

# BENCHMARKS

**For Evaluating Public Policy  
In Virginia**



**Virginia Board for People  
with Disabilities**

The Commonwealth's Developmental  
Disabilities Planning Council



## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Before proposing or passing any policy, regulation, law, or funding, we ask our public policymakers to ask themselves:

*How will this decision affect the citizenry as a whole?*

### Does it:

- ✓ Provide equality of opportunity and universal access?
- ✓ Cultivate increased self-sufficiency and independence?
- ✓ Promote choice, personal decision-making, and individual responsibility?
- ✓ Foster full and meaningful participation in community life?

### Is it:

- ✓ Non-discriminatory and fully inclusive?
- ✓ An investment in the Commonwealth's future rather than a measure of expediency?



***The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities hopes this information will serve as a tool for the Governor, legislators, and other elected officials and policymakers. The Board asks policymakers to adopt these benchmarks and consider the impact upon Virginians with disabilities when developing, writing, and implementing all state policies, regulations, laws, and funding priorities.***

***Over the past 30 years, state leaders have recognized that full inclusion in community life by Virginians with disabilities is a legal, moral, and ethical right.***

***These benchmarks are intended to inform future policy and strategic investments in community supports and infrastructure that will enable Virginia's citizens with disabilities to return the Commonwealth's investment through increased independence, educational achievement, economic self-sufficiency, and community or civic engagement.***



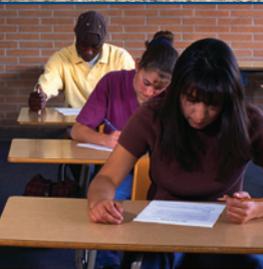
*Most of us will experience some type of disability, either permanent or temporary, in our lifetimes.*



## **Guiding Principles**



- All individuals are entitled to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”
- “Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the rights of individuals... to fully participate in and contribute to their communities...” (U.S. DD Act).
- Like everyone else, Virginians with disabilities aspire to “give back” and contribute to society as a whole. Investment in individuals with disabilities benefits all citizens.
- The merit of any public policy, regulation, program, or service should be measured by whether it achieves these benchmarks.



REFERENCES: U.S. Congress. (2000). *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act* (PL 106.402). Retrieved from: [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/ddact/DDA.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/add/ddact/DDA.html)



*Photos from top to bottom represent legislation, transportation, technology, education, housing, and health care.*

## BENCHMARKS

Publicly funded supports to children and adults with disabilities and their families are “front-loaded” (provided as soon as indicated) at levels designed to reduce services needed over the individual’s lifespan and to maximize opportunities to give back.

Individuals with disabilities receive services and supports appropriate to their needs in inclusive community settings. They are not segregated from their fellow citizens.

Individuals with disabilities have access to and receive flexible, person-centered services and supports that:

- ✓ Provide a single point-of-entry that is not disability specific;
- ✓ Offer choice and maximize personal decision-making;
- ✓ Are available no matter where the individual lives and are effective, timely, and reliable;
- ✓ Promote high expectations and individual potential and strengthen families;
- ✓ Continue as needed across the lifespan; and
- ✓ Have sufficient oversight to ensure health, safety, and welfare and to prevent exploitation, fraud, and waste.



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