

The National Career Development Association

Legislative Platform

The National Career Development Association (NCDA), a founding division of the American Counseling Association (ACA), established its first legislative agenda during the 2008 annual Global Conference in Washington, DC. Since 2008, NCDA has made public policy an important cornerstone of its work. In 2011, NCDA contracted with Advocacy Associates, a legislative policy firm based in Washington, DC. The firm now works closely with the NCDA Government Relations Committee and the American Counseling Association's Public Policy and Legislation Division to advocate for issues important to NCDA Members.

NCDA MISSION STATEMENT

The National Career Development Association (NCDA) inspires and empowers the achievement of career and life goals by providing professional development, resources, standards, scientific research, and advocacy. NCDA is a founding division of the American Counseling Association (ACA) and has over 5000 members.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Worker Employability and Self-Sufficiency: The dynamic nature of the ever-changing world of work requires access to career development resources and services for individuals at all ages and stages. In order for American workers to remain competitive and well-equipped to manage employment in a diverse global marketplace, NCDA advocates for the expansion of career services and programs. Through expanding career programs in our nation's education, labor, and workforce development systems (including K-12, community colleges, one-stop career centers, public-private partnerships, and others), career practitioners provide a pathway for workers to develop career maturity, skills for life-long career management, and a recognition of resources for use during times of career decision-making and transition.

Awareness and Relevance: To ensure the workforce is well-equipped to handle the challenges of the 21st Century workplace, the National Career Development Association advocates for programs, systems, and services that promote awareness of the career-decision making process, career resources and tools, and knowledge about the selection of highly qualified/licensed career practitioners. In order to achieve this goal, NCDA believes that each and every worker must recognize the relevance of career-decision making to their own circumstance and life situation. NCDA promotes and supports programs that seek to elevate awareness of career choice, decision-making, and the interplay between personal circumstance and the world of work.

Access to Career Education and Programs: We recognize that the continued acquisition of knowledge is important to the career success of all workers regardless of age and career stage. Therefore, NCDA advocates for comprehensive career education programs, delivered by trained practitioners, focused on building awareness of career fields (STEM, high-growth fields, green jobs, etc.), establishing a strong understanding of self (skills, values, interests), understanding the complex global economy, identifying pathways for success, and identifying "fit" within the world of work.

NCDA believes that the bases for life-long career management begins when youth gain knowledge related to career choice, pathways, and alternatives through a robust K-12 system that includes opportunities for exploration, practice, and alignment of career choice with personal goals and interests. This knowledge is then expanded and enhanced through access to strong career programs and systems in higher education (career services within a college or university setting), within the community (access to resources at a one-stop center), and provided to special populations (transition assistance programs through the military, AARP career programs, etc.).

Practitioner Preparation and Continued Professional Development: The National Career Development Association advocates for high-quality training programs and continued professional development for career practitioners. Specifically, NCDA seeks recognition of the skill and training required to provide career services to clients of all ages and stages by career counselors (practitioners with a master's or doctoral degree), career development practitioners (those credentialed as Global Career Development Facilitators – GCDF), and counselor trainers and supervisors (those in positions to supervise counselors based on their education, training, and experience). NCDA believes our nation's citizens deserve to be served by well-prepared career practitioners who are knowledgeable about: the helping relationship, ethics, professional practice, diversity and inclusion, special populations, career systems and resources, confidentiality, and the American education and workforce system.

2012-2013 Legislative Priorities

1. Awareness and Understanding

Increase awareness of:

- How career counseling can assist in addressing our nation's unemployment and underemployment issues related to a fluctuating and increasingly global economy
- The career decision-making process and the impact of career transition on mental health, self-sufficiency, relationships, and productivity
- The importance of K-12 career education and the impact it has on successful career transitions later in life
- The growing need to manage a career throughout the lifespan and the unique needs of individuals in career transition at all phases and states of life
- NCDA as an expert resource to local, state, and national policymakers on issues including career development, education and training, workforce sustainability, and other related topics

Vehicles to Increase Awareness:

- National Career Development Month – Congressional Record Statement, Letter to Members, Promotion of 100 Year Anniversary of the National Career Development Association
- Publications and Research from NCDA and NCDA Members – provide Congress, the Administration, and general public with highlights from research and publications on “hot topics” which establish NCDA and our members as a resource for policy-making
- Continued partnership with professional associations, especially the American Counseling Association, for the purpose of increasing our voice on issues of shared interest and importance

2. Access to Career Development Professionals and Resources

Support policies that:

- Maintain or expand funding for existing programs such as WIA, the Payroll Tax Extension and Benefits Act, and others that provide basic access to career practitioners and career services to the general population through one-stop centers, specialized programs, and services to specific population groups
- Assist workers in managing their careers over a lifetime and ensure access by workers to continued education, training, and career development
- Support career development services to specific segments of our workforce including veterans, the disabled, underemployed, and the long-term unemployed through the inclusion of career counseling or resource provisions in legislation such as the Transition Assistance Program managed by DOL, HHS, and the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Seek to continually refine, expand, and improve career resources provided by the Departments of Labor and Education (i.e., enhanced Occupational Outlook Handbook)
- Provide comprehensive career education in K-12 settings by updating and maintaining career development language in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

3. High Standards for Practitioner Preparation and Training

Support policies that:

- Ensure that individuals receiving career counseling services are provided with the highest quality services by a certified/licensed career development practitioner
- Recognize the Global Career Development Facilitator, Master Career Counselor, and Master Career Development Professional as highly-valued industry-standard certifications for career practitioners
- Establish the master's degree in counseling or psychology as the entry-level credential for anyone calling themselves a “career counselor”
- Advocate for recognition of the interconnectedness between career counseling and mental health counseling