

Congress on Disability Policy Purpose and Operating Guidelines

I. Name: *Congress on Disability Policy*

II. Purpose, Values, Guiding Principles

A. Purpose: Advocate for an enhanced quality of life for Missourians with disabilities and their families by identifying common values that drive shared policy positions.

B. Values: Missourians with disabilities and their families have improved access to person-centered supports and services that:

- Enhance self-determination, independence, and interdependence;
- Improve access to information and community experiences;
- Support informed decision making about where people with disabilities live, work, and play;
- Lead to self-directed supports and services; and
- Result in individuals with disabilities being included in the community in a manner that makes sense to them and ultimately improves the diversity of our communities and state.

C. Guiding Principles: To support decision making and the work of the Congress, member organizations and their representatives shall:

- Engage in open, honest, and respectful communication;
- Utilize a consensus model of decision making;
- Conduct responsible, accountable, and outcome oriented activities;
- Include active participation by persons with disabilities and their families;
- Align themselves with and support Steering Committee decisions.

III. Membership: Open to statewide organizations (e.g. state associations, state Councils) who develop and advance legislative public policy agendas, have a disability related purpose/mission, and have a governing body that is able to independently form positions, develop policies, and take action.

A. Charter Members:

1. MO Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (MARF)
2. MO Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services (MACDDS)
3. American Network of Community Options and Resources – Missouri (MO-ANCOR)
4. MO Centers for Independent Living (MO-CIL)
5. MO Association for Persons in Supported Employment (APSE- MO)
6. MO-TASH
7. MO-Arc
8. MO Rehabilitation Association (MRA)
9. American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)
10. Brain Injury Association of MO
11. People First of Missouri
12. Missouri Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association (MOPRA)
13. Encouraging Families with Exceptional Children Together (EFECT)
14. MO Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities

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- B. Addition of New Members:** After the Charter members have been established, the addition of subsequent members requires the unanimous approval of the current members. All organizations applying for membership (including Charter Members) must sign a consent form agreeing to adhere to the purpose, values, guiding principles, and operating guidelines of the Congress and designate one representative and two alternates to serve on the Congress Steering Committee.
- C. Commitment of member Groups/Representatives:** Each member organization will review and sign the Congress on Disability Policy Purpose and Operating Guidelines annually by July 1 to continue membership, noting the member organization's Representative and Alternate(s) for the upcoming year. It will be assumed that member organizations who do not sign the document wish to resign per section E.
- D. Participation of Member Groups/Representatives:** Because of the unanimous nature of Congress decisions it is essential to have representatives from each member organization engaged and participating. If a representative (and the assigned alternates) from an organization misses 3 consecutive meetings or 2 consecutive votes, Congress leadership may request that the representative be replaced and/or the organization reconsider commitment to participate in the Congress. It is the representative's responsibility to notify their alternates if they are needed to attend a meeting for voting purposes. Each representative is expected to notify the Recorder if they, and their two assigned alternates, cannot attend a meeting of the Congress.
- E. Resignation of Member Groups from Congress:** Member groups wishing to cease participation with the Congress on Disability Policy will send a letter to the Chair stating that they no longer wish to participate and the date effective. The Resigning Member Organization will subsequently be removed from all future publications and policy statements and no longer have voting rights in the Congress.
- F. Information Regarding Members:** A member questionnaire will be utilized to obtain important information regarding each member (e.g. mission, # of members, membership composition, {self-advocates, parents, professionals-educators, provider agencies, service coordinators, VR counselors, etc.}, numbers impacted by the organization). This information will be utilized to enhance the influence and impact of shared public policy positions. The questionnaire will be reviewed yearly (with the Policy Purpose and Operating Guidelines) by the participating organization and necessary changes made.

IV. Congress Steering Committee

A. Composition of Steering Committee

1. Each member organization would have one (1) representative with (2) alternates designated that are authorized to make decisions and vote on behalf of their organization
2. Steering committee members will be asked to make a two-year commitment and regularly attend scheduled meetings for continuity purposes.
3. Each organization would have one representative in attendance of steering committee meetings.

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4. An individual can only represent one organization on the steering committee.

B. Steering Committee Decision Making:

1. A quorum of 2/3 must be present for any vote of the Steering Committee.
2. Each organization would have one vote.
3. Only the designated representative or designated alternate may cast a vote.
4. No alternative or proxy votes will be accepted.
5. Members may vote electronically through the list serve should time sensitive issues occur between regularly scheduled meetings of the Congress. The Chair of the congress shall call for a vote. The Recorder shall receive and tally the votes. The Chair may contact non-responding members to collect their vote if necessary. A vote shall successfully pass if there is a quorum responding unanimously in the affirmative by the given deadline for voting. (quorum is defined as 2/3 of the membership).
6. Approval of the Action Plan, Legislative Priorities and written Position Statements shall require a unanimous vote of the members of the Steering Committee who are present at a duly called meeting.
7. Operating decisions (i.e.: approval of minutes) require a simple majority of those members present at a duly called meeting.
8. All members are expected to align with and support the decisions of the Steering Committee.
9. Members should abstain on any vote that involves a conflict of interest.

