



2010 Public Policy/Legislative Platform*

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council will:

- ❖ Promote quality policies, programs and practices that further the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.
- ❖ Advocate for funding to support essential community and educational supports and services. Oppose cuts to community and educational services for people with developmental disabilities and their families funded through the Developmental Disabilities Administration, State Department of Education and Department of Human Resources. The Council will inform policymakers about the impact of budget reductions on people with developmental disabilities and their families and advocate against cuts.
- ❖ Support innovation that improves services and supports and helps people with developmental disabilities exercise self-determination and lead productive, fulfilling lives.
- ❖ Advocate for people with developmental disabilities to enjoy the same rights afforded other citizens.

Education

Advocate for policies, practices and funding that support capacity building in Local School Systems, resulting in more students with disabilities educated in the least restrictive environment, as required by state and federal law.

Child Care

Advocate for policies and practices that result in families of children with developmental disabilities having access to quality, affordable child care that includes children with and without disabilities together and increases children's school readiness. This includes advocating for a quality improvement system that increases child care providers' knowledge and skills needed to include children with developmental disabilities.

Respite

Support innovative approaches to respite care so that families are able to obtain the support they need to care for a family member with a developmental disability.

Issues are listed in random order.

Waiting List for Community Services

Support the establishment of a dedicated revenue source that would fund community supports and services for more children and adults with developmental disabilities. In particular, support passage of legislation that would increase the state alcohol tax by approximately five-cents per drink with a portion of the funding dedicated to developmental disabilities. Thousands of children and adults with developmental disabilities need services that are essential for them to live and work in the community and for families to raise their children with disabilities at home.

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.

Funding of Community Supports and Services

Advocate for adequate funding for agencies that provide supports and services to people with developmental disabilities in the community. Community service providers have been historically under-funded and annual rate adjustments are necessary to ensure quality, individualized supports.

Expanding Community Capacity

Advocate for, and support, the development of more community services that promote and support integration and inclusion and are designed to meet the unique needs of each person. This includes specialized community supports for people with developmental disabilities who also have mental health needs, behavioral support services, and services designed to divert people involved in the court system from being unnecessarily institutionalized.

Reducing and Eliminating Reliance on Institutions

Oppose new admissions to State Residential Centers (SRCs), advocate for the closure of SRCs, and support expanded community options (see Expanding Community Capacity).

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.

Advocate for the development of more quality community-based respite options as alternatives to institutional-based respite care.

Empowerment, Leadership & Advocacy

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

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.

Support a range of activities that promote the development of new advocates and leaders who have developmental disabilities and are parents of people with developmental disabilities.

Advocate, including through legislation, for people with developmental disabilities and their family members to serve on task forces, commissions, councils and other public entities that influence critical public policy and programmatic decisions that affect people with developmental disabilities.

Support self-advocacy groups to be active and effective.

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

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. This includes preventative care.

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.

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, utilization of Maryland's Bridge Subsidy Program, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program, and rental vouchers. Advocate for viable homeownership opportunities.

Transportation

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

** 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 2010 legislative session. The Council will be engaged in a range of other activities, as well.

This document is available in alternate formats.