



# Legislative Priorities

Minnesota often is considered a progressive leader for people with disabilities. When it comes to accessibility, there are many ways in which Minnesota does well. We have laws and policies that address accommodations such as ramps, curb cuts, closed captioning, and a variety of other adaptations. Unfortunately, many lawmakers and community members don't realize that neurodivergent populations, including autistic individuals and those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, also require accommodations. Those accommodations may look quite different from classic ideas of support.

Minnesota needs and deserves accessibility for all its citizens, including those whose disabilities are invisible.

In 2021, AuSM is proposing a large accessibility bill with components that can be packaged together or seen as separate bills (see reverse side). Each of the components address an area of accessibility that has historically gone unnoticed, but that would have a major impact in allowing individuals with disabilities to actively participate in their communities. The Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities already has made this package one of their 2021 legislative priorities, and we look forward to including support from additional partners on this package.

## What is Autism?



Autism is a lifelong neurological disorder that affects 1 in 44 individuals in Minnesota. Although precise neurobiological mechanisms have not yet been established, it is clear that this disability reflects the operation of factors in the developing brain.

Autism includes two major components: differences in socialization and communication, and restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior. Autism is a spectrum. Individuals will have their own unique constellation of traits, as well as their own strengths, preferences, and identities. No single behavior can be used to identify autism. Autism knows no racial, ethnic, or social boundaries. Family income, life-style, and educational levels do not affect the chance of a person having autism.

### About AuSM

The Autism Society of Minnesota exists to enhance the lives of individuals with autism spectrum disorder. AuSM seeks to realize its mission through education, support, collaboration, and advocacy.  
[www.aasm.org](http://www.aasm.org)



# Proposed Package for Accessibility

AuSM's legislative package component proposals are described below. If you would like more information, please reach out to the AuSM Advocacy Committee at [advocacy@ausm.org](mailto:advocacy@ausm.org) or 651.647.1083.

## **1: Special Education Parent Accessibility**

A bill outlying requirements for educators to accommodate parents with disabilities in the IEP process to allow better access to special education for families with multiple generations of disability.

## **2: Sensory-Friendly Grant Appropriation**

Reintroduction of our 2020 legislation for a grant appropriation for sensory-friendly projects in public access spaces.

## **3: Sensory-Friendly Event Licensing**

A bill amending permit requirements for large event approval to include requirements to provide sensory-friendly space or accommodations for any public event that includes more than 1,000 participants.

## **4: Courtroom Accessibility**

Legislation to require accommodations for witnesses, jurors, and other participants with disabilities who need supports.

## **5: Plain Language Bill**

A bill requiring that all documents related to rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities be provided in plain language, and wider spread law that requires that any document that can be requested in another language also be made available in plain language.

## **6: County and State Service Accessibility Investigative Workgroup**

A bill that creates a workgroup of community stakeholders and departmental members focused on ensuring all state and county disability services are accessible. This group will analyze the accessibility of navigation for people with disabilities accessing services independently or parents with disabilities seeking assistance for children.

## **7: Emergency Shelter Accessibility**

Legislation to create guidelines for equitable access to homeless and domestic violence shelters for individuals with neurological and intellectual disabilities.

## **8: Legislative Process Accessibility Workgroup**

Create a legislative workgroup with stakeholders from groups impacted by the in-person requirements to participate in the legislative process.