

# THE DISABILITY COALITION

## *Advocating for People with Disabilities of All Types*

### **What is the Coalition?**

The Disability Coalition is a cross-disability coalition of organizations that represent and advocate for the needs and interests of persons with disabilities. Although the Coalition often finds common ground with agencies that provide direct services, the Coalition intentionally reflects only the perspective of persons with disabilities. The current members of the Coalition include The Arc of New Mexico, NM Developmental Disabilities Council, Disability Rights New Mexico, Independent Living Resource Center, and New Vistas. All member organizations are committed to promoting the rights and the needs of all persons with disabilities rather than a focus on any one disability group.

### **Purpose and Focus of the Coalition**

The purpose of the Coalition is to promote a collaborative and coordinated approach to public policy issues affecting persons with disabilities, such as home and community-based services, health care, employment, education, and other relevant subjects. Based on common interests and perspectives, the Coalition can communicate a consistent message to policy-makers. However, the Coalition's efforts do not and are not intended to replace or override any separate or additional efforts by members of the Coalition.

### **Public Policy Work**

The Coalition works to influence public policy by developing educational materials, analyzing legislative or administrative proposals, developing its own proposals, and educating policy-makers with respect to current programs as well as options or proposals being considered. This may be done through Coalition participants as well as Coalition staff.

### **Communication and Outreach**

The Coalition is committed to empowering and engaging individuals in the disability community. We provide information regarding developments and issues of interest, and alert the community to opportunities to influence public policy related to these issues, encouraging input and testimony that reflects the "consumer" perspective on such matters. This includes regular reports on the status of disability-related bills and memorials considered by the Legislature. Information from the Coalition is distributed statewide to individuals with disabilities, family members, advocates and other interested individuals. The distribution list is open to anyone with an interest in disability issues, and the Coalition encourages further dissemination of such information.

### **Sponsored Events**

The Disability Coalition sponsors or coordinates training and action-oriented events intended to inform participants and encourage involvement in the public policy process. The Coalition's premier event is Disability Rights Awareness Days (DRAD). This includes a pre-legislative-session forum, which is held near the beginning of each year's legislative session, to provide information about current issues affecting the disability community and a review of disability-related issues likely to be addressed during the upcoming legislative session. DRAD also includes a Roundhouse Day, which provides an opportunity for persons with disabilities and supporters to gather at the State Capitol to connect with each other and engage in the legislative process, and for disability-related organizations to explain their work through exhibit tables in the capitol while the Legislature is in session.

### **Administration and Funding**

The Coalition is funded through a grant from the Developmental Disabilities Council as well as additional funding and support from the member organizations.

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### Organizational Members, Representatives and Staff

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