



## 2022 Legislative Priorities

### Our Mission

Paraquad champions equity and independence for people with disabilities through services, partnerships, education, and advocacy.

### Our Vision

We envision an integrated society free of barriers and discrimination where disability is viewed as a natural part of human diversity.

### **People with disabilities should have access to home- and community-based services that allow them to live independent lives in their homes and communities.**

- We support increasing funding for the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program to 100 percent of the funding for nursing home care, thereby allowing people with disabilities who meet a nursing home level of care to choose in-home support to remain independent.
- We support responsible reform of the CDS program to ensure the integrity of this essential service.
- We support increasing provider rates for Consumer Directed Services.

### **People with disabilities should have opportunities to achieve economic self-sufficiency.**

- We support changes to the Missouri's MO HealthNet Buy-in (MBI) Program—the Ticket to Work Health Assurance Program—that increase the likelihood that people with disabilities who need to access MO HealthNet can do so while still being employed to their greatest capacity.
- People with personal care needs can only access these supports at very low-income levels, which limits work opportunities for people with disabilities.
- The State should not consider retirement accounts or a spouse's income, up to \$50,000, when determining eligibility.

### **People with disabilities should be employed in community settings for at least minimum wage.**

- We support a statewide "Employment First" policy that prioritizes competitive, integrated employment settings where disabled workers interact with nondisabled coworkers.
- State agencies should be required to provide information annually to people with disabilities on competitive employment, the relationship between income and benefits, and assistive technology.
- We advocate for partnerships between state agencies, supported employment providers, and employers to overcome barriers in meeting workforce needs.

### **People with disabilities should have access to quality, affordable health care that meets their needs.**

- We oppose any efforts to weaken the vital "safety net" (e.g., implementation of block grants or per capita cap models of Medicaid).
- We oppose implementing work requirements for Medicaid recipients.



- We oppose efforts to include people with disabilities in managed care delivery systems that do not ensure access to quality, affordable health care for people with disabilities.
- As Missouri implements Medicaid expansion, it should provide for equal coverage for the expansion group and cover home and community-based services.

**Paraquad supports increasing Independent Living funding to the level recommended by the federal government.**

- Centers for Independent Living (CILS) are nonprofit organizations in place to provide broad services, supports, and resources to help Missourians live and remain independent at home. Every county in Missouri is served by a CIL.
- CILs serve people with ALL Disabilities and those of ANY AGE; they are disability resource experts who are well connected to assist those who are born with a disability, acquire a disability in life, or develop an age-related disability.
- According to a 1990 National Base Level Funding Study, Centers should be funded at \$250,000 each— Most Missouri Centers fall below this level at \$239,695 – that would have been a \$10,305 SHORTFALL per Center 30 years ago. Per 2014 data, Centers should be funded at \$570,000 each.

**People with disabilities should have access to safe, affordable, accessible housing.**

- Understanding that access to accessible housing is a significant barrier to independent living and de-institutionalization, we support policies to address the shortage of more than 120,000 rental units across Missouri for people with low incomes.
- We support continued reform to the Low Income Housing Tax Credit including universal design and extending the affordability period.
- Missouri should prioritize stable communities and protect vulnerable people by addressing housing needs before, during, and after the eviction process.

**Robust public transportation is essential to ensuring people with disabilities have access to education and employment opportunities, safe housing, and can fully participate in their communities.**

- We support a statewide funding plan for transit access that includes subsidies for paratransit services ensuring healthcare, employment, and education access for Missourians with disabilities.
- We advocate for partnerships between Transportation Networking Companies and local public transit authorities to address disability service gaps.
- We support policies that promote development near public transit.

**Youth with disabilities must have access to a free and appropriate public education adapted to their individual needs in the most integrated setting possible.**

- We support legislation that would require a parent or guardian to consent to any changes to their child(ren)'s Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- We support legislation to shift the burden of proof from the parent(s) to the district in the event of a due process complaint.



- We oppose revenue reductions that impact the state’s ability to fund public education, including property tax cuts, freezes, or limits.
- We support the replication and expansion of programs that successfully meet the needs of students with disabilities, who live in poverty, or who are otherwise considered “at-risk”.

**People with disabilities must be able to participate fully and equally in the democratic process.**

- We oppose any legislation that discriminates against people with disabilities or makes accessing election information, registering to vote, or casting a ballot more difficult for disabled voters.
- We support the right of disabled voters to accessible, reliable, and private voting technology, processes, and formats.
- We support the removal of all physical accessibility barriers to polling centers.