



Policy Priorities 2025–2026

Protecting and Enhancing Civil Rights

A Every person with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) has the right to self-determination, equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency, no matter their disability.

The Council will work to ensure civil rights, including identification and reduction of racial and ethnic inequalities and disparities are protected and enhanced and full implementation of state and federal policies, including but not limited to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Home and Community-Based Services Settings Rule, Every Student Succeeds Act and Achieving Better Life Experience Act.

Guaranteeing Access to Education and Employment

Every student with I/DD has the right to a quality inclusive education with their peers that prepares them for post-secondary education and/or competitive integrated employment (CIE). Students with disabilities must be provided the same learning opportunities, in the classroom and online, as students without disabilities.

Every person with I/DD should have the opportunity to be employed in CIE. Individuals must have access to information, benefits counseling, transition planning, job training, career exploration and information and support for inclusive post-secondary education. New or expanded pathways to CIE must be developed and supported, including apprenticeships and internships.

The Council will work to ensure the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Every Student Succeeds Act, and other federal and state policies to ensure that students with disabilities are provided the services and supports needed to receive quality inclusive education.

The Council will work to ensure the full and robust implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and California's Employment First Law, that policies and practices improve opportunities for and incentivize CIE, to create hiring incentives and supports for all employers and contractors and make the state a model employer.

Identifying & Prioritizing Emerging Issues in the I/DD Community

Every person with a developmental disability should not have to deal with problems that arise due to the emergence of inequality issues in the community. Events in our everyday lives, both due to policy changes and unforeseen events, have the ability to cause unintended consequences for the I/DD community. These issues must be identified and acted upon swiftly to ensure as little harm as possible is inflicted.

The Council will work to ensure any and all emerging issues, including but not limited to dealing with disparity across all I/DD issues, barriers to participating in a community setting, and roadblocks to access for people with I/DD, are dealt with through policy changes.

The Council will work to ensure the Self-Determination Ombudsperson program at the Department of Developmental Services uses its authority to ensure people with I/DD become successful participants in the Self-Determination Program.

Promoting Access to Quality Supports in the Community

Every person with I/DD should be able to fully participate in their communities. The ability to receive quality, individualized services, is the cornerstone for people with I/DD to be safe, healthy, and to promote self-determination, interdependence, and inclusion.

Community-based services/supports require adequate wages for providers; therefore, the state must restore rates. Disparities in access, outcomes, and quality of services and supports must be addressed, and complexities in the service delivery systems must be reduced.

The Council will work to continue to restore the Department of Developmental Services programs cut in 2009, to make meaningful improvements to the service delivery system to reduce disparities, increase transparency and accountability, and increase quality outcomes, support efforts to provide adequate wages to providers for inclusive and quality supports, and work to ensure successful implementation of the Self-Determination Program.

Ensuring Safety in the Community

Every person with I/DD has a right to be safe and must receive emergency preparedness training and training in personal safety. Law enforcement personnel, first responders, emergency medical professionals, and the judicial system must be trained in how to work with people with I/DD (including those who are suspects, victims or witnesses of crimes).

The Council will work to ensure people with I/DD are safe, free from abuse and neglect and have access to services and supports in their communities during all types of disasters or emergencies and an adequate safety net for people in crisis and access to adequate crisis intervention services.

Improving Housing and Community Living

Every person with I/DD should have the opportunity to live in the community. Permanent, affordable, accessible, safe, and sustained housing options must be continually developed. Statewide inclusive living options for individuals with I/DD must be increased and enhanced through access to housing and subsidies, paired promptly, with needed services and supports.

The Council will work to implement the policy recommendations in the Statewide Strategic Framework for Housing and create a dedicated housing fund to support integrated community housing for people with I/DD.

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