



Iowa Disability Policy Alliance Membership Agreement

This membership Agreement is made on January 1, 2026, by the Steering Committee of the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance

- I. Background:** The Iowa Disability Policy Alliance works to strengthen disability advocacy in Iowa through a common voice. We do this through collective action, policy development, and leadership. Our goal is to ensure that Iowans with disabilities can live with independence, dignity, and the opportunity to thrive.

The Iowa Disability Policy Alliance coordinates collective action while respecting the autonomy and missions of member organizations. Each member may continue independent advocacy consistent with their organizational mission, directive or mandates.

II. Purpose of the Membership Agreement:

- a. Establish a shared understanding of the mission, guiding principles, agreed upon priorities and policy focus areas for the legislative session.
- b. Establish roles and responsibilities of membership and the steering committee.
- c. Create a framework for coordinating advocacy efforts.

- III. Mission:** The Iowa Disability Policy Alliance brings people and organizations together to empower the disability community, raise voices, take action and shape positive policy change.

IV. Guiding Principles

- a. We prioritize self-determination and amplify the voices and needs of people with disabilities, and their families, honoring the principle of “nothing about us without us.”
- b. We embrace all disabilities and operate with the principle that together we are stronger. We collaborate and protect one another.
- c. We honor our differences, respect different viewpoints, disagree agreeably.
- d. Decision making shall be transparent and collaborative and based on facts as known to us.
- e. We will operate independently and without political affiliations. We are not a lobbying organization.

V. Values: The Iowa Disability Policy Alliance believes that the collective voice of the disability community is most powerful when grounded in inclusion, respect, and collaboration. Together we ensure that public policy reflects the lived experiences and rights of Iowans with disabilities.

VI. Strategic Priorities

- a. Educate Iowa’s disability community and partners to participate in the Iowa legislative process and provide input on policies impacting people with disabilities.
- b. Develop united messages for membership use with communities and policy makers
- c. Coordinate federal advocacy on disability rights and concerns.
- d. Develop a process to timely respond to pressing disability issues.

VII. 2026 Policy Focus Areas for Iowa Legislative session

- a. Policies and practices that increase employment options for people with disabilities and remove barriers to employment.
- b. Policies and practices that protect, sustain and enhance community supports and community-based Medicaid services for children and adults with disabilities and families.
- c. Policies and practices that protect rights of students with disabilities to a free and appropriate public education and access to higher education under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disabilities Act.

VIII. Alliance Membership Types

- a. Steering committee members: Organizations that established the Alliance and at least one family member with lived experience and one person with a disability. Steering committee members will be reviewed at least annually. Current members:
 - i. ARC of Iowa
 - ii. ASK Resource Center

- iii. Brain Injury Association of Iowa
 - iv. Disability Rights Iowa
 - v. Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council
 - vi. University of Iowa Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
 - vii. Ben Gauer
 - viii. Cynthia Blackford
- b. General Iowa Disability Policy Alliance Voting Members: Organizations and individuals whom align with the IDPA's Mission, Values and Annual Policy Focus Areas that have signed the membership agreement:
- i. General members and Steering Committee members will have one vote per organization. The Application must state the person responsible for voting and indicate a designated alternate if the primary individual is unable to attend the meeting.
- c. Non-Voting Members: Organizations and individuals may attend meetings of the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance to learn and participate in discussions on policy issues. Organizations and individuals that have not signed a membership agreement will not have a vote.

IX. Membership Eligibility

- a. Membership is open to nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, service providers, advocacy associations, and individuals who align with the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance mission and guiding principles.
- b. Organizations and individuals interested in joining will submit an application to the steering committee and sign a Membership Agreement.
- c. Organizations and individuals with signed membership agreements can vote on priorities or focus areas.
- d. Organizations and individuals not able to sign a membership agreement can still attend meetings, serve on subcommittees and attend activities but cannot vote on priorities or focus areas.

X. Membership Responsibilities

- a. Actively participate in at least 50% of meetings/briefings and contribute to the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance campaigns and activities.
- b. Members will share concerns, issues and policy priorities as they arise to the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance
- c. Commit to sharing expertise, information and resources when applicable.
- d. Respond promptly (generally within 48 hours) when issues arise that require group approval before we can take action.
- e. Vote to approve or deny a policy priority within the time specified.
- f. Agreement that on identified annual IDPA's Areas of Focus a non-response will be interpreted as agreement that the Steering Committee

may move that policy priority forward so long as there is consensus among the remaining members.

- g. On an annual basis, provide actual and/or potential organizational/individual conflicts with the proposed IDPA's General Policy Focus Areas.

XI. Membership Duration: Membership will continue unless withdrawn or terminated. Membership agreements will be updated annually.

XII. Steering Committee Membership Roles and Responsibilities

- a. Provide strategic direction and oversight of the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance.
- b. Coordinate Iowa Disability Policy Alliance initiatives, meetings, internal communication policy statements and public relations/external communications.
- c. Draft annual policy focus areas for the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance to consider, discuss and vote on during the annual meeting.
- d. Provide comprehensive and factual information/education to members and public to support our organizations to advocate with messaging that is consistent
- e. Draft public comment for review by the full membership or delegate that responsibility to a volunteer from the General Membership.
- f. Bring other disability-related concerns (outside of the policy focus areas) to the larger Iowa Disability Policy Alliance for consideration. Any member of the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance may also bring issues to the Steering Committee for consideration by the full membership.

XIII. Decision Making and Voting:

- a. Before each legislative session, the Steering Committee will propose policy focus areas for the full Iowa Disability Alliance to discuss.
A unanimous consensus of the members at the annual meeting is required for a policy area to be adopted as an annual Policy Focus by the Alliance.
- b. If urgent disability-related issues arise outside the established focus areas, the Steering Committee will bring this issue(s) to the full Iowa Disability Policy Alliance for consideration. A unanimous consensus of membership will be required for a new issue to be added to the annual policy focus issues.
- c. General members and Steering Committee members will have one vote per organization. The Application must state the person responsible for voting and indicate a designated alternate if the primary individual is unable to attend the meeting.

XIV. Membership Review and Renewal Process

Membership agreements will be reviewed at least annually to confirm continued alignment with the mission, guiding principles, and expectations. Changes to the membership agreement can be requested by any member of the Iowa Disability Policy Alliance for consideration by the full membership.

Member Agreement Signature:

Organization:

Designated Organization Representative's Signature:

Email:

Phone: