



Diversity and Cultural Competency in Disability Advocacy Initiative

Working to empower persons of diverse backgrounds with disabilities and their families in disability rights

TASH's commitment to equity, opportunity, and inclusion for ALL people with disabilities has led the organization to develop the **TASH Diversity and Cultural Competency in Disability Advocacy Initiative** to empower persons of diverse cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds with disabilities and their families to access services and supports offered by TASH and numerous other disability, civil rights and social justice organizations.

Persons of diverse backgrounds with disabilities currently have life experiences that are much different than the rest of society. They face higher incarceration rates, over-representation in segregated special education programs, and diminished social and employment outcomes.

"[The Initiative] has catapulted me to speak on the issue of disabilities and how disabilities affect minorities. I am seeking ways to get people with disabilities more involved in the community."

- Initiative participant

The TASH Diversity and Cultural Competency in Disability Advocacy Initiative includes two major focus areas:

Access to Disability Advocacy:

With support from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, TASH facilitated the participation of more than 250 individuals of diverse backgrounds with disabilities and their families at six national disability advocacy organization conferences (including TASH) in 2008 and 2009. By enhancing the participation of these populations in national and local disability advocacy organizations, TASH supported the development of leadership skills for these individuals and families, drawing attention to the need for disability advocacy organizations to address disparities that persons of diverse backgrounds with disabilities face, and in turn, working to reduce disparities related to access to health and disability services. In 2010, TASH is working with national disability organizations as part of a Cultural Competency Partnership to infuse practices and ideas that strengthen the capacity of the organizations to reach individuals of all backgrounds.

On October 12-13, 2010, TASH is hosting a Symposium for Change on *Eliminating Disparities for People of Color with Significant Disabilities or Support Needs*. The Symposium has a focus on developing an action agenda around education, employment and health that mobilizes the disability and civil rights communities.

Family Training:

Through a grant from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, TASH has developed a Family Support Training series that provides culturally and linguistically relevant training in 12 states and two territories to families and individuals of all ethnic backgrounds. Nationally recognized mentor trainers worked to prepare a national network of emerging leaders to deliver training in their home states and communities. The training program features a two-day basic Family Support Training program followed by one day trainings on policymaking and advocacy. This project seeks to present real training opportunities for those at the greatest risk for exclusion and segregation – persons of diverse backgrounds with disabilities. To date, nearly 200 individuals have been impacted by the training.

More information can be obtained about the TASH Diversity and Cultural Competency in Disability Advocacy Initiative by contacting Dara Baldwin at (202) 540-9020 ext. 17 or dbaldwin@tash.org and the ADD Grant by contacting Haley Kimmet at (202) 540-9015 or hkimmet@tash.org. Visit the TASH website for information on our annual conference and the organization at www.tash.org.

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