

Advocacy

Organizations make a valuable contribution to the development of law, regulation, and policy related to disability services. They take an active leadership role in communicating the unique perspective of direct service providers. Establishing an advocacy-oriented perspective can be a challenge. Organizations should encourage staff to seek out and/or act on opportunities to engage in advocacy efforts that enhance quality of life for people with disabilities.

Quality in Practice

- Evaluate the need for public information and education related to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Ensure that community members and leaders have the information that they need to make informed decisions regarding availability, adequacy and accessibility of services, when a need is identified.
- Join people with disabilities, their families, and other local, state, and national community partners in proactive efforts to ensure passage and implementation of applicable laws and regulations.
- Work together to develop of a full array of necessary and appropriate supports, accommodations, and services for people with disabilities and families, including educational, medical, employment, economic, housing, transportation, legal, and other services.
- Promote inter-organization initiatives designed to identify gaps in services and share resources.
- Maintain membership in advocacy groups or associations dedicated to serving people with disabilities who share your interests and priorities.
- Ensure that people with disabilities receive necessary support in their individual advocacy efforts.
- Link people to advocacy efforts and to advocacy organizations.
- Establish formal and informal mechanisms for staff members and people served to raise concerns or complaints.
- Link people to legal resources that can assist them in making complaints outside of the organization's internal complaint and grievance process, if necessary.
- Adopt a philosophy that all people with disabilities enjoy equal status to other people and make an organizational commitment to make that a reality.