobilize support and encourage others to contact their legislators. Use this guide to amplify your message and make an impact!

Key Hashtags

Use these hashtags in all your posts to connect with the broader advocacy movement:

- ◆ #ProtectDisabilityServices
- ◆ #FundDisabilitySupports
- ◆ #StopTheCutsMD
- ◆ #DisabilityRightsAreHumanRights
- ◆ #FundOurFutureMD

Sample Posts

Copy, paste, and personalize these posts to make your voice heard!

General Advocacy Post:

🚨 Maryland is considering budget cuts that will harm people with disabilities! These cuts would reduce essential services like employment support, housing assistance, and personal care. We must act NOW to stop this! 📢

📞 Call your legislator today and tell them to #ProtectDisabilityServices and #StopTheCutsMD!

Find your legislator here: [Insert Link]

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Employment Impact Post:

Marylanders with disabilities deserve the right to meaningful employment! Cutting funding for disability services means fewer job opportunities, loss of independence, and greater barriers to success.

Tell legislators to #FundDisabilitySupports and keep employment services available for ALL. Contact them today! 📞

Community & Independence Post:

People with disabilities deserve to live independently and thrive in their communities. Budget cuts will force many into crisis situations, reducing access to housing, healthcare, and daily support.

We must fight back! Urge lawmakers to #StopTheCutsMD and fully fund disability services. Take action now!

Personal Story Post:

Share a brief story about how disability services impact you, your family, or someone you know.

Example:

“My brother depends on disability services to maintain his independence and live in the community. If these budget cuts happen, he could lose access to the support he needs. We can’t let this happen. Contact your legislators today to #ProtectDisabilityServices! ”

Graphics & Social Media Actions

- ◆ **Tag Your Legislators:** Make sure they see your advocacy by tagging them in posts.
- ◆ **Engage & Amplify:** Comment on related posts, retweet/share content, and encourage friends to advocate.
- ◆ **Tag us in your advocacy efforts so we can amplify your message!** 📱



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Phone & Meeting Guide:

Advocating Against Budget Cuts to Disability Services in Maryland



Speaking directly with legislators—whether over the phone or in person—is one of the most effective ways to advocate for disability services. This guide will help you prepare for a **phone call or meeting** with your elected officials.

How to Prepare for a Call or Meeting

✓ **Know Your Legislator:**

Find out who represents you at Maryland's General Assembly website and research their position on disability issues.

✓ **Prepare a Personal Story:**

Sharing real-life examples makes your message stronger. Explain how these cuts would affect you, a loved one, or the community.

✓ **Be Clear About Your Ask:**

➔ **Main Message:** Oppose the proposed budget cuts to disability services.


➔ **Why It Matters:** Cuts will reduce critical supports that allow people with disabilities to live independently and participate in their communities.

➔ **Your Call to Action:** Request their commitment to fully funding disability services in Maryland's budget.

✓ **Stay Professional and Respectful:**

Legislators are more likely to listen when approached with a respectful, solution-oriented attitude.

Making a Phone Call

 **Call the office of your legislator and ask to speak with them or a staff member who handles disability policy.** If they are unavailable, leave a message with the key points below.

Sample Phone Script:

“Hello, my name is [Your Name], and I’m a [self-advocate, family member, service provider, concerned citizen] from [Your City]. I’m calling to urge [Legislator’s Name] to oppose the proposed budget cuts to disability services.”

Key Talking Points:

- **These cuts will reduce essential services that help people with disabilities live independently, find employment, and receive community-based support.**
- **Many families and providers are already struggling with underfunding—these cuts will worsen the crisis.**
- **Fully funding disability services ensures that Maryland remains a state that values inclusion, independence, and dignity for all.**

ASK:

“Can I count on [Legislator’s Name] to fight against these budget cuts and protect disability services in Maryland?”

Listen & Take Notes:

If they express support, thank them. If they are undecided, ask what concerns they have. If they oppose, politely ask them to reconsider and share why this issue is important to you.

Close Strongly:

“Thank you for your time and for supporting Marylanders with disabilities. I appreciate your leadership on this critical issue.”

