A WORLD OF POSSIBILITIES

Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities

By Genesis Leong, genesisl@hawaii.edu

Photo - Welcoming ceremony in the Capitol chamber room,. Photo credit Craig T. Kojima, Star Advertiser.

On March 7, 2024, advocates from across the sate celebrated "*A World of Possibilities*" as the 2024 Day at the Capitol event theme. The purpose of the event is to foster inclusivity, empower voices and promote awareness about the rights and needs of those with developmental disabilities, as well as Alzheimer's disease and dementia-related conditions.

Advocates participated in meetings with lawmakers, observed legislative sessions in the house and senate, and contributed to the following policy priorities led by Community & Legislative Liaison Che Silvert.

Hawaii ABLE Savings Program - HB2556

Amends the sources of funding for the Hawai'i ABLE Saving Program Trust Fund, making savings more accessible for individuals with IDD.

ABLE Savings provides individuals with disabilities flexible savings accounts for expenses such as medical care, education, and housing. Parents can save for their child's future without jeopardizing Medicaid eligibility. Transition to adulthood, providing them with resources for employment, housing, and a better quality of life.

Relating to Social Services - SB849/HB1974

Funds federal supplemental security income (SSI) to increase the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA).

PNA allows individuals living in long-term care facilities to make personal purchases, promoting self-determination. Parents can save for their child's future without jeopardizing Medicaid eligibility. Empowers individuals with IDD to participate in acts of self-determination, money management skills, and decision-making processes.

Relating to Equity - SB2503

Requires all places of public accommodation constructed after 12/31/24 to provide universal changing accommodations that are equally accessible regardless of gender.

Equitable Access is crucial for ensuring equitable access to essential facilities for individuals with disabilities. Significant step towards achieving equity in access to public accommodations for all members of the community. This will alleviate the burden on families and caregivers, promoting inclusion and integration

HAWAI'I BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY - SB1231

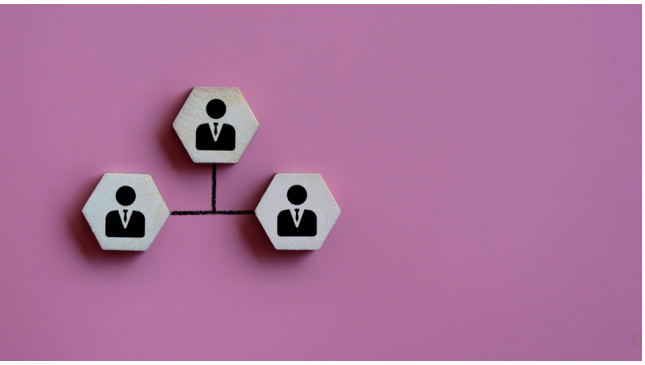
Establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program and facilitates digital equity projects

Supports the development of broadband infrastructure for underserved communities. Provides broadband equity increases access to and affordability of digital resources. Our population relies on telehealth services, and benefit from increased access to high-speed internet and improved broadband equity.

Office of Elections - HB1976

Requires the Office of Elections to annually request funding for the Statewide Elections Accessibility Needs Advisory Committee.

Our population relies on access to digital technology which promotes community engagement The role of the advisory committee is to work to enhance accessibility for voters with disabilities. Funding is important because the current lack of funding is insufficient for increasing accessibility for voters with disabilities throughout the voting process. The Americans with Disabilities Act mandates that state and local governments ensure people w/ disabilities have equal opportunity to vote in all elections.



PEER SUPPORT SPECIALISTS - SB3094

Establishes a working group to create a statewide framework for peer support specialists.

Trauma-informed care is crucial for individuals with developmental disabilities navigating systems like Child Welfare Services (CWS). It recognizes the impact of trauma on individuals' lives and prioritizes safety, trust, and empowerment. For organizations, bringing trauma-informed care and peer-to-peer support into organizations like Kids Hurt Too Hawai'i is essential. This can make a significant difference in nurturing healing and resilience, even in the face of tough challenges.