

DISABILITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Organizational Structure and Key Components

Mission Statement

To foster an inclusive business environment by advocating for, connecting, and empowering businesses owned by people with disabilities and businesses that prioritize disability inclusion.

Leadership Roles

The Disability Chamber of Commerce will be led by a dedicated team of individuals committed to advancing its mission. Key leadership roles include:

- **Board of Directors:** The governing body responsible for setting strategic direction, overseeing financial performance, and ensuring the Chamber's long-term sustainability. The Board will consist of business leaders, disability advocates, and community representatives.
- **President/CEO:** The chief executive officer responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Chamber, implementing the Board's strategic plan, and representing the Chamber to external stakeholders.
- **Vice President:** Supports the President/CEO in managing Chamber operations and may oversee specific areas such as membership, programs, or advocacy.
- **Treasurer:** Responsible for managing the Chamber's finances, preparing financial reports, and ensuring compliance with all applicable regulations.
- **Secretary:** Maintains official records of the Chamber, including meeting minutes, membership lists, and other important documents.

Membership Structure

The Disability Chamber of Commerce offers a tiered membership structure to accommodate businesses of all sizes and individuals interested in supporting its mission:

- **Individual Membership:** Open to individuals with disabilities, students, allies, and advocates who support the Chamber's mission. Benefits include networking opportunities, access to resources, and discounted event registration.

- **Small Business Membership:** Designed for businesses with fewer than [Number] employees. Benefits include all Individual Membership benefits, plus listing in the Chamber's online directory, access to business development workshops, and opportunities to participate in Chamber events.
- **Corporate Membership:** Available to larger businesses and corporations that demonstrate a commitment to disability inclusion. Benefits include all Small Business Membership benefits, plus enhanced visibility in Chamber publications, sponsorship opportunities, and access to exclusive networking events.
- **Non-Profit Membership:** Designed for non-profit organizations that serve the disability community. Benefits mirror those of the Small Business Membership, tailored for non-profit needs.

Committees

The Chamber will establish several committees to focus on specific areas of activity. These committees will be led by volunteer members and supported by Chamber staff. Potential committees include:

- **Membership Committee:** Responsible for recruiting new members, retaining existing members, and developing membership benefits.
- **Advocacy Committee:** Advocates for policies that support disability-owned businesses and promote disability inclusion in the workplace.
- **Programming Committee:** Plans and organizes Chamber events, workshops, and training programs.
- **Marketing and Communications Committee:** Develops and implements the Chamber's marketing and communications strategy.
- **Finance Committee:** Assists the Treasurer in managing the Chamber's finances and developing the annual budget.

Key Initiatives

The Disability Chamber of Commerce will undertake several key initiatives to advance its mission:

- **Business Development Programs:** Providing training, mentorship, and resources to help disability-owned businesses start, grow, and succeed.
- **Advocacy and Public Policy:** Lobbying for policies that support disability-owned businesses and promote disability inclusion in the workplace.
- **Networking and Collaboration:** Creating opportunities for members to connect with each other, potential customers, and strategic partners.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns:** Raising awareness of the economic contributions of disability-owned businesses and the importance of disability inclusion.
- **Accessibility Consulting:** Offering businesses guidance on how to improve accessibility for employees and customers with disabilities.

Next Steps

The immediate next steps for establishing the Disability Chamber of Commerce include:

- Recruiting and appointing the initial Board of Directors.
- Developing a detailed strategic plan.
- Securing funding and resources.
- Establishing the Chamber's physical or virtual office.
- Launching a membership drive.



Disability Chamber of Commerce Code of Ethics

Summary of ethical principles and standards

Introduction

The Disability Chamber of Commerce (DCC) is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards in all its activities. This summary outlines the key principles and standards of conduct that guide our members, staff, and stakeholders. Adherence to this Code of Ethics is essential for maintaining the integrity, reputation, and success of the DCC.

Core Ethical Principles

Integrity:

- Honesty and transparency in all dealings.
- Avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Maintaining confidentiality.

