
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES

Senator Becker, Chair

2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No: AB 1925
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Version: March 16, 2026
Urgency: No
Consultant: Diana Dominguez

Hearing Date: June 15, 2026
Fiscal: Yes

Subject: State permanent disability certification program: feasibility study

SUMMARY

This bill would require the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS), upon appropriation and in consultation with relevant state departments within the agency, to complete a feasibility study that includes a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities related to establishing a state permanent disability certification program. This bill would require CalHHS to submit a report of the completed study by July 1, 2028.

ABSTRACT

Existing Law:

- 1) Establishes CalHHS, which consists of the following departments and offices: Aging, Child Support Services, Community Services and Development, Developmental Services, Health Care Access and Information, Health Care Services, Managed Health Care, Public Health, Rehabilitation, Social Services, State Hospitals, the Center for Data Insights and Innovation, the Emergency Medical Services Authority, the Office of Technology and Solutions Integration, the Office of Law Enforcement Support, the Office of the Surgeon General, the Office of Youth and Community Restoration, and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities. (*Government Code 12803 and 12806*)
- 2) Requires an applicant for, or recipient of, In-Home Supportive Services to obtain a certification from a licensed health care professional, including, but not limited to, a physician, physician assistant, regional center clinician or clinician supervisor, occupational therapist, physical therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist, optometrist, ophthalmologist, or public health nurse, declaring that the applicant or recipient is unable to perform some activities of daily living independently, and that without services to assist the applicant or recipient with activities of daily living, the applicant or recipient is at risk of placement in out-of-home care. (*Welfare and Institutions Code [WIC] 12309.1*)
- 3) Requires certification, signed by a physician, substantiating the existence of a disability before the issuance of special license plates for a person with a disability. (*Vehicle Code 5007*)

- 4) Requires a person with disability who requires a modified vehicle for mobility or assistive technology to obtain a certification by a physician or the Department of Rehabilitation to prove eligibility for the Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Guarantee Fund. (*WIC 19461*)
- 5) Requires certification by a physician of the existence of a disability in order to qualify for a free sport fishing license. (*Fish and Game Code 7151*)
- 6) Requires certification by a physician of the existence of a disability for a disabled veteran to qualify for an exemption from the vehicle license fee. (*Revenue and Taxation Code 10783*)

This Bill:

- 1) Makes findings and declarations about repeated requirements for Californians with permanent disabilities to reverify their condition across multiple government programs, despite the permanent nature of many disabilities; the state's lack of a coordinated disability verification framework; and unnecessary costs borne by state and local agencies, including administrative burdens, diversion of public resources away from direct service delivery, and by and individuals with permanent disabilities, such as avoidable interruptions in health care, housing, in-home services, transportation, and other essential supports.
- 2) Defines the following terms for purposes of this bill:
 - a. "Agency" means CalHHS.
 - b. "Disability" has the same meaning as set forth in the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
 - c. "Permanent disability" means a medically determinable disability certified by a licensed medical professional as permanent or as one that continues, or can be expected to continue, indefinitely, and where significant functional improvement is not reasonably expected based on most updated medical evidence.
 - d. "State permanent disability certification program" means a certification issued by a state department confirming that an individual has a permanent disability for the purpose of obtaining services.
- 3) Requires CalHHS, in consultation with relevant state departments within CalHHS, to complete a feasibility study that includes a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities related to establishing a state permanent disability certification program.
- 4) Requires CalHHS, for purposes of completing the feasibility study, to reasonably attempt to consult with local stakeholders, including, but not limited to, independent living centers, Aging and Disability Resource Connection programs, disability-led organizations, and county agencies.
- 5) Requires the analysis within the study to address, at a minimum, all of the following:

- a. The ability to detect and prevent fraud within a state permanent disability certification program.
 - b. The ability of the state to protect individual privacy.
 - c. Technological limitations.
 - d. Compatibility of a permanent disability certification for use within existing federal, state, and local programs.
- 6) Requires CalHHS, by July 1, 2028, to submit a report of the completed study to the Legislature and post the report on the CalHHS internet website.
 - 7) Provides that this act shall be implemented upon appropriation made by the Legislature for this purpose.
 - 8) Provides that this act shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2032, and as of that date is repealed.

