

Family Support Act Program

The WV Legislature passed SB 29 on March 7, 1991 for the establishment of the Family Support Program for people with developmental disabilities.

The Legislature found that families are the greatest resource available to individuals with developmental disabilities, and they must be supported in their role as primary caregivers. They also found that to maximize the number of families supported by this program, each family would contribute to the cost of goods and services based on their ability to pay, taking into account their needs and resources.

The program provides funds to families to purchase goods and services included in the family's service plan and that are related to the extra care of the person who has a developmental disability. This includes things such as: respite care; home and vehicle modifications; specialized nutrition; specialized clothing; equipment and supplies;

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special utility costs; and health related costs that are not covered by other means.

Families who need the services offered by the Family Support Program do not necessarily qualify for Medicaid or other government assistance programs. Families who have private health insurance often have unmanageable out-of-pocket expenses related to the needs of their family member, and many of the needs listed above are not covered by Medicaid or other health insurance. If available, the coverage may be very limited for many items.

The Family Support Program funds are “funds of last resort,” so that needs which can be paid for through other programs are not funded. The program also includes case management services for each family in order to provide them with information, service coordination, and other assistance that may be needed.

**Funding for FY 2013 was \$1,093,923.
Funding for FY 2014 was \$985,078. Funding**

for FY 2015, FY 2016, and FY 2017 was \$251,226, or a 75% cut.

The Bureau for Behavioral Health and Health Facilities combined the family support funds with other funds for a total of \$850,000 to provide a blended program of both the Family Support program and emergency funds for people with mental health and/or other challenges, who are at risk of involuntary commitment. The actual amount used for the Family Support program in FY 2016 was \$364,186, and in FY 2017 was \$465,098. The increase in usage to the program in FY 2017 could be due to cuts to other programs who support people with developmental disabilities.

In FY 2013, 1,961 families were served by the program. In FY 2014, 1,664 families were served by the program. In 2015, 776 families were served, and in FY 2016, 780 families were served. In FY 2017 815 families were served. The top number of requests were: adaptive equipment at \$126,176, attendant care at \$6,370, essential wellbeing at

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\$43,716, environmental accessibility at \$30,572, housing maintenance at \$45,968, integrated activities at \$22,077, medical related at \$150,906, therapy at \$20,498, and transportation at \$18,815.

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