

Position Statement of the Role of Government in Disability Policy

The Arc Minnesota believes that the provision of services and supports for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities is a natural and necessary obligation of government at all levels in order to provide for their general welfare and protect their human and civil rights. Resources of the community must be used to ensure that individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities are able to enjoy the opportunities of community life on par with other community members.

Position Statement

The Arc Minnesota believes that the provision of services and supports for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities is a natural and necessary obligation of government at all levels. Resources of the community must be used to ensure that these individuals are able to enjoy the opportunities of community life on par with other community members. Inclusion, with the benefit of services and supports, and a commitment to support the quality of life for individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities must be priorities of government policy. A minimum standard of the protection of health and safety is not acceptable. The Arc Minnesota believes that it is the obligation of government to adequately plan for and provide resources to meet this standard of care.

The Arc Minnesota believes that government must provide an effective method to ensure the quality of supports and services provided to individuals with disabilities, including consumer involvement in the assessment process. The Arc Minnesota supports the creation of a statewide quality assurance program to monitor statewide services and supports.

The Arc Minnesota believes that the following general principles should be used to evaluate government policy decisions affecting individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities and the implementation of those decisions:

Consumer Direction

Policy implementation must be individualized. Decisions affecting an individual should be consumer-directed and based on facts, objective evidence, and state-of-the-art practices. Consumer direction is vital and should represent a true partnership of government resources with individual needs and preferences.

All programs and services should be provided in the most integrated setting appropriate for the individual's needs and preferences. The presumption must be that public programs should be provided in an inclusive setting with necessary supports. Inclusion is the appropriate standard in meeting the unique needs of all individuals. Administrative convenience is an unacceptable standard.

Full Participation

Individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities and their families must be involved in the policy decisions that affect them. The making of disability policy at all levels of government and administration must include real and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities and their families. Disability policies, practices, and procedures must provide for the empowerment of individuals and their families, based on principles of self-advocacy; person-centered planning; person-centered budgeting; self-determination; and real, informed choice.

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities should have the right to vote in elections at all levels of government, unless this right is specifically taken away by the courts.

Independent Living

Independent living for persons with developmental and other intellectual disabilities must be a goal for disability policy. Policies must foster independence rather than dependence and be based on individual needs, abilities, and preferences. If long-term services and supports are needed by an individual, those services and supports must be readily available, and the personnel providing those services should be adequately compensated.

Economic Self-Sufficiency

Economic self-sufficiency must be a goal of disability policy whenever possible. Meaningful employment-related services and supports must be available to individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities. These services and supports must be based on individual needs, abilities, and preferences. They should encourage individuals to be contributing members of their community and foster independence. Government policy should help people with intellectual and other developmental disabilities build a life of greater independence whenever possible that could result in less reliance on public support.

Issue

Policy decisions at the federal, state, and local level directly affect the quality of life of individuals with intellectual and other disabilities and their families. In addition, implementation decisions by administrative departments at all levels effectively determine the quality of services and supports enjoyed by these individuals and their families. Given the enormous power that government at all levels has over disability policy and implementation, the disability community must clearly articulate its criteria for evaluation of policy decisions and administrative action by governmental entities. The disability community must formulate principles and guidelines to evaluate disability policy and the ongoing design of a system of services and supports for individuals with disabilities.

*Approved by The Arc Minnesota Position Statements Task Force on June 10, 2011.
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