Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities
Commission Meeting
September 22, 2021 | 10:00am – 11:30am

Values Statement

The following values statements are from *Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities*, published in 2017 by the Council of State Governments (CGS) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL).

We will discuss strengths of these, how they can be strengthened, and any additional statements suggested by the membership.

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience that in no way diminishes one's right to fully participate in all aspects of community life.
    - As such, state disability policy should consider support of the following four goals:
        - Equal opportunity, including treating people with disabilities as individuals, making assessments based on facts, objective evidence and science, and providing effective and meaningful experiences in the most integrated setting appropriate.
        - Full participation in society, including engagement of people with disabilities in relevant decision-making at the individual and systems levels, self-determination, self-advocacy and informed choice.
        - Economic self-sufficiency, including employment-related services and supports, financial literacy, entrepreneurship and work incentives.
        - Independent living, including skills development and long-term services and supports.

- Disability can develop at any point during an individual's lifetime and have varying impacts.
    - As such, state agencies should ensure service delivery is relevant at all ages, is inclusive of all types of disabilities, and maximizes the strengths and abilities of the individual. States should also consider providing a centralized systems navigation process so that people with disabilities and their families have a place to ask questions and get answers about rights, responsibilities, services and supports.

- Successful disability policy embraces the "nothing about us without us" principle.
    - Individuals with disabilities, alongside families, advocates and champions from agencies, education, business and communities, should be engaged throughout the policymaking process at all levels. This includes increasing the actual participation of people with disabilities at the highest levels of state government.

- People with disabilities are underutilized in our workforce and frequently experience social and economic disadvantage.
    - There is strong rationale for including people with disabilities in public policy efforts targeting other under-represented groups like veterans, women and minorities.

- People with disabilities have valuable and unique contributions to make.
    - State disability employment initiatives have the best chance at success when employers are motivated to hire people with disabilities not because they have to or because it's the right thing to do, but because they recognize that disability inclusion helps boost the bottom line through increased innovation, creativity and productivity.