



# TASH

Equity, Opportunity and Inclusion for People with Disabilities since 1975

## **TASH Resolution on Supports in the Community**

### **Statement of Purpose**

In support of the international movement of people with disabilities, we seek government policies and funding for services and support (referred to as support throughout) for all people with disabilities. These supports must give people control over all aspects of their life, including areas such as housing, employment, recreation, sexuality, and other elements of participation in the community. Supports must reflect the personal preferences and potential of the person receiving them.

### **Rationale**

Children and adults with disabilities should have opportunities to be involved with ordinary people as partnership basis and to develop relationships with neighbors, classmates, co-workers and community members. These supports shall include, but not be limited to: interpreting, homemaking, mobility assistance, social support, medical assistance, transportation, personal hygiene, reading, recreation, parenting and decision-making.

While support most often comes from families, friends, neighbors, and citizens, some support may also be necessary from public sources. The role of government, agencies and organizations is to determine how they can provide assistance to the individual in meeting his or her needs and preferences. As we move toward an era of greater choice and recognition of self-determination by people with disabilities, it becomes incumbent on government to seek ways to directly involve people with disabilities, not simply their representatives, in all processes affecting their lives.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT TASH, an international advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates and people who work in the disability field, endorses the following principles that we believe should guide the

interaction of government and policy-makers when they become involved in providing supports to people with disabilities:

- Support shall be government entitlement and people need not risk the loss of material support in order to obtain such supports. Government funding should not be a disincentive to employment; payments to the person shall not be treated as disposable, taxable income, and shall not make the person ineligible for other statutory benefits or supports. Support shall be available wherever a person chooses to live and funding should be allocated to people, not solely to programs. People with disabilities should not be required to live in agency facilities or to become impoverished to obtain supports.
- Supports shall enable children and adults with disabilities to participate in every aspect of socio-cultural life including, but not limited to, home, school, work, cultural and spiritual activities, leisure, travel and political life. These supports shall enable people, without penalty, if they so choose, to establish a personal, family and community life and fulfill all responsibilities associated with those aspects of life.
- Adults and families of children with disabilities shall have maximum control over their personal assistance and other supports, with advocacy and support, independent of service agencies, in making these decisions. The concept of personal assistance is based on the principle that all people must have a way of communicating choices and that all people are unique in their preferences. Thus, supports must be designed to be individualized and flexible, since people with similar needs may prefer different solutions. When people have difficulty expressing choices, independent facilitation shall be available. Adults should be able to self-designate those who will represent them, including a friend or family member, instead of having these individuals chosen for them. Personal and civil rights, such as the need for a representative payee, should not be determined by physicians.
- Adults or families of children with disabilities must have the right to choose the type of support needed and wanted and how that support will be provided. The role of the service system is to facilitate a vision of full inclusion in community life for all people, to assist people in having access to needed resources, and to organize support in a way that reflects individual and family preferences. Individuals with disabilities (and families for children) shall be free to select and/or hire whomever they choose, including family members.

- Support should be considered a human and civil right. These supports should be available to people of all ages and irrespective of disability, personal health, marital and family status, and without discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, cultural background, religion, gender, sexual preference, or geography. Supports shall not be made contingent on the behavior of the person with a disability. People shall be informed about their rights and options and have legal resources to preserve those rights.
- Supports shall promote the full inclusion of people in society, and should not supplant or undermine relationships or community connections or the roles of ordinary citizens. We all need to learn from each other, recognize our interdependence, and insure that formal services do not supplant informal supports. When government becomes involved, it should not disrupt existing relationships and connections; rather it shall seek to encourage them.
- Services such as fire, police, 911 and emergency medical care have been deemed essential for the health and safety of people in a free society. To this end, the people have pooled their resources to ensure that these services are accessible and available to all. Therefore, it is the obligation of those public and private agencies established and/or empowered to fulfill this need to ensure that the necessary accommodations are provided so that persons with disabilities shall also be beneficiaries of these essential services

To this end, TASH will work toward developing new ways of providing supports and adapting materials and making decisions so all individuals, regardless of communication styles and abilities, will be able to fully participate in making decisions and developing their own supports.

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