



Linking Employment, Abilities and Potential

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PUBLIC POLICY, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Lack of access to information and assistance related to long-term care, income supports, housing, transportation, health care, personal care assistance, and assistive technology can prevent individuals from achieving independence in one or more significant life areas. LEAP works to implement local, state, and federal policies to make facilities, services, and opportunities available, affordable, and accessible to individuals with disabilities. The goal of Public Policy, Education and Advocacy is to increase the availability and improve the quality of community options for individuals with significant disabilities and to conduct activities that increase the capacity of communities to meet the needs of those individuals.

PUBLIC POLICY

GOAL: To improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their family members through strengthened public policies for equal access

SERVICES

LEAP's Public Policy work focuses on policies and practices affecting people with disabilities. We do this by:

- Advocating for legislation and policy changes on the local, state, and national levels to create equal opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as improved public awareness of the concerns and needs of people with disabilities
- Sponsoring activities and training sessions for community members who want to help educate policy makers and the general public about these issues
- Encouraging others to take action by distributing legislative updates and alerts and by sponsoring advocacy training, visits to legislators, and educational events
- Collaborating and networking with coalitions and partnerships to expand the participation of people with disabilities in their communities

LEAP reviews and selects its advocacy priorities annually. Specific areas of concern include civil rights, voting rights, employment, education, housing, public transportation, independent living, health care, long-term-care services and supports, and the role of government and public funding in public policy.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

GOAL: To create a person-centered, community-based environment that promotes independence and dignity for individuals with disabilities

SERVICES

Public Education provides technical assistance and training on accessibility and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act for businesses, government agencies, schools, and public accommodations. It also provides training on home and community-based services and supports, including

- Accessibility studies
- Independent living history and philosophy
- Disability awareness and sensitivity training
- Access to services such as long-term-care options counseling, disability benefits assistance, personal care assistance, home modifications and assistive technology, consumer-directed care, advocacy, and self-advocacy
- Disability legislative history
- Disability rights law, including the following laws: the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, Section 504, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Fair Housing Act as amended, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Olmstead v. L.C.*

Other topics include such issues as Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, nursing home transition, advocacy, emergency preparedness, and school-to-work transition.

Community Access, Education and Outreach: enhancing public awareness of disability and disability issues, programs and policies; and offering technical assistance to advance local, state and federal policy to make facilities, services, programs and opportunities available and accessible

ADVOCACY

GOAL: To advance public policy and systems advocacy priorities in order to tackle unmet needs or deal with emerging needs in the community in the areas of:

- Home and Community-Based Services
- Employment Opportunities
- Access to Benefits and Resources
- Equity and Nondiscrimination
- Collaborating and Networking: building coalitions or collaborative partnerships designed to expand the participation of persons with significant disabilities in the community and participating with others who share our mission to affect change.

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