

State Advocacy Toolkit

2026



Contents

I. The Need for State Advocacy	3
II. What Do We Mean by "Systems".....	4
III. Start With One Step	5
Know the Moment	6
Identify Contacts	7
Share Your Story	9
Make the Ask	10
Show Up & Stay Connected	11
IV. Advocacy in Action	12
V. Talking Points	14
VI. Templates	17
Emails	17
Calls	21
Testimony	23
Social Media	25
VII. State Mapping Tool	28
VII. Preventing Costs Infographic	29

I. The Need for State Advocacy



Understanding where FASD currently exists within your state's systems is essential to improving how people with FASD and their families are supported. This work also prepares states to successfully implement programs authorized with the passage of the FASD Respect Act. Federal policy alone does not create change. Now, our advocacy needs to bring awareness and coordination to states so they have the capacity to act.

Multiple Systems

FASD is complex, meaning multiple systems in your state are already addressing it, either directly or indirectly. These systems (healthcare, education, disability services, substance use, mental health, child welfare, and justice) all need to become FASD-informed and aware of the direction provided by the FASD Respect Act. Mapping these systems and the people within them is the first step toward building a more informed, responsive, and connected state approach.

Mapping and Meeting

By doing this mapping now, you are positioning your state to make effective use of new federal opportunities, reduce duplication across systems, and strengthen support across the lifespan for people with FASD. Success is not measured by immediate change, but by progress: stronger connections, clearer pathways, and systems that are increasingly informed, aligned, and ready to respond.

Policy to Practice

Identifying who is already working on FASD (or whose work intersects with it) creates opportunities for education, collaboration, and long-term systems change. Tracking outreach and follow-up helps ensure that conversations don't end with a single email or meeting but instead develop into ongoing partnerships. Over time, these relationships create shared understanding, trusted points of contact, and internal champions who can move FASD-informed practices forward within their agencies.

Until recently, much FASD advocacy focused on gaining recognition and permission at the federal level. Advocacy around the FASD Respect Act was about establishing that FASD needs an updated, coordinated response. With the Respect Act now law, that permission has been granted. The question is no longer whether states can act on FASD, but how they will do so. This is where your advocacy can have an impact!

State Level Impact

Many of the new and updated programs in the FASD Respect Act are fully focused on improving state capacity to address FASD. This means the biggest impact your advocacy can have right now is at the state level, where programs will be implemented. States will determine which programs are prioritized, how services are accessed, and how these services will be coordinated across systems. Engaging with these important parties now can help ensure that your state creates sustainable and useful supports.

II. What Do We Mean by “Systems”?

FASD is complex and intersects across multiple systems. Systems are the public structures and institutions that provide support, services, and oversight for state residents. These systems are not individual entities, but instead function through state agencies and departments, specific programs, local regulations.

For example, in any given state, the **education system** might be made up of a Department of Education, multiple offices with different authorities and specializations (Office of Special Education or the Office of Higher Learning), federal statutes and regulations like IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and local regulations and school district policies.

FASD Cuts Across Systems

FASD does not fit neatly into one system or category. When FASD is not explicitly addressed within our systems, it risks slipping through the cracks. Because eligibility, documentation, and funding differ across systems, FASD may be addressed under different categories or not named at all. This cross-cutting nature means that responsibility is often diffuse, and coordination becomes essential. When systems operate in isolation, individuals and families may experience repeated referrals, inconsistent identification, or gaps in support.

Apply Your Advocacy

This kind of advocacy is not about creating something new. It's about clarifying how existing programs and services include people with FASD, bridging the gap between your living experience and experience of professionals and providers, and highlighting how strengthened coordination between agencies is crucial. You do not need to be an expert; let your living experience provide the expertise, and start with one step.

Click an icon below to download an FASD fact sheet for the corresponding system

Education



Justice

Mental Health



Substance Use

Health



Child Welfare

III. Start With One Step



Start where you live. Advocate where it counts

Six Steps to Get Started

1. Know the Moment

Understand what the FASD Respect Act authorized and how states will implement its programs.

2. Identify Contacts

Get in contact with your state legislators and identify agencies within your state working on FASD.

3. Frame Your Story

Prepare a few points from your living experience and relate them to gaps in services or support.

