

**Budget, Entitlements, and Appropriations**

Congress has traditionally set fiscal policy through three major fiscal actions. These actions largely determine the actual funding for all disability benefits, programs, and services for the year:

1. Adopting a budget resolution that sets annual revenue and spending limits. The budget resolution is the blueprint for discretionary and entitlement spending;
2. Adopting annual appropriations bills which set spending levels for the many discretionary programs; and
3. Enacting a reconciliation bill requiring relevant committees to revise tax policy and entitlement spending (such as Medicaid, Medicare, Supplemental Security Income, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as food stamps)) to comply with the budget resolution.

However, in recent years Congress has not adhered to all of these steps because of concerns over the role and size of the federal government and how to address federal deficits and the long term debt.

During the 115th Congress, our public policy goals are to:

* Strengthen, not weaken, vital entitlement programs such as Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, SSI, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and SNAP (food stamps);
* Promote cost-effectiveness when such efforts do no harm to our constituents and allow them to live as independently as possible in the community;
* Replace the scheduled automatic spending cuts that impact discretionary programs that support people with disabilities with a balanced deficit reduction package that includes revenue increases and no further cuts to programs that support people with disabilities and their families;
* Ensure that the recommendations of non-Congressional commissions or bodies are given full consideration by the Congress and not placed on a fast track to by-pass the legislative process;
* Address the significant unmet needs, disparities, and inequities faced by people with disabilities and their families by expanding the federal government’s investment in people with disabilities to enable them to live and work as independently as possible in the community with appropriate and flexible long term individual and family supports;
* Ensure that eligibility for services and benefits is not restricted and that the level of services and benefits for entitlement programs (such as Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security) is not reduced or limited to achieve budget cuts;
* Remove the Social Security Administration’s administrative budget from any budget cap requirements for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education; and
* Oppose a Constitutional balanced budget amendment.

To download the full legislative agenda, visit: <http://www.thearc.org/what-we-do/public-policy/legislative-agenda>