



Public Policy Positions

ADEQUATE COMPENSATION

We urge you to support equitable compensation rates to help to recruit and retain consistent and capable staff for caregiving and services.

- The compensation system must recognize the necessity and value of caregivers, and adopt systemic solutions which support those values.
- Caregiving work requires a complex knowledge and skills, including exceptional judgment, maturity and personal restraint. Service rates should reflect that understanding by allowing caregivers to be paid a minimum of 40% above the current minimum wage.
- Laura Baker Services Association supports legislation to raise pay rates for caregivers to help curb high staff turnover and improve the quality of care for people with disabilities who are receiving Home and Community-based Services.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

We urge you to support measures to address affordable housing as a means to ensure that people with disabilities have access to housing.

- In order to live up to the Olmstead Plan, we must provide a range of living options for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, including living independently in integrated settings.
- Independent living and independent living in a small-group setting are the right fit for some people.
- Current legislation restricts the number of people on waived services that can live together. People receiving waived services cannot constitute more than 25% of any licensed or unlicensed living setting (e.g., an apartment building), severely limiting their housing options.
- Section 811 Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities is a supportive housing program that assists the lowest income people with significant and long-term disabilities to live independently in the community. There is a shortage of Section 811 housing vouchers.

ADEQUATE SUPPORT AND REIMBURSEMENT FOR FAMILIES

We urge you to support family reimbursement for respite care for people with disabilities at the same level as respite care for older adults.

- Respite care is temporary relief designed for families of children or adults with special needs. It can range from a few hours of care provided on a one-time basis to overnight or extended care sessions.
- Respite should be available for all citizens who require intensive support, not just the elderly.
- Funding for respite care should be expanded, and based on a needs assessment, not a preset amount for all families.

MINNESOTA'S OLMSTEAD PLAN

We urge you to support maintaining a range of real living options for people with developmental disabilities in Minnesota's Olmstead Plan.

- An Olmstead Plan demonstrates how a state intends to achieve the goal of providing services to people with disabilities in the most integrated settings appropriate to their needs and wishes.
- Minnesota's Olmstead Plan is still being developed and revised.
- Laura Baker Services Association fully supports people with disabilities living integrated lives of their choosing and being able to access the right amount of structure and support to successfully engage with the world.
- We support policies that allow for flexibility in how people and their families access supports.
- We affirm the need both to support the individual's *choice* of living situation and to ensure that a *variety* of such choices remain available. One size does not fit all.
- We support policies that recognize that people with disabilities may want to move away from their family of origin at the appropriate time in their life. We must develop support systems and contingency plans for these people and their families.
- It is not always less expensive to support people in the community.
- We must *stop* developing one-size-fits-all solutions. Our plan *must* be a plan for *all* Minnesotans, including those with the most significant needs.