



2012 Public Policy Platform*

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council will:

- ❖ Promote policies, programs, practices, and laws that further the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.
- ❖ Advocate to preserve and expand funding to support essential community supports and education services for children and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. Inform policymakers about the impact of budget decisions on people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ❖ Support innovation that improves services and supports and helps people with developmental disabilities exercise self-determination and lead productive, personally fulfilling lives.
- ❖ Advocate for people with developmental disabilities to enjoy the same rights afforded other citizens.

Early Intervention & Education

Advocate for interagency collaboration that results in a more integrated system of early care and education for all children, including those with developmental disabilities, and closes the school readiness gap.

Advocate for and promote legislation, regulations, policies, practices, and funding that result in more students with disabilities educated in the least restrictive environment, as required by state and federal law.

Advocate for funding for year-round early intervention services and the continuation of the birth through five system.

Through collaboration with MSDE, institutes of higher education and other stakeholders, promote and support strategies that better prepare general education teachers to teach students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Child Care & Out of School Time Activities

Advocate for policies, regulations, programs and training that result in families of children with developmental disabilities having access to quality, affordable child care that includes children with and without disabilities together.

Expanded and Improved Community Services

Advocate for alcohol tax revenue in FY 2013 to fund supports and services for people on DDA's Waiting List.

Advocate for community services funding policies and rates that promote the provision of person centered supports and ensure competitive wages for direct support staff.

Support the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative and advocate for DDA funding to serve all transitioning youth; i.e., youth with developmental disabilities exiting the school system who need day or employment support.

Advocate for additional funding for the Autism Waiver. Advocate for an evaluation of Autism Waiver services to determine the impact on quality of life.

Promote practices that support people with developmental disabilities to maximize the control they have over their own lives.

Evaluate the Developmental Disabilities Administration's Low Intensity Support Services and Family Support Services programs and advocate for improvements to expand their reach and maximize impact and quality.

Reducing and Eliminating Reliance on Institutions

Oppose new admissions to State Residential Centers (SRCs), support efforts to move residents to the community, advocate for the closure of SRCs, and support expansion of high quality community options.

Advocate for all people with developmental disabilities involved in the criminal justice system to be supported in the least restricted/most integrated setting with state-of-the-art, progressive services. Oppose funding to expand facility-based services.

Promote inclusive practices. Ensure that policymakers have accurate information, including the cost of institutional and community services, reports and research about where people's needs can most appropriately be met, and best and promising practices.

Empowerment, Leadership & Advocacy

Support people with developmental disabilities to advocate for themselves and others, develop leadership skills, exercise choice and control over their lives, and play a meaningful role in the development of public policies and community services that affect them.

Support and promote the development of self-advocacy skills by youth with developmental disabilities so they can effectively engage in decisions affecting their lives.

Support parents of people with developmental disabilities to advocate for their family's needs and the needs of others, develop leadership skills, and play a meaningful role in the development of public policies that affect them.

Civil Rights

Support and advocate for laws that ensure the rights of people with developmental disabilities are consistent with the rights afforded to all other Marylanders and are not violated.

Health

As Maryland implements health care reform, ensure that state health care policies, programs, and services provide people with developmental disabilities fair and equal access to affordable health care treatment, information, and options.

Promote the development of accessible and affordable dental services.

Employment

Advocate for policies and services that provide people with developmental disabilities competitive jobs they desire in the community that are not segregated, living wages with benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. Support effective implementation of Maryland's Employment First policy so that paid employment is the first service option considered for all people with developmental disabilities.

Promote and support the development of a system to measure employment outcomes.

Promote policies and practices that improve the processes schools use to help students with developmental disabilities successfully transition from school to work.

Post-Secondary Education

Promote a statewide needs assessment to determine what barriers exist in postsecondary education for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and what institutions of higher education need in order to improve outcomes for these students.

Housing

Advocate for, and support, policies and programs that result in more rental housing options that are accessible and affordable to people with developmental disabilities who have low incomes. This includes, but is not limited to, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, rental vouchers, expansion of Maryland's Bridge Subsidy Program, and utilizing federal funding opportunities.

Transportation

Advocate for an increase in the availability of reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Diversity

Advocate for people with developmental disabilities from underserved ethnic and cultural groups to have equal access to information and community resources.

** The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a federally funded public policy organization that advocates for the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.*

This platform represents the Council's public policy priorities, including the 2012 legislative session. The Council will be engaged in a range of other activities, as well. Issues are listed in random order.

This document is available in alternate formats.

217 E. REDWOOD STREET, SUITE 1300, BALTIMORE, MD 21202
410-767-3670 • 800-305-6441 • FAX: 410-333-3686 • MD RELAY: 711 • www.md-council.org
TOM WEBB, CHAIRPERSON • BRIAN COX, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