4. Make the Ask

Ask your state to expand FASD-specific funding and supports and to begin thinking about federal funding opportunities.

5. Show Up

Participate in town halls, hearings, listening sessions, advisory groups, or any other chances to give FASD a seat at the table.

6. Stay Connected

Follow your state and federal legislators online or through email alerts. Stay engaged with the FASD United Affiliate Network Member in your state.



i. Know the Moment

The FASD Respect Act provisions included in the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act mark the first comprehensive federal authorization focused on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders across the lifespan. Built on decades of research, living experience, and exhaustive advocacy, these provisions authorize coordinated federal action to improve FASD prevention, screening, diagnosis, services, and professional training.



Most FASD supports—diagnosis, care coordination, education accommodations, mental health services, peer support, and lifelong assistance—are designed, funded, and delivered by states. That means progress depends on state leadership and community advocacy.

Start Where You Live. Advocate Where it Counts

Parents, caregivers, and people with FASD have always been the drivers of real change. Living experience is what moves policy from paper into practice, making sure FASD supports become embedded in our systems.



This is your moment to:

- Ask your state how it plans to respond
- Advocate for funding that reflects real needs
- Ensure FASD services exist across the lifespan
- Build systems that work—not just once, but long term

ii. Identify Contacts



Jumping into this process can be intimidating. Let's walk through how to make initial contact with those working on FASD in your state.

1. Start with what you know:

Choose *one* system in your state that you have some level of familiarity with or that you think interacts with FASD. For this example, we'll start with **Education**.

EXAMPLE: I will start my search for a contact within my state's Department of Education. I know that this department has an Office of Special Education, so I will make that my initial focus.

2. Identify a way in:

Now, we are looking for our first point of contact. If you have already done some advocacy in your state, you could check in with your existing contacts, letting them know you are hoping to meet with state employees to discuss FASD Respect Act implementation.

You can also start the process by visiting the state agency's website, where you will be able to find a "Contact Us" section. Your first contact does not have to be an actual employee; a **general email inbox** can serve as your first point of contact and will often route you to the correct person or office.

EXAMPLE: Since I have engaged with my state legislators before (communications about FASD Awareness Day in my state and updates on the FASD Respect Act), I will start by contacting them. I can let them know about the passage of the FASD Respect Act and tell them I intend to meet with state agencies to provide information on FASD, asking if they have suggestions of who to work with in the state.

I can also search for a contact within the Office of Special Education by finding the "Contact Us" section of their website. Here, I find a general email inbox that can serve as my first contact.

3. Make Contact

Reach out with an email to get the conversation started. Let them know who you are (your connection to FASD), why you are reaching out (to discuss FASD in your state and offer support), and what you are asking for (a meeting or help connecting to right person).

EXAMPLE: Using the general email, I will send an email using the template found on page 19 of this toolkit.

4. Plan Follow-up

Use the State Mapping Tool to log this interaction and plan your follow-up action. Keep track of who you contacted, their office and role, and who is responsible for the next interaction.

EXAMPLE: Using the State Mapping Tool that I have shared with other advocates in my state, I log that I emailed the Office of Special Education today to request a meeting. Since I am working with others advocates, I have assigned one of them to send a follow-up email in one week if we do not receive a response.

**Feel like you're advocating alone or don't know where to start?
Check if there is an FASD United Affiliate Network Member in your
state, or join the FASD advocacy community every Wednesday at
12:00 pm Eastern for our Virtual Policy Check In**



Use the FASD State Mapping Tool to keep track of contacts, track our interactions, and coordinate with other advocates in your state.

[Click Here to Download and Get Started](#)

iii. Share Your Story

Your living experience can be a valuable tool in creating FASD-informed systems. Sharing your story with legislators and other decision makers works best when it is focused and able to highlight how gaps in services and supports affected outcomes. It is also helpful if you can point to an example of supports or services that have beneficial, clearly stating how they had a positive effect. The goal in sharing your story is not to persuade based on emotion, but to make the impact of policies more tangible.



