ABLENH

DISABILITY JUSTICE ADVOCATES



Our Mission

ABLENH
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Advocates Building Lasting Equality in NH advocates for the civil and human rights of children and adults with disabilities. We promote full participation by: improving systems, connecting families, inspiring communities, and influencing public policy.



ABLE NH: Building Inclusive Communities

- Statewide nonprofit advocating for the rights of people with disabilities
- Focus: inclusive education, housing, healthcare, transportation, civic engagement
- Led by people with disabilities and allies
- Changing policy, practice, and perception through advocacy and training



Our Advocacy Work

- Medicaid
- Supportive Education
- Voting Rights
- Housing
- Transportation
- Advocacy Training
- Educational Opportunities
- Events



Medicaid

Medicaid changes are coming to NH. How is NH preparing?

Work Requirements

- Helping people understand new requirements and exemptions
- Identifying how requirements affect people with disabilities and caregivers
- Preventing paperwork and administrative rules from becoming barriers to coverage
- Advocating for implementation that recognizes the realities of disability

Redetermination

- Documenting confusing, burdensome, and unnecessary processes
- Helping people understand what is being asked of them
- Identifying where people lose coverage because of administrative barriers rather than eligibility
- Pushing for clearer, more accessible communication

Stories

- Collecting experiences directly from people who rely on Medicaid
- Showing candidates what Medicaid makes possible
- Connecting individual experiences to larger policy problems
- Making sure policy discussions include the voices of people most affected

Housing Options at a Glance
Comparing Living Arrangements for People with Disabilities

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Live Independently with Support

You live in your own apartment or house. You may live alone or with a roommate. Support staff can help you but you are in control

Benefits

- Greater independence
- More privacy
- Control over your daily routine
- Opportunity to build independent living skills
- Flexible support based on your needs

Supports may include

- Budgeting and money management
- Transportation assistance
- Help with shopping and meal planning
- Medication reminders
- Support with appointments

Things to Consider

- What happens if support staff are unavailable?
- Is transportation available?
- Can you manage household responsibilities?
- Will you feel connected to your community?

Helpful tip

Build a support network before you need it.
Make a list of people you can call if you need help!

Live With a Family Member

You live with a parent, sibling, or other family member. Family members provide some support, while waiver services or direct support professionals may provide additional assistance.

Benefits

- Familiar and comfortable environment
- Close connection to family
- Lower housing costs
- Built-in support system
- Can provide stability during transitions

Supports may include

- Direct support professionals (DSPs)
- Day programs
- Community participation services
- Respite care
- Transportation support
- Employment supports

Things to Consider

- What is the long-term plan?
- What happens if a family caregiver becomes unavailable?
- How much independence do you want?
- Are there backup supports in place?
- How will caregiving responsibilities change over time?

Helpful tip

Talk about future plans early. Having conversations now about housing, can help everyone prepare for the future.

Community Living Facilities

A community living facility is a shared home where support staff provide assistance. Some homes have support available at all times, while others provide support during scheduled hours. These settings are sometimes called community residences or group homes.

Benefits

- Consistent support
- Structured environment
- Opportunities to develop friendships
- Staff available to assist with daily needs
- Can provide a higher level of support

Supports may include

- 24-hour staffing (in some homes)
- Medication support
- Personal care assistance
- Meal preparation
- Transportation
- Community participation opportunities

Things to Consider

- Shared living spaces
- Shared schedules and routines
- Privacy may be more limited
- Transportation may depend on staff availability
- Daily activities may be influenced by the needs of the group

Helpful tip

Ask about daily routines and choices. Find out how residents make decisions like meals, activities, and personal schedules.

Enhanced Family Care

You live with a trained caregiver who is not a family member. The caregiver shares their home and provides support as part of daily life. This option is sometimes called Shared Living, Adult Family Care, or Adult Foster Care.

Benefits

- Family-like environment
- Personalized support
- Smaller setting than a group home
- Opportunities to build strong relationships
- Support integrated into everyday life

Supports may include

- Daily living support
- Transportation
- Community activities
- Medication support
- Health and wellness monitoring
- Assistance with personal goals

Things to Consider

- Finding a good match between the person and provider
- House rules and routines
- Privacy and personal space
- How often family visits will occur
- Backup plans if the provider becomes unavailable

Helpful tip

Take time to find the right match. Ask questions, visit more than once, and get to know the provider.

Supportive Housing

You live in your own apartment while support staff are available nearby. Many supportive housing communities include shared spaces where residents can gather, socialize, and receive assistance when needed.

