**NEVADA GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**Position on Disability Policymaking**

Historically, individuals with disabilities have been denied access to being involved in the right to determine the policies that impact their lives as citizens. They have not had the opportunity or the supports to make choices and decisions about important aspects of their lives. Instead, they have often been overprotected and involuntarily segregated, with others making decisions about key elements of their lives. For many, the absence of the dignity of risk and opportunities to make choices has impeded people with IDD from exercising their right of self-determination and has inhibited their ability to become contributing, valued, and respected members of their communities, living lives of their own choosing.

People with disabilities have the same right to self-determination and policy influence as all people and are entitled to the freedom, authority, and supports to exercise control over their lives. People with disabilities must understand that they can direct and influence circumstances and policies that are important to them.

Developing disability-inclusive measures with individuals with disabilities at the table is vital to ensuring individuals with disabilities have access to influence policy that impacts their lives.

# **The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD)** r**ecognizes four major principles that form the basis for disability policy: (1) Dignity, (2) Respect for Autonomy, (3) Life, and (4) Equality.**

1. Dignity: All persons are equally valuable, with or without disability, and deserve respect consistent with human dignity. The value of a person’s life is not related to the type, degree, or severity of disability. Inherent value must be distinguished from quality of life. Inherent value persists from birth to death, even though the quality of life may change as one approaches the end of life.
2. Autonomy: Individuals with disabilities should always be afforded the right to self-autonomous behavior. This includes determining if and to what extent they’d like to participate in social change activities.
3. Life: Individuals with disabilities have a right to life and to determining the courses of action within their life.
4. Equality: Individuals with disabilities have a right to the same freedoms and protections as all individuals regardless of their disability status.

Recognition of the right to self-determination must be a priority. The principles of self-determination and opportunities to promote self-determination must be incorporated into all aspects of policymaking. This includes but is not limited to:

* Creating accessible documents and documents in various formats including digital and large print.
* Using accessible meeting platforms and offering multiple options for participation.
* Providing language interpretation into any requested language.
* Providing plain language versions of complex language.
* Engaging stakeholders from all impacted groups in the conversation from the beginning conversations.

Laws, regulations, policies, procedures, and funding systems should be regularly reviewed and revised to remove barriers and to promote self-determination. People with IDD must be involved in this process at all levels.

**Policy Recommendations:**

1. Individuals with disabilities must be allowed to lead in decision-making and problem-solving about all aspects of their lives and have the supports they want to make decisions;
2. Individuals with disabilities must be allowed to advocate for themselves with the assurance that their desires, interests, and preferences will be respected and honored;
3. Provide necessary supports to allow individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate fully and meaningfully in the community they live.
4. Provide necessary supports and assistance to vote and exercise other rights as citizens.
5. Provide leadership roles for individuals with disabilities to take part in setting the policy direction for the disability community.
6. Provide opportunities for meaningful representation and participation in policy-making at the federal, state, and local levels.

Last Review Date: