

Approved by Board of Directors, 12-01-07

**Advocacy Center for
Persons with Disabilities, Inc.**

STRATEGIC LONG RANGE PLAN

2008 -- 2012

**Renewing our Commitment
&
Regrouping for the Future**

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Development of a Strategic Long Range Plan (SLRP) was included as an important project for the Advocacy Center in 2007 to help us establish a strategic direction for the future. A Report and Recommendation regarding possible approaches to developing a SLRP was presented to our Board of Directors (BOD) in February 2007, and a SLRP Committee was subsequently appointed by Board Chair Doug Jones. An overview of the SLRP process was presented to staff members in April, and status of the SLRP was an agenda item for subsequent meetings of our BOD, PAIMI Advisory Council (PAC), management team, and staff throughout 2007.

A Planning Survey was developed as the primary mechanism to receive input from all stakeholders concerning major challenges facing persons with disabilities, things the Advocacy Center should be doing during the next five years to carry out its mission, and related matters. Almost 500 external stakeholders responded to the survey online, and more than 200 others submitted responses in other forms (including persons with disabilities at facilities, responders at disability events, and others who responded by fax or mail). A more detailed survey was administered to all BOD, PAC, and staff members, the results of which were considered during this planning process.

In addition to receiving needs data and other input through the aforementioned planning surveys, a wide range of other pertinent information was gathered from state agencies, disability groups, service providers, planning entities, and others as part of an "environmental scan." Facts and figures, trends and themes, and other pertinent information were examined as part of a "situation analysis" and to help us analyze "SWOTs" (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) during the planning process.

In June 2007, a comprehensive Strategic Long Range Planning (SLRP) Briefing Book was assembled and made available to BOD, PAC, and staff members (and was also made available on our intranet for all internal stakeholders). The Briefing Book contained a detailed review of the process we were using to develop the SLRP, together with a wide variety of background, resource, and reference materials, and a bibliography of other helpful resources. BOD, PAC, and staff members also received extensive summaries of the planning survey results which were charted as surveys were received. More detailed charts were furnished to the SLRP Committee and management staff who were helping to support the planning process.

In June 2007, several extensive work sessions were held where the SLRP Briefing Book material, planning survey results, and other pertinent information were examined. The PAIMI Advisory Council (PAC) reviewed strategic planning issues at a meeting on June 21 and 22; a Management Team Work Session focused on strategic planning issues on June 26 and 27; and the Strategic Long Range Planning (SLRP) Committee met on June 29th. The Management Work Session and SLRP Committee meetings were facilitated in part by Arthur Cutler of the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN).

As a result of the work done during these work sessions and the prior planning activities, the SLRP committee formulated a new Mission Statement, which was presented to, and adopted by, the BOD in August 2007. Due to time constraints and the need to concentrate on finalization of FY08 annual goals, budget, and workplans, the SLRP Committee deferred further work on strategic goals and the SLRP action plan until after the current fiscal year ended on 9/30/07. However, a special meeting of the full BOD to discuss resource development issues (which was an issue of significant discussion and concern at the June meetings) was held on 9/26/07, where certain short-term approaches were agreed upon and longer-range resource strategies were explored.

The SLRP Committee met again via teleconference on 10/15/07 to review the status of the SLRP process. The committee decided to meet in mid-November and do whatever additional work was needed to try to finalize the strategic long range plan by the time our BOD and PAC met jointly at the end of November.

Additional work by management team and staff also occurred during September, October, and early November regarding planning issues, including consideration of emerging opportunities or challenges facing Floridians with disabilities, new or emerging initiatives within State government, consideration of possible major service projects for the Center in the future, and other matters. A Draft of possible Strategic Goals and Action Steps was prepared by staff for consideration at the November SLRP Committee meeting.

