



The Arc of Massachusetts
Impact Analysis of Current Federal Policies and Actions
Updated: September 15, 2025

The disability community is facing serious threats from the federal government. From devastating Medicaid cuts to the dismantling of long-standing support systems, immigration actions, cuts to research grants, and more, there is deep fear, uncertainty, and anxiety among our community. The Arc of Massachusetts, which represents and advocates for over 250,000 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including autism, and their families, is deeply concerned about this administration's actions and policies. It is important to note that disability status intersects with every other identity and all proposed cuts and changes will disproportionately impact disabled people from other marginalized communities.

These cuts and resulting fear became even more tangible on July 4, 2025, when the President signed into law legislation that will cut \$1 trillion from Medicaid over the next 10 years. This will lead to reductions in access to health insurance and other long-term supports and services.

The Arc and other organizations have long-advocated for pay increases through Chapter 257 for staff in the human services workforce. Despite making slow but steady progress over the last few years, it now appears that the advocacy must shift to safeguarding the existing rates and ensuring that they aren't decreased due to a tight state budget. We need to be moving in the opposite direction—*investing* in wages, *fortifying* the service system, and *supporting* the staff who are the backbone of that system. Without increases, recruitment and retention will become even more of a challenge.

The Arc of Massachusetts is on high alert. Our team is listening to the community, analyzing federal cuts and proposals in real-time, advocating directly to our congressional delegation and our state leaders, and sharing fact-based resources. Several months ago, The Arc launched the [Disability Impact Tracker: Community Check-In Survey](#) where our community could share how federal changes are impacting their lives. So far, 700 people have responded. Below is a summary of the impact of the current and proposed federal cuts on our community. We are sharing several comments that demonstrate the deep concerns around cuts to services or loss of eligibility. Small edits to responses were made for clarity.

Note: The survey responses are based on possible loss or cuts to services as well as ripple effects of dismantling agencies and disability systems nationally.

Medicaid (89% of respondents expressed concern about cuts to Medicaid)

Medicaid is the backbone of the disability community, but recently passed legislation will make substantial cuts and changes to Medicaid that will disproportionately impact the disability community. In Massachusetts alone, we are facing [\\$15-25 billion](#) in cuts over the next decade, and an estimated [300,000 people](#) will lose access to insurance. Many people with disabilities will lose access to the MassHealth-funded services that they rely on. Families are deeply concerned about Day Programs and Waiver-funded services. Medicaid cuts will also significantly impact the human services workforce, many of whom rely on Medicaid for health insurance. It is important to note that cuts will not happen in one fell swoop and The Arc will continue our advocacy to ensure that Massachusetts does all that it can to blunt the worst of these cuts.

- "My daughter has severe disabilities and relies on Medicaid for her health services, [day habilitation] program, and...her residential home."
- "Our major concern is that cuts to Medicaid could affect services my daughter receives from MassHealth, including her day program, transportation and [other] supports."
- "Without Medicaid, [my son] would not have access to the care that he needs as we wouldn't be able to afford the healthcare costs that are not covered."

- “Medicaid funding...will be my son's lifeline when he ages out of the school system next year at 22. Services for those turning 22 are already lacking, and potential cuts would be devastating to this population and their families.”
- “Without Medicaid, my son would lose the waiver that covers half the cost of his group home, as well as his medical insurance. Our daughter would also lose her medical insurance.”

Immigration (38% of respondents expressed concerns about issues with workforce supports)

Changes to immigration policies, deportations, and the revocation of visas and other humanitarian protections are deeply concerning both for the already-struggling human services workforce and those who access services. Individuals who came to this country legally through programs like Temporary Protected Status (TPS) will soon be at risk of deportation. This will impact the workforce and immigrants with disabilities. Families are also deeply concerned about the impact that this will have on their loved ones.

- “Many staff & contractors have work visas or other documentation to work legally in the US. I have seen a steep decline in...staff applications due to fear of immigration status of family members, including a caregiver who has been in ICE detention out of state for 5 weeks. The staffing issue is a major concern for most of our families and personally.”
- “Finding staff in [programs] is difficult and now some of the staff is worried about ICE so they have left their jobs.”
- “If there is immigrant disruption, then programs that are already understaffed, will be under tremendous pressure.”
- “I am worried that staff who are supporting my son in the community will be taken by ICE. Beyond that frightening and horrible act, my son could be left without supports!”
- “We are hearing reports of immigrant families being scared to access state-funded services for their loved ones with a disability.”

Social Security (81% of respondents expressed concerns about changes to Social Security)

There have been [several proposed changes](#) to the Social Security Administration (SSA), all of which will result in an increasingly complicated system and disruptions in benefits. There are plans to cut thousands of employees and close over half of regional offices across the country, along with new identity verification requirements and other concerning policy changes, which will cause undue delays and complications when accessing the system that is already overwhelmingly challenging to navigate.

- “Losing Social Security would be devastating, as [my son] does work, but [cannot work] full time.”
- “Without Social Security, our son would have no income to pay for his group home. The loss of Social Security by everyone in his house would impact the group home budget.”
- “Cuts to Social Security would affect both my sister and my daughter, as Social Security is their only source of income.”
- “If cuts to Social Security disability payments occurs, that will severely impact my family and my ability to provide what my disabled children need.”

