



2025 Iowa Legislative Session Review

The Iowa Legislature wrapped up its work for the year on May 15 after having worked three 18+ hour days in a row. They managed to pass all nine budget bills, the federal block grant bill, opioid settlement spending, a bill limiting what carbon pipeline companies can do to take private land, the Governor's rural health initiative, the Governor's unemployment tax reduction, state government employee paid leave, Iowa Health & Wellness Plan work requirements, the Governor's tax credit bill, local government ban on DEI activities (Diversity – Equity – Inclusion), regulation of crypto-currency (bitcoin), an expanded state adoption tax credit, and 35 other bills in these final three days of session. After much talk and several subcommittees, they did not end up making changes to the state's property tax system (look for that next year).

So now what? **Part One!**

1. **Take a look below at what passed – and celebrate the good!** Consider thanking your legislators for their work on the issues you care about by writing them a personal thank you card and mailing it to their home address. You can find their contact information in our Guide [here](#).
2. **Take a deep breath and read through the things that are not so great.** Think about how these law changes will impact you. We have suggestions for what to do next below in Part 2. So keep reading!

NEW LAWS: The Good News

- Private insurance will no longer be able to limit its coverage for **autism spectrum disorder** to children or put annual caps on the amount they'll cover. This will apply to any plans renewed or started after January 1, 2026. ([HF 330](#))

- Schools will be safer for students with epilepsy after the passage of the **Seizure Safe Schools** bill ([HF 835](#)). The bill will also require students and all faculty to take a short “seizure first aid” course that will help broaden understanding of seizures, including how to spot them and what to do.
- Homeowners will be notified of any **lead pipes** carrying water to their home. Lead exposure is a preventable cause of intellectual disabilities. ([HF 876](#))
- Cities and counties would not be allowed to stop a homeowner from putting a tiny house or other “**accessory dwelling unit**” on their property ([SF 592](#)). We watched this because many families thought this might be helpful for caregiving.
- **Community providers** will get a small boost in rates this year for intermittent services – the \$3 million state appropriation will be matched with federal funds for a total increase of \$8 million for respite, employment, supported community living, and day habilitation. How this will be applied is yet to be determined (because they needed \$8 million in state funds to do the full increase). Increases in rates means more sustainability for community providers, and more access to services by people with disabilities. ([HF 1049](#))
- Medicaid will pay higher rates for **prosthetics** in an effort to make this more available to lowans with disabilities. The budget bill ([HF 1049](#)) increases funding for this by \$295,000.
- People living in a nursing home, residential care facility, or other institutional setting will be able to keep more money for personal needs each month. The budget bill ([HF 1049](#)) increases **personal needs allowance** from \$50 to \$55/month. Advocates had asked for more and asked for an automatic yearly increase, but this is a good start.

NEW LAWS: Mixed News

- Legislators lived up to their commitment to include \$14 million in the budget for **paraeducator salaries**, but the language was not changed to tighten up the use of those dollars. Some schools used the funds to increase salaries for all “education support professionals,” including janitors and lunch staff. While this is important work as well, it led to paraeducator salaries falling short of the promised \$15/hour. In addition, the funds used are not from the state's general fund. Instead, the Legislature used one-time sports gambling funds. That means those funds may not be available next year for this purpose. This could be fixed in 2026 to either increase the amount to bring paraeducator salaries up to \$15 or by changing the definition so the funds are used only for paraeducators. ([SF 660](#)).
- The Iowa Legislature agreed to keep **special education funding** for the Department of Education at the current level - \$10 million. The Governor recommended cutting this in half since the Department had not used the full \$10 million this year. While getting the full amount is good news, the Legislature put only \$5 million into the Education budget ([SF 660](#)) and again used one-time sports betting money for the other \$5 million ([SF 647](#)).