Respect:

- Treating all individuals with dignity and consideration.
- Valuing diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- Promoting accessibility and inclusion.

Inclusion:

- Actively promoting opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Ensuring equal access to resources and services.
- Challenging discriminatory practices.

Standards of Conduct

- **Professionalism:** Maintaining a high level of competence and ethical behavior in all professional activities.
- **Compliance:** Adhering to all applicable laws, regulations, and DCC policies.
- **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for one's actions and decisions.
- **Fairness:** Ensuring equitable treatment and opportunities for all members and stakeholders.
- **Collaboration:** Working cooperatively with others to achieve common goals.
- **Stewardship:** Managing resources responsibly and sustainably.

Importance of Ethical Conduct

Adhering to this Code of Ethics is crucial for:

- Building trust and credibility with members, partners, and the community.
- Fostering a positive and inclusive organizational culture.
- Promoting the success and sustainability of the DCC.
- Upholding the rights and interests of people with disabilities.

Conclusion

The Disability Chamber of Commerce's Code of Ethics is a vital framework for ensuring ethical conduct and promoting a culture of integrity, respect, and inclusion. All members, staff, and stakeholders are expected to familiarize themselves with this code and to uphold its principles in all their activities related to the DCC. By committing to these ethical standards, we can collectively contribute to a more just and equitable society for people with disabilities.



Understanding and Addressing Ableism

Promoting Inclusion and Awareness

What is Ableism?

Ableism is discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. It can manifest in various forms, from overt prejudice to subtle assumptions and systemic barriers. Ableism assumes that disabled people need to be 'fixed' and defines people by their disability.

The Impact of Ableism

Ableism has profound and far-reaching impacts on individuals with disabilities. It can lead to:

- **Limited Opportunities:** Reduced access to education, employment, and social participation.
- **Internalized Oppression:** Feelings of shame, low self-worth, and isolation.
- **Mental Health Issues:** Increased rates of depression, anxiety, and stress.
- **Physical Health Disparities:** Lack of accessible healthcare and support services.
- **Social Exclusion:** Being marginalized and excluded from mainstream society.

Examples of Ableism in Different Contexts

Workplace

- **Inaccessible Buildings:** Offices without ramps, elevators, or accessible restrooms.
- **Discriminatory Hiring Practices:** Employers making assumptions about a candidate's abilities based on their disability rather than assessing their skills and qualifications.
- **Lack of Accommodations:** Refusal to provide necessary accommodations, such as assistive technology or flexible work schedules.

Education

- **Inadequate Support:** Schools failing to provide appropriate educational support for students with disabilities, such as individualized education programs (IEPs) or assistive technology.
- **Exclusionary Practices:** Students with disabilities being segregated from their peers in separate classrooms or schools.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Educators not understanding or addressing the needs of students with disabilities.

Public Spaces

- **Inaccessible Transportation:** Public transportation systems without ramps, audio announcements, or priority seating for disabled passengers.
- **Physical Barriers:** Sidewalks without curb cuts, narrow doorways, and inaccessible restrooms in public buildings.
- **Lack of Signage:** Absence of clear and accessible signage for people with visual or cognitive impairments.

Media

- **Stereotypical Representation:** Portraying disabled characters as either villains, victims, or inspirational figures, rather than complex individuals.
- **Lack of Representation:** Excluding disabled actors and stories from mainstream media.
- **Ableist Language:** Using derogatory or stigmatizing language to describe disability.

Moving Towards Inclusion

Combating ableism requires a multifaceted approach, including:

- **Education and Awareness:** Raising awareness about ableism and its impact through education and advocacy.
- **Accessibility:** Ensuring that all physical spaces, digital platforms, and services are accessible to people with disabilities.
- **Representation:** Promoting positive and accurate representation of disabled people in media and culture.
- **Policy Change:** Advocating for policies that protect the rights and promote the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- **Challenging Assumptions:** Questioning and challenging ableist assumptions and stereotypes in our own thoughts and actions.

By understanding and addressing ableism, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.