



## **ACCSES Public Policy Priorities for 2009**

**Consistent with our Mission, Vision, and Values, ACCSES will direct its advocacy activities toward specific goals for each of our priority areas. While we are ready to react to our federal government's legislative and regulatory proposals, our posture is to be proactive and collaborative in working with government and other advocacy and service organizations on our priority issues.**

**And, in these difficult financial times, we are particularly cognizant of the disproportionate and adverse impact this has on people with disabilities in the employment, health and independence areas and the stress placed on our valued Members to deliver necessary services and supports.**

### **I. Employment**

#### **A. Positions**

- Meaningful employment opportunities shall be available for all people with disabilities who desire to work.
- Public policy shall aggressively encourage employers to hire and accommodate people with disabilities in regular work settings.
- Government shall not eliminate an employment program unless and until there is a meaningful and appropriate alternative to accommodate the employment needs of individuals with disabilities served under that program.
- Public policy shall facilitate appropriate training and accommodations for competitive employment.
- Government shall not eliminate individual's choice for employment.
- Government shall ensure all forms of employment, including facility-based employment, are recognized as offering meaningful job opportunities for people with disabilities.

#### **B. Agenda**

- **On the WIA/Rehab Act, ACCSES shall:**
  - Work to encourage the reauthorization of the Rehab Act during this Congress;

- Work with Congress to ensure dedicated and adequate funding streams in all employment programs and continued separation between WIA/Rehab Act programs;
  - Promote physical and programmatic accessibility to WIA/Rehab Act programs; and
  - Advocate for increased funding and improvements to employment transitional services in all programs.
- **On the AbilityOne Program, ACCSES shall:**
    - Champion the original legislative intent of the JWOD Act to assist people with severe disabilities who are otherwise unable to work in the community;
    - Advocate for the inclusion in the Federal Acquisition Regulations the “poaching agreement” regarding Randolph Sheppard and Ability One Providers;
    - Work to protect Ability One contracts on military bases for services (such as dining hall, janitorial and landscaping) by opposing encroachment efforts by Moral, Welfare and Recreation (MWR);
    - Promote the right of nonprofits participating in the AbilityOne program to independently govern themselves;
    - Actively participate as members of the QWE initiative steering group to ensure that the Initiative encourages and facilitates the adoption of best practices consistent with ACCSES’ stated positions; and
    - Promote the JWOD Modernization bill to the extent that the legislation is consistent with ACCSES positions.
  - **ACCSES shall support federal procurement and other incentives that increase meaningful employment opportunities for people with disabilities.**
  - **ACCSES shall monitor the Ticket to Work Advisory Panel Recommendations.**
  - **ACCSES shall also monitor issues that impact its members in terms of their businesses and organizations including:**
    - **FICA taxes; and**
    - **Minimum wage.**
  - **ACCSES strongly favors the continuation of the 14(c) program and the enforcement of regulations preventing misuse of the program.**
    - ACCSES shall support fair wages for workers with disabilities and will work with other organizations to insure full compliance with the law
    - ACCSES shall monitor enforcement of the laws by the US Department of Labor
    - ACCSES shall monitor Congressional action on wage and hour laws and enforcement and will respond as appropriate.

## II. Health

### A. Positions

- Healthcare reform shall address the unique and general needs of all citizens with disabilities, and should afford commensurate healthcare between people with and without disabilities.
- Healthcare shall include the full array of services necessary to maintain function and independent living, not simply serve acute healthcare needs.
- The bias in healthcare shall be toward home and community based care rather than institutional care with access to service delivery programs.
- Long term services and supports should be incorporated into healthcare reform.
- People with disabilities shall have access to health care practitioners who understand their unique needs and challenges.

