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## HAVE A BRIGHT IDEA?

### Bright Ideas Grants

#### Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

The Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (WGCDD) is currently accepting grant applications for the Bright Ideas Grant for the 2026 Federal fiscal year.

- The WGCDD is granting \$75,000 for the 2025-26 grant period.
- Grant amounts can range from \$1,000.00 up to \$35,000 per project.
- Grants are effective October 1, 2025 through September 30, 2026.

**[Applications are due prior to January 10, 2025.](#)**

The purpose of the Mini-Grant is to facilitate new and innovative projects and/or activities in the state that will empower people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Projects or activities funded by a Mini-Grant must fulfill the Council's stated purpose and vision. The project must be innovative. This means the project should introduce something new, or make changes in something established, especially by introducing new methods or ideas. Durable goods and direct services cannot be funded.

Visit <https://wgcd.wyo.gov/projects/mini-grants> for more information and apply for a mini-grant.

Questions? Please contact:

Penny Davis (307-777-3339, [penny.davis@wyo.gov](mailto:penny.davis@wyo.gov))

Shannon Buller (307-777-7230, [shannon.buller@wyo.gov](mailto:shannon.buller@wyo.gov))

Kayla Green (307-777-7358, [kayla.green@wyo.gov](mailto:kayla.green@wyo.gov))

## Secretary Buttigieg Announces Sweeping Protections for Airline Passengers with Disabilities

On December 16, 2024, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced that the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has issued new protections for people with disabilities in commercial air travel that will ensure that they can fly safely and with dignity.

The new final rule requires that airlines meet more rigorous standards for accommodating passengers with disabilities, especially for passengers who use wheelchairs. The rule sets new standards for assistance, mandates hands-on training for airline employees and contractors who physically assist passengers with disabilities and handle passengers' wheelchairs, and specifies actions that airlines must take to protect passengers when a wheelchair is damaged or delayed during transport.

“Every passenger deserves safe, dignified travel when they fly—and we’ve taken unprecedented actions to hold airlines accountable when they do not provide fair treatment to passengers with disabilities,” said Secretary Buttigieg. “With the new protections we’re announcing today, we’re establishing a new standard for air travel—with clear and thorough guidelines for airlines to ensure that passengers using wheelchairs can travel safely and with dignity.”

An estimated 5.5 million Americans use a wheelchair, and many encounter barriers when it comes to air travel. DOT data shows that for every 100 wheelchairs or scooters transported on domestic flights at least one is damaged, delayed, or lost.

When an individual’s wheelchair is delayed or damaged by an airline, their mobility, health, and freedom can be severely impacted until the wheelchair can be returned or replaced. During a roundtable discussion in July 2023, Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary Buttigieg heard firsthand stories from people with disabilities whose lives were seriously affected by unsafe assistance and mishandling of their Mobility device during air travel, including instances that resulted in serious injuries. One public survey found that one in ten people with a disability do not fly due to fear of bodily harm, damage to their wheelchair, or aircraft inaccessibility.

Secretary Buttigieg has made improving air travel for people with disabilities a priority throughout his time in office.

Visit <https://www.transportation.gov> to read the full article which includes a detailed description of the new protections as well as the improvements made during Secretary Buttigieg’s time in office.

Source: <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/secretary-buttigieg-announces-sweeping-protections-airline-passengers-disabilities?emci=67921596-68bd-ef11-88do-000d3a9d5840&emdi=4e7d6394-27be-ef11-88ce-0022482a93af&ceid=5955931>

**Department of Workforce Services  
Awarded Grant to Improve Mental Health  
and Economic Outcomes  
for Children and Youth with Disabilities**

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services' (DWS) Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (WY DVR) has been awarded a \$10,000,000 Disability Innovation Fund grant through the U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

The grant will fund the Wyoming Pathways to Partnership project (WY P2P) to improve systems, services, and outcomes for children and youth with disabilities living in Wyoming. It will use Competitive Integrated Employment to improve mental health and economic outcomes for this underserved population.

"This grant will empower us to pioneer innovative solutions that enhance vocational opportunities and support for youth with disabilities and unlock career success for those individuals, ensuring a more inclusive and equitable workforce for our communities," says Robin Sessions Cooley, Director of the Department of Workforce Services.

