



# infoNET

IOWA'S DISABILITY POLICY RESOURCE

**IOWA DD Council**  
Preparation, Participation, Power

**This Week at the Iowa Capitol | Week 12 Report | April 24, 2026**

## State Capitol News: Budget Work Begins

The one thing legislators must do each year is pass a budget. That has to be done before the state's new budget year (called the fiscal year) begins on July 1. To begin that process, the heads of the majority party in the House and Senate announce the total amount of money they will spend, called a budget target. After that total is announced, they divide it up between the seven state budget subcommittees. Those seven budget subcommittees will decide how much each program or service will get.

You can see who serves on these committees below:

1. [Administration & Regulation](#)
2. [Agriculture & Natural Resources](#)
3. [Economic Development](#)
4. [Education](#)
5. [Health & Human Services](#)
6. [Justice Systems](#)
7. [Transportation & Infrastructure](#)



There are only a few weeks left in the Iowa legislative session. The session is scheduled to end April 21. With 18 days left in the legislative session, Senate leaders have started their budget process. **On Monday, Senate Majority Leader Mike Klimesh announced they will spend \$9.6 billion.**

- This is \$47.8 million less than the Governor's budget.
- This budget had to be reduced by that amount because revenue estimates were lowered in March. Legislators are required to set budgets based on that lower estimate.
- This is still an increase of 1.2%.
- That means there will be \$114 million in new state funds available in the budget.
- However, this includes \$100 million in new funding for schools passed earlier in the year.
- That means there isn't much new money left for budgeting - only \$14 million.
- This will leave the state with \$4.8 billion in the ending balance, the Taxpayer Relief Fund, and the state's rainy day funds at the end of the next fiscal year (FY 2027).

Senate budget chairs wasted no time getting to work. Here's a quick review of the Senate budgets that have been introduced so far:

- **Administration & Regulation Budget ([SF 2479](#)):**
  - Total spending \$73.1 million (cut of \$613,000).
  - This includes a small (\$47,000) cut to the Office of Civil Rights. These cuts are because of a reduction in fees for some of the technology used by the office.
  - No change in funding for the State Treasurer for administering Iowa ABLE plans (\$200,000). Iowa ABLE are savings accounts for people with disabilities. Find out more about these here : <https://www.iable.gov/>
  - Directs the Department of Inspections, Appeals & Licensing to report on public assistance program fraud investigations (report due 12/1/2026).
  - No change in funding for public libraries (\$2.5 million).
  - The bill was voted out of committee this week, so is ready for debate by the full Senate. You can find more details [here](#).
- **Agriculture/Nature Resources Budget ([SSB 3190](#)):**
  - Total spending \$46.6 million (increase of \$300,000).
  - No change in funding for the farmers with disabilities program.
  - The subcommittee will meet to discuss this bill on Monday, April 6 at 12:30 pm.
- **Economic Development Budget ([SSB 3188](#)):**
  - Total spending \$38.4 million (cut of \$1.9 million).
  - No change in funding for HCBS rent subsidy program, vocational rehabilitation services, and the entrepreneurs with disabilities program. Funding for independent living services and centers for independent living (CILs) is being moved to the HHS budget.
  - The subcommittee met on April 2 and approved the bill. The next step is the Senate Appropriations Committee. You can find more detail [here](#).

- **Education Budget ([SSB 3191](#)):**
  - Total spending \$1.05 billion (increase of \$14.9 million).
  - Cuts children’s mental health training by \$1.5 million. This cuts funding almost in half, leaving \$1.9 million for AEAs to provide mental health awareness training to teachers. This training is to help teachers support students’ mental health needs.
  - Includes a \$764,000 increase for the Iowa School for the Deaf and a \$100,000 increase for educational services for the blind and visually impaired.
  - No change in funding for special education. The full \$10 million is included in this budget. Last year, lawmakers used \$5 million from the Sports Wagering Fund to add to the \$5 million in this budget.
  - No change in funding for the Department for the Blind, Best Buddies, therapeutic classrooms, Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K), and Health Care Professional Incentive Program.
  - The bill was voted out of the subcommittee this week, but we do not know when the Senate Appropriations Committee will take action on it. Just a reminder — it will get a new bill number when it is voted out of committee, but if you click on the bill link above, it will tell you what that new number is under “Bill History.” You can find more details [here](#).
  
- **Justice Systems Budget ([SSB 3184](#)):**
  - Total spending \$714.2 million (an increase of \$11.1 million).
  - This budget funds prisons, the Attorney General’s office, state police, criminal investigations, victim services, and public safety.
  - The bill was voted out of the subcommittee this week, but we do not know when the Senate Appropriations Committee will take action on it. This will also get a new bill number when voted out of committee. You can find more details [here](#).
  
- **Judicial Branch Budget ([SSB 3185](#)):**
  - Total spending \$221.8 million (no change).
  - This budget funds the state’s courts and judges.
  - The bill was voted out of the subcommittee this week, but we do not know when the Senate Appropriations Committee will take action on it. This will also get a new bill number when voted out of committee. You can find more details [here](#).
  
- **Transportation Budget ([SF 2478](#)):**
  - This budget allocates road use tax funds (which come from gas taxes and other sources) to fund road projects. Funding for things like public transportation is in the Infrastructure budget, which has not yet been released.
  - The bill was voted out of committee this week and is ready for full Senate debate. You can find more details [here](#). The House also has introduced the same bill ([HSB 763](#)), but the subcommittee in that chamber has not met.

The Infrastructure and Health/Human Services budgets are going to take a bit longer. You will also notice we are talking about one chamber's budget targets — the Senate. People think that because the House and Senate are controlled by Republicans, they will always agree. That's not always true. The House will set their own targets, and then the leaders of the two chambers will get to work on a compromise.

