

Fairfax County 2026 Legislative Recommendations Related to Disability Policy

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has long prioritized creating an inclusive and equitable community that supports the independence, dignity, and full participation of individuals with disabilities. These legislative recommendations, developed in partnership with the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board, reflect shared priorities aimed at advancing access to services, expanding housing and transportation options, improving economic opportunity, and preserving core civil rights protections. Together, they seek to ensure that Fairfax County continues to be a leader in disability-inclusive policy and that the Commonwealth of Virginia takes meaningful steps to uphold the rights and meet the needs of people with disabilities across all aspects of life.

1. Codify Key Federal Disability Protections in Virginia Law

Support legislation that incorporates core provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and other federal disability rights protections into Virginia state law to preserve and ensure continued protections for individuals with disabilities in the event of future federal policy changes.

2. Study the Standardization of Real Estate Tax Relief Programs for People with Disabilities

Request a study through the Housing Commission or another appropriate venue of real estate tax relief programs intended to assist individuals with disabilities. The study should examine how income is calculated (e.g., gross vs. net), whether unreimbursed medical expenses and disability-related costs are considered, and how eligibility criteria vary across localities. The ultimate goal is to inform legislation that standardizes program criteria to ensure equity, transparency, and fidelity to the original intent of providing meaningful tax relief to people with disabilities.

3. Increase State Investment in Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS)

Advocate for expanded funding and waiver slots for Virginia's Medicaid HCBS programs, including the Community Living (CL), Family and Individual Supports (FIS), and Building Independence (BI) waivers, to address long waitlists and support people with disabilities to live independently in the community.

4. Ensure Accessibility in Transportation and Infrastructure Projects

Support legislation and funding that promote fully accessible public transportation, pedestrian infrastructure, and ride services across the Commonwealth, with specific consideration for mobility, sensory, and cognitive accessibility in transportation planning and implementation.

5. Improve Employment Outcomes for Virginians with Disabilities

Endorse policies that expand inclusive workforce development initiatives, improve employment supports through the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), and incentivize employers to hire and retain individuals with disabilities.

6. **Promote Affordable and Accessible Housing**

Back efforts to increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing units in Northern Virginia, including incentives for universal design and visitability standards in new housing developments. Support rent assistance programs targeted at people with disabilities and ensure that affordable, accessible housing options include units with sufficient space to accommodate live-in caregivers when needed, enabling individuals with significant support needs to remain in the community.

7. **Expand Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities**

Encourage legislation that ensures state and local emergency response and preparedness plans address the needs of individuals with disabilities, including accessible communication, transportation, sheltering, and evacuation procedures.