
AN ACT

To establish a Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities, to develop a comprehensive National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, to establish an Office of Persons with Disabilities to implement said policy, and for other related purposes.

THE PEOPLE OF PALAU REPRESENTED IN THE OLBIIL ERA KELULAU DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Legislative Findings. The Olbiil Era Kelulau finds that the Republic
2 of Palau needs a national policy on persons with disabilities to provide essential support
3 for persons with disabilities, create equal opportunities for persons with disabilities,
4 and help ensure that persons with disabilities in Palau live their lives to the maximum
5 extent of their individual potential. Persons with disabilities should be able to fully and
6 effectively participate in our society on an equal basis with others, with respect and
7 consideration of their inherent dignity, rights, and well-being. The Olbiil Era Kelulau
8 further finds that, according to the World Health Organization, 16 percent of the
9 global population has one or more disabilities, which if applied to Palau would equate
10 to over 2,800 persons. This large number of persons with disabilities in Palau demands
11 a comprehensive national policy so that each of these persons can make their own
12 contribution to our rich society. Accommodation of these persons will not only benefit
13 them, but benefit all of Palau. However, the current approach to handling these
14 challenges is fragmented across many government agencies. The establishment of an
15 office to oversee the implementation of a comprehensive policy will help the national
16 government to best serve these persons, and better provide accommodation for them
17 in the public sphere.

18 Section 2. Amendment. Title 21 of the Palau National Code is hereby amended
19 to add a new chapter as follows:

20 “Chapter 11

21 Persons with Disabilities

22 §1101. Establishment of Office of Persons with Disabilities.

23 §1102. Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities.

1 **§1103. National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.**

2 **§1104. Review of National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.**

3 **§1101. Establishment of Office of Persons with Disabilities.**

4 **(a) There is hereby established within the Ministry of Health and Human**
5 **Services an Office of Persons with Disabilities.**

6 **(b) The duties of the Office of Persons with Disabilities shall be:**

7 **(1) to develop programs and activities to implement the National Policy**
8 **on Persons with Disabilities required to be developed under this Chapter;**

9 **(2) to serve as the public-facing office for residents to access information**
10 **about programs and services available to persons with disabilities; and**

11 **(3) to supply data and policy recommendations to the Coordinating**
12 **Committee on Persons with Disabilities.**

13 **§1102. Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities.**

14 **(a) The Minister of Health and Human Services shall convene a Coordinating**
15 **Committee on Persons with Disabilities.**

16 **(b) The membership of the Coordinating Committee on Persons with**
17 **Disabilities shall be as follows:**

18 **(1) the Minister of Health and Human Services or his designee;**

19 **(2) the Minister of Justice or his designee;**

20 **(3) the Minister of Education or his designee;**

21 **(4) the Minister of Finance or his designee;**

22 **(5) the Social Security Administrator or his designee;**

23 **(6) a representative from an organization that advocates for or provides**
24 **services to persons with disabilities, appointed by the President of the Republic;**

25 **(7) a representative from an organization that represents the parents of**
26 **persons with disabilities, appointed by the President of the Republic;**

27 **(8) a representative from a religious or faith-based organization,**
28 **appointed by the President of the Republic;**

1 (9) a representative from the Governors Association, appointed by the
2 President of the Republic; and

3 (10) any other members added pursuant to subsection (g).

4 (c) The Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall have its first
5 meeting no later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Chapter. The
6 Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall adopt by-laws, procedures,
7 and meeting schedules as necessary and appropriate to effectuate the provisions of this
8 Chapter.

9 (d) The Chairperson of the Coordinating Committee on Persons with
10 Disabilities shall be the Minister of Health and Human Services or the Minister's
11 designee.

12 (e) Members of the Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall
13 serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for expenses, including travel
14 expenses, necessary for the performance of their duties. Members of the Coordinating
15 Committee on Persons with Disabilities who are not government employees shall
16 receive a stipend on days Committee business is performed, to be determined by the
17 Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities through its by-laws. Such stipend
18 shall not exceed fifty dollars (\$50) per day.

