



CA STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

WORKING TO MAKE CALIFORNIA THE BEST PLACE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR FAMILIES

POLICY PLATFORM 2027-2031

People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families have a right to exert control and choice over their own lives, hold decision-making roles in policies and programs, and be fully integrated into the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of California.¹

Guided by our core values of self-determination, independence, productivity, integration, inclusion, advocacy, protection, and quality of life, the State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) removes barriers, strengthens systems, and expands opportunities so people with I/DD can live, work, and thrive in their communities. We work to make California the best place for people with I/DD and their families through advocacy, capacity-building, and systems change.

SCDD's State Plan provides a five-year roadmap, identifying the goals, objectives, and activities to advance meaningful change across California's systems of services and supports in partnership with people with I/DD and their families. This Policy Platform complements the State Plan by translating SCDD's values, priorities, and legal principles into a public policy framework that guides our advocacy, education, partnerships, and engagement with state and federal decision-makers:

PROTECT AND ENHANCE CIVIL RIGHTS

Federal and state laws, including but not limited to the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, affirm that people with I/DD have the right to equality of opportunity, self-determination, full participation, independent living, and freedom from discrimination in all areas of life.

For people with I/DD, these civil rights ensure protection from discrimination and unequal treatment across all areas of life, including but not limited to education, employment, housing, health care, public services, and community life, and require that systems provide equal access, reasonable accommodation, and meaningful opportunities for participation and decision-making.

¹ Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, (Public Law 106-402; 42 U.S.C. Sec. 15001 et seq.) Section 101

SCDD will advance civil rights by promoting equity across systems, identifying and addressing disparities and discriminatory practices, and ensuring meaningful participation of people with I/DD and their families in policy development and systems change.

GUARANTEE ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provide students with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education, including access to inclusive educational opportunities, individualized supports, and full participation in school programs that promote independence, self-determination, and lifelong success.

For students with I/DD, this means receiving the supports needed to learn alongside typically developing peers, to access and benefit from their education, and to be prepared for further education, employment, and independent living.

SCDD will identify and address systemic barriers in educational systems to ensure students with I/DD have equal access to an appropriate, inclusive education.

REMOVE BARRIERS TO EQUAL EMPLOYMENT

Federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, affirm the right of people with I/DD to equal opportunity in employment, including access to competitive integrated employment, reasonable accommodations, and supports necessary to obtain and maintain meaningful work.

Employment provides opportunities for economic self-sufficiency, independence, community inclusion, and career growth. Access to competitive integrated employment enables individuals to earn fair wages, build meaningful relationships, contribute their talents, and pursue personal and professional goals.

SCDD will advance policies and systems-change efforts that expand access to competitive integrated employment, reduce barriers to workforce participation, and increase opportunities for people with I/DD to obtain and retain meaningful employment.

PROMOTE ACCESS TO QUALITY SERVICES AND SUPPORTS IN THE COMMUNITY

Federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, and California's Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) framework, establish the right of people with I/DD to receive the services and supports necessary to live, learn, and work in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs.

Access to services and supports such as in-home assistance, personal care, transportation, assistive technology, and other community-based services is essential to living independently and participating fully in community life. These supports make it possible to exercise choice, maintain health and safety, and be included in the community. These supports reduce reliance on costly institutional models of care that can separate people from family, community, and everyday life.

SCDD will advocate for policies that expand, strengthen, and improve access to high-quality, person-centered services and supports, reduce barriers to eligibility and delivery, and ensure that services are responsive to the needs and choices of people with I/DD and their families.

IMPROVE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Medicaid requirements, ensure that people with I/DD have the right to equal access to health care services, reasonable accommodations, and care without discrimination.

For people with I/DD this means having access to affordable, accessible, and coordinated health care that meets both physical, behavioral, and specialty health needs, with providers who are trained to support disability-related needs, and in health care settings that are equipped to serve patients with disabilities. Access to quality health care is essential to maintaining health, preventing avoidable complications, and supporting independence and community participation.

SCDD will advocate for policies that improve access to equitable, high-quality, and coordinated health care for people with I/DD, address disparities in care, and promote systems that are responsive to the needs and preferences of individuals and their families.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

People with I/DD have the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and discrimination and to receive the supports necessary to live safely and fully participate in their communities, consistent with the protections afforded by the California Constitution, the Lanterman Act, and federal disability rights laws. Public safety requires disability-informed law enforcement and first responders, emergency planning, communication, evacuation, shelter, recovery, and continuity of essential services and supports.

This means having accessible environments, services, and supports that prevent harm, respect personal autonomy, and ensure that safety concerns are identified and addressed promptly. It also means having a voice in decisions that affect personal safety and emergency preparedness, and access to protections when harm, risk, disaster, or service disruption occurs.

SCDD will advocate for policies that advance public safety and emergency response for people with I/DD and their families. SCDD will work to improve public safety and emergency preparedness for people with I/DD and their families by identifying emerging concerns, providing training and other capacity-building, promoting accessible and inclusive emergency planning, supporting continuity of essential services and supports, and ensuring meaningful inclusion of people with I/DD and their families in the development of policies, programs, and solutions that affect them. This includes advancing flexible, person-centered approaches when traditional service models do not meet a person's needs or are insufficient to support safety, autonomy, emergency response, recovery, and community inclusion.

IMPROVE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY LIVING

People with I/DD, like all people with disabilities, have the right to live in the community of their choice. Federal law, including the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Supreme Court's decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*, recognizes that people with disabilities have a right to receive services in integrated community settings. California law further affirms that people with I/DD are entitled to live with the services and supports they need in the least restrictive and most integrated setting appropriate to their needs and preferences.

Community living depends on access to affordable, accessible, safe, and inclusive housing, together with the services and supports necessary to remain connected to family, community, work, school, and everyday life. Housing policy should expand integrated, community-based housing opportunities that allow people with I/DD to

choose where and with whom they live, exercise autonomy, and fully participate in community life.

SCDD will advocate for policies and engage in systems-change efforts that expand affordable, accessible, and inclusive housing opportunities, reduce barriers to community living, and promote the services and supports necessary for people with I/DD to live in the community of their choice.

RESPOND TO EMERGING ISSUES

People with I/DD and their families are affected by changing laws, policies, budgets, programs, technologies, emergencies, and social conditions that may create new opportunities, barriers, or risks. SCDD must be able to respond to emerging issues that affect the rights, services, supports, safety, inclusion, and quality of life of people with I/DD and their families.

Emerging issues may arise across any system that affects people with I/DD, including education, employment, housing, health care, community services, civil rights, public safety, emergency preparedness, transportation, technology, and state or federal policy. These issues may require timely analysis, public education, policy engagement, partnerships, training, technical assistance, or systems-change activities.

Consistent with the State Plan, this Policy Platform, and SCDD's core values, SCDD may identify, monitor, analyze, and respond to emerging issues as they arise. This authority includes undertaking activities necessary to protect rights, address barriers, improve services and supports, and advance self-determination, independence, integration, inclusion, and quality of life for people with I/DD and their families.

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