

COALITION OF CALIFORNIANS FOR OLMSTEAD

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Access Center of San Diego, Inc.
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Independent Living Resource Center of
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Independent Living Center
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Mental Health Advocacy Board
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Multiple Sclerosis – CA Action Network
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Self-Advocacy Board
of Los Angeles County
Self-Advocacy Council, VI
World Institute on Disability

COCO FACT SHEET

What is COCO?

Founded in May 2000, the Coalition of Californians for Olmstead (COCO) is a coalition of over 30 disability consumer, legal and advocacy services organizations. COCO's mission is to work towards community inclusion of all people with disabilities in California, through implementation of the *Olmstead* decision. COCO does this by working with people with disabilities to get the public resources and quality support needed for people to move out of institutions and into the community.

COCO's values are:

- That anyone who is living in an institution, or is at risk of living in an institution, should be provided with the services that will support them living in the community, such as housing, support services, work and leisure opportunities.
- The empowerment of people with disabilities through means that include consumer directed services.
- That money and other resources need to be moved from institutions into community options.

COCO believes in the Community Imperative, which states: In Terms of Human Rights:

- All people have basic human and legal rights,
- Included in these basic rights is the right to live in the community, and
- These rights must not be taken away just because a person has a mental or physical disability.

"A Coalition of Californians working toward community inclusion through the implementation of the *Olmstead* decision"

In terms of education and support services:

- All people are valuable,
- All people have strengths and abilities,
- All people have the right to services in their lives that support these strengths and abilities,
- These supports are best provided in the community.

How does COCO operate?

COCO operates as a coalition through consensus decision making. COCO consists of a number of organizations with long track records of effective advocacy and organizing. COCO member meetings are held bi-monthly. COCO has a list-serve of all its members, which is used regularly to communicate among members, gather input and make decisions. There is a Steering Committee that is responsible for reviewing applications for membership, making organizational decisions between meetings and seeking consensus on issues or making decisions based on a majority of support from member organizations.

What does COCO do to help people live in the community?

COCO helps people by:

Teaching people with disabilities who are living in institutions about their rights to live in the community;

Writing to and meeting with people in the California government who makes decisions about institutions and living in the community;

Speaking at public hearings about institutions and living in the community;

Helping to pass laws that make it easier for people with disabilities to live in the community; and,

Helping people with disabilities organize and take action to get out of institutions.