



Policy Platform

Working in Coalition to create a society that values, supports and includes people with disabilities.

www.tndisability.org



Policy Areas

04

Civil Rights

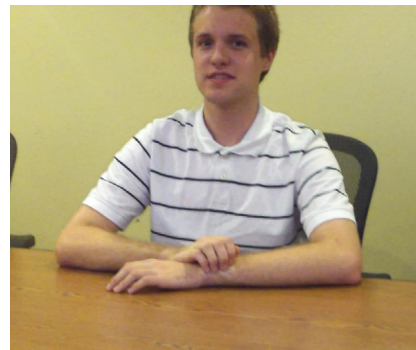


06

Education

07

Employment



08

Health Care

10

Transportation
and Housing



11

Long-Term
Supports and
Services



The Tennessee Disability Coalition supports public policies that promote equal opportunity, economic self-sufficiency and independent living for children, youth and adults with disabilities.

Civil Rights

Access to civic life is a fundamental part of American society. The rights of persons with disabilities are as important as those of our peers. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities and represents a foundation on which we continue to build new opportunities for our community.

The Coalition supports public policies that advance:

- Understanding and acceptance of disability and a whole view of individuals beyond disability.
- Integrated communities that support individuals with disabilities and welcome our contributions.
- Availability of resources for individuals with disabilities so that we can be as independent as possible in our communities.
- Protections for individuals with disabilities to vote privately, independently, and in the way that we want.
- Access for individuals with disabilities to take an active role in civic and political life.
- Access to the physical environment, including "complete streets" that enable safe use for all people and through all modes of transportation.
- Effective communication across all media, including through cable and the internet.



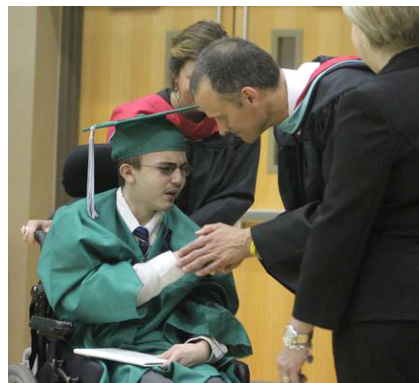
Education

Every child should have access to an education that prepares him or her for positive long-term outcomes including gainful employment and meaningful community involvement.



The Coalition supports public policies that advance:

- Early intervention services for children with delays and disabilities as young as possible.
- Equal access to the general education environment and curriculum.
- Safe, inclusive classrooms that put the student first.
- Parent-professional relationships with quality, regular communication.
- An IEP and 504 process that engages all stakeholders at the table.
- Protections for students to access the special education services they need in all education reform initiatives.
- Protections for students from improper discipline, restraint and isolation practices.
- Higher expectations for student outcomes and accountability for our schools to get them there.
- Services for students who are transitioning from school to a career or additional studies.
- Opportunities for post-secondary education and training.



Employment

Only 27% of Tennesseans with disabilities are in the labor force. There are more than half-a-million working-age adults with disabilities in Tennessee who CAN work and WANT to work.



The Coalition supports public policies that advance:

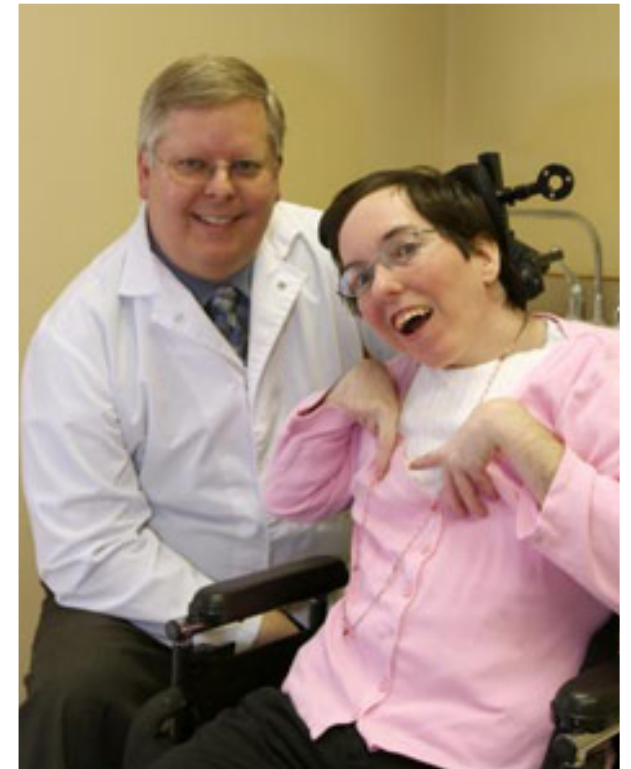
- Competitive, integrated employment options for people with disabilities.
- Coordination between agencies that provide training and employment supports.
- The "Employment First" Initiative assisting the state of Tennessee to align policies, regulations and funding priorities to encourage integrated employment as the primary outcome for individuals with significant disabilities.
- Benefits planning and awareness for youth as they transition from school to a career or additional studies.
- Protections for workers who experience a disability to retain employment.

Health Care

Good health is the foundation on which we build our personal, civic, and work lives. Individuals with disabilities typically experience higher than average health care needs. Higher than average health care costs often become barriers in our lives.

The Coalition supports public policies that advance:

- 100% health care coverage for all Tennesseans.
- Early screening and detection for all children.
- Barrier-free access to quality, affordable behavioral and physical health care and specialized services for all Tennesseans.
- Person and family-centered care and the medical home model.
- Data-driven outcomes and transparent systems of care.
- Protections for individuals with disabilities during vulnerable times including end of life decision-making.





Transportation and Housing

Individuals with disabilities need accessible, reliable transportation to find and maintain employment and coordinate health care. Our ability to participate fully in our community is often hindered by lack of access to transportation.

We need safe, accessible, affordable housing options like anyone else.

The Coalition supports public policies that advance:

- Options for safe, accessible, affordable and responsive transportation across urban and rural Tennessee.
- Options for safe, accessible, affordable housing.
- Universal housing design and visitability to allow all people to access the homes of our neighbors, friends and family.

Long-Term Supports and Services

Forty percent of Tennesseans who need long-term supports and services are under age 65. People with disabilities often need long-term services and supports to assist us in activities of daily living and help us live as independently as possible.

The Coalition supports public policies that advance:

- Quality, integrated, home- and community-based service options available for all individuals with disabilities who need them.
- Individually driven programs that are sufficient in scope and flexibility to maintain recipients' health, security and independence.
- Programs that enhance natural supports without overburdening them.
- Protections for the rights, autonomy and choices of the individual receiving services.
- Expanding eligibility and services through existing programs that work, including CHOICES, Employment and Community First CHOICES and the Family Support Program.
- Qualified, adequate workforce of direct support professionals and service providers with fair pay.
- Adapting Tennessee's system of care to provide services to more people, improve the quality of services and deliver them in a more efficient manner.
- Accountability through performance measures, contract monitoring and enforcement and transparency through public reporting.



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