19 (f) The duties of the Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall
20 be as follows:

21 (1) to coordinate programs and services relating to persons with
22 disabilities, including all such programs and services provided by the
23 government and including such programs and services provided by non-
24 governmental organizations who choose to participate;

25 (2) to report on the progress of programs and services relating to persons
26 with disabilities in accordance with this Chapter;

27 (3) to develop, publish, and update the National Policy on Persons with
28 Disabilities in accordance with this Chapter;

1 (4) to recommend regulations related to persons with disabilities to the
2 Minister of Health and Human Services; and

3 (5) to recommend legislation related to persons with disabilities to the
4 Olbiil Era Kelulau.

5 (g) Additional members of the Coordinating Committee may be added if the
6 Coordinating Committee votes to request the President to appoint a new member, the
7 President appoints such member, and the Senate confirms such appointment.

8 §1103. National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.

9 (a) Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Chapter, the
10 Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall develop and publish a
11 National Policy on Persons with Disabilities in accordance with this Section. Such
12 policy shall be submitted to the President of the Republic of Palau and to the Olbiil Era
13 Kelulau.

14 (b) The Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall ensure that
15 the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities is responsive to the needs and rights of
16 persons with disabilities, and addresses the challenges faced by persons with
17 disabilities, and considers the following as they relate to and effect the population of
18 persons with disabilities:

19 (1) Palauan values and traditions of community support, family
20 inclusion, and cooperative initiatives;

21 (2) the wide variety of individual needs and rights of persons with
22 disabilities;

23 (3) the wide variety of individual capacities of persons with disabilities;

24 (4) health, education, and social services;

25 (5) the ability of persons with disabilities to participate economically and
26 equally in the Republic;

27 (6) environmental factors; and

1 (7) pre-conditions to disability inclusion, such as accessibility, assistive
2 devices and products, social protection, support services, community based
3 inclusive development, and non-discrimination.

4 (c) The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities shall be considered a rule
5 under Chapter 1 of Title 6 of the Palau National Code (the Administrative Procedure
6 Act).

7 §1104. Review of National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.

8 The Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities shall convene and
9 conduct a review of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities, its
10 implementation, and the needs and challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the
11 Republic of Palau, at a minimum of every two (2) years following the initial publication
12 of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities. The Coordinating Committee on
13 Persons with Disabilities shall provide a written report of its findings and the National
14 Policy on Persons with Disabilities, with any necessary amendments, to the President
15 of the Republic of Palau and to the Olbil Era Kelulau no later than 180 days after the
16 commencement of the review.”

17 Section 3. Amendment. Section 2655 of Title 40 of the Palau National Code is
18 hereby amended to add a new subsection (h) as follows:

19 “§ 2655. Allocation of tax revenues for healthcare-related and other costs.

20 ...

21 (h) For a period of two years from the date of the enactment of this subsection,
22 one percent (1%) of the annual revenues derived from the tax imposed on alcohol,
23 cigarettes and other tobacco products under this subchapter is hereby authorized and
24 appropriated to the Coordinating Committee on Persons with Disabilities established
25 by Chapter 11 of Title 21 for the purpose of initial start-up funding for the costs
26 associated with the initial development of, and subsequent reviews of, the National
27 Policy on Persons with Disabilities, and related duties . Such funds shall not lapse until
28 the date that is two years from the date of the enactment of this subsection

1 (i) For a period of two years from the date of the enactment of this subsection,
2 two percent (2%) of the annual revenues derived from the tax imposed on alcohol,
3 cigarettes and other tobacco products under this subchapter is hereby authorized and
4 appropriated to the Office on Persons with Disabilities for purposes of initial start-up
5 funding. Such funds shall not lapse until the date that is two years from the date of the
6 enactment of this subsection.”

7 Section 4. Effective date. This Act shall take effect upon its approval by the
8 President of the Republic of Palau, or upon becoming law without such approval.

Passed on: September 16, 2024

Approved this 30th day of September, 2024.



H. E. Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.
President, Republic of Palau