NEW LAWS: The Bad News

- Low-income adults who are a part of the Medicaid expansion population (Iowa Health & Wellness Plan) would be required to **report they worked at least 80 hours/month** in order to keep their coverage. This mirrors what Congress is considering now. There are more than 180,000 Iowans who have this plan. If Arkansas' experience holds true and one in four people lose their health insurance because of this reporting requirement, that means 45,000 Iowans will lose their health insurance (mostly because they were confused about the reporting or forgot to report their work). ([SF 615](#))
- Local governments would not be able to hire **DEI (Disability, Equity, Inclusion)** staff, have DEI offices, and sponsor DEI events under a new bill signed into law ([HF 856](#)). Disability inclusion is considered a DEI activity, so we'll have to watch the fall-out on this bill. Some have said that city and county recognition of Martin Luther King Day and other culturally specific days that honor the contributions of a specific cultural group may be challenged.

Missed Opportunities

The Iowa Legislature could have passed several bills that would have improved the lives of Iowans with disabilities, but there is always next year! Policy change takes time – just ask the Epilepsy Foundation of Iowa. They succeeded this year in passing the Seizure Safe Schools bill after more than six years of advocacy. The things listed here have started that process, but they will only be successful if each year's advocacy builds on the prior year. These issues need your summer advocacy if they stand a chance in 2026.

- Young adults with disabilities would be able to get scholarships for **Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs** (University of Iowa REACH, Northwestern College's NEXT, North Iowa Community College's EDUCATE) if the Legislature were to pass [HF 271](#) or its companion [SF 283](#). These programs are very expensive, not eligible for traditional student loan programs, and are highly successful in improving employment outcomes. The House bill is in the [House Ways & Means Committee](#); the Senate bill is in the [Senate Ways & Means Committee](#). Talking to legislators on these committees this year could help these pass in 2026!
- Iowa's lawmakers could show their commitment to community living by passing [HF 408](#). It eliminates all **waiver waiting lists for Medicaid home and community-based services**. The downside is it will be very expensive for the State to implement.
- Iowa could lead the way in disability policy by passing some version of the **Work Without Worry Act** ([HF 905](#)). Work Without Worry is an expanded version of the Medicaid for Employed Persons with Disabilities (MEPD) program, but it allows people with disabilities to earn up to their full potential while buying into Medicaid. The more you make, the more you pay for keeping Medicaid. Asset limits would be eliminated. The bill passed out of a committee in the House and is on the House Appropriations Calendar ready for debate in 2026. Talk to your State Representatives about passing this early in 2026 and ask your Senators to sponsor a similar bill!
- A series of bills introduced this year would have made it easier to **access complex**

medical equipment often used by people with disabilities. [HF 425](#) eliminates Medicaid (including managed care organizations, also known as MCOs) prior authorization and the need for a prescription for complex medical equipment. Prior authorization means having to get permission from Medicaid before getting the equipment. [HF 426](#) requires Medicaid (including MCOs) to continue to cover durable medical equipment without extra hurdles for those whose condition is not going to change in 12 months. [HF 427](#) requires MCOs to pay for power standing equipment that attaches to a power wheelchair. All three of these bills were sent to the [House Health & Human Services Committee](#), but were not even assigned a subcommittee (which is a necessary first step in the process). [HF 500](#) requires private insurance to pay for the maintenance and repair of complex rehabilitation technology wheelchairs (this bill was sent to the [House Commerce Committee](#) and also failed to get a subcommittee assigned). If these bills are important to you, start with your State Representative and talk to the members of the committees listed above!

- A State Architect would be hired under this bill ([HF 483](#)) to **survey state buildings and plan for increasing their accessibility**.
- [HF 485](#) does not allow sales tax to be charged on the purchase of **adaptive driving equipment**, which allows a person with a disability to drive. The House Ways & Means Committee passed this bill, and it is on the House Ways & Means Calendar ready for debate in 2026. There is some confusion as to whether companies already exempt these sales from the state sales tax (which can add up on these expensive purchases). Talk to your State Representative if this is an important issue for you.
- [HF 509](#) came close to passing this year but was taken out of the budget at the last minute. This would add **autism spectrum disorder coverage** to the children's health insurance program (Hawki). Right now private insurance and Medicaid cover this, but some families fall into the income gap between these two programs. The bill passed the House 89-0 and it is currently in the [Senate Health & Human Services Committee](#). Your State Senator would be the best starting point for this issue, but you can also talk to other Senators on the HHS Committee.
- For-profit employers would have to pay at least **minimum wage to their workers with disabilities** if [HF 538](#) passes. A subcommittee was held on this bill but it was set aside in the [House Labor & Workforce Committee](#). The best place to start with this issue is your own State Representative, but you can also talk to legislators on this committee.
- Many advocates have told us it is hard to keep up with legislation when bill numbers change. Some states do not **change bill numbers** as they move through their legislative processes. [HF 597](#), which is in the [House State Government Committee](#), would keep bill numbers the same.
- The state would set up a **centralized accommodation grant program** if [HF 738](#) were to pass. This would provide grants to help an individual or employer pay for mobility devices and other accommodations needed to make the workplace accessible to the employee with a disability. This bill is in the [House Health & Human Services Committee](#), but it has not been assigned a subcommittee.
- Iowans with low vision would be able to get **prescription medication labels and**