Experience as Expertise

Start with these simple steps:

- Write down 2-3 points from your living experience
- Connect your story to a system gap (diagnosis, education, transition to adulthood, caregiver support, etc.)
- Consider what supports or services would have been helpful
- Keep it brief, honest, and positive. Legislators and other decisionmakers want to help, and we need to make sure they have the opportunity



Remember

- You don't need policy expertise.
- You don't need perfect words.
- Your experience is enough.

iv. Make the Ask

Passage of the FASD Respect Act has provided more than just the opportunity to update the state and federal response to FASD. It has also provided us with the legitimacy needed to ask states to increase FASD-specific funding. Now is the time to make connections in your state and urge them to consider how FASD fits into their current systems.



State Asks

Ask your state to dedicate or expand current FASD-specific funding for services like:

- Screening and diagnostic capacity
- Care coordination and navigation
- Peer support and mentorship
- Training for professionals
- Lifespan services for adolescents and adults

Ask how your state plans to leverage guidance and funding provided by the FASD Respect Act.



Remember

Your state likely already has authorization to provide these services to the FASD-community, so your advocacy can help illuminate where FASD supports should already exist.

v. Show Up



Advocacy takes many forms and there is a way for everyone to get involved. Of course, you can always request and attend meetings with your state and federal legislators, or employees from state agencies. This is just the beginning, however, and the form of advocacy best suited to your skills is out there! Besides meeting with legislators and state agency employees, consider these others way to show up for the FASD community:

- Attend a town hall, listening session, legislative hearing, or other local public event
- Submit written testimony
- Join a state task force, advisory group, FASD United Affiliate Network Member Organization
- Write an Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor with a focus on FASD

vi.

Stay Connected

We are more powerful together. Tap into the collective experience and knowledge of this community by:

- Following your legislators and state agencies online
- Signing up for advocacy alerts
- Staying engaged with FASD United and your local FASD United Affiliate Network Member Organization
- Share update with your community and network.

This movement grows when stories are shared. Start today.

IV.

Advocacy in Action



Comprehensive State Advocacy:

Texas FASD Network and State Engagement

The Texas FASD Network, an FASD United Affiliate Network Member has been hugely successful in encouraging and coordinating advocacy at both the state and federal levels. By bringing together individuals with FASD, family members, service providers, and other professionals, the Texas FASD Network has ensured that their advocacy touches each system that interacts with FASD.

Through coordination and consistent communication with state and federal level contacts, the Texas FASD Network met with the office of every Member of Congress from Texas while advocating for the FASD Respect Act. The group has also educated state legislators on the need for FASD-specific supports, positioning the TEXAS FASD Network as a trusted partner in the state.



Learn more about their efforts at
<https://texasfasd.org/advocacy/state-advocacy/>

2026 Advocacy Impact Calendar

Make sure your state is prepared to capitalize on the programs authorized by the FASD Respect Act and help secure greater funding by using this Impact Calendar for 2026. Exact timing of objectives is dependent on your state's legislative calendar and current capacity to address FASD. The important thing is to make steady progress throughout the year by building relationships and starting conversations.

Q1 Appropriations

Objectives

- Complete appropriation questionnaire
- Arrange meetings with legislators
- Follow up with contacts

Support

- Appropriation request form questionnaire
- Talking points
- Slides and presentations



Q2 State Agency Outreach

Objectives

- Connect with state agencies
- Determine where FASD fits into current state systems

Support

- State agency mapping tool
- Talking points
- Slides and presentations



Q3 Legislative Outreach

Objectives

- Identify State Champions
- Submit Awareness Month proclamation requests
- General outreach and awareness

Support

- Awareness Month Proclamation templates
- Slides and presentations



Q4 State Legislation Introduction

Objectives

- Introduce state legislation for FASD State Coordinator and Advisory Committee

Support

- Draft language for legislation or executive order



V.

Talking Points

Framing the Meeting

State Agency

Purpose: Understand where FASD is currently showing up in systems, identify how existing programs support the FASD community, and encourage states to incorporate FASD-informed services into their systems.

"We are meeting with state agencies to better understand how FASD is already being addressed and how the support needs of those impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure are already being served. This is especially important now as Congress has authorized the FASD Respect Act, which directs states to review and update their response to FASD."

State Legislator

Purpose: Educate on FASD Respect Act, explain how coordinated systems benefit the FASD community and the entire state, and request leadership in establishing a State FASD Coordinator and State FASD Advisory Committee through state legislation.