C. Leadership and Meetings of Steering Committee

1. The steering committee would meet 5 times per year (suggested meeting times Summer, September, November, January, and March) at a minimum. In addition, the steering committee may need to have additional meetings as legislative conditions necessitate (e.g. special session)
2. Regularly scheduled meetings will be announced at least 5 working days in advance. The Chair may call an urgent meeting with a 48-hour advance notice.
3. Meetings are open and alternates and other individuals may attend as observers.
4. Steering committee leadership will consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and Recorder.
5. These leadership positions will be nominated and elected during the March meeting and will serve one year terms starting July 1st.
6. The Chairperson position would be assumed by the Vice-chairperson at the end of a one year term.
7. The Chair and/or vice-chair would be the primary spokes persons for the Congress on disability policy in public hearing/testimony, media, etc. However, all members could speak on the talking points of the coalition/congress that have been adopted/ratified by the steering committee or as dictated by the agreed on Action Plan.

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V. Congress Communications

- A. Listserv:** A Congress Listserv will be created for the purpose of sharing public policy information between Congress members and others. Access to the Listserv shall be open but postings shall be monitored by a facilitator identified by the steering committee.

VI. Annual Decision and Policy Making Processes:

- A. Summer:** After the completion of the legislative session, each member should discuss and identify key issues, policies and legislative priorities with their respective memberships.
- B. September:** The Steering Committee will meet to review and discuss the issues and policies identified above. A result of the meeting will be recommendations for an Action Plan to actively advocate for policies and legislation that have an impact on the quality of life of Missourians with disabilities.
 - 1. The Action Plan shall include:
 - a)** Priority areas/statements for the next legislative session;
 - b)** Identification of persons responsible for each priority area/statement/action item (Persons will be identified for action items, such as tracking relevant legislation, communicating on behalf of the congress to key legislators regarding our position, arranging for the Congress to be represented at relevant hearings and reporting back to the steering committee);
 - c)** The Action Plan will state how the communication methods will be used (i.e.: phone tree, website, list serve) to communicate items that require action from member groups.
- C. October:** Members may review the above Action Plan and approve or suggest changes.
- D. November:** The Steering Committee shall reconvene and approve an Action Plan taking into consideration the responses received from the membership during October.
- E. January:** Members report on progress of approved Action Plan. Implement early legislative session awareness activities such as sharing information about the Congress and Legislative Priorities through mail, visits, Legislative Breakfast.
- F. March:** Members report on progress of approved Action Plan. Leadership positions are nominated and elected. Current Congress on Disability Policy Purpose and Operating Guidelines distributed to member organizations for review and approval by July 1.

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Membership Consent and Designation:

The governing body of _____ has voted to join the Congress on Disability Policy and agrees to adhere to the above purpose, values, guiding principles, and operating guidelines. In addition, we authorize the following representatives and alternates to represent our organization on the Steering Committee.

Authorized Signature: _____
Date: _____

Representative: _____
Alternate #1: _____
Alternate #2: _____

Please fill out the attached Member Profile and return with signed membership consent and designation.

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Member Profiles***

Contact Information

Name of Association/Council:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Website:

Name of Lead Representative:

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Alternative #1

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

Alternative #2

Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

CDP communicates important and timely information through their e-mail list serve.

*****Please note in this section if e-mail is not the representatives/ alternates preferred communication method or they need to be notified via phone or another contact method.*****

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Profile of Association/Council

*****Please note: if no changes from last year, you may write “no change”**

Mission/Vision:

Guiding Principles/Core Beliefs/Values:

How many members comprise the association/council?

Composition of the membership:

<i>Individual Members (Include numbers):</i>	
People with Disabilities/Self-advocates	
Parents	
Siblings	
Personal Care Attendants	
Direct Support Professionals	
Administrators	
Service Coordinators/Counselors	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	
Other (please specify):	

<i>Organizational Members</i>			
Type	Number of organizations	Total number of employees	Total # of individuals served annually
Employment Provider			
Residential Provider			
Recreation/Leisure Provider			
Multiple Service Provider			
Independent Living Center			
Mental Health Center			
Government Agency			
Other (please specify):			
Other (please specify):			
Other (please specify):			

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How do people/organizations become members?

Describe the primary public policy initiatives and activities of the association/council?

Describe other initiatives and activities of the association/council?

Thank you and please attach any descriptive brochures or flyers!