

## **The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council**

### **Equal Access to Information and Resources: Research Project**

#### **Request for Letters of Interest**

#### **Purpose**

*The purpose of this project is to determine if people with developmental disabilities and their families from the Hispanic community in Maryland have equal access to information and resources from specified disability service systems as other people with developmental disabilities and their families; to determine the “state of the state” on this issue and develop recommendations for improvements.*

#### **Background**

The State of Maryland has a population rich in ethnic diversity. The Council advocates for people with developmental disabilities and their families from all backgrounds to have equal access to community services, individualized supports, resources and other forms of assistance that are made available to others in the community. Services and supports should be provided in a culturally competent manner that demonstrates respect for individual dignity and personal preferences.

#### **Scope of Work**

The successful applicant for the Equal Access to Information and Resources research project will recommend cost-effective strategies to improve and/or expand access to information and resources in Maryland.

Scope of work must include but is not limited to the following criteria:

- research should specifically focus on the Hispanic population
- research should take place in diverse geographical areas of the State, including rural areas
- research should address issues, needs, barriers, opportunities and promising practices

Disability service systems that should be included in the research:

- Early Intervention (Infants & Toddlers)
- Public school systems, especially special education services and services related to transitioning youth
- Developmental Disabilities Administration and Resource Coordination

A study of the gateways to all of the above systems/organizations to determine:

- the outreach capacity of each system/organization
- if systems/organizations have the knowledge and resources needed to properly serve diverse populations
- whether the systems/organizations utilize culturally competent practices

If possible, research should include general data collected about other major linguistic groups in Maryland.

The recommendation and final report are due within one year of the award date.

### **How to Apply**

Submit a letter of interest to the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council. Your letter should include the following:

- your experience in conducting multicultural research
- your proposed approach or strategy for collecting and analyzing information, including which counties will be researched and why
- a potential list of the people or organizations who will be contacted by the researcher(s)
- general budget information identifying major projected expenditures; a specific line item budget will be required later; only if a full proposal is requested

Please limit your letter of interest to no more than 5 pages.

### **Deliverables**

1. A written report of findings with recommendations specific to Maryland addressing issues, needs, barriers, opportunities and promising practices regarding equal access to information and resources for people of Hispanic background with developmental disabilities and their families.
2. Electronic and hard copies of all materials developed as a result of this project, e.g., findings on specific organizational policies/procedures, surveys, statistical data and lessons learned must be submitted along with an executive summary.

### **Funds Available**

The total available funding for this one year, one-time initiative is \$25,000.

### **Who Can Submit Proposals**

Independent researcher(s) or research organizations that have related expertise in conducting a focused community assessment regarding cultural competent practices.

### **Council Process**

1. A Council committee will review all Letters of Interest that are submitted by the deadline.
2. The committee will select applicants who qualify to participate in a face-to-face interview with Council staff and committee members.
3. The chosen applicant must be approved by the full Council.

### **Letters of Interest Deadline**

Letters of Interest for the Equal Access to Information and Resources research project are due to the Council office by Friday June 26, 2009 no later than 4:00 p.m. Please submit one signed letter, one hard copy and an electronic version (Microsoft Word). Send the hard copies to:

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

217 E. Redwood St., Suite 1300

Baltimore, MD 21202

(410) 767-3670

Electronic copies should be emailed to:

[info@md-council.org](mailto:info@md-council.org)