Phone & Meeting Guide:

Advocating Against Budget Cuts to Disability Services in Maryland



Meeting with Your Legislator

Before the Meeting:

- ☒ Confirm your appointment and bring key materials (fact sheets, a personal story, talking points).
- ☒ If meeting as a group, assign roles (who will introduce the issue, share personal experiences, make the ask, etc.).
- ☒ Practice your key points to ensure you stay on message.

During the Meeting:

Introduction:

- Thank them for their time.
- Introduce yourself and your connection to disability services.

Main Message:

- Explain why fully funding disability services is crucial.
- Share a personal story or impact statement.
- Highlight how budget cuts will harm Marylanders with disabilities.

ASK: “Will you commit to opposing these budget cuts and fully funding disability services?”

Listen & Respond:

- If they support, thank them and ask how you can help them champion the issue.
- If undecided, provide additional information and ask what concerns they have.
- If opposed, respectfully ask them to reconsider, sharing why this matters.

Phone & Meeting Guide:

Advocating Against Budget Cuts to Disability Services in Maryland



Meeting with Your Legislator

Close the Meeting:

- Thank them for their time.
- Offer to follow up with any additional information.
- Leave behind any printed materials.

After the Call or Meeting:

- **Follow Up with an Email or Letter** thanking them for their time and restating your key points.
- **Encourage Others to Take Action** by sharing your advocacy efforts on social media and within your community.

Every call and meeting makes a difference!

Your voice is critical in protecting disability services in Maryland.



SAVE OUR SUPPORTS: TALKING POINTS FOR FAMILIES

Protect Services for People with Disabilities

1. These Budget Cuts Will Hurt My Family

- The governor wants to cut over **\$170 million from disability services**.
- My loved one **depends** on these services to **live, work, and be part of our community**.
- If these cuts happen, we will **lose the support** we rely on every day.

2. We Need Support, Not Less Help

- Cutting community living supports means **my family member could lose the one-on-one care they need**.
- Reducing self-directed services makes it **harder to hire and keep** Direct Support Professionals (DSPs).
- Families like mine will be left **struggling** without help.

3. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) Are Critical

- DSPs are already **underpaid and leaving the field**—these cuts will make it even harder to maintain them.
- Without DSPs, my loved one won't get the support they need to **live safely and independently**.

4. Maryland Can Afford to Do Better

- The state is spending **hundreds of millions on business growth** while **cutting disability services**.
- There's **\$2 billion in a "rainy day" fund**—if supporting vulnerable people isn't a priority **now**, when will it be?
- **People with disabilities deserve to be treated as a priority**, not an afterthought.

5. We Need You to Stop These Cuts

- These cuts will **push families like mine into crisis**.
- Fully funding these services isn't optional—**it's necessary for people with disabilities to live with dignity**.
- **Please stand with us and fight to restore full funding for DDA services!**



SAVE OUR SUPPORTS: TALKING POINTS FOR EMPLOYEES

Protect Services for People with Disabilities

1. These Budget Cuts Will Hurt the People We Support

- The governor's proposed budget cuts over **\$170 million from disability services**.
- These cuts will **take away essential supports** that people with disabilities need to **live independently, work, and be part of their communities**.
- Without this funding, the person(s) I support **will lose critical services** that help them thrive.

2. Community Living and Self-Directed Services Are at Risk

- **Cutting community living supports means** fewer hours of care, making it harder for people to participate in daily life.
- Reducing self-directed services will **limit families' ability to hire and retain caregivers, leaving people without the support they need**.
- If these cuts happen, **people and families will be left struggling**, and we will see more people in crisis.

3. We Can't Provide Quality Care Without a Strong Workforce

- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and provider staff play a **vital role in supporting people with disabilities**, but we are **already facing a workforce crisis**.
- Eliminating the geographical differential rate and wage exception process will make it even **harder to recruit and retain staff—especially in high-cost areas**.
- If these cuts go through, **we will lose more staff**, making it impossible to provide the quality care people deserve.

4. Maryland Can Afford to Fund These Services

- The state is investing in economic growth and industries of the future **while cutting services that people with disabilities rely on today**.
- Maryland has a \$2 billion rainy day fund—if **supporting people with disabilities isn't a priority now**, when will it be?
- Our **work is essential**, and it **deserves to be fully funded**.



