



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

▶ HIGHLIGHTS

2018 Annual Report

Empowerment, Opportunity, Inclusion







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A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



2018: TRANSFORMATION EVERYWHERE

Dear friends and colleagues,

Transformation is happening everywhere in Maryland! We are making great progress in meeting our goals of supporting people with developmental disabilities and their families to lead the lives they want, participate in meaningful ways in community life, and effectively advocate for themselves and others.

Significant accomplishments this year include:

- ▶ Expanding capacity building for employment supports through TIP grants, which this year included 10 additional providers. With that support, 94 people gained employment or increased hours, and were engaged in meaningful community activities when not working. Providers were also able to make organizational changes that will continue to improve employment outcomes.
- ▶ Co-sponsoring a record-breaking Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature with 800 registrants and 1,200 participating via live streaming.
- ▶ Bringing technical assistance to more than 100 child care providers throughout Maryland to increase inclusion. So far 140 children with developmental disabilities and their families have benefited.
- ▶ Increasing awareness of the importance of raising expectations and why that matters, reaching close to 15,000 people.

Transformation happens when child care providers gain knowledge and skills that enable them to welcome and support more children with disabilities. People's expectations are transformed when they get jobs or increase their work hours and when providers are able to improve employment outcomes. This past year, we have supported a wide range of transformational efforts and initiatives.

Even as we celebrate our accomplishments, there is still much work to be done to expand opportunities, widen the availability of resources, and empower people to bring about change that enables them to create the lives they want.

That is, in fact, our ongoing goal: to have a transformational impact in areas where change is needed.

Sincerely,

Kalani Brown
CHAIRPERSON

Brian Cox
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council envisions a state where all people with developmental disabilities exercise control over their lives, reach their full potential, and lead healthy, fulfilling lives with enriching relationships.

OUR MISSION

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's mission is to advance the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life by eliminating barriers, creating opportunities, empowering people, and promoting innovation.

TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION, THE COUNCIL:

- ▶ Educates and informs policymakers about issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ▶ Advocates for policies, practices, laws, and services that support people with developmental disabilities to exercise control over their lives, reach their full potential, and lead productive, meaningful lives.
- ▶ Designs and funds initiatives that increase community inclusion, improve services and supports, and increase opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to pursue their hopes, dreams, and aspirations.
- ▶ Promotes innovative approaches to supporting people to live, learn, work, and enjoy community life.
- ▶ Advocates for the elimination of barriers that create separation and segregation and limit opportunities for full inclusion and community participation.
- ▶ Raises public awareness about people's contributions and capabilities so differences are respected, attitudes change, and inclusion and equality become an expectation.
- ▶ Supports people with developmental disabilities and their family members to develop advocacy and leadership skills to affect change in their own lives and the lives of others.

The Council works in partnership with people with developmental disabilities and their families, as well as other individuals and organizations, to bring about lasting change. We develop five-year state plans that establish our priorities and serve as a roadmap for accomplishing our goals.

Who We Are

A small staff works on behalf of the Council to carry out its mission and address the priorities and goals established in the Council's five-year state plan. The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is part of a network of developmental disability councils.

Stay Connected

To learn more about the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and our work, visit our website:

md-council.org

For the latest news and information, sign up for email news on the home page.

Follow us on:

 Facebook (facebook.com/MDDDCouncil/)

 Twitter ([@MdDDCouncil](https://twitter.com/MdDDCouncil))



ADVOCACY

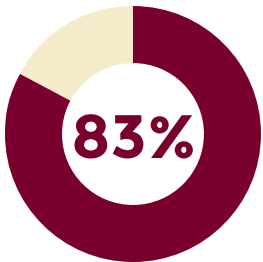
A SEAT AT THE TABLE

The Council works with people with developmental disabilities to make sure that they lead the way in collectively and strategically advocating to shape the laws, regulations, policies, programs, and practices that affect their lives and their futures. We do this through funding, guidance, training, and related efforts. These initiatives represent the work we did in the past year.

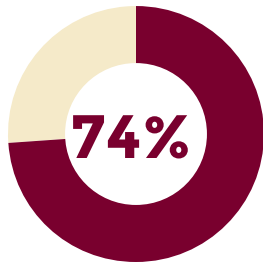
With the support of a \$100,000 grant from the Council, People on the Go of Maryland (POG), a statewide advocacy group led by people with disabilities, **widened and deepened its advocacy and education efforts** as more organizations requested their expertise and leadership. POG provided training to 127 people with developmental disabilities and expanded its outreach this year to increase advocacy in Maryland's Latino communities. POG also went outside Maryland's borders to provide training in sustainability and best practices for an emerging self-advocacy group in North Dakota.

