

# The Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities in Arkansas

## Disability Rights Center

[www.arkdisabilityrights.org](http://www.arkdisabilityrights.org)

### Position Paper

**DRC believes** that Arkansas still has considerable progress to make in ensuring the rights affirmed to individuals with disabilities in the *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision.

**DRC has never advocated closing all of the state's human development centers.** However we do believe that community engagement and support is a vital component of a meaningful life.

**DRC will continue advocating** to expand community services by increasing the amount of money to community programs and the number of community programs and eliminating the over-reliance on institutions to provide treatment to individuals with developmental disabilities.

**DRC will continue to advocate to** reduce (eliminate) separation between those who support institutional services and those who support community options by bringing these two groups together to support an array of options that best fit the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities

**DRC will continue advocating** for elimination of barriers that still exist for individuals with developmental disabilities to live as independently as they choose and are able.

**DRC will continue its advocacy efforts** until all Arkansans have a real choice to live safely, including living in the community with appropriate supports and services.

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Contents of this Position Paper are solely the responsibility of the grantee and do not necessarily represent the official views of the funding agency: U.S. Department of Health Human Services/ACF/Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

**Disability Rights Center (DRC) supports assuring the rights affirmed in *Olmstead v. L.C.* and the policy of the United States that states that all programs, projects, and activities receiving assistance under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act shall be carried out in a manner consistent with the principles that-**

- (1) individuals with developmental disabilities (DD), including those with the most severe DD, are capable of self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, but often require the provision of community services, individualized supports, & other forms of assistance;
- (2) individuals with DD & their families have competencies, capabilities, & personal goals that should be recognized, supported, & encouraged, & any assistance to such individuals should be provided in an individualized manner, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, & capabilities of such individuals;
- (3) individuals with DD & their families are the primary decision makers regarding the services & supports such individuals & their families receive, including regarding choosing where the individuals live from available options, & play decision making roles in policies & programs that affect the lives of such individuals & their families;
- (4) services, supports, & other assistance should be provided in a manner that demonstrates respect for individual dignity, personal preferences, & cultural differences;
- (5) specific efforts must be made to ensure that individuals with DD from racial & ethnic minority backgrounds & their families enjoy increased & meaningful opportunities to access & use community services, individualized supports, & other forms of assistance available to other individuals with DD & their families;
- (6) recruitment efforts in disciplines related to DD relating to pre-service training, community training, practice, administration, & policymaking must focus on bringing larger numbers of racial and ethnic minorities into the disciplines in order to provide appropriate skills, knowledge, role models, & sufficient personnel to address the growing needs of an increasingly diverse population;
- (7) with education & support, communities can be accessible to & responsive to the needs of individuals with DD & their families & are enriched by full & active participation in community activities, & contributions, by individuals with DD, & their families;
- (8) individuals with DD have access to opportunities & the necessary support to be included in community life, have interdependent relationships, live in homes & communities, & make contributions to their families, communities, & States, & the Nation;
- (9) efforts undertaken to maintain or expand community-based living options for individuals with DD should be monitored in order to determine & report to appropriate individuals & entities the extent of access by individuals with DD to those options & the extent of compliance by entities providing those options with quality assurance standards;
- (10) families of children with DD need to have access to & use of safe & appropriate child care & before-school & after-school programs, in the most integrated settings, in order to enrich the participation of the children in community life;
- (11) individuals with DD need to have access to & use of public transportation, in order to be independent & directly contribute to & participate in all facets of community life; and
- (12) individuals with DD need to have access to & use of recreational, leisure, & social opportunities in the most integrated settings, in order to enrich their participation in community life.