

The Rights of People with Cognitive Disabilities to Technology and Information Access

Linguistically Accessible Version*

- Twenty-eight million citizens in the United States have cognitive disabilities. People with intellectual disability, mental illness (such as bi-polar disorder), brain injury, stroke, and dementia are included in this group.
- People with cognitive disabilities are entitled, or have a right to, full inclusion in society. Some of the laws that give them these rights are section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and other state or local laws.
- To be able to take part in society people with cognitive disabilities need access to information. They need information about their rights, responsibilities, and duties of citizenship.
- Many people with cognitive disabilities have limited or no access to current understandable information about technology. This technology includes such things as cell phones, computers, televisions, and radios.
- Technology and computers can be very hard to understand and use. They have changed how people communicate with each other. This includes how people learn new information, respond to information, and share information with each other.
- People with cognitive disabilities must use and understand the technology in order to take part in life. It also helps to promote self-determination which allows people with cognitive disabilities to make their own decisions.

- Technology needs to be made in ways that are based on ideas and rules made by technology makers. They need to make sure that all people, including people with cognitive disabilities, have equal access to these devices. All devices should work together with different programs.
- Protecting the civil rights and dignity of all people is important. Having security and privacy options built into the devices is a must.
- There are many benefits to making sure that people with cognitive disabilities, their families and service providers have access to information and communication technologies. It builds a new market by creating jobs for people. It allows people with disabilities to rely less on public services. It is worth spending money on because it will help more people with cognitive disabilities take part in the community.
- Current federal and state funding supports do not usually pay for these technologies for people with cognitive disabilities. In order to help pay for these technologies for people with cognitive disabilities, consumers and providers need to advocate for and get low-cost solutions in public and private sectors.

*Translated from the original document by Amy Goodman, Co-Director of Autism Now, and others at The Arc. The original document can be viewed at: www.colemaninstitute.org/declaration