



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 2022, 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 2022 legislative priorities, and we look forward to including support from additional partners on this package.

AuSM's legislative package component proposals are described on the reverse. If you would like more information, please reach out to the AuSM Advocacy Committee at advocacy@ausm.org or 651.647.1083.

What is 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.ausm.org

Autism is a lifelong neurological disorder that affects 1 in 36 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.

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Proposed Package for Accessibility

1: 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. AuSM has partnered with the Disability Law Center to create pilot programs that will develop accessibility projects across the state.

2: Special Education Parent Accessibility (HF1362, SF1961)

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.

3: Sensory-Friendly Event Licensing (HF139, SF1348)

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: Sensory-Friendly Grant Appropriation (HF139, SF1348)

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

5: Emergency Shelter Accessibility (SF139, SF1349)

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

6: 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

Collaborative Legislation

- Reform the MAEPD statutes to create equity in fee structure and policies to promote employment and create a better outcome for people accessing medicaid for employed people with disabilities.
- Support efforts to provide funding and legislation to address the direct support professional workforce shortage.
- Accessible and Inclusive Playground Bonding Proposal.
- Legislation prohibiting a teacher, school employee, or other agent of a district or charter school from excluding a student in elementary school from recess to punish or otherwise discipline the student.
- AuSM is a member of the Coalition for Children and the MN Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities. As a result, we support their legislative priorities.