"Passage of the FASD Respect Act shows Congress' dedication to updating both the federal and state response to FASD. Making sure our state is prepared to implement FASD Respect Act programs is the best way to benefit from this new comprehensive approach to FASD support."

Federal Legislator

Purpose: Reinforce the need for increased funding for FASD programs, connect federal funding to state-level implementation, and highlight how investing in FASD protects against costly adverse outcomes.

"The FASD Respect Act clearly intends for states to be able to update and strengthen their response to FASD. In order for FASD-informed services to actually make it into our communities, incremental increases in appropriations will be necessary. This is what will allow states to incorporate FASD supports into their existing systems, creating more efficient and effective programs."

Questions for State Agencies

Understanding an Agency's Role

Begin by understanding how the system defines its work and what it knows about FASD.

- *Is FASD explicitly named or addressed in your agency?*
- *What do you see as your agency's primary responsibilities? How do you see FASD fitting into that?*
- *How does your agency coordinate with other departments or agencies?*

Identification and Coordination

Get a sense of how your state identifies FASD and how care is coordinated.

- *How are people with support needs identified?*
- *How is prenatal and early developmental history considered?*
- *What happens when someone has complex support needs but no clear diagnosis?*
- *Is eligibility for supports primarily diagnosis-based or needs-based?*
- *Once identified, how is care coordinated across systems?*
- *Are there pressure points where you see families bouncing back and forth between supports or systems?*

Data

If the data is not visible, then it cannot be used to inform policy.

- *What data do you collect on the population you serve? Is any of it related to FASD or PAE?*
- *How are you identifying trends in PAE?*
- *Are there areas you wish you had better data collection?*

Training and Education

Training strengthens systems without creating new programs.

- *What FASD-related trainings do providers/professionals currently receive?*
- *Where do you or other in your agency feel least prepared?*
- *Do you see FASD-informed guidance fitting into any existing trainings?*

Closing Questions

End with a positive tone suggesting partnership and a forward-thinking mindset.

- *What other information or support would be most helpful from us or the FASD community?*
- *Which other department or agency do you suggest we speak to?*
- *Are there existing work groups or committees where this conversation would fit in?*
- *What do you need in order to address FASD in your system?*



Remember

- This is about building relationships, not winning arguments. Be positive and position yourself as a partner.
- You do not need to know everything. You just need to start the conversation.
- Teamwork is powerful. Connect with others in your state to share responsibility and make an impact!

VI.

Templates

Don't let a blank page slow down your impact. Use the following templates and scripts as starting points.



Email to a State Legislator (General)

Subject: Supporting FASD Services in Our State Following New Federal Action

Dear **[Representative/Senator]** **[Last Name]**,

My name is **[Name]**, and I live in **[City/County]**. I am a **[parent/caregiver/person with FASD]**, and I'm reaching out to share why fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) matter to families like mine.

With the recent passage of the FASD Respect Act provisions in the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act, there is new federal recognition of FASD across health, education, justice, and social services. This is an important step, but real impact depends on state leadership.

In our state, families affected by FASD continue to face gaps in **[diagnosis/supports/education/mental health/transition to adulthood—choose what fits]**. These gaps create lifelong challenges that are preventable with the right investments.

I am asking you to support:

- Dedicated state funding for FASD services
- Screening, diagnosis, and care coordination capacity
- Training for professionals who serve people with FASD
- Lifespan supports for adolescents and adults, not just young children

I would welcome the opportunity to share more about my experience and learn how our state plans to respond to this new federal opportunity.

Thank you for your time and for serving our community.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[City/Zip Code]

[Phone or Email]

Email to a State Legislator (Budget-Focused)

Subject: FASD Services in State Budget and Alignment with New Federal Guidance

Dear **[Representative/Senator]** **[Last Name]**,

I am writing as a constituent from [City/County] to encourage state investment in fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) services as part of upcoming budget decisions.

Recent federal action through the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act creates new opportunity and guidance for states to strengthen FASD-related systems. However, without state-level funding and implementation, families will continue to fall through the cracks.

