



Position Statement from the Disability Advocacy and Policy Alliance (DAPA) On the Federal Reduction in Force (RIF) Affecting OSERS and OSEP

October 13, 2025

The Arizona Disability Advocacy and Policy Alliance (DAPA) expresses deep concern regarding the recent Reduction in Force (RIF) notices issued to nearly all federal staff within the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) within the U.S. Department of Education.

What We Know

Reliable sources confirm that these RIF notices have been distributed to nearly all employees in both OSERS and OSEP. Under federal law, the notices provide 60 days' advance warning before positions are eliminated. Unless rescinded, the layoffs will take effect on December 9, 2025. This situation is unprecedented in scope and poses a direct threat to the infrastructure supporting implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act.

The potential loss of experienced federal staff will severely undermine essential federal oversight, technical assistance, data collection, and accountability functions that safeguard the rights of children and youth with disabilities, their families, and the professionals who serve them.

What We Don't Know

At this time, it is unclear:

- Whether the RIF will be rescinded or revised. There is speculation that the decision may be linked to ongoing federal budget negotiations, but no official confirmation has been issued.
- Whether legal action will be pursued. Litigation is being discussed among advocacy and civil service organizations, but no formal filings have yet been made.
- When the ongoing federal government shutdown will be resolved. There remains no clear timeline for a budget agreement.

Our Position

DAPA firmly opposes the elimination of positions within OSERS and OSEP.

These federal offices are vital to ensuring that states, schools, and service systems meet their obligations under IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act. The loss of institutional knowledge, policy



expertise, and technical assistance capacity will have devastating consequences for individuals with disabilities and their families nationwide.

DAPA calls upon the Administration and Congress to:

1. Immediately rescind the RIF notices affecting OSERS and OSEP staff.
2. Prioritize funding stability for federal education and disability programs, regardless of ongoing budget negotiations.
3. Protect the integrity of IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act by ensuring strong federal leadership and technical assistance capacity.

Our Commitment

As a statewide coalition of disability advocacy and family-serving organizations—including the Arizona Developmental Disability Planning Council, The Arc of Arizona, Care 4 the Caregiver, Disability Rights Arizona, Encircle Families, and Northern Arizona University's Institute for Human Development—DAPA remains united in our mission to uphold the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities across Arizona.

We are working together to communicate the critical importance of OSERS and OSEP to policymakers, and to ensure a coordinated, informed response from the disability community.

The families and individuals we serve depend on the stability and leadership of these federal programs. We urge our elected officials to act swiftly to restore that stability.