**The House budget numbers have not been shared yet. Budget subcommittee chairs were told what they were this week, so we hope they will be announced soon.** During a House Appropriations Committee meeting on April 1, the committee chair (Rep. Gary Mohr) said that the Health and Human Services Budget would not be released until the Department of Health & Human Services answers their long list of questions. Legislative leaders have asked Iowa HHS a number of questions dating back to last summer, and are still awaiting a response.

Stay tuned to our [Facebook](#) and [Website](#) for updates on the budget!

## Successful Disability Advocacy Day Held April 1

**With Medicaid, We Can:**

**Live.  
Work.  
Play.  
Flourish.**

**Protect**

- HOME**
- HCBS**
- Our Services**
- Our Waivers**
- Iowans with Disabilities**

Logos: Common Coalition, ASK, IOWA DD Council, IOWA SILC, ACCESS INDEPENDENCE, The Arc, Autism Society, EPILEPSY FOUNDATION, LSI, ALLIES IN ADVOCACY, IOWA DISABILITY POLICY ALLIANCE, TB

More than 15 disability-related organizations and 200 advocates came together for Disability Advocacy Day at the Iowa State Capitol on **Wednesday, April 1** with a message appropriate for the day – **Don't fool with Medicaid!**

Advocates asked lawmakers to invest in Medicaid and reject budget cuts that could affect health care services and supports. Before meeting with legislators, self-advocates, family advocates and community advocates shared their stories to inspire those attending to advocate for Medicaid, education, and employment for Iowans with disabilities. Legislators also spoke to the group in attendance about the importance of advocacy, showing up and asking for what they want.

Groups of advocates came from as far away as Rock Valley, driving more than four hours, to connect with legislators and other advocates at the Capitol. As a result, many important conversations happened and strong connections were made. Organizations provided support with training. There was also a great barbeque lunch provided by Triple B's, a Johnston restaurant that is staffed by more than 30 Iowans with disabilities. It hosts special events for Iowans with disabilities and is a restaurant that is friendly to people of all abilities.

Special thanks to The Arc of Iowa and the Common Coalition for organizing, and to the organizations attending who provided financial support. Thanks to the legislators who spoke and those who listened! **Congratulations to all the advocates who showed up and made a difference!**



# Missed Disability Advocacy Day?

## Advocate from Home!

We know that many advocates could not make it to the Capitol to advocate for Medicaid. It's not too late — in fact, now is the absolute best time to ask to protect Medicaid! Legislators are making decisions now on funding, and the HHS Budget will be one of the last completed.

- You can use these [talking points](#) to help with your message.
- You can use [these tips](#) to help organize your message.
- You can send your message to your legislators using our Grassroots Action Center [here](#).
- You can send a videotaped message to your legislators as well — find their emails [here](#).



### The Iowa DD Council wants to hear from YOU!

Read our draft five-year state plan and let us know if you agree with our direction and what we're missing. Read the plan and submit your comments at:

[iowaddcouncil.org/state-plan](http://iowaddcouncil.org/state-plan)

## Become the Voice that Creates Change

**YLA** | YOUTH  
LEADERSHIP  
ACADEMY



Do you want to learn about being a leader? If so, the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) is for you! YLA is a way to connect with peers with disabilities and learn leadership skills. Spend two hours per day for five days this summer and gain skills for a lifetime. All sessions are virtual and FREE! YLA is for youth and young adults with disabilities ages 14–21.

At YLA you will learn how to become a leader and advocate for yourself and others. You will build your leadership skills — things like goal setting, networking, mentoring, self-determination, disability rights, advocacy, and civic engagement.

**Youth Leadership Academy will be held July 27-31, 2027  
at Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines, Iowa.**

Learn more and sign up at: [iowaddcouncil.org/yla](http://iowaddcouncil.org/yla)

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## **Public Comment on State Special Education Plan**

Earlier this year, the Iowa Department of Education (IDE) announced that they had received approval from the federal government to merge state and federal "special education accountability systems" into one new, unified **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) special education accountability system**.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law ensuring children with disabilities, from birth through age 21, receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) tailored to their needs. It requires special education, related services and early intervention, guaranteeing, through Individualized Education Programs (IEP), that services are provided in the least restrictive environment.

The IDEA requires states to develop comprehensive plans for accountability and support, and identify schools for support and improvement using an approved rating system, identifying schools in one of four categories: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention and needs substantial intervention. Iowa's system for accountability and support under IDEA is being developed with broad public input to fit the state's context and focus on helping schools find solutions that work for them.

The proposed change will update how Iowa collects information about special education services, outcomes, and challenges. The goal of the department was to make reporting easier for school districts and give the IDE more information to help develop strategies to close the achievement gap.

This is a pretty technical change, so it may be more interesting to school district staff than parents of students with disabilities. If you think you might be interested in this, you can watch the 15-minute video that reviews the three options they are considering and then give your thoughts on which direction makes the most sense.

**Feedback will be collected through Friday, April 10.** All comments will remain anonymous. You can watch the video and take the survey [here](#).

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Find all the bills we are tracking at:

[\*\*iowaddcouncil.org/bill-tracker\*\*](http://iowaddcouncil.org/bill-tracker)

Take action on bills by emailing your legislators at:

[\*\*iowaddcouncil.org/take-action-center\*\*](http://iowaddcouncil.org/take-action-center)

Find local legislative town hall meetings in our calendar at:

[\*\*iowaddcouncil.org/calendar\*\*](http://iowaddcouncil.org/calendar)

Find our bills of the week at:

[\*\*Iowaddcouncil.org/bill-of-the-week\*\*](http://iowaddcouncil.org/bill-of-the-week)