I am asking you to support:

- Appropriations for FASD screening, diagnosis, and navigation
- Cross-agency coordination between health, education, child welfare, and justice
- Evidence-based, lifespan services that reduce long-term costs and improve outcomes

I would appreciate learning how FASD is being considered in this year's budget and what opportunities exist for constituent input.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this issue.

Best regards,

[Name]

[City/Zip Code]

[Phone or Email]



Visit your State Legislature's website to find contact information for your representatives

Email to State Agency

Health, Education, Human Services, Justice

Subject: FASD Services and State Implementation Opportunities

Dear **[Director/Program Manager Name]**,

My name is **[Name]**, and I am a **[parent/caregiver/person with FASD/professional]** living in **[City/County]**. I'm reaching out to ask how your agency is planning to address fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) following recent federal action.

The new federal recognition of FASD creates an opportunity for states to strengthen screening, services, and cross-system coordination. From living experience, I can share that families in our state face ongoing challenges related to **[diagnosis, access to services, education supports, adult services, justice involvement—customize]**.

I am interested in learning:

- Whether FASD is part of your agency's current planning
- What funding or pilot opportunities may exist
- How people with living experience can provide input

I would welcome the chance to connect or be directed to the appropriate staff member working on this issue.

Thank you for your time and for the work you do for our state.

Sincerely,

[Name]

Email to Federal Member of Congress on Appropriations Committee

Subject: Constituent Meeting Request re: FASD Respect Act Program Appropriations

Dear **[Senator/Representative] [Last Name] OR [Staffer Name]**,

My name is **[Name]**, and I am a constituent from **[City, State or District]** and a **[parent/caregiver/person with FASD/professional]**. I am writing to request a meeting with your appropriations staff to discuss FY27 appropriations for the FASD provisions authorized in the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act.

The FASD Respect Act provisions created important federal authority to strengthen or update prevention, screening, services, and cross-system coordination for individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). It also allows states to begin examining how they address FASD, letting them make their existing systems more effective and efficient. Appropriations above the authorized \$12.5 million will allow this to happen in our state and across the country.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, and to provide data on how the FASD supports and services that were recently authorized will lead to long-term cost savings and better outcomes for people with FASD. I would be happy to help coordinate scheduling and I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for your time and for the work you do for our state.

Sincerely,

[Name]



If your Senator or Representative was an FASD Respect Act Cosponsor in the past, this is a great time to reach out and say thank you!

Call Scripts



Brief calls to your state legislators or state agencies can help you find contacts and increase the visibility of FASD to decision makers.

State Legislator Office (1-2 minutes)

Opening: "Hello, my name is **[Name]**, and I'm a constituent from **[City/County]**. May I speak with the staff member who handles health or human services issues?"

If transferred to voicemail: "I'm calling to share why fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, or FASD, matter to families in our community. I would appreciate the chance to speak with a member of the health or human services team about new opportunities for states to update their response to FASD."

Core Message: "There was recently a historic federal step recognizing FASD through the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act. That opens the door, but states decide whether families actually see services. As a **[parent/caregiver/person with FASD]**, I see firsthand how gaps in diagnosis, education supports, and adult services impact lives."

The Ask: "I'm asking the **[Representative/Senator]** to support state funding and policy that expand FASD screening, services, and cross-agency coordination."

Closing: "I would appreciate knowing how FASD fits into upcoming legislative or budget discussions, and I'd be happy to follow up by email if you can provide the email for the appropriate staff member. Thank you for your time."



Your reason for calling will be logged by the legislator's office, so keep it brief and focused.

Call Scripts

State Agency Office

Opening: "Hello, my name is **[Name]**, and I live in **[City/County]**. I'm calling to ask about fetal alcohol spectrum disorder services within your agency."

If transferred to voicemail: "I'm calling to share why fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, or FASD, matter to families in our community. I would appreciate the chance to speak with a member of the health or human services team about new opportunities for states to update their response to FASD."

Core Message: "There has been recent federal action recognizing FASD, and I'm trying to understand how our state is responding. Families like mine often struggle to access coordinated, appropriate supports."

Key Question: "Is there someone within your agency working on FASD, neurodevelopmental disabilities, or related planning who I could speak with or email?"

Closing: "I'd really appreciate any guidance you can provide or assistance reaching an appropriate member of your team. Thank you for your help."