The SLRP Committee met on November 16, 2007 to discuss, decide upon, and draft strategic goals and action steps for the Center for the next five years to include in the SLRP. Following extensive discussion concerning the level of detail to include in the SLRP, the SLRP Committee decided that the goals and action steps should be clear and concrete enough to establish the strategic direction of the Advocacy Center for the next five years, but specific activities and implementation steps should be left for inclusion in annual goals and priorities, budgets, and workplans. The SLRP goals and strategies should be written in such a way as to last for the five-year period of the plan without having to be revised during the five-year period (although the SLRP or specific strategic goals or action steps certainly could be reviewed and revised if needed during the plan period due, for example, to major unforeseeable developments).

In addition to drafting four Strategic Goals for this 2008-2012 SLRP, and a total of ten Action Steps (sub-points of the Strategic Goals), the SLRP Committee also drafted a Vision statement for inclusion, which appears with our Mission Statement.

The Draft of the SLRP Report was widely circulated to BOD, PAC, and staff members in advance of the November 30-December 1 combined BOD and PAC meeting where it was further reviewed, discussed, amended, and approved.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to advance the quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice of persons with disabilities through collaboration, education, advocacy, as well as legal and legislative strategies

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision is that all Floridians with disabilities will have the services, supports, protection of rights, and remedies they need for quality of life, dignity, equality, self-determination, and freedom of choice

STRATEGIC GOALS & ACTION STEPS
2008 - 2012

I. SECURE ADEQUATE SYSTEMS, SERVICES AND SUPPORTS FOR FLORIDIANS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. Identify unmet needs
- B. Identify and provide services most likely to be effective to reduce unmet needs
- C. Publicize the extent of unmet needs in Florida

II. STRENGTHEN PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS OF, AND SECURE NEEDED REMEDIES FOR, FLORIDIANS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. Identify and provide services most likely to be effective to protect rights and secure remedies needed by individuals with disabilities
- B. Increase education, self-advocacy support, and other services to facilitate self-empowerment of Floridians with disabilities

III. STRENGTHEN EXISTING, AND SECURE ADDITIONAL, CAPACITY OF THE ADVOCACY CENTER TO SUCCESSFULLY SERVE FLORIDIANS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. Increase and diversify funding and other support
- B. Strengthen internal and external communications
- C. Maintain/strengthen internal systems (including systems for program/project evaluation and management, management information, human resources, and quality assurance) needed for effective, efficient, and successful services and operations
- D. Strengthen Advocacy Center leadership/management team

IV. STRENGTHEN STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION TO GET NEEDED RESULTS FOR FLORIDIANS WITH DISABILITIES

- A. Increase/strengthen work with State and federal officials and agencies
- B. Increase/strengthen work with legal community
- C. Increase/strengthen work with disability community
- D. Increase/strengthen work with media, public at large, business community, educational institutions, and other stakeholder groups

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this Strategic Long Range Plan (SLRP) for 2008-2012 will help us accomplish a number of things:

- * It will keep us focused on some of the most important things we want to and will accomplish during the next five years;
- * It will help us as we figure out what specific services, projects, and activities we should start, continue, or expand;
- * It will help us communicate with other key stakeholders that, and how, we would like to work with them;
- * It should make it easier for us to attract and allocate resources sensibly and strategically;
- * It will help Advocacy Center staff members and teams adjust their activities to help us achieve overarching goals during the next five years;
- * It will make it easier to establish year to year (and shorter term) goals, workplans, staffing assignments, and activities; and
- * It should make it easier to attain some stability and ability to focus on particular objectives in a sustained and successful way over the "long haul."

We received much valuable input from Board members, PAC members, staff members, and a wide variety of external stakeholders during this planning process. Many of those suggestions influenced us as we worked to restate our mission and vision and develop strategic goals and action steps for the next five years.

Much of the specific input also will be valuable -- and will be used -- as we work further on annual goals, specific issues, services, and projects to carry out our mission, attempt to achieve our stated vision, and pursue the goals stated in this report.

We are grateful to everyone who participated and contributed to development of this Strategic Long Range Plan, and we look forward to working with all stakeholders to successfully implement it and fully carry it out.

Submitted by:

Doug Jones, Chair,
Board of Directors and
Strategic Long Range Plan Committee

Gary J. Weston
Executive Director