

"To keep the promise of the American with Disabilities Act, we must create, enact and implement an expanded, comprehensive Rehabilitation Act. Our first priority is to develop an already good, but incomplete Act into a comprehensive process through which all people with disabilities will empower themselves to participate fully in the mainstream of our culture."

Justin Dart, Chair, President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities

We must have an Act that promotes the social and economic independence of people with disabilities as lifelong members of the community.

A m e r i c a n s w i t h D i s a b i l i t i e s

**F O R
C H A N G E**

Call for a New ACT with Purpose and Values Matched to the Scope and Integrity of the Americans with Disabilities Act!



We need a new Rehabilitation ACT with a much broader view of what has been called "rehabilitation." The ACT must eliminate the archaic requirements of dehumanizing medical labelling, program segregation, low expectations with exclusionary code word "feasibility," and the closure "success" criteria of short term, entry level, dead end job placements.

The New Rehabilitation ACT must have a new name, a preamble and 4 main value based, policy foundations:

1. Career Development First

Assist individuals to choose, build and change careers.

2. Personal Empowerment & Build Community

Create a response to the individual's choices of career, employment, and independence minimizing economic and professional dependency.

3. Youth as a Priority

Early intervention, personalized career planning with friends and family, imaginative programming for integrated peer support. Simplify access to and coordinate all school, health and social services as well as community resources.

4. Life Long, Sustainable Technology and Personal Assistance

Ensure personally planned, continually anticipated, fully financed, adaptable, responsive and accessible human supports and adaptive equipment and technology.

Each person's plan for the future should be based on self-determination and lead to satisfaction. The plan should draw on support from family and friends. The system must draw from the individual's own plan and build on each person's strengths and capabilities in creating a career path that is responsive to that plan.

The new ACT must assist people to get jobs, but more importantly, to build careers. The life long process of creating a self-satisfying career and life begins with education. The new ACT should include and extend benefits to youth with disabilities and focus on their building and determining their own future.

The ACT must recognize that people are empowered by having choices, and making their own informed decisions about the future. This means assisting people to learn about the options, services and new technologies that are available, not only to people with disabilities, but to all people. It means that the services available to everyone in the community must be accessible to people with disabilities.

People need access to what exists. And, the system must be able to create new supports that better help individuals achieve their goals. There must be a match between services and technologies, and the person's plan. If there is, careers will be sustained, people will live more independently, and the community will receive the benefits of the work and lives of people with disabilities.

To achieve this new purpose:

1. The ACT must contain a preamble which spells out the values and principles of integrated, independent living and careers; reflect the principles of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and reinforce the full civil rights of all people with disabilities.
2. The ACT must remove barriers to employment and career development; eliminate the deficit-based medical model; and end eligibility criteria based "feasibility/employability."
3. The ACT must direct new resources to integrated career options, and redirect existing funds toward the same goal.
4. Personnel must be trained to assist individuals to make and act on their own choices; know about and use services available to everyone in the community; and help communities to organize themselves to ensure full access by and the acceptance of people with disabilities.
5. Youth with disabilities must be included in the services and benefits of the ACT to assure full integration into community life and smooth transition from school into post-school activities.
6. The ACT must include entitlement to technology and related supports as long as needed.
7. Support, assistance, and services must be defined to include "whatever it takes" to accomplish goals for a meaningful career.
8. Eligible services must be seen as those services which are defined by the individual's plan. Those services should enable the community and its services to meet individual needs; be accessible lifelong; and include, but not be limited to personal assistance services, assistive technology, personal and co-worker support, training, counseling, and transportation and other support necessary to maintain the individual's career goals.
9. The ACT must establish new State entities to: a) plan and coordinate all services funded under the ACT; b) identify duplication and gaps in services; c) provide input and review policy development, state programs, and independent living state plans; d) centralize intake and referral; e) collect and analyze data and report trends; and f) build accountability to the citizens.

WHAT YOU CAN DO...!

Write your representative and demand that the new ACT be passed. Write your representative and demand that the new ACT be passed. Write your representative and demand that the new ACT be passed. Write your representative and demand that the new ACT be passed. Write your representative and demand that the new ACT be passed.

WHAT NEXT?

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DEMAND!

A Rehabilitation ACT that is truly responsive to the lives and dreams of people with disabilities.



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**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
is a major step towards profound change in
our nation's approach to people with disabilities.**

IT'S NOT ENOUGH!

"If the ADA was the legislation that opened the door of opportunity for persons with disabilities, then the Rehabilitation Act is the legislation that must prepare persons with disabilities to proceed through that door."

- Sandy Parrino, Chair, National Council on Disability

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