### B. Agenda

- **ACCSES will promote universal healthcare coverage that fully and equally includes people with disabilities;**
- **ACCSES shall monitor and support efforts to increase the availability, accessibility, and safety of quality private health care coverage and ensure that a basic benefit package in healthcare reform efforts include services for individuals with disabilities, such as: DME, orthotics and prosthetics, etc;**
- **ACCSES shall work with Congress and the Administration to ensure access to and availability of the full scope of Medicaid disability services, including community-based rehabilitation and habilitation services;**
- **ACCSES shall work to secure adequate federal funding for disability-related services provided under Medicaid, SCHIP and other programs;**
- **ACCSES shall promote independent, community living through Medicaid state options and waivers (including 'Money Follows the Person' demonstration grants) emphasizing the importance of consumer choice; and shall promote the enactment of legislation such as the Community Choice Act and CLASS Act;**
- **ACCSES shall work to secure the funding and acceptance of Medicaid buy-in programs by states;**
- **ACCSES will seek to address ongoing workforce shortages, particularly direct support professionals, in the disability services sector; and**
- **ACCSES believes Medicare should continue to eliminate barriers for people with disabilities including barriers such as the Medicare two year waiting period, the in the home exclusion, therapy caps and the restriction on the availability of Medigap for individuals below the age 65.**

## III. Education

**A. Positions**

- Education programs shall be flexible to ensure success with the diverse and complicated needs of students with disabilities.
- Federal financial support for special education shall fully fund the mandated requirements.
- Goal planning for each student shall include an effective transition to adulthood, secondary education, and/or meaningful employment.
- Early childhood programs under IDEA shall be based upon child development principles, with a strong family component.

**B. Agenda**

- **ACCSES shall promote the protection of “due process” procedures under IDEA;**
- **ACCSES shall work with Congress and the Administration to promote early intervention for children with disabilities;**
- **ACCSES shall support the enhancement of parent training, advocacy, mentoring, and resource programs;**
- **ACCSES shall support federal grant programs that focus on transitional services and work with Congressional staff to ensure that transition services have a separate line-item in appropriations bills;**
- **ACCSES shall support the strengthening of linkages between federal, state and local programs to provide effective, ongoing services and supports; and**
- **ACCSES shall advocate for full federal funding for IDEA.**

**IV. Independence**

**A. Position**

- All federal policy shall support the rights of people with disabilities to make individual choices that affect their lives.
- The federal government shall continue to have a strong role in assuring and funding residential supports for people with disabilities.
- The federal government shall help to assure long term services and supports for people with disabilities.
- To assure that opportunities for individuals with disabilities can live safely in their homes and with dignity in the community the federal government will maintain funding for Home and Community Based Services.
- All people with disabilities shall have the opportunity to participate in their community through meaningful daily activities that promote learning and independence.
- Assistive technology shall be made available for people with disabilities.
- There shall be accessible and safe transportation available for individuals with disabilities.

**B. Agenda**

- **ACCSES shall support the enforcement of civil rights legislation to eliminate discrimination based on disability;**
- **ACCSES shall support the adoption of civil rights legislation to remedy discrimination based on disability;**
- **ACCSES shall coordinate with other organizations to support paratransit and other mechanisms to ensure appropriate transportation services to people with disabilities;**
- **ACCSES shall work with the ITEM Coalition to attempt to expand coverage for assistive devices for people with disabilities;**
- **ACCSES shall support efforts to preserve and expand housing opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the least restrictive and most integrated environment possible;**
- **ACCSES shall support enactment of the Community Choice Act in order to remove the institutional bias under Medicaid in favor of home-and-community-based services; and**
- **ACCSES will seek to address ongoing workforce shortages, particularly direct support professionals, particularly in the disability services sector.**

**V. Member Organizational Issues**

- **ACCSES shall publish a statement of governance and statement of ethical conduct approved by members;**
- **ACCSES shall also monitor and respond as appropriate to issues that impact its members in terms of their businesses and organizations including:**
  - **Non-profit legislation and IRS regulations;**
- **ACCSES will support coalitions and other organizations dealing with legislative and regulatory matters affecting ACCSES member organizations; and**
- **ACCSES will help members develop relationships with key influencers at the national and local levels.**

These “organizational issues” are important to monitor because thriving organizations that are in compliance with federal regulations are able to provide quality care to individuals with disabilities.