



Plain Language Edition

ASAN Strategic Goals 2021–2024

Overarching goals

Anti-racism

ASAN will focus on anti-racism in all our work. This includes advocacy work, programs, and the day-to-day operations of ASAN. We will make anti-racism a top priority. We will focus on three ideas for autistic people of color. We will focus on including autistic people of color in our work. We will make sure autistic people of color have representation in our work. We will promote equity (fairness) for autistic people of color.

- We will think about how the policy issues we work on affect disabled people of color. Some policy issues affect autistic people of color in much higher numbers than other autistics. We will find out about these policy issues and then work on them. Some of these issues are: police violence, immigration justice, and voting rights.
- ASAN will make resources to help self-advocates promote anti-racism and racial justice.
- ASAN will change the way we give leadership training. We will be more active in supporting the next generation of autistic leaders of color. ASAN will use our trainings to support the leadership of autistic people of color. We will make careful choices to make sure autistic leaders of color have what they need to succeed.
- ASAN will use our social media to share the words and work of disabled people of color. We will also use social media to share information about intersectional advocacy.
- ASAN will build partnerships with racial justice organizations. We will make stronger relationships with these organizations.
- ASAN will hire more autistic people of color to our staff. We will add more board members who are people of color. We will make sure we have good ways of running ASAN. We will run ASAN in a way that supports our values. We will run ASAN in a way that supports our staff and board members of color. We will run ASAN in a way that lines up with our focus on anti-racism.

All means All

ASAN will fight to include many kinds of autistic people in our work. We will fight to include non-speaking autistics and autistic people with intellectual disabilities. We will fight to include autistics who have survived being in institutions. We will fight to include autistic people with high support needs or more than one disability.

- ASAN will fight for policies that protect all autistic people. We will fight for policies that protect civil rights and human rights. We will fight for policies that include all autistic people in society. We will fight for policies that protect the dignity of all autistic people. We will fight for these policies to protect all autistic people. It doesn't matter if we have high support needs. It doesn't matter if we can speak out loud or not. It doesn't matter if we have more than one disability. ASAN will fight for every kind of autistic person.
- ASAN will fight to close every institution. We will fight to stop others from separating disabled people from non-disabled people. We will fight to stop others from taking advantage of disabled people. We will fight to stop others from having low expectations of disabled people. We will fight for these things for autistic people with the most significant disabilities.
- ASAN will make stronger relationships with different kinds of groups. We will make stronger relationships with groups that have AAC users in charge. We will make stronger relationships with groups led by people with intellectual disabilities. We will make stronger relationships with other disability rights groups. In particular, disability rights groups that help people with developmental disabilities.
- ASAN will add more staff and board members who use AAC. We will also add more people who have intellectual disabilities.
- We will keep working on Easy Read, videos, and other accessible resources. On top of that, we will focus even more on accessibility. We will find new ways to include autistic people who cannot access our resources right now.

- ASAN will tackle ableism inside our community. We will promote a culture of inclusive self-advocacy. This means self-advocacy that lifts up the voices of:
 - non-speaking autistics
 - autistic people with intellectual disabilities
 - people who have survived being in institutions
 - autistic people with high support needs or many disabilities.
- We will keep making these parts of our community a top priority. We will focus on their ideas and messages in the work we do. We will use social media to share their ideas and messages to a large audience.

Collaboration

ASAN will make our relationships with other civil rights organizations even stronger. We will build new connections and use our partnerships to serve our whole community.

- ASAN will build stronger relationships with LGBT organizations. We will build stronger relationships with reproductive rights and justice organizations. We will work together to promote policies that support the rights of autistic people of all genders and sexual orientations.
- ASAN will make our relationships with racial justice organizations stronger. We will also form new relationships with racial justice organizations. We will work together with these groups to fight for different kinds of policies. We will fight for policies to end police violence and mass incarceration (putting many, many people in jail and prison). We will fight to make an immigration system that is fair. We will fight to protect the civil rights of people of color and disabled people. We will fight to protect civil rights in education, housing, voting, and more.
- ASAN will keep focusing on cross-disability advocacy in our work. We will keep forming many relationships with lots of other disability organizations. We will push these groups to include more people with intellectual disabilities. ASAN will keep helping other disability organizations. We will help them be more accessible and include more people. We will make and share guides on how to make Easy Read documents.