FISCAL IMPACT

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee,

The Department of Developmental Services within CalHHS estimates total costs of approximately \$1 million annually until the report is produced and the bill sunsets on January 1, 2032. These costs include approximately three additional positions and any necessary contract to support the completion of a feasibility study and comprehensive analysis, as specified.

The author has requested \$2 million in the 2026-27 budget to fund the study proposed in this bill.

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, the General Fund faces a structural deficit in the tens of billions of dollars over the next several fiscal years.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Bill:

According to the author, "Californians with permanent disabilities are too often forced to repeatedly prove the same lifelong condition just to access basic services. This duplicative system creates unnecessary burdens for individuals, families, providers, and government agencies. AB 1925 takes a thoughtful approach by studying how a statewide permanent disability certification could streamline access and reduce inefficiencies. By exploring this solution, we can improve access to and continuity of care for those that need it most."

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities.¹ Under the ADA, a person is considered to have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, have a history or record of such an impairment (such as cancer that is in remission), or are perceived by others as having such an impairment (such as a person who has scars from a severe burn). Examples of disabilities include cancer; diabetes; post-traumatic stress disorder; HIV; autism; cerebral palsy; deafness or hearing loss; blindness or low vision; epilepsy; mobility disabilities such as those requiring the use of a wheelchair, walker, or cane; intellectual disabilities; major depressive disorder; and traumatic brain injury; among others.

Employers, state and local governments, businesses open to the public, commercial facilities, transportation providers, and telecommunication companies must follow anti-discrimination requirements under the ADA. Because the ADA is a law and not a benefit program, people with disabilities do not have to apply for coverage. However, people with disabilities may need to provide evidence of their disability to demonstrate their availability for certain disability programs.

Disability in California

California has a number of programs designed to benefit people with disabilities. These include medical, nutritional, financial and housing assistance, as well as benefits that allow people with disabilities to receive subsidized licenses or permits such as fishing or parking. These programs have different program requirements that align with the type of impairment. For example, a person would qualify for the Deaf and Disabled Telecommunications Program if they cannot use a standard telephone due to difficulty seeing, hearing, speaking, moving, or remembering.² These programs require certification to verify that the applicant is impaired and meets eligibility requirements for participation. This may require a physician or other medical professional to verify the existence of an applicant's disability. The certification process protects program integrity by ensuring resources are provided to those who need it. However, because people with disabilities may qualify for multiple programs and eligibility differs by program, people with disabilities must repeatedly provide evidence of their disability. This bill would require a study of the feasibility of establishing a state permanent disability certification program.

Related/Prior Legislation:

AB 1250 (Papan, Chapter 725, Statutes of 2025) required transit operators, on or before June 1, 2027, to use a streamlined recertification process, as specified, for persons who have previously been determined to be eligible for paratransit service to have their eligibility renewed.

¹ <https://www.ada.gov/topics/intro-to-ada/>

² https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/-/media/cpuc-website/divisions/communications-division/documents/ddtp/factsheets/ddtp_statsheet_031326.pdf

AB 1351 (Lackey, Chapter 627, Statutes of 2019) required the California State Transportation Agency to conduct an assessment by July 1, 2021, of the procedures used by public transit operators to provide dial-a-ride and paratransit services to individuals with disabilities whom are visiting their service territory, and required the California State Transportation Agency to develop statewide guidelines.

COMMENTS

This bill would require CalHHS to assess the feasibility of establishing a statewide permanent disability certification program. According to the American Community Survey, an estimated 4.7 million Californians have a disability.³ Additionally, California has an aging population, and the prevalence of disability generally increases with age. This means a larger number of people may be applying to state and local government disability programs in the near future. Applying and re-applying for programs that provide essential supports to people with disabilities can be difficult, time-consuming, and frustrating. Conducting a feasibility study could provide insights to the State on how to reduce certification requirements for people with a permanent disability.

PRIOR VOTES

Assembly Floor:	72 - 0
Assembly Appropriations Committee:	15 - 0
Assembly Human Services Committee:	7 - 0

POSITIONS

Support:

Disability Resource Agency for Independent Living (DRAIL) (Sponsor)
 Access Central Coast
 Association of Regional Center Agencies
 California Disability Services Association
 California Foundation for Independent Living Centers
 Freed Center for Independent Living
 Marin Center for Independent Living
 Resources for Independent Living
 The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy California Collaboration
 The California Baptist Capitol Ministry

Oppose:

None received

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³ <https://data.census.gov/table?q=s1810&g=040XX00US06&y=2024>