

Policy Platform 2026-27

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families have a right to exert control and choice over their own lives, play decision making roles in policies and programs, and be fully integrated into the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of California.¹ To advance these rights, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities declares these policy priorities.

PROTECTING AND ENHANCING CIVIL RIGHTS

Every person with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) 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, are protected, and enhanced, including identification and reduction of racial and ethnic inequalities and disparities, advocating for transparency in processes, and supporting persons with IDD and their families to participate in policy/systems change.

ENSURING FEDERAL POLICIES AND LAWS ADVANCE INCLUSION AND SELF-DETERMINATION

Federal law recognizes that individuals with developmental disabilities have the right to make informed choices and decisions about their own lives, live independently, and participate fully in their communities. Further, these values call for providing persons with IDD and their families with the information, skills, opportunities, and supports needed to pursue meaningful and productive lives; contribute to their families, communities, and the nation; and achieve full inclusion in society consistent with their unique strengths and abilities. Federal policies play a crucial role in ensuring robust, community-based systems of services and supports that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and inclusion.

The Council will work to ensure that information about federal policies and laws that have an impact on persons with IDD and their families is shared in plain language. The Council will also work to ensure that these federal efforts uphold the values of informed choice, independence, and full community participation for all persons with IDD and their families.

GUARANTEEING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Every student with IDD 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 opportunities for learning, in the classroom and online, as students without disabilities.

Every person with IDD 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 full and robust implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, California's Employment First Law, and the California Employment First Office. The Council will ensure that policies and practices improve opportunities for and incentivize CIE, encourage supports for employers, 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, can cause unintended consequences for the IDD 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 emerging issues including, but not limited to, dealing with disparities across all IDD issues, barriers to participating in a community setting, and roadblocks to access for people with IDD are dealt with through policy changes and by keeping the administration and lawmakers informed about issues.

PROMOTING ACCESS TO QUALITY SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Every person with IDD should have the ability to fully participate in their communities. Receiving quality, individualized services is the cornerstone for people with IDD 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. Complexities in the service delivery systems must be reduced.

The Council will make meaningful improvements to the service delivery system to reduce disparities, increase transparency and accountability and increase quality outcomes by making recommendations to the Master Plan on Developmental Services, and by ensuring successful implementation of the Self-Determination Program and Achieving Better Life Experience Act.

ENSURING SAFETY IN THE COMMUNITY

Every person with I/DD has a right to be safe and must be provided with 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 IDD (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. The Council will work to improve outcomes of law enforcement interactions with people with IDD.

IMPROVING HOUSING AND COMMUNITY LIVING

Every person with IDD 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 IDD must be increased and enhanced through access to housing and subsidies that are paired in a timely manner with needed services and supports.

The Council will work to identify housing resources for persons with IDD and their families to prevent homelessness and advocate for availability of accessible and affordable housing.