Education (41% of respondents expressed concerns about dismantling the Department of Education)

There have been [several proposed changes](#) and cuts to the Department of Education (DOE), as the administration has moved to fire nearly 50% of the department's workforce. DOE plays a critical role in civil rights enforcement and special education funding, which ensures that students with disabilities have access to services like Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). There have also been threats to long-standing federal laws, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and cuts to federal reimbursements for special education. For example, federal funding covers about 15% of the cost of special education in Massachusetts. Cuts to this funding would be devastating to students, teachers, and school districts.

- “I'm worried that my son will not have access to special education and therapeutic interventions at school.”
- “Our son...has profound autism and I worry the funding for his school [and] services will be cut.”

- “My school district is already having struggles with budget, and I'm concerned that any lack of federal support would have severe impacts on my son's education...I'm very concerned my school district could not afford to provide 1:1 support that keeps my son safe.”
- “We worry that the elimination of the Department of Education will negatively impact special education services and funding. The role of government is to step in and care for our most vulnerable citizens when they are unable to care for themselves through no fault of their own.”

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The same law that made historic cuts to Medicaid also made massive cuts to SNAP totaling \$200 billion over 10 years and including new eligibility requirements. Nationwide, about 30% of SNAP recipients have a disability and rely on these benefits for their access to food. These cuts will translate to fewer resources to states and will lead people to go hungry.

- “I am disabled and dependent on...SNAP benefits and Medicaid. I have nowhere to go, or to turn to if I lose any of these programs.”
- “It would be so much harder to be able to buy food, not just for me but nationwide...Families already struggling to pay for groceries would face losing SNAP.”
- “My SNAP benefit helps with food insecurity. What I receive is a small amount monthly, though it most certainly is of help to me.”
- “Cuts to SNAP...will have devastating effects for those eligible. Hunger affects well-being.”

Housing & Other Federal FY26 Budget Impacts

The President recently released his proposal for the fiscal year 2026 budget. It still must go through Congress before being finalized, but as drafted it includes many concerning provisions. These include deep cuts to the budget for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – notably, a 51% decrease in HUD's discretionary budget. The proposal further aims to consolidate various rental assistance and public housing programs, including Section 811-Housing for Persons with Disabilities, into a single State Rental Assistance block grant.

The House has released its counter proposal. It is not as draconian as the President's; most notably it does not consolidate existing programs into a block grant. However, it still represents a decrease of \$939 million over the FY2025 HUD budget. The House proposal still has to undergo markup, the process of considering amendments to the bill, before the Senate weighs in.

This budget proposal also includes proposed cuts to community living programs, protection and advocacy (P&A) services, disability councils, and more. These organizations provide vital services to individuals with disabilities and to our state as a whole.

- “Lack of access to housing for adults with disabilities would make it harder for adults with disabilities to live independently.”
- “Without section 8 I would not be able to pay market rent. I would be homeless.”
- “If my daughter lost either her housing supports via section 8, or her functional daily support staff, she would have to move home. My husband is a disabled veteran, and I work full-time. This would be a disaster. Right now, she has a beautiful life with a part-time job with work support as well as caregivers in. We have worked our whole life to advocate for her to go to a special school to gain the skills to live semi independently with roommates.”

NIH Cuts (34% of respondents expressed concerns about cuts to NIH research funding)

There have been significant cuts to research grants funded by the National Institutes of Health. NIH funding massively impacts people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism in Massachusetts. For example, NIH funding supports scientific research at our world-renown research centers like Children's Hospital, and this critical funding helps to improve diagnoses, treatments, and access to quality services and interventions.

- “I’m also concerned that autism research currently underway will be stalled or eliminated.”
- “Research into medical issues like cancer and Alzheimer’s which potentially affect our family’s health and wellbeing.”
- “We are worried about the funding for medical research which is so important.”

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (45% of respondents expressed concerns about the threats to DEI)

Threats to diversity, equity, and inclusion programs are damaging to the disability community. Cutting DEI programs in public or private sectors would have significantly detrimental effects on inclusion of people with disabilities in communities. This will lead to the loss of programs and resources, erosion of inclusive hiring, and reduced investments in accessibility.

- “Without DEI initiatives, he may not have access to employment which is critical to his well-being and sense of purpose.”
- “My autistic sons could lose the support they need to be productive in the workplace.”
- “Without DEI I am fearful that compassion will be lost.”
- “As for the decimation of the DEI initiatives...the message is that the offensive behavior of individuals towards the disabled, people of color...is acceptable making it scary to be out and about in the community.”

Resources & Advocacy

The Arc of Massachusetts is here to help make sense of these fast-changing and significant changes. To learn more, check out our [State & Federal Policy Issues](#) webpage, which contains digestible fact sheets on issues including Medicaid, the Department of Education, Social Security, and more.

Sign up for our action alerts to advocate directly to your elected officials.

- [The Arc of Massachusetts Action Alerts](#) (state issues)
- [The Arc of the United States Action Alerts](#) (federal issues)

Reach out to us if you have questions or need support.

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