



UCP Public Policy Strategic Plan

Goal #1: *Elevate disability policy as a political priority for the nation.*

Priority #1: Establish UCP as a first-tier resource to the Congress, the White House, and state policy-makers.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Work with affiliates to identify policy priorities that are important to people with disabilities that form the UCP policy agenda.
- Meet and offer to be a resource to Congressional and Administration staff on policy issues that affect the lives of people with disabilities.
- Identify UCP's political assets such as:
 - Number of people served and employed nationally, by affiliate, by state, and by federal/state legislative district;
 - Total revenues nationally, by state, by affiliate, and by federal/state district;
 - Economic impact of UCP's services nationally, by affiliate, by state, and by federal/state legislative district;
 - Number of registered voters the network touches nationally, by affiliate, by state, and by federal/state legislative district (people receiving services, families, employees, vendors, advocates, etc.); and
 - Number of people and economic impact represented by the various state and federal coalitions, associations, advocacy groups, etc. that the UCP network engages in.
- Work with existing disability advocacy organizations to bring disability policy to the attention of legislators.
- Position UCP staff and affiliate representatives to be part of major disability conferences across the country.
- Identify and target Congressional champions for UCP-supported policy goals.

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- Establish relationships with high-level state leaders through engagement with national political groups—RGA, DGA, RLCC and DLCC.

Priority #2: Build UCP, its affiliates and supporters to be an effective voice on local, state and federal disability policy.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Provide affiliates and advocates the tools and resources they need to engage on state and federal issues:
 - Create a web-based rapid response tool for addressing affiliate policy-related questions;
 - Create a weekly “Washington Wire” to keep affiliates informed of national activities;
 - Initiate a bi-weekly “Radio Show” to promote affiliate debate on priority policy issues at the state and national levels;
 - Create toolkit and trainings for affiliates and advocates to use in engaging state and federal legislators at the local level;
 - Routinely update public policy pages on website;
 - Create web-based advocacy tools to recruit, manage and mobilize advocates; and
 - Provide action alerts and fact sheets to affiliates on key issues.
- Empower grassroots advocates to be an effective voting block by:
 - Providing affiliates and advocates collaterals and a web-based platform to register and turn-out supporters to vote;
 - Disseminating template materials affiliates and advocates can use to engage candidates on disability issues, including measurable “action” items;
 - Quantifying the size/impact of the disability voting block and seeking a means to identify “disability” voters (match lists, etc.);
 - Meeting with national political groups—RNC, DNC, RGA, DGA, etc.—to promote strength of the disability voting block and seek support in engaging candidates on disability issues; and
 - Creating targeted events/meetings or issue campaigns in early primary states and/or Presidential battleground states, including seeking private meetings with Presidential candidates and/or their senior staff.
- Utilize legal advocacy, as necessary, on key state, federal or rights issues by:
 - Serving as a resource to affiliates considering legal action on rates, access or other issues;
 - Submitting amicus on important actions; or
 - Leading legal activities on behalf of affiliates or individuals with disabilities.

- Consult on state issues, including on-the-ground engagement on key issues.

Priority #3: Collaborate with disability and non-disability advocacy groups at the national and state level to develop stronger disability policy and self-sustaining disability policy campaigns.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Share credit and foster legitimate collaboration with disability and non-disability advocacy groups engaged in similar public policy initiatives such as: veterans, the aging community, the senior community, the business community and the young adult community.
- Increase engagement with federally-focused groups, such as: Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD), Committee on Universal Design, etc.
- Engage with state-focused policy groups—NGA, NCSL, CSG, ALEC, think tanks, Medicaid Directors Association, DD Directors Association, etc.—and encourage affiliate/advocate participation in key in-state advocacy groups, coalitions and trade associations.
- Create issue-specific campaigns to influence legislators and recruit new supporters.

Goal #2: *Maximize the opportunity for people with disabilities to achieve a “Life Without Limits.”*

Priority #1: Strengthen families to be an effective voice for people with disabilities.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Provide affiliates with up-to-date services, supports, webinars and conferences to share with consumers and their families.
- Support affiliates in promoting parent groups that focus on state and local policy priorities.
- Foster parent participation at the annual UCP conference in Washington, DC.

Priority #2: Endorse full educational opportunity for children and youth with disabilities as the door to community living and lifelong learning.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Become actively engaged in the IDEA/ESEA reauthorization process.
- Fight to protect the integrity of the early intervention and preschool programs as developmental systems of service.
- Promote better mental health services and supports in schools for all children.
- Strengthen the vocational rehab programs of employment under Education, particularly with focus on supported employment opportunities.
- Protect and strengthen Medicaid reimbursement to schools and programs under IDEA, as well as for the employment programs under vocational rehabilitation.
- Protect and strengthen habilitation programs, including advocating for their inclusion as a benefit in plans developed within the framework of the forthcoming Health Care Exchanges.

Priority #3: Advocate for healthcare coverage that provides people with disabilities with access to the services and technologies they need to engage in community life.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Work in collaboration with other disability and aging advocacy organizations to protect Medicaid coverage and reimbursement to providers of services.
- Work with states to rebalance the options of community services and supports by:
 - Encouraging the closure of state-run institutions;
 - Removing disincentives for states to expand HCBS;
 - Promoting policies that ensure a sustainable HCBS workforce; and
 - Tracking state progress through the publication of *The Case for Inclusion*.
- Establish relationships with America's Health Insurance Plans and other Medicaid-managed care organizations that implement the Medicaid program.
- Work with affiliates in accessing state insurance commissioners around requirements for the newly established Health Exchanges.
- Collaborate with Think Tanks in developing and promoting policy positions;

- Be a resource to affiliates during the implementation of *The Affordable Care Act* and in any fight against Medicaid and Medicare budget cuts.

Priority #4: Advocate for public programs that provide meaningful engagement and employment for people with disabilities.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Work with the Committees of Jurisdiction in the House and Senate on the reauthorization of vocational rehabilitation and the 14(c) program that will be included in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) legislation.
- Work with OMB on the development of more sustainable, supported employment programs and the funding necessary to guarantee their success.
- Work with the affiliates in states and at the national level to ensure better transition between IDEA and Vocational Rehab/SSA work programs as students with disabilities leave secondary school.
- Work with affiliates to develop business models that offer several options of engagement in employment opportunities.

Goal 3: ***Establish UCP as the organizational leader in cross-generational advocacy.***

Priority #1: Strengthen the relationship between the disability and aging communities in establishing and creating home and community-based supports.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Join with the aging community and advocacy groups such as: LeadingAge and AARP on the campaign to both protect Medicaid and establish new non-poverty programs for people with disabilities.
- Work with affiliates to engage seniors in grassroots support programs, e.g. grand-parenting programs.
- Work with the Older Americans Act reauthorization to ensure that the Disability and Aging Resource Centers are rebalanced to serve the needs of both populations.
- Work with other disability partners to include senior groups in their health care and employment policy initiatives.

Priority #2: Support policies that strengthen services and supports for people with disabilities across the lifespan.

Activities (July 1, 2011 – December 2012):

- Engage the affiliates to consider implementing programs that meet cross-generational needs. For example, early intervention through IDEA, through employment and housing, through end of life.