



ILLINOIS

Planning

The Illinois *Olmstead* plan, the "Community Living and Disabilities Plan," was released in April 2002. Then Governor George H. Ryan (R) issued an executive order in 2002, appointing the Illinois Disabilities Services Advisory Committee to monitor the progress of the plan. Although, the plan established a framework for achieving greater integration of people with disabilities into the community, it was general in scope rather than enumerating specific goals and timetables. The plan can be found at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/projects/initiatives/Olmstead>.

Legislation

As a result, the Illinois General Assembly decided to establish a formal *Olmstead* process, enacting House Bill 684, the Disabilities Services Act of 2003, in May 2003. HB 684 requires the governor, with the assistance of the secretary of the Department of Human Services, to appoint a 33-member Illinois Disabilities Services Advisory Committee to develop a Disabilities Services Implementation Plan that will ensure compliance by the state with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the *Olmstead* decision.

The legislation stipulates that the implementation plan include: 1) establishing procedures for completing comprehensive evaluations of people with disabilities; 2) establishing procedures for development of service plans for these people; 3) identifying core services; 4) establishing minimum standards for individualized, residential, and vocational services and for family support services; 5) establishing due process hearing procedures; and 6) securing the financial resources necessary to fulfill the purposes of the Act. The governor must report to the General Assembly by November 1, 2004, on the plan and improvements or expansions that have been implemented.

Governor Rod Blagojevich (D), who took office in January 2003, issued an amendatory veto on August 19, citing technical issues such as the definitions of developmental disabilities and mental illness, and recommending that certain services may (rather than "shall") be described in the Implementation Plan. The bill was placed on the legislative calendar for November 4, 2003, requiring both houses to concur in the governor's recommendations for the bill to become law. According to state officials, the original bill appeared to be an open-ended entitlement, which had implications for the state to have to devote more resources to services at a time when the state is in the midst of budget difficulties.

The legislature also enacted the following legislation:

- o Senate Bill 252, which requires the Department of Human Services to contract with a research organization to compile a cross-disability database of disabled Illinois residents who are potential beneficiaries under the "most integrated setting" requirement of the ADA,
- o House Bill 293, which requires all financially eligible applicants and recipients of services of the Department on Aging to apply for medical assistance. (This applies to programs to prevent unnecessary institutionalization of people age 60 and older or those who qualify under the Alzheimer's Disease Assistance Act.), and
- o House Resolution 33 to create a task force to study and make recommendations to improve community-based services for developmentally disabled individuals.

Appropriations

With a budget deficit of \$5 billion at the beginning of 2003, the new administration took few new initiatives in terms of community services. There were no deep cuts in human services budgets, however. The governor did veto a bill to give direct care workers a \$1-per hour wage increase, but by executive order he gave personal care workers bargaining rights.

Grants and Projects

A federal Systems Change grant also is helping to move initiatives forward, state officials say. A Consumer Task Force and State Inter-Agency Team are involved in the project, which is focusing on Southern Illinois and Rockford. The project aims to foster ongoing communication between various state agencies (such as Department of Human Services Offices of Rehabilitation Services, Developmental Disabilities, and Mental Health) and community service delivery agents. A key component is identifying tools to help people who wish to make the transition from institutional to community settings.

In 2002, the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) joined the city of Springfield, the Statewide Center for Independent Living Council, and other local organizations in forming a Home Ownership Coalition for Persons with Disabilities, funded by DHS.

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