
Principles: Community Integration

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BACKGROUND

In *Olmstead v. L.C.*, the United States Supreme Court held that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all public entities to refrain from discrimination and explicitly identifies unjustified segregation of people with disabilities as a form of discrimination. The Court recognized that unnecessary institutionalization “perpetuates unwarranted assumptions that persons so isolated are incapable or unworthy of participating in community life.” In addition, the Court said, “confinement in an institution severely diminishes the everyday life activities of individuals, including family relations, social contacts, work options, economic independence, educational advancement, and cultural enrichment.”

Disability Rights California concurs with the ADA’s integration mandate and adopts the following principles to guide its advocacy in support of the fundamental human and civil right of people with disabilities to integration and participation in all aspects of community life.

PRINCIPLES

1. The right to live in integrated community settings is a fundamental right of all people, including people with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities.

2. People living in institutional or other segregated settings retain their right to participate in community and family life and are entitled to support and encouragement in exercising this right.
3. Policies and practices of state and local governmental agencies should support the right of all people with disabilities to live, work, recreate, socialize, and receive publicly supported, culturally-competent services in the most integrated community settings appropriate.
4. State and local government entities, with full participation by people with disabilities, family members, disability advocates, and disability organizations, should develop comprehensive, effectively working plans to place people with disabilities in integrated settings and prevent unnecessary institutionalization.
5. The provision of publicly-funded programs and services must support self-determination and provide people with disabilities with opportunities to choose community-based options.
6. Governmental entities should allocate and apply for sufficient funding to ensure the availability of appropriate services and supports of high quality to enable people with disabilities to live in safe and appropriate non-institutional, community-based settings.
7. The development of affordable, accessible community housing options should be increased to ensure that people with disabilities can live in appropriate non-institutional settings in communities of their choice.