



2021 Legislative Priorities

Our Mission

Paraquad will empower people with disabilities to increase their independence through choice and opportunity.

Our Vision

Paraquad will be the leader in advancing the independent living philosophy. We envision an integrated community in which people with disabilities are valued and participate in all aspects of society.

People with disabilities should have access to home- and community-based services that allow them to live independent lives in their homes and communities.

- We support increasing funding for the Consumer Directed Services (CDS) program to 100 percent of the funding for nursing home care, thereby allowing people with disabilities who meet a nursing home level of care to choose in-home support to remain independent.
- We support responsible reform of the CDS program to ensure the integrity of this essential service.
- We support increasing provider rates for Medicaid services.

People with disabilities should have opportunities to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

- We support changes to the Missouri's MO HealthNet Buy-in (MBI) Program—the Ticket to Work Health Assurance Program—that increase the likelihood that people with disabilities who need to access MO HealthNet can do so while still being employed to their greatest capacity.
- People with personal care needs can only access these supports at very low-income levels, which limits work opportunities for people with disabilities.
- The State should not consider retirement accounts or a spouse's income, up to \$50,000, when determining eligibility.

People with disabilities should be employed in community settings for at least minimum wage

- 51% of Missourians with disabilities without a job would like one.
- In 2017, people who were placed through supported employment had an average annual increase in wages of \$13,156.
- We support a statewide "Employment First" policy that prioritizes integrated employment settings where disabled workers interact with nondisabled coworkers over sheltered workshops.

People with disabilities should have access to quality, affordable health care that meets their needs.

- We oppose any efforts to weaken the vital "safety net" (e.g., implementation of block grants or per capita cap models of Medicaid).
- We oppose implementing work requirements for Medicaid recipients.



- We oppose efforts to include people with disabilities in managed care delivery systems that do not ensure access to quality, affordable health care for people with disabilities.
- As Missouri implements Medicaid expansion it should provide for equal coverage for the expansion group and cover home and community-based services.

Paraquad supports increasing Independent Living funding to the level recommended by the federal government

- Centers for Independent Living (CILS) are nonprofit organizations in place to provide broad services, supports, and resources to help Missourians live and remain independent at home. Every county in Missouri is served by a CIL.
- CILs serve people with ALL Disabilities and those of ANY AGE; they are disability resource experts that are well connected to assist those who are born with a disability, acquire a disability in life, or develop an age-related disability.
- According to a 1990 National Base Level Funding Study, Centers should be funded at \$250,000 each— Most Missouri Centers fall below this level at \$239,695 – that would have been a \$10,305 SHORTFALL per Center 30 years ago. Per 2014 data, Centers should be funded at \$570,000 each.

Parents and families should not be barred from recording their child’s IEP meeting.

- We support legislation that bars schools from prohibiting the use of recording devices to document IEP meetings between school officials and parents.
- An IEP meeting belongs to the student; it should be up to the parent to decide if the meeting should be recorded.
- IEP and 504 meetings can be confusing, emotional, and long. Parents need to be able to revisit the comments related to decisions made at the meeting.

Paraquad supports legislation to regulate and limit the use of seclusion and restraint in schools across the state of Missouri to ensure the safety, well-being, and educational success of all students.

- Currently, school districts are allowed to create their own definitions for *seclusion*, *isolation*, and *restraint*.
- Missouri currently lacks reporting requirements to parents and the Department of Education unless a door is locked; schools often work around this by propping a chair or mat against the door instead of locking.
- The use of seclusion and restraint disproportionately affects students with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and students of color.