Through the Youth Leadership Forum, which is funded in part by the Council, students with disabilities experienced college life and learned leadership skills that will enable them to create positive change in their communities. In 2018, a visit to Annapolis to meet with legislators provided **an opportunity for the students to put their newly learned leadership and advocacy skills to work**. As part of that experience, they also learned how to prepare and present legislative testimony and participated in mock hearings.

AFTER THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM:



of students reported that they were likely to increase their advocacy.



of students reported that they see themselves as effective organizers for the disability rights movement.

LEADERSHIP

A STRONG CLEAR VOICE

Providing people with developmental disabilities and their family members opportunities to develop the leadership and advocacy skills they need to be strong voices for the change they want to see in their lives and their communities is one of the Council's core objectives. To provide those opportunities, the Council invests in initiatives that provide leadership training. These are the key initiatives we supported in 2018.

A \$36,700 grant from the Council enabled Parents' Place of Maryland to provide training, through its Southern Maryland LEADers Initiative, in 2018 to **21 family members in underserved St. Mary's, Charles, and Calvert counties that prepared them to take on leadership and advocacy roles within their communities.** Trainees have already reported ongoing leadership and advocacy through their support of other families and participation in local Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee meetings and support groups. The Initiative continues to support them in their leadership roles through mentoring and follow-up activities, like webinars, face-to-face meetings, and presentations.

The Council provided a \$100,000 grant to The Arc Maryland to administer the **Partners in Policymaking program, to train a new generation of leaders in Maryland.** Partners in Policymaking is the most prominent leadership development program for individuals with disabilities and their families in the country. State and national experts are teaching a class of 30 participants—nine individuals with developmental disabilities and 21 family members—best practices and competencies needed to advocate for change.

"This is a valuable training with proven results—graduates of LEADers are more effective members of local Special Education Citizens Advisory Committees."

**—Branch Chief for Interagency Collaboration Maryland
State Department of Education**



EDUCATION AND CHILD CARE

OPEN DOORS

As a result of the Council's policy efforts and grant making to support capacity building, Maryland's children with disabilities and their families have more opportunities to access high-quality, inclusive early care and education. These accomplishments represent our efforts in 2018.

With \$75,000 in Council funding, Abilities Network provided **intensive customized technical assistance to child care providers statewide** to enable them to care for children with developmental disabilities and special healthcare needs alongside children without disabilities. The long-lasting knowledge and skills gained by these providers will result in more children with disabilities being welcomed and supported over the coming years.

As a result of **the Council's presentation to the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission)** about issues that affect young children with disabilities, the Commission added stronger anti-discrimination language, specifically including disability, to its recommendations. The Commission also

recommended a priority in expansion of prekindergarten for children receiving special education services.

The Council was appointed to the **Workgroup for Prekindergarten to Grade 2 Prohibition on Suspension and Expulsion**. The Workgroup made recommendations to the State Board of Education on new regulations; helped develop new guidance documents to implement the prohibition on suspension and expulsion; and provided information and resources about best practices to support children in schools in a positive way.

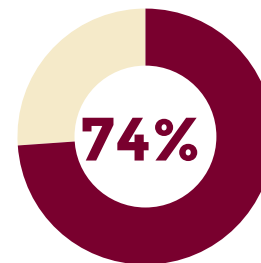
"The inclusion specialist has helped me put in place strategies and implement procedures that have not only benefited the individual child with special needs but all of my students."

—Ms. Kim, Toddler teacher, Baltimore County

AS A RESULT OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY ABILITIES NETWORK:

140 children with disabilities have benefited.

123 childcare providers reported they are more likely to care for children with developmental disabilities.



74% of providers showed an increase in how ready they felt to include children with special needs.

FAMILY SUPPORT

A VITAL ROLE

Families are often the sole source of support for people with developmental disabilities, from infancy into adulthood, a role that requires a range of critical supports. In 2018, the Council continued its partnership with the Developmental Disabilities Administration and a diverse leadership team to support the Community of Practice (CoP) for Supporting Families.

The Community of Practice facilitates and supports coalitions of families and state and local organizations to improve policies, practices, and services to better assist and support families. The Maryland Community of Practice increased the capacity and competencies of the statewide leadership team and **strengthened the development and sustainability of nine local CoPs.**

The Council also funded the printing of 3,000 resource folders, *Strategies for a Good Life*, developed by the statewide leadership team. The folder identifies basic supports and services available to families across the lifespan.

