



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
& SPECIAL EDUCATION

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Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education Legislative Hearings/Budget Alert 3/21/23

The Alaska House of Representatives will take public testimony on the proposed FY 24 Operating Budget this week. Below is the schedule of testimony by community, and how to call in to give 2 minutes' worth of testimony. Advocates can also provide written testimony via email at House.Finance@akleg.gov. Legislators pay attention to both oral and written testimony. You can send in your testimony and speak to it as well.

House Finance Public Testimony Schedule:

- **Tuesday March 21** from 1:30-3:30 p.m.: Sitka, Petersburg, Dillingham, Glennallen, Valdez, Wrangell, Homer, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Seward, Tok
- **Tuesday March 21** from 5-8 p.m.: Juneau
- **Wednesday March 22** 2-4 p.m.: Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Kenai, Bethel, Cordova, Kotzebue, Nome, Utqiagvik
- **Wednesday March 22** 5-8 p.m.: Anchorage, Mat-Su
- **Thursday March 23** 2:30-3:30: Additional communities/callers

How to Testify Telephonically:

From Juneau, call 907-586-9085
From Southcentral AK call 907-563-9085
From anywhere else call 844-586-9085

- If possible, visit your local LIO to participate in teleconferenced hearings. LIOs act as an extension of the formal committee room for hearings.
- **If you wish to testify during a legislative hearing and having trouble, contact the Juneau Legislative Information Office at 907-465-4648.** They will assist you with how and when to connect to the hearing by teleconference.
- You will be allowed 2 mins to testify and if you go over time, your phone line may be muted by the chair out of respect to others waiting their turn.
- Please call to be connected 5 to 10 minutes prior to the scheduled start time. This relieves call congestion and cuts down hold time. Call in at

least 30 mins before the end of the scheduled hearing or you may not get in line to testify.

- When it is your turn to testify: Your name will be called and you will hear the audio prompt, “Your line is unmuted.” Then state your full name, where you are from, and your affiliation. *“Madam/ Mr. Chair and members of the committee, my name is ____, I am from ____ and am representing (myself, business or organization name)”* Provide your testimony. When you are finished with your testimony committee members may ask you questions. If there are no questions and you have access to the internet, please disconnect your phone and stream the remainder of the meeting at akleg.gov (this helps free up phone lines for other testifiers).

Tips for using our Teleconference System: When calling in to testify, **do not use a speaker phone**. Speaker phone audio quality is poor and makes it difficult for legislators to understand you. **There will be periods of silence – don’t hang up!** Prior to a meeting beginning the line will be silent. Be patient and wait for the meeting to begin. After the meeting begins, the committee may take an “at ease”. The line will be silent when the committee is not on the record. Ensure you are in a quiet setting when testifying. **Background noise diminishes the quality of your testimony.** If you are inaudible, the chairman may ask you to try and remedy the situation. If it is not improved, they may ask you to submit written testimony instead.

If you need further assistance, contact the Juneau Legislative Information office at 907-465-4648.

Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education FY 24 Budget Priorities¹

Centralized Accommodation Fund (CAF) (DOA) + \$100,000 (GF)

Adding this proposed increment to the state Department of Administration would establish a Centralized Accommodation Fund to hire and retain qualified employees with disabilities in state government jobs. This recommendation was one of the major solutions developed by the state’s Work Matters Task Force and would improve employment opportunities for Trust beneficiaries in state jobs, helping them to be more independent from other state services and benefit programs.

Infrastructure to Support IDD Waitlist Eradication (DOH/SDS) + \$647,800 (GF)

This proposed increment to DOH/SDS is the amount cited in the state's [*Plan for Eradicating the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \(IDD\) Wait List*](#) for structural changes needed within DOH to replace an antiquated consumer needs assessment tool with a more modern and accurate tool that can better assess service needs and costs, as well as allow for self-directed IDD.

IDD Waitlist Eradication Year 1 Costs + \$16,160,500 (\$6.4 mil GF/\$9.69 Federal)

Per the Legislature's request in 2022, Senior and Disability Services (SDS) developed a five-year plan to eradicate the waitlist, which calls for \$6.4 million in State general funds to be matched with \$9.69 in federal funds for the first year of their five-year plan. Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are critical for every aspect of their lives and are also important for families and caregivers. HCBS grants pay for home care, assisted living, transportation, social support, medical care, and more. These services help ensure that Alaskans who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities have access to services they need to lead full lives across their lifespan.

Infant Learning Program (ILP) Program Expansion + \$3,666,600 (GF)

The ILP serves approximately 1,633 children with a medical diagnosis of a 50% developmental delay. The early intervention services provided by ILP providers across the state are often credited with success later in life for children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Currently, Alaska has one of the more restrictive eligibility requirements in the nation. Therefore, the Interagency Coordination Council (ICC), which is a part of the GCDSE, asks the Legislature to expand eligibility to include a diagnosis of a 40% developmental delay in 1 area or 25% developmental delay in 2 areas. This change in eligibility and funding request will serve approximately 450 additional children services annually.

Aging and Disability Resource Centers + \$250,000 (GF/MH)

ADRCs provide support and resources for older Alaskans, persons with disabilities, family caregivers, and community members, and offers a reliable resource for information, referral, and access to services. ADRCs provide help navigating health systems, finances, housing, transportation, and more.

Senior and Disability Services Grants + \$1,498,200 (GF)

Senior grant services administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services provide critical supports for Older Alaskans (60+) throughout the state. Grant funds provide meals, transportation, household assistance, health promotion, adult day programs and other services that allow individuals to remain in their homes and communities. These grants also fund Alaska's Centers for Independent Living to provide information, referral, and assistance with accessing senior services by community.

1 If you are a state of Alaska employee, please take note before taking any action as a result of receiving this correspondence, including forwarding this email to others inside or outside of state government. The Alaska Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) serves as Alaska's Developmental Disabilities Council, a federally required role of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) which includes a unique responsibility to engage in "advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities" without interference by the State (42 USC 15024(c)(5)(L). While the GCDSE has this unique independent role under the DD Act, state employees who are on this email generally do not have the same ability to advocate as the GCDSE. Therefore, before taking any action using any state resources, any state employee who is on this list and who does not work for the GCDSE should contact their supervisor or their designated ethics supervisor to discuss what they can or cannot do with respect to the action items listed in the above correspondence from the GCDSE.