Outreach

ASAN will use new ways to reach more people in underserved communities.

- ASAN will make it a top priority to reach parts of the autistic community that usually don't get reached. These parts of the community include:
 - people who don't have much internet access
 - people who don't use computers
 - people living in institutions and group homes
 - people in immigrant communities
 - people living on tribal lands
 - people in communities of color.

ASAN will reach out to these groups by working together with the people in these communities.

- ASAN will form relationships with groups that give services directly to these communities. We will work with these groups to help get resources to more people. We will make strong relationships with advocacy groups who work with these communities. For example, DD councils or People First groups.
- ASAN will work to make more of our resources available in printed formats. We will work to make more resources available in languages other than English.

Power

- ASAN will work to build the power of the autistic community.
- ASAN will show more of what we do “behind the scenes”. We will share what our day-to-day policy work looks like. We will share what relationships we’re making with other groups. We will share more so that our grassroots can find out how we’re doing on meeting our policy goals.
- ASAN will focus more on sharing the work of autistic people and groups whose work is about:
 - culture,
 - community, and
 - belonging.

We will focus more on connecting people to the people doing this important kind of work.

- ASAN will keep making tools about self-advocacy for our grassroots to use. We will build the autistic community’s ability to organize and get involved in advocacy in our local communities.
- ASAN will keep working to support local groups led by self-advocates. We will work with our affiliates to help make their groups stronger. We will help new leaders and groups to grow.
- ASAN will keep giving self-advocates ways to get involved in policy. For example, chances to tell Congress about important issues. We will make supports that help self-advocates get involved. We will help self-advocates make our community’s voice heard. ASAN will make our advocacy campaigns bigger and stronger. We will keep building power over time. We will build power until we are able to make decision-makers take action.

- ASAN will keep fighting to protect voting rights. We will fight for disabled people to have accessible and private ways to vote. We will fight for the right to vote even if you're under guardianship. We will keep working to get more disabled people to vote for whoever they choose. We especially want to get more people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to vote. We will make accessible resources about how to vote and why voting is important.

Policy goals

Nothing about us, without us

ASAN will work to make sure that autism policy and research help autistic people.

- Autistic people have needs. People with other developmental disabilities have needs. Our needs are mostly like each other's. Our civil rights are the same as civil rights for all disabled people. But most policies that focus on autism are out of date and limited. ASAN supports policies that help people with all kinds of disabilities. We think these policies are the best way to protect the rights of autistic people. Policies for all people with disabilities are the best way to meet the needs of autistic people. People will talk about policies that affect autistic people. People will make policies that affect autistic people. Autistic people should help shape these policies. We will make sure our community gets to shape these policies.
- A lot of autism research doesn't help autistic people. ASAN will fight for research that actually helps autistic people. We will fight for more research money for understanding and supporting autistic people of all ages. We will fight for less research money for trying to "prevent" autism. We will fight for less research money for trying to make autistic people seem non-autistic.
- The Autism CARES Act is a law that gives money to autism research and services. The government has to renew the law from time to time. ASAN will fight for changes in the law the next time the law gets renewed. A group called the IACC helps decide how to spend the money. We will fight for the IACC to add more autistic self-advocates. We will fight for more autism acceptance in the law instead of fear. We will fight for more money to go toward good autism research and less money for bad research.

- ASAN will fight the spread of ABA. We will fight for autistic children to have respectful supports that focus on them as a person. We will fight for them to have respectful supports instead of harmful therapy.
- ASAN will keep changing how people in our society talk about autism. We will work to make sure that the media shows autistic people in a truthful way. We will make sure there is correct, positive, and respectful information about autism. We will work to make sure families, autistic people, and everyone else can see this information.

Self-determination

ASAN will fight to make sure more and more autistic people have the basic tools we all need for self-determination.

- ASAN will work together with Congress and different high-level government groups. We will work together to get AAC to more people. We will work to make sure every autistic person has a way to communicate that works for them.
- ASAN will keep promoting supported decision making. We will focus on ways to make supported decision making accessible to more people. For example, people with the most significant intellectual disabilities, and the fewest resources. And, we will keep fighting to prevent, reduce, and finally get rid of guardianship.

Community living

ASAN will work to make sure that all disabled people can live in their own homes and community. We will work to make sure all disabled people have what they need to live a good life in the community.