SAVE OUR SUPPORTS: TALKING POINTS FOR EMPLOYEES

Protect Services for People with Disabilities

5. We Need You to Take Action

- These cuts will make it **harder for us to do our jobs** and for the people we support to **live safely and independently**.
- Fully funding these services isn't just about numbers—**it's about real people** who rely on them every day.
- **Please stand with us and fight to restore full funding for DDA services!**

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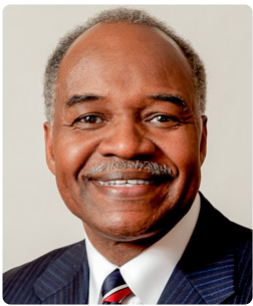
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[Long, Jeffrie E., Jr.](#)
District 27B
Calvert and Prince
George's Counties
Democrat



[Long, Robert B.](#)
District 6
Baltimore County
Republican



[Lopez, Lesley J.](#)
District 39
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Mangione, Nino](#)
District 42A
Baltimore County
Republican



[Martinez, Ashanti](#)
District 22
Prince George's County
Democrat



[McCaskill, Aletheia](#)
District 44B
Baltimore County
Democrat



[McComas, Susan K.](#)
District 34B
Harford County
Republican



[Metzgar, Ric](#)
District 6
Baltimore County
Republican



[Miller, April](#)
District 4
Frederick County
Republican



[Mireku-North, Bernice](#)
District 14
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Moon, David](#)
District 20
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Morgan, Matthew](#)
District 29A
St. Mary's County
Republican



[Morgan, Todd B.](#)
District 29C
Calvert and St. Mary's
Counties
Republican



[Nawrocki, Ryan](#)
District 7A
Baltimore County
Republican



[Nkongolo, LaToya](#)
District 31
Anne Arundel County
Republican



[Otto, Charles J.](#)
District 38A
Somerset, Worcester,
and Wicomico Counties
Republican



[Palakovich Carr, Julie](#)
District 17
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Pasteur, Cheryl E.](#)
District 11A
Baltimore County
Democrat



[Patterson, Edith J.](#)
District 28
Charles County
Democrat



[Pena-Melnyk, Joseline A.](#)
District 21
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties
Democrat
Chair - HGO



[Phillips, N. Scott](#)
District 10
Baltimore County
Democrat



[Pippy, Jesse T.](#)
District 4
Frederick County
Republican



[Pruski, Andrew C.](#)
District 33A
Anne Arundel County
Democrat



[Qi, Lily](#)
District 15
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Queen, Pam](#)
District 14
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Reilly, Teresa E.](#)
District 35A
Cecil and Harford
Counties
Republican



[Roberson, Kent](#)
District 25
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Roberts, Denise](#)
District 25
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Rogers, Mike](#)
District 32
Anne Arundel County
Democrat



[Rose, April](#)
District 5
Frederick and Carroll
Counties
Republican



[Rosenberg, Samuel I.](#)
District 41
Baltimore City
Democrat



[Ruff, Malcolm P.](#)
District 41
Baltimore City
Democrat



[Ruth, Sheila](#)
District 44B
Baltimore County
Democrat



[Sample-Hughes, Sheree](#)
District 37A
Dorchester and
Wicomico Counties
Democrat



[Schindler, Matthew J.](#)
District 2B
Washington County
Democrat



[Schmidt, Stuart Michael,
Jr.](#)
District 33B
Anne Arundel County
Republican



[Shetty, Emily](#)
District 18
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Simmons, Gary](#)
District 12B
Anne Arundel County
Democrat



[Simpson, Karen](#)
District 3
Frederick County
Democrat



[Smith, Stephanie](#)
District 45
Baltimore City
Democrat



[Solomon, Jared](#)
District 18
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Spiegel, Ryan](#)
District 17
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Stein, Dana](#)
District 11B
Baltimore County
Democrat



[Stewart, Vaughn](#)
District 19
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Stonko, Joshua J.](#)
District 42C
Carroll County
Republican



[Szeliga, Kathy](#)
District 7A
Baltimore County
Republican



[Taveras, Deni](#)
District 47B
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Taylor, Kym](#)
District 23
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Terrasa, Jen](#)
District 13
Howard County
Democrat



[Toles, Karen](#)
District 25
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Tomlinson, Chris](#)
District 5
Frederick and Carroll
Counties
Republican



