



RE: [HF 3896 \(Freiberg\)](#) Task Force on Disability Services Accessibility
ATTN: Minnesota House Human Services Finance and Policy Committee
FROM: The Minnesota Council on Disability
DATE: March 16th, 2022

Honorable Chair Schultz and Members of the Committee,

The Minnesota Council on Disability urges the committee to support HF 3896 which creates a stakeholder task force to evaluate county and state disability services for accessibility and participant ease of use. This will include evaluating current systems, accessibility plans, data surrounding current access barriers and appeals, the process for accessibility complaints, and the discrepancy of policy versus lived experiences.

The Minnesota Council on Disability supports any effort or legislation that expands access and inclusion for Minnesotans with disabilities. Many Minnesotans with disabilities rely on disability services to live independently in the communities of their choice. However, navigating the complex bureaucracy of applications and services can be confusing and inaccessible to many. Far too often Minnesotans in need of critical services don't utilize those services because the process of obtaining those services are barriers themselves. Many people who have disabilities who use disability services find the processing of accessing those services incredibly difficult. Although disability services are aimed at supporting people's disability related needs, sometimes the process of receiving and maintaining those services presents barriers because of people's disability related needs. Some of these barriers include completing paperwork, which sometimes requires outdated or specific methods such as faxing; communicating with lead agencies, which is often prescribed to occur in specific ways without flexibility; participating in assessments, which may favor certain communication methods and not leave room for communication or interaction accommodation; and resolving disputes about service determinations, which often results in frequent appeals that may have been avoidable.

As a state agency ourselves, it is within the purview of the Minnesota Council on Disability to audit and report on the accessibility of state disability services as mandated in Minnesota Statutes 256.4825. The task force would expand our capacity to do a full, comprehensive report and audit of state disability services, identifying the strengths and areas of improvement. We urge you to support the disability community by supporting the betterment of state disability services.

Sincerely,

Trevor Turner
Public Policy Director