



*Many Voices / One Vision*



## 2026 Legislative Candidate Survey

*Questions for Legislative Candidates — The Arc of Washington  
The Community Advocacy Coalition for Developmental Disabilities  
The Children's Campaign Fund*

---

**Name:** Renee Hernandez Greenfield

**Position:** House

**Legislative District:** 26

**Email:** renee@reneeforhouse.com

**Website:** www.reneeforhouse.com



---

**1. Do you have a personal connection or professional experience with someone who has an intellectual/developmental disability (IDD)? If yes, would you describe its impact on you and your candidacy? If not, what have you learned about people with intellectual or developmental disabilities and how has it impacted your candidacy?**

Yes. My professional life has centered on supporting children with developmental disabilities and their families.

Today I work as a Developmental Specialist providing early intervention services to infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities throughout our community. Every week I partner with families as they navigate evaluations, therapies, Medicaid, early support, and the transition into special education services. Previously, I worked in Head Start and

ECEAP, child welfare, and early childhood education, where I saw how critical early identification and family-centered services are to lifelong outcomes.

My connection is also personal. As a parent of a child with special needs, I have navigated disability services, IEP meetings, and the challenges of coordinating healthcare, education, and community supports. Those experiences have reinforced that families don't experience these systems separately; they experience them all at once.

These experiences are a major reason I'm running for the Legislature. I have seen the difference thoughtful public policy can make, and I've also seen where well-intentioned systems create unnecessary barriers. I want to help build policies that reflect how families live—not how government agencies are organized—and ensure people with disabilities and their families have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect them.

**2. What policies and systems are you aware of that impact the lives of people with IDD and their families? If elected, what responsibility would you have to change those policies or systems?**

Families interact with many different systems, including Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT), developmental disabilities services through DDA, Medicaid, special education, behavioral health, childcare, housing, transportation, respite care, and employment supports. Too often these systems operate independently, leaving families to coordinate everything themselves.

As a state representative, my responsibility would be to ensure these systems are adequately funded, coordinated, and accountable. That means protecting Medicaid, strengthening the developmental disabilities workforce, investing in early intervention and special education, and reducing unnecessary administrative barriers.

Throughout my career, I've learned that families don't experience healthcare, education, housing, or employment separately—they experience one life. Our policies should work together the same way. Government should help families navigate systems, not expect families to navigate government.

Good policy should make it easier—not harder—for families to access the services they already qualify for.

### **3. If elected, what are your top three priorities, and how would people with IDD and their families benefit from each priority?**

1. Strengthening healthcare and Medicaid. Families need timely access to therapies, specialists, behavioral health services, and medically necessary supports. Protecting Medicaid and addressing provider shortages will improve access across our district.

2. Fully funding education and early intervention. Early intervention and special education change lives. I support fully funding these systems, so children receive services when they need them and schools have the resources to meet their legal obligations.

3. Improving affordability for working families. Housing, childcare, transportation, and everyday costs affect every family, including those raising children or supporting adults with disabilities. I support continuing to make Washington's tax code more equitable so working families can keep more of what they earn while ensuring our state can responsibly fund the healthcare, education, and community supports that make independence possible.

Underlying all three priorities is a simple belief: when we invest early, coordinate services, and remove barriers, we improve outcomes while making better use of public resources. Supporting people with disabilities isn't separate from building healthy communities—it is central to it.

### **4. When you have questions about how to best support people with IDD and their families, what or who are your trusted resources?**

My first resource is always people with lived experience—individuals with disabilities, their families, and self-advocates.

I also believe good legislation is built through partnership. Before making policy, I want to hear from the people who live with its consequences every day.

Professionally, I regularly collaborate with speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, educators, pediatricians,

behavioral health providers, and fellow developmental specialists. I also value the expertise of disability advocacy organizations, family support organizations, and researchers working in early childhood and developmental disabilities.

As a legislator, I would continue listening first to the people most directly affected by proposed policies.

**5. The national trend -- and legal mandate --- supports transitioning individuals with IDD out of institutional settings and into community-based care, which is not only the best practice but also the most cost-effective approach. Studies consistently show that community-based services cost significantly less per person than institutional care while providing greater independence and quality of life. In Washington the cost of care in a Residential Habilitation Center (RHC) is more than double the cost of equivalent services in community settings. Although Washington has made progress, continued efforts are needed to align with best practices, civil rights, federal priorities, and fiscal responsibility. Transitioning more individuals into community-based care will allow the state to reinvest savings into services for much needed community-based services. How do you believe Washington state should approach investment in home and community based services for people with IDD in the next five years?**

Washington should continue investing in home and community-based services because they promote independence, community inclusion, and a higher quality of life while making responsible use of public resources. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities should have meaningful choices about where and how they receive services, and families should not have to wait years for the supports they need.

Over the next five years, I would prioritize expanding home and community-based services, strengthening the direct support workforce through better wages and career pathways, reducing wait lists for services and respite care, increasing accessible housing, and improving coordination across healthcare, education, and long-term supports.

Washington's budget should reflect our values, but it should also reflect what works. My experience has taught me that investing early, coordinating

services, and supporting people in their communities leads to better outcomes for individuals and families. We should continue making thoughtful investments that help people live with dignity and independence while ensuring public resources are used effectively and responsibly. As community-based services reduce reliance on more expensive institutional care, those savings should be reinvested to strengthen supports and expand access across our state.

6. Is there any other information you'd like constituents with intellectual or

**6. Is there any other information you'd like constituents with intellectual or developmental disabilities and their family and friends to know?**

I believe people with developmental disabilities should be involved in shaping the policies that affect their lives. "Nothing about us without us" is more than a slogan—it is a principle that leads to better policy.

Throughout my career, I've learned that disability is one part of a person's life—not the whole story. Every individual has strengths, aspirations, relationships, and something to contribute to their community. My role as a legislator is to help remove barriers, expand opportunity, and build systems that recognize the dignity and potential of every person.

I will continue leading with humility, listening to those with lived experience, and working alongside individuals, families, providers, and advocates to create policies that reflect how people actually live their lives.