instructions in an accessible format if [SF 202](#) were to pass. It's currently in the [Senate Health & Human Services Committee](#).

- This bill would set up **automatic annual increases in Medicaid provider rates** ([HF 13](#)). Passing this means reimbursement rates would get an increase for inflation and not fall so far behind. This bill never made it out of the [House Health & Human Services Committee](#).

So Now What? [Part 2](#)

1. **Write down how these laws impact you.** Legislators will want to hear your stories and the more specific you can be, the better. If you know that there will be negative impacts on your life, be ready to explain why. [Get ready to share them with your legislators.](#)
2. **Also share your concerns and your stories with us at the Iowa DD Council.** We are reviewing policy proposals and ideas in the summer months, and we want to hear from you. We use your input to choose our priorities and also share the concerns we hear from Iowans with policymakers during the legislative session.
3. **Plan when to talk to your elected officials.** They have more time in the summer and fall to talk to their constituents. They want to hear from you – what challenges do you face and how can they help. Invite them to coffee, or to your home or work site. Would you consider getting other advocates together to organize a forum or town hall? We can help with that!
4. **We are here to help—let us know how we can help you!** We can help you organize a town hall or just talk through your concerns and the best way to tell your story to others.

We also have these tools:

- [Who Represents You? Guide to the US Congress & Iowa Legislature](#)
- [Advocacy Toolkit](#)
- [Talking Points](#)
- [Bills of the Week \(they can still be used for 2026 session\)](#)
- [Capitol Chats \(and recordings\)](#)
- [YouTube](#), [Facebook \(DD Council\)](#), [Facebook \(Infonet/Policy Focus\)](#), [Instagram](#)

All of these materials were created after advocates spoke up and asked for them.

- What is the next thing we can develop to help you?
- What formats (video, printed, social media) are the best for you?
- Let us know what you need and how we can help you by emailing carlyn.crowe@hhs.iowa.gov.

Remember—you are not alone. Many Iowans share your concerns. Consider how to get other advocates to use their voice. **[We are better together!](#)**

Mark Your Calendars

- **June 20 (Noon-1 pm):** June Capitol Chat | Register [here](#).
- **July 28-August 1:** Youth Leadership Academy | More information [here](#).
- **August 28 (Noon-1 pm):** August Capitol Chat | Register [here](#).

- **September 18-19:** Make Your Mark! Conference | More information [here](#).
- **September 26 (Noon-1 pm):** September Capitol Chat | Register [here](#).
- **October (any time, any day):** Hey Legislator! Do My Job! | More information [here](#).
- **October 31 (Noon-1 pm):** October Capitol Chat | Register [here](#).
- **November 4:** City/School Election Day
- **December 5 (Noon-1 pm):** November/December Capitol Chat | Register [here](#).
- **January 12, 2026:** Iowa Legislature starts again!



Advocate Resources

[Bill Tracker](#)
[Bills of the Week](#)
[Weekly Capitol Report/INFONET](#)
[Action Center](#)
[Calendar & Legislative Town Halls](#)
[Who Represents You? Guide](#)
[Advocacy Toolkit](#)

infoNET is the disability policy project of the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council and its network of Iowans with Disabilities in Action.

IOWA DD Council

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This project is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$774,176 with 100 percent funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by ACL/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

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