- Right now, Medicaid pays for more services in institutions. Medicaid doesn't pay as much for services in the community. ASAN will work to get Medicaid pay for more Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). We will work to stop Medicaid from always giving more money to services in institutions. That way, more people can get services in their homes and communities.
- ASAN will fight for housing for autistic people. We will fight for better housing. The housing will cost less money. It will be accessible. And the housing will not separate autistic people from everyone else. ASAN will advocate for true community integration. People with disabilities will live in the same communities as non-disabled people. We will help the government put the HCBS Settings Rule in action. The HCBS Settings Rule says what counts as a real community and what is just an institution. We will fight to stop institutions from pretending they are real communities.
- ASAN believes that autistic people should be in control of our own services. We should get to make choices about the services we get in our communities. That is the only way to really be part of a community. We will work to make sure more autistic people and people with intellectual disabilities get to make these choices.
- ASAN will fight for big changes to Social Security and other programs. Right now, people with disabilities can only get services if they are poor. They have to stay poor to keep getting services. ASAN will fight to make sure disabled people don't have to stay poor to get services.

Ending violence

ASAN will fight to stop the many kinds of violence that autistic people face. Autistic people of color face violence a lot more often. ASAN will fight to stop these kinds of violence.

- ASAN will support new policies about the police. For example:
 - Policies that hold police officers accountable for violence
 - Policies that end qualified immunity. Qualified immunity means that you can't take police officers to court when they violate your rights.
 - Policies that stop police from having the same gear and weapons that the military uses.
 - Policies that reduce how much people of color and disabled people have to deal with the police. And, policies that reduce how often people of color and disabled people get sent to jail for no reason.
 - Policies that take money away from police and give money to different kinds of services.

We will not support changes that do not address the root causes of police violence. For example, national lists of police officers who have gotten in trouble. Or, unhelpful police "training".

- ASAN will fight for new ways of handling community safety. We will fight for ways that do not involve police or prisons. For example, community-based crisis services. Or, other programs that decrease how often people have to interact with police.

- ASAN will support policies to end mass incarceration. Mass incarceration means sending a huge number of people to jail and prison. We will support different programs that do not send lots of people to jail and prison. People of color with disabilities get sent to jail and prison in much higher numbers. We will support ways to keep people of color with disabilities in their communities instead. ASAN will support new ways of getting justice for people in our community who have been harmed. These new ways will not rely on lots of police and sending lots of people to jail and prison.
- ASAN will fight to ban restraint and seclusion in schools. We will do this by making Congress pass the Keeping All Students Safe Act. We will support other policies to keep students with disabilities safe as well. For example:
 - Ending the use of School Resource Officers
 - Stopping the School to Prison Pipeline
 - Stopping bullying.

And, we will work to end restraint and seclusion in other places. For example, institutions.

- ASAN will fight for policies to help autistic people of all ages be safe at home. For example:
 - Policies that work to end child abuse
 - Policies that work to improve child welfare and adult protective services
 - Policies that make sure autistic people can get domestic violence services and resources.
- We will fight to make sure parents with disabilities have the supports they need to parent their own children. We will fight to make sure that being a disabled parent is not seen as abuse.
- Hate crimes against disabled people happen. But they are not taken as seriously as hate crimes against non-disabled people. ASAN will fight for people to take hate crimes against disabled people just as seriously. We will keep fighting against filicide (when a relative or caregiver murders a disabled person). We will keep calling the filicide of disabled people a hate crime.

Protecting rights

ASAN will fight to protect disabled people's rights in every area of the law.

- ASAN will fight to end subminimum wage. The minimum wage is the lowest amount of money a job can give someone for working. Right now, the law says jobs can pay workers with disabilities even less than the minimum wage. We will fight to get disabled workers good wages.
- ASAN will work with our allies to defend the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We will protect the ADA from attacks and people in power trying to destroy it.
- ASAN will work to protect the rights of people with disabilities in different ways. We will work to protect the right to travel on airplanes. We will work to protect the right to use service and emotional support animals. We will work to protect the right to use assistive technology, like wheelchairs and AAC.
- ASAN will work to make sure the legal system treats people with disabilities fairly and respects our rights.
- ASAN will fight all kinds of discrimination against people with disabilities in health care.
- ASAN will keep building our legal center. We will make our legal center able to do more things. Then, our lawyers can directly represent more autistic people harmed by illegal discrimination.