Use the FASD State Mapping Tool to keep track of contacts, track our interactions, and coordinate with other advocates in your state.

[Click Here to Download and Get Started](#)

Testimony and Public Comment

Public testimony and comments are ways to directly influence policy, budget, and implementation decisions. Occasionally, legislative committees, state agencies, advisory councils, and other entities will invite the public to provide information or voice their opinion on subjects. You can keep track of these opportunities by signing up for alerts from your representatives and various state agencies, monitoring your state legislature's website, and staying connected to FASD United for opportunities on the National level.

General Testimony–Parent or Caregiver

Opening: "Chair [Name], members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is [Name], and I live in [City/County]. I am the parent or caregiver of a person with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or FASD."

Personal Experience: "FASD is a lifelong brain-based disability. In our family, it shows up as **[brief example: learning challenges, emotional regulation, difficulty with transitions, trouble in school or the justice system]**. What has been hardest is not the diagnosis itself, but the lack of coordinated, appropriate services.

Systems Gap: "We are often told our child does not qualify for services, or that programs are not designed for FASD. Families are left navigating health care, education, mental health, and social services on our own. This leads to higher costs later and unnecessary crises."

Federal Context: "Recently, the federal government took an important step by recognizing FASD through the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act. This creates new opportunity, but states decide whether families actually receive support.

The Ask: "I urge you to invest in: FASD screening and diagnostic capacity, care coordination and family navigation, training for professionals across systems, and lifespan services, including adolescence and adulthood."

Closing: "With the right supports, people with FASD can thrive. State investment now prevents harm later and strengthens families like mine. Thank you for listening and for your service."

General Testimony–Self-Advocate

Opening: "Hello. My name is [Name]. I live in [City/County], and I am a person with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder."

Personal Experience: "FASD affects how my brain works. It does not mean I am lazy or unwilling to try. It means I need supports that match how I learn, work, and live."

Systems Gap: "Many systems are not built for people like me. I have struggled with [school, jobs, housing, mental health, justice involvement—choose what fits]. Often, supports stop too early or never start."

Why the Moment Matters: "The federal government has now said that FASD matters. That recognition is important—but it only helps if states act on it."

The Ask: "I am asking you to fund services for people with FASD, include self-advocates in planning and decision making, and make sure supports exist across the lifespan."

Closing: "I want to live a stable, healthy life in my community. With the right supports, I can—and so can others like me. Thank you for listening."

Testimony Template– Budget or Appropriations Hearing

Purpose: Highlight the cost-effective nature of supporting people with FASD, discuss thoughtful prevention, and systems alignment

Opening: "My name is [Name], and I am a [parent/caregiver/person with FASD] from [City/County]."

The Problem: "FASD is a common but under-addressed neurodevelopmental disability. When it goes unsupported, costs increase across education, health care, mental health, housing, and justice systems."

Federal Alignment: "The recent inclusion of FASD in the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act provides guidance and flexibility for states. This is a clear signal that now is the time to align state budgets with federal direction."

Return on Investment: "Funding FASD screening, diagnosis, care coordination, and professional training reduces long-term costs and improves outcomes. Prevention and early support are far more effective than crisis response."

The Ask: "I urge you to include dedicated funding for FASD-informed services across agencies, workforce training and capacity building, and ongoing supports beyond early childhood."

Closing: "This is a smart, responsible investment that strengthens families and systems statewide. Thank you for your consideration."

Testimony Template–Advisory Council or Task Force

Purpose: Discuss Respect Act implementation and state collaboration

Opening: "Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. My name is [Name], and I live in [City/County]."

Context: "I am here to speak about fetal alcohol spectrum disorders and how state systems can better serve people with FASD and their families."

Implementation Focus: "Federal recognition of FASD creates an opportunity for states to improve coordination across health, education, child welfare, justice, and behavioral health. Families often experience these systems as fragmented and inconsistent."

Living Experience: "People with lived experience bring essential insight into what works and what does not. Including families and self-advocates leads to better policy and better outcomes."

The Ask: "I recommend including FASD explicitly in state planning, creating cross-agency coordination, and engaging self-advocates and caregivers as partners."

