



CURRENT INITIATIVES

ADVOCACY

Enhancing Self-Advocacy and Public Policy Work ***People On the Go of Maryland (POG)***

POG, a group of advocates with developmental disabilities, is supported by the Council and the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD). The group advocates for people with developmental disabilities and educates people with developmental disabilities through leadership trainings and mentoring opportunities. The group is also a driving force behind legislative changes in the state to ensure people with disabilities have equal rights and opportunities.

Professional Development and Coaching: Cultivating Youth Leadership and Self-Advocacy ***Tilson & Diaz Solutions, Inc.***

The purpose of this initiative is to increase the capacity of local school system professionals to ensure active student engagement in the transition process and to promote the self-advocacy skills of transition age youth that will be using the newly developed Digital Transition Portfolio. Tilson & Diaz Solutions is working with three pilot school systems – Anne Arundel, Caroline, and Carroll Counties – so that transition professionals in those counties will be able to train and mentor their colleagues in their counties and statewide.

CHILD CARE

Building Capacity through Technical Assistance ***Abilities Network***

This initiative provides intensive, customized technical assistance to child care providers throughout Maryland to increase their skills, knowledge, and capacity. As a result of this investment, more children with developmental disabilities and



special health care needs will be in child care settings alongside children without disabilities. Abilities Network will increase the capacity of child care providers statewide using three major components: Strategy, Action, and Reflection (STAR). The project uses reflective coaching and requires the participation of child care program directors and classroom staff so the strategies learned are retained and benefit many children. By the project's conclusion, at least 225 technical assistance sessions will be facilitated.

EMPLOYMENT

Transforming and Improving Practices through Customized Technical Assistance, (TIP grants)

Service Providers throughout Maryland

TIP grants provide funding to improve employment outcomes of people with developmental disabilities by funding customized technical assistance for community service providers licensed by the Developmental Disabilities Administration. The grants allow providers to improve the way services are provided, building their capacity so that more people with developmental disabilities are supported to obtain and keep the meaningful work they want in their communities and to have meaningful days when not working. The Council has recently funded two rounds of TIP grants to the following organizations: *Appalachian Parent Association; Bay Community Support Services; CHANGE, Inc.; CHI Centers; Head Injury Rehabilitation & Referral Services; Humanim & Compass (jointly funded); Itineris; Providence Center; Spring Dell Center; The Arc of Howard County; The Arc Prince George's County; The Arc Southern Maryland, The Arc of Washington County; Bayside Community Network; Community Living, Inc.; Gallagher Services; Melwood; Opportunity Builders; Rehabilitation Opportunities; The Arc Baltimore; The Arc Central Chesapeake Region; The Arc Montgomery County.*



Employment Publication: Success Stories

In-house initiative

The Council is developing a publication that highlights the employment success stories of people with developmental disabilities, sharing the perspectives of people with disabilities, families, direct support professionals, and employers. By addressing topics such as safety, dignity of risk, and opportunities in rural areas, the publication will allay fears and negative perceptions and help to improve attitudes about employment and meaningful opportunities for people with developmental disabilities throughout the entire state.

Employment Certification Trainings

MD Works, Inc.

The Council has partnered with MD Works to co-sponsor ACRE Approved Basic Community Employment Certification Trainings for direct support professionals to assist people with disabilities in their job development and discovery. A total of 50 professionals, mostly in rural areas of the state, will be certified. The training focuses on increasing and enhancing development of the Employment First Initiative key competencies for direct support staff.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

My Support

My Support, Inc.

This initiative assists with start-up costs for MySupport to become operational in Maryland. MySupport is an online provider directory platform that people with disabilities and their families can use to find support staff.



RAISING EXPECTATIONS

Awareness Campaign

In-house initiative

The purpose of this initiative is to identify challenges and create strategic messaging to increase expectations of people with developmental disabilities. The Council convened a think tank of people with developmental disabilities, professionals, and educators to discuss ideas surrounding expectations and worked with a designer/communications professional to develop an awareness campaign to spread the message of increasing expectations of people with developmental disabilities.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Southern Maryland LEADers

The Parents' Place of Maryland

This project provides leadership training in Southern Maryland for parents of children with developmental disabilities and ensures ongoing engagement by participants in advocacy and leadership.