

**Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism
National Public Policy Agenda
July 15, 2010**

The primary goal of *Advancing Futures with Adults with Autism (AFAA)* is to advocate for change that will enable adults living with autism to lead independent and productive lives. This change must occur in public policy and in partnership with the private sector. The National Public Policy Agenda is one outcome of the AFAA effort. AFAA provides the following recommendations to federal policy makers and urges their immediate adoption.

- 1. Adults with autism need access to services and supports to develop skills to live safe, independent, and successful lives. AFAA urges federal policy makers to:**
 - Amend the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to include life skills/social skills training as part of individualized education program (IEPs).
 - Enact the Frank Melville Supportive Housing Investment Act to design and develop new residential models.
 - Expand the capacity of Community Development Financial Institutions.
 - Expand the implementation and enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Olmstead decisions to ensure least restrictive and most appropriate housing for adults with autism.
 - Expand the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) to encourage public/private collaborations that create meaningful and diverse vocational opportunities for adults with autism.
 - Expand Medicaid to include ongoing residential, vocational and community living supports.
 - Create/expand federal incentives to encourage investment in housing options for adults with autism.
 - Establish a new priority within the DD Act to provide appropriate and ongoing vocational supports for adults with autism.

- 2. Adults with autism need access to skilled direct care personnel. AFAA urges federal policy makers to:**
 - Prioritize the training of direct care workers to provide vocational and residential assistance to adults living with autism.
 - Expand the Combating Autism Act (CAA) to include training demonstration projects to teach service providers to work effectively with adults with autism.

- 3. Adults with autism need access to and choice within the funding of services. AFAA urges federal policy makers to:**
 - Change existing and establish new funding streams so that financial assistance follows the person and can be used to meet unique and evolving needs.
 - Expand both public and private funding for residential, vocational, and community integration services for adults with autism. Funding should follow the individual and be person centered to meet the varying and unique needs of adults with autism.
 - Enact the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act.
 - Increase the amount and flexibility of funding allowing individuals with autism and their families to make the most effective decisions.
 - Develop a cost effective process that allows cross-state portability and uniformity of person-centered funding.

About Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism

To ensure that individuals living with autism have the opportunity to create more meaningful lives as adults that include homes, jobs, recreation, friends and supportive communities, ASD advocates have formed a national consortium called *Advancing Futures for Adults with Autism (AFAA)* which will facilitate the development of a national agenda through three phases: an expert Think Tank, a National Town Hall and a Congressional Briefing. At every phase, AFAA has been committed to engaging both the public and private sector to develop the best possible solutions, recognizing that both have important roles to play. The outcome of three-phase agenda will be defined, actionable and strategic solutions to address the needs of the vastly increasing numbers of adolescents and adults who need service modifications, accommodations and supports.

Autism Speaks and New York Center for Autism are the organizational chairs of this effort. AFAA's honorary chair is Global Communities of Support, and AFAA partner organizations include Alpine Learning Group, The Autism Program of Illinois, The Daniel Jordan Fiddle Foundation, Easter Seals, Hallmark Community Solutions, The Hope Institute, Organization for Autism Research (OAR), Rethink Autism, Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC), Trinity Services, Inc and the UM-NSU Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.