3,000 people
received family
support resources.



EMPLOYMENT

MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES

The Council continues its role as a strong partner, leader, and advocate working for increased employment, fair wages, and meaningful activities in the community for people with disabilities. We work with state agencies, community organizations, and others to educate stakeholders, including employers, parents, providers, and people with disabilities, to reduce negative perceptions that create barriers to those opportunities. Our combined advocacy in this arena will create lasting systemic change. In 2018, our efforts included these initiatives.

By **funding 10 more TIP grants**, totaling \$96,405, in the past year, the Council and Maryland Works supported more providers to transform how they help people get and keep employment. As a result, in 2018, 94 people with developmental disabilities, including those in rural parts of the state, gained employment, increased their work hours, and/or engaged in meaningful community activities when not working. In addition, the 13 TIP grants funded in 2017 continued to have an impact in 2018, with 130 more people with developmental disabilities working in competitive employment and 200 people more engaged in the community and having meaningful days when not working. Agency-wide changes made by the organizations that received funding have already produced results in improved staffing structures, policies and procedures, and the continued closure of sheltered workshops.

420 **people** with developmental disabilities have gained employment, are engaged in the community, and/or are having meaningful days when not working since TIP funding began.

Also in partnership with Maryland Works, Inc., the Council funded a set of three Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) **trainings that focused on job development and customized employment for employment service providers** located in southern and western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore. A total of 85 employment support professionals took the training and received certification.

The Council actively participated in **the Equal Employment Act Workgroup** that was established through legislation to develop a plan to phase out the use of subminimum wage in Maryland for individuals with disabilities by October 2020. The Council provided comprehensive feedback about best practices and available resources for continued implementation of the plan that was included in the workgroup's 2018 annual report.

The Council also began work on *What Matters*, a collection of stories about people with developmental disabilities who work and have meaningful days in their communities. Their stories illustrate how success comes when the right planning, support, and expectations are in place and will be a useful educational tool in many settings. *What Matters* will be available in 2019.

"I feel more empowered to be more effective now with how I approach my job."

–Employment support professional who received ACRE training

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

NOTHING LESS THAN FULL INCLUSION

The Council has long been a leading advocate for systemic change that enables the full inclusion of children and adults with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life and provides the supports they need to actively participate in their communities. We do this by helping to shape legislation and policies that affect people with developmental disabilities and their families. These are the highlights of our advocacy work in 2018.

The Council **provided testimony on 80 bills** on a wide range of issues and **monitored another 101** during the 2018 legislative session. Numerous Council members testified. One of our successes was advocating for removal of old language from Maryland's alcohol laws in eight counties that prohibited the sale of alcohol to people with intellectual disabilities.

Another success for the disability community came with passage of a bill that prohibited the Maryland ABLE program "clawback" that had allowed the state to claim funds from an ABLE account holder's account upon their death as reimbursement for Medicaid services provided. The bill's passage removes a significant deterrent that

kept individuals from opening ABLE accounts and loved ones from contributing to those accounts. Kay Han, Council member, summed up the impact when she testified, "This bill will ensure that the program meets its full potential."

Council staff served on **21 statewide committees, commissions, and councils** to impact issues across multiple areas of emphasis and across the lifespan.

Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature, which the Council sponsors with the Developmental Disabilities Coalition, broke attendance records again in 2018, with 800 people registered. Approximately 1,200 people joined us via Facebook Live. People with developmental disabilities, family members, advocates, and service providers came together to hear from legislative leaders and get briefings on key bills before they dispersed to meet with their legislators — all 188 of them. Simultaneous Spanish interpretation and the availability of briefing materials in Spanish widened the opportunity for participation by diverse groups.

2,000 **people** participated in DD Day at the Legislature in person or remotely.

"I am 29 years old. Everyone who has a disability wants to be treated like everyone else, including having a drink every once in a while. I vote. I have a job. I pay taxes. I am an adult and I expect to be treated as one."

—Meghan Jones, Council member



KNOWLEDGE

A SOURCE FOR RESOURCES

One of the Council's key roles is getting needed information into the right hands. In 2018, we made information available through a number of channels.

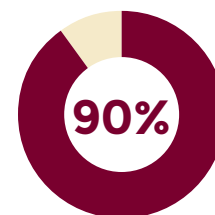
Working with Disability Rights Maryland and the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities, we finalized **informational sheets in English and Spanish about the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) service system**. Topics include:

- ▶ Overview of the DDA
- ▶ DDA Waiting List
- ▶ Coordinators of community service
- ▶ Person-centered planning

The Council produced a **new edition of *Planning Now*, our comprehensive planning guide, in English and Spanish**.