"Wyoming Pathways to Partnership will expand access to mental health services for individuals with disabilities, increase knowledge of the link between mental health and employment, better equip individuals to care for their mental health, fill resource gaps, and provide important career and life skills," says Nicky Harper, Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator. "This project will be a model for expanding rural mental health treatment access, creating rural collaborative systems to serve individuals, and improving economic outcomes for rural youth with disabilities and Wyoming generally."

WY DVR will accomplish these goals and objectives through collaborative partnerships with the Wyoming Department of Education, Campbell County School District #1, Park County School District #1, and centers for independent living across Wyoming to execute the project design and services. "We look forward to collaborating with the state and local education agencies and the independent living centers in Wyoming," Harper said.

Source:  
<https://dws.wyo.gov/department-of-workforce-services-awarded-grant-to-improve-mental-health-and-economic-outcomes-for-children-and-youth-with-disabilities/>

## Assistive Technology

### Tech Tip Tuesday

Join Wyoming Assistive Technology Resources (WATR) during your lunch hour for the monthly Assistive Technology (AT) Tech Tip Tuesday, a unique opportunity to learn about assistive technology!

On the second Tuesday of each month, WATR hosts an informative session where you can gain valuable insights and practical tips to enhance your knowledge and use of AT. This is a great chance for professionals or anyone interested in assistive technology to gather virtually during lunch for a quick but impactful session.

The first virtual meeting will be on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Mountain Time.

Terri Wofford, MS/CCC-SLP, will discuss foundational reasons for considering and using augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) with tips to develop communicative success.

To register for the monthly AT Tech Tip Tuesdays, please visit <https://www.uwyo.edu/wind/watr/training/index.html> and click on the link to the registration form. When you register, you will receive a calendar invite for all the spring sessions, and on the morning of the session, you will receive a Zoom link and PowerPoint.

A Certificate of Attendance will be provided upon request following the session.

Please contact Terry Wofford at 307-766-2932 with any questions.



## Wyoming Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities Seeks Input for the 2027-2031 Five-Year-Plan

The Council travels the state every five years to speak to communities about gaps in services for people who have developmental disabilities.

The Council uses this feedback to build the next five-year-plan, which drives the Council's work.

If you have information or concerns about people in Wyoming who have developmental disabilities, please join a listening session or complete the online survey. Multiple in-person sessions will be held throughout the state and there will also be Zoom opportunities. Visit <https://wgodd.wyo.gov> for information on future sessions.

### Upcoming Listening Session

January 8, 2025 ~ 5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Laramie County Community College  
Clay Pathfinder Building  
ANB Leadership Center, Room 109  
1400 East College Drive, Cheyenne, WY 82007

### Online Survey

To access and complete the online survey, visit <https://wgodd.wyo.gov/five-year-plan-2027-2031>

### Questions

Please contact Shannon Buller at [shannon.buller@wyo.gov](mailto:shannon.buller@wyo.gov) or 307-777-7332.

*Upcoming Webinar*

### **Building Inclusive 988/Crisis Lifeline Systems State Policy Academy: Early Learnings**

As states build robust 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline systems, there is a growing recognition that siloed service delivery systems often contribute to a lack of access to trauma-informed clinical and support services for individuals experiencing a crisis who have intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD), brain injuries, or cognitive impairments. This lack of access can lead to adverse outcomes, such as hospital emergency department use or admissions into settings that may exacerbate already difficult circumstances.

The Administration for Community Living (ACL) and The Link Center, in partnership with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, convened a state policy academy to build strong, collaborative service systems that enable states to effectively support individuals in crisis regardless of disability and/or communication differences. Join this webinar to hear from individuals who have experienced crises and learn how their states are building inclusive crisis response systems available to everyone.

Contact [TheLinkCenter@nasdds.org](mailto:TheLinkCenter@nasdds.org) with any questions about the event.

Join at: <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/announcements/building-inclusive-988crisis-lifeline-systems-state-policy-academy>

**Monday  
January 27, 2025  
2:00-3:30 p.m. ET**

**Live Captioning  
and ASL  
Interpretation  
Provided**

**Advance  
Registration  
Not Required**



### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To establish, expand, protect, and enforce the human and civil rights of persons with disabilities through administrative, legal, and other appropriate remedies.

### **CONTACT US**

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