

DJTF Guiding Principles¹

- 1. Intersectionality:** We recognize and address the multiple forms of oppression faced by individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to racism, sexism, and ableism, to ensure fair treatment. We understand that people experience discrimination based on a combination of these factors and that these intersecting identities shape their experiences within the legal system. For example, a Black woman with a disability may face challenges and biases that are different from those faced by a white man with a disability. By acknowledging and addressing these intersections, our courts can work towards a more just and equitable system for all.
- 2. Leadership of Those Most Impacted:** We are dedicated to actively involving individuals with disabilities in decision-making processes and policy development. Inside the courtroom, this could involve ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to advocate for themselves and have their voices heard in legal proceedings. Outside of the courtroom, it could mean including individuals with disabilities in the development of policies that affect them, such as disability accommodations. By prioritizing the leadership of those most impacted, our courts can better address the diverse needs and experiences of all individuals with disabilities.
- 3. Economic Justice:** We champion for equity in economics and oppose systems that devalue individuals with disabilities for profit. We champion for policies that prioritize the well-being and dignity of people with disabilities over financial gain. This includes seeking increased funding and resources to support accessibility and identifying alternatives to legal financial obligations (LFO) for individuals with disabilities who are unable to pay. It also entails ensuring that economic barriers don't hinder access to legal representation

¹ Adapted from Sins Invalid's definition of Disability Justice at <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/news-1/2020/6/16/what-is-disability-justice>.

and challenging laws that perpetuate economic inequities for individuals with disabilities.

- 4. Cross-Movement Organizing:** We are dedicated to cross-movement organizing, which requires recognizing and addressing the interconnected nature of disability justice with other social justice issues. We will collaborate with organizations and movements that focus on racial justice, gender justice, LGBTQ+ rights, and other areas to address the systemic barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. For example, we will work with racial justice organizations to address the disproportionate impact of the legal system on people of color with disabilities. Working alongside other social justice movements will help our courts achieve broader systemic change.
- 5. Recognizing Wholeness:** We emphasize the inherent worth and dignity of individuals with disabilities, valuing their lived experiences and perspectives. We recognize that individuals with disabilities are whole people with valuable contributions to society. We respect the autonomy and agency of individuals with disabilities. Their voices must be heard and respected in legal proceedings.
- 6. Sustainability:** We champion for sustainable practices that support the long-term well-being of individuals with disabilities. This means ensuring that access to justice is not hindered by burnout or lack of resources. This includes supporting policies that provide support for individuals with disabilities to navigate the legal system, such as access to legal aid or support services.
- 7. Cross-Disability Solidarity:** We are dedicated to supporting cross-disability solidarity among individuals with disabilities, recognizing the diversity of experiences and needs within disability communities. We support for policies and practices that address the needs of all individuals with disabilities, regardless of their specific impairments. This includes supporting for accessible courtrooms, legal documents, and communication methods that meet the needs of individuals with a range of disabilities.

- 8. Interdependence:** We acknowledge and support the interdependence of individuals with disabilities, recognizing that mutual support and community care are essential for achieving justice. We recognize that individuals with disabilities may rely on support from others to access the legal system and we must ensure that legal processes are inclusive of these support networks.
- 9. Access & Accessibility:** We prioritize accessibility for individuals with disabilities, recognizing the value of flexible and creative approaches to reasonable accommodation. This means ensuring that courtrooms, legal documents, and communication methods are accessible to individuals with disabilities, including those with sensory, cognitive, and mobility impairments. This includes providing alternative formats for legal documents, such as Braille or large print, and ensuring that courtrooms are physically accessible to individuals with mobility impairments.
- 10. Inclusion:** We champion for the inclusion of all individuals, recognizing that no body or mind should be left behind in the pursuit of justice. We are working towards a court system that is inclusive and equitable for all individuals, regardless of their disability status or identity. This includes supporting policies and practices that address systemic discrimination and inequity, and promoting a court system that is responsive to the needs and upholds the rights of all individuals.