



Priority Issues (2026 - 2028)

Purpose

This document explains and updates the Coalition's shared priorities so they reflect today's realities, future needs, emerging issues, and the lived experiences of people with disabilities in Rhode Island, while strengthening our collective voice in advocacy, leadership, and systems change.



1. Self Advocacy, Leadership & Decision Making (Choice)

- Ensure people with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to speak up on issues that affect our lives. This includes laws, policies, services, budgets, and community decisions.
- Increase participation of people with disabilities as decision makers on state committees, advisory groups, community boards, and task forces—with supports and compensation where appropriate.
- Build leadership skills through accessible trainings, peer learning, and Coalition meetings to help people build confidence, independence, and self-advocacy skills.
- Strengthen person-centered planning that is led by the individual and focuses on what they want (and do not want) for their life.



2. Jobs, Money, & Economic Stability

- Expand access to competitive, integrated employment with fair wages, benefits, opportunities for advancement, and job security.

- Increase employer education to better understand the skills and abilities of people with disabilities.
- Support self-employment, entrepreneurship, and non-traditional career pathways for people with disabilities.
- Promote peer-based employment supports such as job clubs, mentoring, and shared success stories.
- Improve access to benefits planning, financial education, ABLE accounts, budgeting tools, and clear, easy-to-understand strategies to build long-term financial stability.



3. Access to Information, Technology, Transparency & Digital Rights (Privacy & Digital Safety) 🗝️

- Improve transparency and access to clear, plain language, and accessible information about services, supports, eligibility, and outcomes across state and local agencies.
- Make information easy to find and available in different formats and languages, including written, audio, visual, and digital.
- Expand access to technology, devices, and support so people can use them safely and independently.
- Provide training and support on digital safety, privacy, and avoiding scams and fraud.
- Ensure people with disabilities have clear, accessible information about artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital tools, including how they are used in jobs, services, and government programs.
- AI systems must be fair, transparent, and not discriminate against people with disabilities.
- People with disabilities must have the right to opt-in or opt-out (choose yes or no) of digital technologies, data collection, tracking, and information sharing, including AI-based systems. These choices must be explained in plain language, based on informed consent, and honored with no loss of services or supports and no penalty.



4. Community Inclusion, Belonging & Public Awareness 📣

- People with disabilities should be welcomed and included in all parts of community life.
- Increase public awareness through more real-life success stories that show people with disabilities as people first. These stories should highlight abilities and skills, including leadership and lived experiences.
- Expand the visibility and impact of the Coalition's Speakers Bureau and community presentations.
- Strengthen partnerships that reflect the diversity of the disability community, including race, culture, language, age, and disability type.
- Reduce isolation by supporting inclusive social, cultural, civic, and recreational opportunities.



5. Transportation, Housing & Basic (Everyday) Access 🏠

- Advocate for accessible, affordable, reliable transportation across urban, suburban, and rural areas so people can work, learn, get healthcare, and take part in the community. (Rideshare, Public Transit, etc.)
- Support access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing that allows people with disabilities to live in the community of their choice.
- Systems should support people to live in the community and avoid unnecessary institutional care.



6. Coalition Visibility, Partnerships & Impact (Strong Coalition, Strong Voice) 🤝

- The Coalition brings people with different disabilities together to share information and support each other.
- Increase visibility of Coalition initiatives, including accessibility projects and advocacy efforts.
- Build partnerships across disability, aging, mental health, and community organizations.
- Establish clear goals and annual priorities to guide and strengthen our advocacy and community work.
- Our work should help increase the voice and leadership of people with disabilities.



Our Shared Belief

The RI Cross Disability Coalition exists to bring people with disabilities together to build leadership, share information, and unite around issues we believe are important to our lives. When we work together, our voices are stronger, and our communities are better for everyone.