

Empowering People with Disabilities

Having steered the economy back from the brink of a depression, the Administration is committed to moving the Nation from recession to recovery by sparking job creation to get millions of Americans back to work and building a new foundation for the long-term prosperity for all American families. To do this, the 2011 Budget makes critical investments in the key areas that will help to reverse the decline in economic security that American families have experienced over the past decade with investments in education, clean energy, infrastructure, and innovation.

But even as we meet the challenge of the recession and work to build an economy that works for all American families, we must also change the way Washington does business – ending programs that don't work, streamlining those that do, cracking down on special interest access, and bringing a new responsibility to how tax dollars are spent. The President's budget takes the steps to help jumpstart job creation, works to strengthen the economic security of American families, and makes the tough choices to put our Nation back on the path to fiscal responsibility.

To empower people with disabilities, the Budget will:

Identify Ways to Improve Health Care Services for People. The Budget includes new Medicare and Medicaid demonstration projects that evaluate reforms to provide higher quality care at lower costs, improve beneficiary education and understanding of benefits offered, and better align provider payments with costs and outcomes. Special emphasis will be placed on demonstrations that improve care coordination for beneficiaries with chronic conditions, that better integrate Medicare and Medicaid benefits, and that provide higher value for dollars spent.

Increase Funding for Special Education and Vocational Rehabilitation. The 2011 Budget provides a \$250 million increase for IDEA State Grants to provide a high quality education to the nearly seven million students with disabilities. The additional funds help offset State and local special education costs and related services for children with disabilities. As part of the Administration's Workforce Investment Act reforms, the 2011 Budget provides \$30 million in new funding for helping youth with significant disabilities transition from education to employment, learning what works in helping individuals with disabilities get jobs, and improving independent living outcomes.

Assist Important Programs for Youth with Disabilities. The 2011 Budget provides \$10 million for Special Olympics through the Department of Education, a \$2 million increase from 2010, in addition to \$6 million through the Department of Health and Human Services. The Budget also provides \$10 million for a new program, Mentoring for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities. Both programs would support activities to increase the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in social relationships and other aspects of community life, including recreation, education, and employment.

Consolidate Vocational Rehabilitation programs. The Budget provides \$3.2 billion for VR State Grants to assist States and tribal governments to increase the participation of individuals with disabilities in the workforce. The request includes \$56 million added from other small programs serving the same population that are proposed for consolidation into the VR State Grants program, as well as a change in the VR formula to ensure that all States receive the same level of funding under the consolidation as under the separate antecedent authorities.

Strengthen Independent Living. The Budget includes \$110 million for a new Grants for Independent Living program that replaces the Independent Living State Grants and Centers for Independent Living

programs and would provide formula grants to States to support the provision of independent living services through centers for independent living. The request represents a \$6 million increase over the 2010 levels for the programs being consolidated and would provide some additional funding for States with significant unmet needs.

Improve Transitions for Youth with Significant Disabilities. The Budget provides \$25 million for a new Supported Employment Extended Services for Youth with Significant Disabilities, a new program of competitive grants to States to assist them in expanding supported employment opportunities for youth with significant disabilities, such as youth with intellectual disabilities, as they transition from school to the workforce.

Encourage Innovation. The Budget provides \$30 million for a VR-related Workforce Innovation Fund. These funds, along with an identical amount described above under Adult Education National Leadership Activities, would be administered through a Partnership for Workforce Innovation, which encompasses \$321 million of innovation funding in the Departments of Education and Labor. The Partnership would award competitive grants to encourage innovation and identify and validate effective strategies for improving the delivery of services and outcomes for beneficiaries under programs authorized by the Workforce Investment Act. This investment will create strong incentives for change that, if scaled up, could improve the effectiveness of the WIA programs.

Expand Disability Employment Research. The Budget provides \$112 million for the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research to support a broad portfolio of research and development, capacity-building, and knowledge translation activities. The requested increase of \$2.7 million would primarily be used for activities relating to vocational rehabilitation, including both research and program evaluation. The Budget also supports two research efforts at the Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences which will provide important information about youth with disabilities' transitions to postsecondary education and employment: a new National Research and Development Center on Postsecondary Education and Employment and a longitudinal study of following a sample of special education students and comparing their post-secondary outcomes to a group of general education students who are enrolled in the same school districts.

Strengthen Anti-Discrimination Enforcement. The 2011 Budget provides an \$18 million -- or 5 percent increase-- for the Equal Opportunity Employment Commission (EEOC), which is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a job applicant or an employee. This increased investment will allow for more staff to reduce the backlog of private sector charges. In addition, the Budget increases funding for the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division by 10 percent since it's critical that there is a robust effort to prosecute those who seek deny basic civil rights to their fellow Americans.

Expand Research into Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The Budget continues to expand research, detection, treatment, and other activities related to improving the lives of individuals and families affected by ASD. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) will pursue comprehensive and innovative approaches to defining the genetic and environmental factors that contribute to ASD, investigate epigenomic changes in the brain, and accelerate clinical trials of novel pharmacological and behavioral interventions by 2016.

Help Families Care for Aging and Disabled Relatives. The Budget includes \$103 million for the Administration on Aging's Caregiver Initiative and doubles funding in support of the Lifespan Respite Care Act. The Caregiver initiative is an effort to expand help to families and seniors so that caregivers can better manage their multiple responsibilities and seniors can live in the community for as long as possible. Of this increase, \$52.5 million will fund caregiver services and temporary respite care -- such as several days at a residential facility -- so that caregivers can get a much needed break. The Caregiver

Initiative also provides an additional \$50 million for other services that relieve both the time and financial stress that caring for an aging parent or family member can bring while improving the quality of life for seniors. Without creating new programs, this initiative provides new resources to support the network of agencies in local communities across the country that already provide critical help to seniors and caregivers.

Provide Greater Benefits to Veterans who are Medically Retired from Service. For the first time, highly-disabled veterans who are medically retired from service will be eligible for concurrent receipt of disability benefits from VA in addition to DOD retirement benefits. All medically retired servicemembers will be eligible for concurrent receipt of VA and DOD benefits by 2015.

Provide an 8 Percent Funding Increase to Provide Social Security Services Faster and Reduce Backlogs. This year, SSA will process almost 5 million retirement, survivor, and Medicare claims; 3.3 million disability claims; and over 326,000 Supplemental Security Income (SSI) aged claims. The Budget proposes \$12.5 billion for SSA, an increase of \$930 million, or (8 percent), above the 2010 enacted level of \$11.6 billion. This amount includes resources to increase staffing in 2011 and will allow SSA to provide services faster with a focus on key service delivery areas, such as processing initial retirement and disability claims, and disability appeals. At the end of 2010, the initial disability claims backlog is expected to reach record highs with over one million people waiting for a decision. This is unacceptable. The 2011 Budget funds SSA to lower the backlog below one million by processing over three million claims. The Budget also allows SSA to continue to reduce the appeals hearing backlog. By hearing approximately 799,000 cases in 2011, the backlog will fall to 657,000 hearings pending. In addition, the Budget also includes resources to enable SSA to more effectively and efficiently verify hundreds of millions of Social Security Numbers and issue about 19 million Social Security cards.