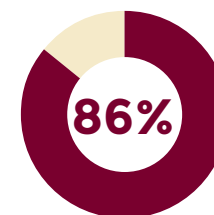
In partnership with the Maryland ABLE program, we funded development of **a user-friendly guide to the Maryland ABLE program** to make the program more widely accessible. The guide will be available in 2019.

The Council also sponsored **two webinars about the special education process** that drew 300 registrants. Our first-ever legislative session wrap-up call provided information about key bills and budget issues and answered participants' questions.



of webinar participants

reported a positive impact on the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their family members.



of the participants

in the legislative session wrap-up call thought it was "very useful/informative."

AWARENESS

AN INVITATION TO EXPECT ABILITY

Building on the 2017 launch of our awareness campaign, the Council added new strategies in 2018 built on “Expectations Matter Expect Ability” messaging to challenge people to think about the critical importance of expectations and how our assumptions and behaviors may impede the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities.

From social media and new publications to events and making the message available to other organizations, **we spread the word that “Expectations Matter,” with the goal of evolving from “awareness campaign to conversation to way of thinking,”** as one Council member noted.

These are some of the strategies we used in 2018 to infuse the expectations message into our communications:

- ▶ Used social media to reach more than 5,000 people with personal stories from Council members reflecting on how expectations matter in their lives.
- ▶ Made 17 resources specific to the “Expectations Matter” campaign on topics ranging from parenting and education to employment available on the Council’s website. In 2018, over 500 people accessed the resources.
- ▶ **Promoted the campaign across several media outlets during Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month**, including WYPR, the public radio station in Baltimore, which averages 220,000 listeners per week and Baltimore’s Child Magazine, which has a print readership of 147,000.
- ▶ Made “Expectations Matter Expect Ability” the theme of our fifth annual photo/story contest, weaving in the power of storytelling to raise awareness and affect change, reaching more than 15,000 people on social media.

15,000

people

viewed Expectations Matter messaging on social media.



SMALL GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

AN INVESTMENT IN EMPOWERMENT

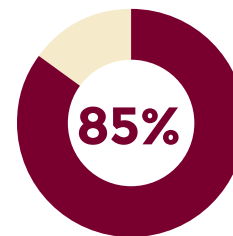
The Council also funded a diverse array of small grants and education and training sponsorships throughout Maryland to increase the knowledge and skills of people with developmental disabilities, family members, professionals, and the general public. In 2018, this included support of these events, initiatives, and workshops.

- ▶ Wor-Wic Community College **held an event in Wicomico County to promote awareness, inclusion, and empowerment** of people with developmental disabilities, which drew 80 people.
- ▶ Hispanic Community Resources implemented the **Advocacy 101 Project**, a leadership development initiative for people with developmental disabilities and family members whose primary language is Spanish.
- ▶ Shared Support Maryland's **Raising Awareness, Engagement and Action in Self-Direction initiative** trained support brokers, people with disabilities, and family members.
- ▶ The Arc Maryland's **"Together We're Better" inclusive awareness campaign and artwork contest** in elementary and middle schools raised awareness of the value and importance of diversity in our schools.

- ▶ A local self-advocacy leader started **a new self-advocacy group** in Western Maryland.
- ▶ The Arc Prince George's County's **Ready@21 Program** offered six Transition 101 workshops to 80 parents.
- ▶ **Honestly Autism Day**, organized by the Baltimore Chesapeake Autism Society, provided information, resources, and support to 475 attendees.
- ▶ Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance in Kent County helped teachers, school administrators, day care directors, and others to learn how to effectively include students with disabilities in arts education settings through its **Accessibility in Arts training**.
- ▶ **The Arc Maryland Convention** engaged 300 attendees in sessions ranging from accessing community opportunities to voter's rights.
- ▶ The **28th ADA Anniversary Celebration** promoted inclusive employment practices.

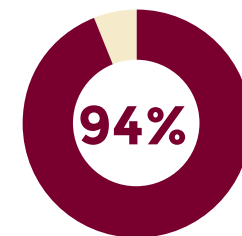
"I will use the information from the breakout sessions to initiate important conversations with my child."

—Parent who attended Honestly Autism Day



of the Ready@21 Transition 101 workshop participants

reported that what they learned will help them increase their advocacy.



of attendees

said the Wor-Wic College event improved their awareness, acceptance, respect, and appreciation of people with developmental disabilities.