Closing: "With intentional planning and living experience at the table, our state can lead in building effective FASD systems. Thank you."

Submit a Proclamation

FASD Supports Needed

You can submit a request to your Mayor or Governor to declare September as FASD Awareness Month. Insert your local information in the **placeholders** in the Sample Proclamation to customize it for your town or state. Go to [FASDUnited.org](https://fasdunited.org) for more information on how to submit a request to your Governor, or email melfi@fasdunited.org.

Human service organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public are called to action to work together to better understand and support individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). This can be done by improving public health efforts to increase awareness on how FASDs may present in individuals across the lifespan and the ongoing need for services and support for individuals living with FASD while also spreading the message that there is no safe alcohol during pregnancy.

WHEREAS, FASD affects 1 in 20 school-aged children in the US and are complex lifelong disorders that affect each person differently, resulting in unique strengths and challenges; and

WHEREAS, FASD is an umbrella term describing the range of disabilities that can occur in an individual who was exposed to alcohol before birth; and

WHEREAS, FASD can cause challenges with learning and memory, social interaction, cognition, and adaptive function, and can affect anyone, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic background; and

WHEREAS, FASD is often accompanied by medical conditions that impact quality of life; and

WHEREAS, A comprehensive, collaborative approach will strengthen advocacy efforts and will help to advance research, professional training, and access to services and resources across the lifespan; and

WHEREAS, Although FASD can be prevented by supporting pregnancies free of alcohol, prevention efforts should be balanced with support and intervention for people with living with FASD; and

WHEREAS, Early diagnosis and intervention tailored to individual needs can have lifelong benefits, easing the transition to adulthood and improving quality of life; and

WHEREAS, Each person and family should have access to reliable information, supports, and opportunities to thrive; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress has reaffirmed its dedication to addressing FASD at all levels through the inclusion of FASD provision in the SUPPORT Reauthorization Act, signaling a renewed commitment to strengthening both national and state capacity to support individuals and families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, **(Governor's name)**, Governor of the state of **(name of your state)**, do hereby declare **[September 9, 2026, as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day [or September as FASD Awareness Month]** and pledge to continue to partner with organizations, health care professionals, educators, and the public to raise awareness about FASD and support individuals living with this disability.

VII. FASD State Mapping Tool

Use this tool to better understand where FASD exists in your state's systems, organize your contacts, and plan follow-up interactions. Knowing who is working on FASD in your state is the first step towards improving FASD capacity.



Get Organized

Keep track of contacts within your state working in healthcare, education, substance use, disability, maternal health, mental health, and the justice system. This tool lets you log interactions, notes, and follow-up actions to turn one-time contacts into FASD-informed allies.

Get Together

Advocacy like this is best when done together. This tool is meant to be shared and used collaboratively, letting multiple advocates in your state be engaged and aware of progress made. Download the tool using the link below and share it with other advocates in your state.

Get Started

Pick one system (ie: Education). Start by identifying a contact within your state's Dept of Education or use their "Contact Us" page on their website. Request a meeting to discuss FASD and how the FASD Respect Act can help update and coordinate their response across systems

[Click Here to Download and Get Started](#)



Preventing Costs, Supporting People: The Case for Investing in FASD

Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD) are a group of diagnosable medical conditions that can occur in individuals with exposure to alcohol before birth. Thankfully, early diagnosis and supports can protect against the costly adverse outcomes of this full-body, lifelong disability.



1 in 7 pregnancies are alcohol exposed ⁶

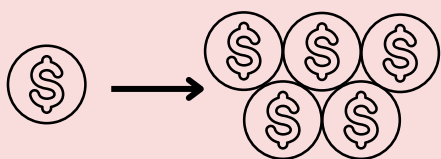
Alcohol exposure prior to recognition of pregnancy can lead to FASD. FASDs are not 100% preventable, but many costly outcomes are.



