



FACT SHEET

How Trump's FY 2019 Budget Hurts People with Disabilities

By Eliza Schultz February 16, 2018

President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2019 budget is poised to wreak havoc on people with disabilities—increasing hunger, reducing economic security, and undermining access to education and work opportunities—all to pay for the \$1.5 trillion in tax cuts he gave to corporations and millionaires.¹ Here are just a few examples of the myriad ways in which President Trump's budget harms people with disabilities as well as their loved ones.

- **Dismantles the health care system:** As a continuation of President Trump's dogged efforts to undermine the nation's health care system, his budget not only repeals and replaces the Affordable Care Act (ACA) but also slashes Medicaid by at least \$306 billion in over 10 years.² These cuts—on top of Trump's efforts to introduce so-called work requirements and lifetime limits into the program—will jeopardize vital health care for the more than **15 million** people with disabilities who are insured through Medicaid. Many of these people rely on the program for home- and community-based services that make it possible to live independently and to work.³ Combined with Trump's renewed call for ACA repeal, these changes to Medicaid would lead to \$675 billion in cuts to health care over the next 10 years. Additionally, his budget reduces supports for programs that promote independent living for people with disabilities and eliminates the Limb Loss Resource Center and the Paralysis Resource Center.⁴
- **Slashes Social Security:** The budget also jeopardizes the economic security of people with disabilities, who are already disproportionately likely to have low incomes. President Trump slashes federal disability programs by \$72 billion, chiefly from two programs that provide modest, albeit critical, income support to disabled individuals: Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).⁵ These programs serve as financial lifelines to nearly **13 million** nonelderly adults with significant disabilities and severe illnesses,⁶ and SSI serves 1.2 million kids.⁷ President Trump's cuts to SSI for families with multiple people with disabilities alone could impact more than 1 million households, driving them closer to—or deeper into—poverty.⁸ Trump's budget also calls for slashing the retroactive benefits that SSDI beneficiaries are eligible to receive from 12 months to six months, cutting the amount that new recipients receive in half.⁹

- **Undermines education and makes deep cuts to training programs:** Trump’s budget doubles down on his call for private school vouchers, which lead taxpayer dollars to flow to unaccountable private schools at the expense of public education. These vouchers also notoriously undermine the rights of disabled students, as these programs generally require parents to waive their child’s educational rights, including those under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.¹⁰ Additionally, the budget eliminates some vocational rehabilitation opportunities for people with disabilities.¹¹ It also proposes \$11 million in cuts to the Office of Disability Employment Policy, which works with employers to ensure that people with disabilities are able to work, despite the fact that workers with disabilities face unemployment rates two to three times higher than workers without disabilities.¹²
- **Jeopardizes access to housing assistance:** President Trump also targets a slew of affordable housing programs, including the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Section 811 program¹³—which boosts the supply of affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities—with an overall cut of \$8.8 billion to the department.¹⁴ What’s more, Trump’s budget eliminates the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, a utility relief program that enables millions of households—**38 percent** of which have a member with a disability—to keep their homes at safe temperatures.¹⁵
- **Slashes food assistance:** President Trump has called for slashing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—which helps low-income families put food on the table—by \$214 billion by 2028, a cut of 31 percent.¹⁶ SNAP is critical for people with disabilities; it serves about 4.6 million households with at least one non-elderly disabled member.¹⁷ What’s more, the budget would further tighten draconian time limits on SNAP for unemployed and underemployed workers, threatening to strip critical food assistance from people with disabilities who face barriers to work. His budget also eliminates both the Social Services Block Grant and the Community Development Block Grant,¹⁸ each of which supports critical programs such as Meals on Wheels, a program that provides food to people who are unable to leave their homes, many of whom live with disabilities.
- **Undermines access to justice:** President Trump’s budget also axes the Legal Services Corporation (LSC) in its entirety, eliminating a critical source of federal funding that provides free legal help to low- and middle-income people who cannot afford a lawyer. Civil legal aid is particularly critical for people with disabilities facing wrongful denial of needed services, accommodations, or benefits.¹⁹ More than 11 million people with disabilities are eligible for LSC-supported assistance on the basis of income.²⁰

Eliza Schultz is the Research Associate for the Poverty to Prosperity Program at the Center for American Progress.

Endnotes

- 1 Office of Management and Budget, "President's Budget," available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/> (last accessed February 2018).
- 2 Seth Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy," Center for American Progress, February 12, 2018, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2018/02/12/446453/trumps-budget-reveals-wants-everyday-americans-pay-tax-cuts-wealthy/>.
- 3 Jackie Odum, Katherine Gallagher Robbins, and Rebecca Vallas, "The Impact of Medicaid Cuts on People with Disabilities: State-by-State Breakdown" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2017), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2017/03/22/428185/impact-medicaid-cuts-people-disabilities-state-state-breakdown/>.
- 4 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *FY 2019 Budget in Brief* (2018), p. 110, available at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2019-budget-in-brief.pdf>.
- 5 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 6 Social Security Administration, "Disabled Beneficiaries Receiving Social Security, SSI or Both, December 2016," available at https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/di_asr/2016/sect05.html (last accessed February 2018).
- 7 Social Security Administration, "Monthly Statistical Snapshot, December 2017," Table 3, available at https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/quickfacts/stat_snapshot/ (last accessed February 2018).
- 8 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 9 The White House, "Efficient, Effective, Accountable: An American Budget" (2018), p. 137, available at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/budget-fy2019.pdf>.
- 10 Stephenie Johnson, Neil Campbell, and Scott Sargrad, "Trump and DeVos Continue to Undermine Public Education with Their Proposed Fiscal Year 2019 Budget," Center for American Progress, February 12, 2018, available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/news/2018/02/12/446423/trump-devos-continue-undermine-public-education-proposed-fiscal-year-2019-budget/>.
- 11 Department of Education, "REHABILITATION SERVICES: Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Request" (2018), available at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget19/justifications/i-rehab.pdf>.
- 12 Office of Management and Budget, "President's Budget."
- 13 Government Printing Office, "Appendix to the President's FY2019 Budget: Department of Housing and Urban Development" (2018), available at <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BUDGET-2019-APP/pdf/BUDGET-2019-APP-1-13.pdf>.
- 14 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 15 Department of Health and Human Services, *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program Report to Congress for Fiscal Year 2014*, p. vi, available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocs/fy14_liheap_rtc_final.pdf (last accessed February 2018).
- 16 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 17 Melanie Meisenheimer, "SNAP Matters for People with Disabilities" (Washington: Food Research Action Center, 2015), available at http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/snap_matters_people_with_disabilities.pdf.
- 18 Hanlon and others, "Trump's Budget Reveals that He Wants Everyday Americans to Pay for His Tax Cuts for the Wealthy."
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Legal Services Corporation, "The Justice Gap: Measuring the Unmet Civil Legal Needs of Low-income Americans" (2017), p. 19, available at <https://www.lsc.gov/sites/default/files/images/TheJusticeGap-FullReport.pdf>.