2018 BY THE NUMBERS



3,928

people trained
through Council-
supported initiatives



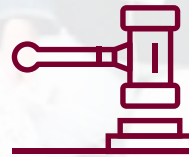
25

programs/
policies created
or improved



21

committees/councils served
on to improve policies,
programs, and practices



188

legislators educated
about issues related to
developmental disabilities



26,610

members of general
public educated
about developmental
disability issues



123

child care providers
received training and
technical assistance

LOOKING FORWARD

2019 AND BEYOND

The Council is investing in new and diverse initiatives to broaden our impact. These include:

Ready @ 5: With Council support, Ready @ 5 is expanding its Parent Leadership Learning Parties across the state. The learning parties provide important leadership and advocacy skills to parents/caregivers of children with and without disabilities so they can take active roles in their children's schools and in their communities.

Nurse Consultation and Coaching Demonstration Project: The Council provided funding to PACT: Helping Children with Special Needs for this demonstration project, which provides an experienced pediatric registered nurse to train, coach, and consult with 50 licensed child care providers in the Baltimore metro area. With increased knowledge and skills, they will be able to care for children with developmental disabilities who have special healthcare needs in inclusive child care settings. Lessons learned will be used to expand the nurse consultation model statewide.

Transforming and Improving Practices (TIP) Grants: The Council will again partner with MD Works to award TIP grants to more organizations to help them improve how they support people to get and keep employment.

Southern Maryland Provider Technical Assistance: Through technical assistance and training, this project is helping 10 providers in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's counties undertake organizational

change so they are able to better support more people with developmental disabilities to get and keep meaningful work and to have meaningful days when not working.

Person-Centered Planning: The Council will fund the development of a person-centered planning guide and training for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Police Training: Council funding will be used to provide stipends to trainers with developmental disabilities who participate in law enforcement training.

Training Parents to Serve on Advisory Councils: The Council will fund Parents' Place of Maryland to train parents of children with disabilities to effectively serve on Local Interagency Coordinating Councils and Special Education Citizen Advisory Committees.

Creating a Spanish Maryland ABLE Guide: The Council will fund a Spanish version of the guide to understanding the Maryland ABLE program.

Expanding "Expectations Matter Expect Ability": Thanks to the success and reach of our awareness campaign, the Council plans to expand its message to reach more people, with the guidance and expertise of a diverse group of advisors.

MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL MEMBERS & STAFF

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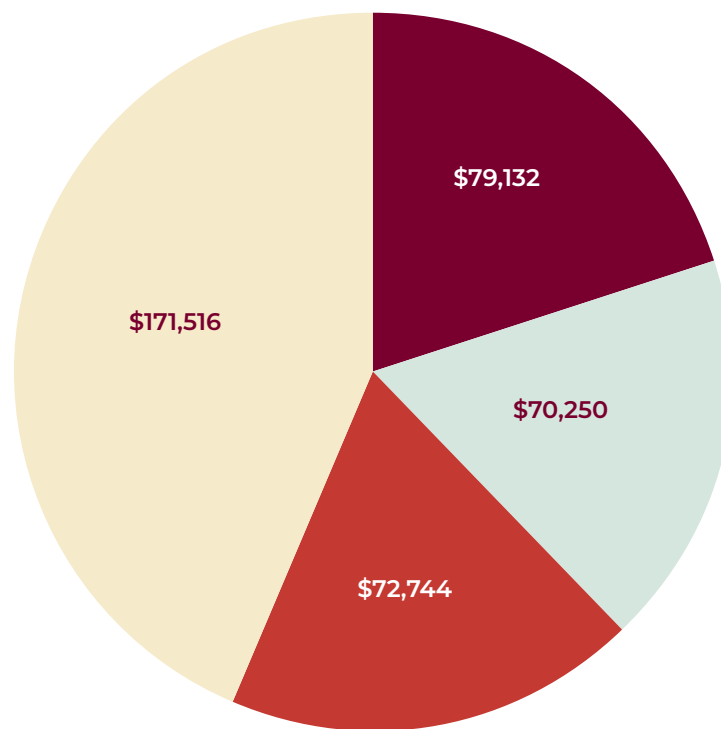
Shawan Pearson
Administrative Coordinator

INVESTMENTS IN MARYLAND

The Council considers our grant funding to be an investment that builds a better and more inclusive community, ultimately building a stronger Maryland.

- Family and Community Supports
- Employment
- Child Care and Education
- Leadership and Advocacy

**obligated and/or expended in FY2018*





**Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council**

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