



Survival Coalition

of Wisconsin Disability Organizations

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SURVEY OF WI DISABILITY COMMUNITY SHOWS DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACTS OF COVID

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Media, policymakers and the public are invited to a virtual press event Thursday, Feb. 11, at 10 a.m. that will share findings from the survey, review today's proposal from the Governor to invest in caregiving and long-term supports, and share the stories of Wisconsinites living with disability and their families on how their lives have been impacted by reductions in supports resulting from the pandemic. To participate, contact Fil Clissa at survivalcoalitionwi@gmail.com for a Zoom link.

(MADISON) – A survey of more than 300 people with disabilities and their families shows that COVID has had devastating impacts on employment, housing, and support systems, resulting in loss of jobs and homes, school regression, and heightened depression and social isolation.

The survey by the Survival Coalition of more than 25 statewide disability organizations shows the heightened needs among Wisconsinites living with disability and their families that must be addressed with adequate funding in the state's upcoming biennial budget.

Among the survey results:

- One-third of families lost their jobs
- One in 8 lost their homes
- One-fifth lost their health insurance.
- 9 of 10 families say COVID has had a negative change on their child's special education services.
- 3 in 4 families expect significant skill regression in their child.
- Nearly a quarter of adults with disabilities say they experienced barriers to employment supports.
- Over half have concerns about lasting depression and social isolation
- Nearly half are worried they may permanently lose the direct care workers they rely upon daily.

“People with disabilities and their families are at increased risk of contracting COVID-19, often because they depend on critical supports and services in physically close settings in their homes, workplaces, schools and the community,” said Beth Swedeem, Survival Coalition co-chair. “Results from our survey also are clear that the disability community is experiencing drastically increased additional impacts from the pandemic that have harmed their jobs, homes, support networks and connection to community.”

“Survey results clearly demonstrate that priorities in this budget must include both increased funding for students with disabilities and support for the recommendations from the Governor’s Task Force on Caregiving,” says Lisa Pugh, Survival Coalition co-chair. “We are at risk for permanent set-backs, dire health outcomes and increased costs if these needs are not addressed now.”

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Investing in People with Disabilities