Benefits

- Independent living with support nearby
- Private living space
- Opportunities to build community connections
- Greater choice and control
- Access to staff when needed

Supports may include

- On-site support staff
- Community activities
- Assistance with meal preparation
- Independent living skills training
- Wellness checks
- Social opportunities

Things to Consider

- Is the community a good fit for you?
- How much support is available?
- How much privacy do you want?
- Will you participate in community activities?
- Is the location accessible to transportation, work, and recreation?

Helpful tip

Visit during different times of the day. Seeing the community can help you understand what daily life is really like.

Oral Healthcare



- **ACCESS**
  Finding and receiving care
- **INCLUSION**
  Care that works for different bodies and minds
- **SYSTEMS CHANGE**
  Removing barriers at their source

Medicaid

How do the federal and state changes in Medicaid affect people with disabilities and their families?

Access

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Inclusion

Why students with disabilities belong in general education and wha
the research shows

How We Got Here: A Broken Federal Promise

The funding crisis didn't start in Nashua. It started in Washington.

> *"Congress promised 40 cents on the dollar in 1975. Fifty years later, it sends 13. The promise was made. The money was never sent."*
>
> *— Sorted, Separated, and Underfunded, ABLE NH (2026)*

Federal Promise (IDEA, 1975)

40% > 13%

promised

Congress passed IDEA in 1975 and committed to cover 40% of the cost of educating students with disabilities. That promise has never been kept not once in 50 years.

State of New Hampshire

~10%

state share

NH contributes roughly $3,285 per student with an IEP — covering just over 10% of actual additional costs. The gap between state obligation and state delivery is enormous.

Local School Districts

83%

local burden

In Nashua and across NH, city residents are paying for a federal civil rights mandate the federal government chose not to fund and a state obligation the legislature chose to underfund.

Source: NEA IDEA Funding Report; NH Center for Justice & Equity; ABLE NH, "Sorted, Separated, and Underfunded" (2026)

The IDEA Problem: Compliance Questions

IDEA doesn't have a budget exception.

1 Placement by Program Design

IDEA prohibits basing placement solely on "configuration of the service delivery system." Centralizing programs by need level, not by individual IEP, does exactly that.

CFR 2006, p. 46588

2 Leaving Home Schools

IDEA presumes the placement option closest to the home school. Moving 228 students away from their neighborhood schools requires individualized justification for every single child.

34 CFR § 300.116

3 Once In, Rarely Out

Research shows students placed in more restrictive settings rarely transition back, regardless of progress (Kurth et al., 2014). This is not a one-year decision but it is a structural one.

Kurth et al. (2014)

4 Consolidated = Harder to Undo

Once programs are built, staff are hired around them, and transportation is configured for them. System inertia reinforces segregation even when individual students are ready for inclusion.

Annamma et al. (2013)

5 Efficiency Is Not IDEA-Compliant

The plan is explicitly cost and resource-driven. But IDEA does not allow financial efficiency to override the obligation to provide placement in the least restrictive environment appropriate for each child.

IDEA, 20 U.S.C. § 1412(a)(5)

Sources: IDEA Regulations CFR 2006; Kurth et al. (2014); Annamma et al. (2013); ABLE NH analysis of Nashua BOE Agenda April 27, 2026

Benefits for Students

Students in general education consistently show better outcomes in every area that matters

ACADEMIC

- ✓ Higher reading & math scores on statewide assessments
- ✓ Greater literacy, math & communication skill growth
- ✓ More likely to achieve IEP goals
- ✓ 22% more likely to graduate via assessments
- ✓ More prepared for post-secondary education

SOCIAL & LIFE

- ✓ Greater growth in social skills
- ✓ More participation in school & community
- ✓ More meaningful social connections
- ✓ Higher likelihood of competitive employment
- ✓ Higher likelihood of independent living

Sources: Cole et al. (2023); Mansouri et al. (2022); Marder et al. (2003); Gee et al. (2020)

Continuum of Placements & Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

IDEA Mandate

Students must be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment the setting closest to the general education classroom where they can succeed with appropriate supports.

Key Principle

The general education classroom is the STARTING POINT. Removal is justified only when supports cannot make participation successful.

← More Inclusive

More Restrictive →

★ LRE					
General Education Classroom	**Gen Ed + Pull-out Support**	**Resource Room**	**Self-Contained Special Ed Class**	**Separate Special Ed School**	**Residential / Hospital Program**
Full inclusion with supports	*Most time in gen ed*	*Part-time specialized setting*	*Same school, separate classroom*	*Dedicated specialty campus*	*24-hr care or medical need*

Goal: Always begin with the most inclusive setting. Move along the continuum only when, with appropriate supports, the student is unable to make meaningful progress. Document the justification in the IEP.

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Inclusion Is Not a Favor.

It's the law. It's the evidence. It's the right thing to do.

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NH's only independently funded disability justice advocacy organization

ablenh.org

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