1 in 20 Americans estimated to have an FASD ⁵

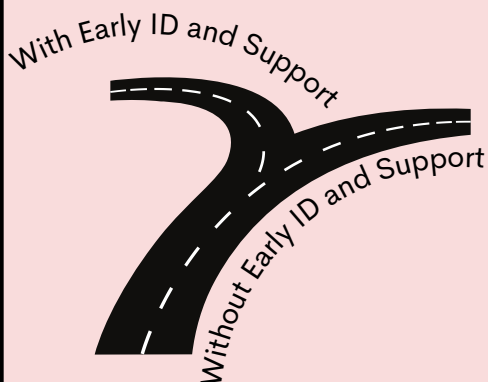
Cost Savings at All Levels

Pregnancy Support



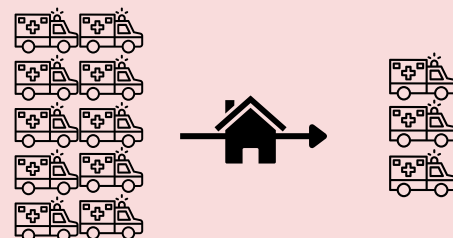
Alcohol screening & brief intervention during pregnancy returns \$4–\$5 for each \$1 invested ⁴

Early Identification and Support



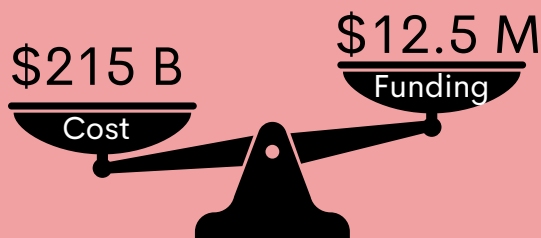
Early ID before age 6 = 2–4x less likely to experience costly adverse life outcomes ²⁰

Long-term Interventions



Sustained community supports, like supportive housing programs, can decrease dependence on costly emergency services ³⁴

The Price of Ignoring FASD

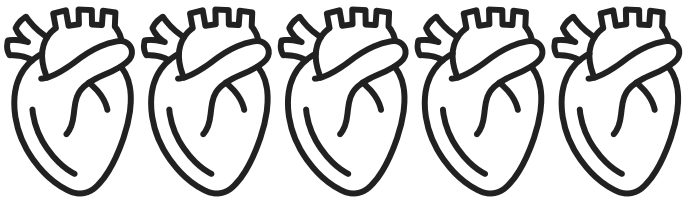


Annual Federal Funding for FASD Programs vs. Total U.S. Expenditures Associated with FASD ^{2,3}

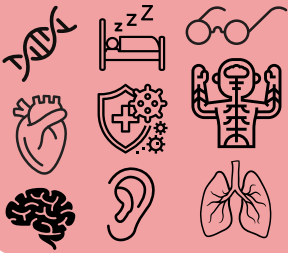


Annual cost between \$24–\$45K/person (amortized) ^{1,2}

Lifelong Disability, Lifelong Costs



People with FASD are 5x more likely to have congenital heart defects¹²



428 conditions affecting body and brain systems are known to co-occur with FASD¹⁰

82% of people prenatally exposed to alcohol have at least one co-occurring diagnosis¹¹



3–10x higher overall healthcare costs^{8,9}



Education plans costing 2–3x more than general education^{21, 22}



19x more likely to be incarcerated, costing \$35–\$60K/year/person²⁵



People with FASD face unemployment at rates of up to 80%²⁷

Building a Stronger Nation Must Include FASD Support

“

It is reasonable to conclude that PCAP has the potential for significant cost savings. However, cost savings alone do not capture the societal benefits of keeping parents with their children, improving family well-being, and supporting mothers...

Parent-Child Assistance Program Outcomes Suggest Sources of Cost Savings for Washington State, Produced by Casey Family Programs and the University of Washington for the University of Washington.

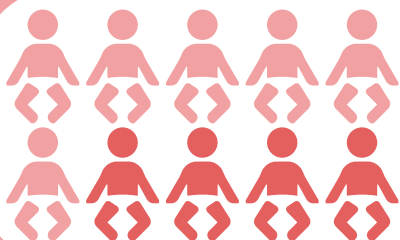
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A study found that **86.5%** of youth with FASD in child welfare had **never been diagnosed** or had been **misdiagnosed**²³

Early diagnosis and FASD-informed supports can improve outcomes throughout the lifespan and **reduce lifelong costs**



Universal alcohol screening and brief interventions in primary care reduce alcohol exposure 20–40%²⁸

Want Citations or More Information? Scan Here