[Turner, Veronica](#)
District 26
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Valderrama, Kriselda](#)
District 26
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Valentine, William](#)
District 2A
Washington and
Frederick Counties
Republican



[Vogel, Joe](#)
District 17
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Watson, Courtney](#)
District 9B
Howard County
Democrat



[Wells, Melissa](#)
District 40
Baltimore City
Democrat



[White Holland, Jennifer](#)
District 10
Baltimore County
Democrat



[Wilkins, Jheanelle K.](#)
District 20
Montgomery County
Democrat
Vice Chair - W&M



[Williams, Nicole A.](#)
District 22
Prince George's County
Democrat



[Wilson, C. T.](#)
District 28
Charles County
Democrat
Chair - ECM



[Wims, Greg](#)
District 39
Montgomery County
Democrat



[Wivell, William J.](#)
District 2A
Washington and
Frederick Counties
Republican



[Wolek, Sarah](#)
District 16
Montgomery County
Democrat



Woods, Jamila J.
District 26
Prince George's County
Democrat



Woorman, Teresa
District 16
Montgomery County
Democrat



Wu, Chao
District 9A
Howard and
Montgomery Counties
Democrat



Young, Caylin
District 45
Baltimore City
Democrat



Ziegler, Natalie
District 9A
Howard and
Montgomery Counties
Democrat

No image
available

To Be Announced
District 41
Baltimore City

No image
available

To Be Announced
District 8
Baltimore County

Save Our Supports: Letter Template



[Your Name]

[Your Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

[Your Email]

[Your Phone Number]

[Date]

The Honorable [Legislator's Name]

[Legislator's Office Address]

[City, State, ZIP Code]

Dear [Legislator's Name],

I am writing to urge you to **oppose the proposed budget cuts to disability services** in Maryland. These cuts would have a devastating impact on thousands of Marylanders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), as well as their families and caregivers.

The services at risk—such as personal supports, employment assistance, and community-based care—are essential for people with disabilities to **live independently, contribute to their communities, and lead fulfilling lives**. Reducing funding for these programs would not only threaten their well-being but also place additional strain on families, service providers, and our state's economy.

As a **[self-advocate, family member, service provider, concerned citizen]**, I have seen firsthand how these services empower individuals with disabilities to thrive. **[Share a brief personal story about how disability services impact you or someone you know.]**

I strongly urge you to:

- **Reject the proposed budget cuts** and advocate for full funding of disability services.
- **Prioritize policies that support inclusion, independence, and economic opportunity** for people with disabilities.
- **Work with the disability community** to find sustainable solutions that protect essential services.

Maryland has long been a leader in disability rights. We must continue to uphold these values by ensuring that people with disabilities receive the support they need to live with dignity and independence.

Please stand with us by **opposing these budget cuts and fully funding disability services**. I appreciate your leadership on this critical issue and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

[Your City, MD]

[Your Contact Information]



Save Our Supports Resource Page



Stay Informed. Take Action. Save Our Supports.

Governor Wes Moore's proposed **FY25 & FY26 budget** includes **severe funding cuts to DDA services**, jeopardizing essential supports for thousands of Marylanders with developmental disabilities (DD). These cuts would limit access to care, reduce service availability, and place immense strain on families, caregivers, and providers.

Save Our Supports: **An Urgent Call to Action Webinar Series**



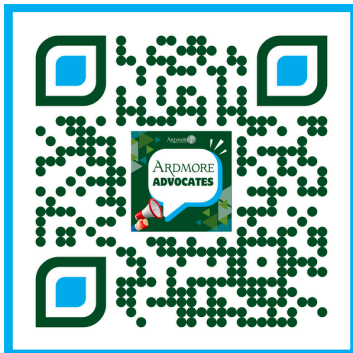
Join Our Next Advisory Call – **February 25, 2025 at 6PM**

Sign Up for Advocacy Alerts below to get access to our Webinar Series.

**Sign Up for Advocacy
Alerts from Ardmore**

**Send A Letter to
Maryland Legislators**

**Learn More About Our
Advocacy Efforts**



Have questions or want to get involved?

Email us at advocacy@ardmoreenterprises.org for updates and resources.

Every voice counts—let's stand together to **#SaveOurSupports**

#InCommunityTogether