



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

# Public Policy Platform 2020

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.

**#ExpectationsMatter**  
**#ExpectAbility**

The DD Council works 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. Specifically, we:

- Provide information and analysis to policymakers about issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families so they make informed decisions.
- Work to shape public policy, change attitudes, and improve services and supports that are essential to children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- Advocate for policies, laws, and services that support people with developmental disabilities to exercise control over their lives, reach their full potential, and lead productive, meaningful lives.
- Seek to preserve and expand funding to support essential community supports, early intervention, and education services for children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- Advocate for the elimination of barriers that create separation and segregation and limit opportunities for full inclusion and community participation.
- Advocate for people with developmental disabilities to enjoy the same rights afforded others.

Contact the DD Council for information, perspective, ideas, or analysis about legislation as it relates to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

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Note: Developmental disabilities are disabilities that manifest during the developmental years (before age 22) and have a significant and ongoing impact on an individual's life. Examples include, but are not limited to autism, intellectual disability, and cerebral palsy.

## Early Childhood Education

Advocate for and support policies, programs, laws, funding, training, and technical assistance that increase access to high quality, inclusive early childhood education and the services and supports children with disabilities need to learn and play alongside children without disabilities, and prepare them for school.

## Education

Promote and support legislation, regulations, policies, and funding that result in more students with disabilities educated in the least restrictive environment with access to the general education curriculum, appropriate assessments, and the services and supports needed to succeed, as required by state and federal law.

Promote and support strategies that prepare teachers to teach students with disabilities alongside students without disabilities.

Promote policies and practices that improve what schools, state agencies, service providers, and others do to help students with developmental disabilities successfully transition from high school to work, college, and the adult service system.

## Post-Secondary Education

Support efforts to develop and expand post-secondary education options, including dual enrollment programs that provide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities with meaningful access to academics and campus life.

## Expanded and Improved Community Supports & Services

Advocate for and support policies and program changes that result in improved services and supports for people with developmental disabilities.

Advocate for increased funding to reduce the Developmental Disabilities Administration's waiting list for community supports and services, so more people receive the supports and services they need. Currently, over 4,300 people are waiting.

Advocate for an annual funding allocation for DDA to serve all new "transitioning youth" -- youth with developmental disabilities exiting the school system who need support to work and have meaningful days when not working.

Advocate for provider rates necessary to ensure the provision of individualized, person-centered supports, and competitive wages for direct support staff.

Promote policies, services, and supports that result in people with developmental disabilities maximizing control over their own lives.

Support initiatives that build the capacity of community providers to support people with developmental disabilities to live, work, and meaningfully engage in their communities.

## Supported Decision Making

Support efforts that establish a process for Supported Decision Making that is recognized and accepted in Maryland. Supported Decision Making (SDM) promotes autonomy and independence by allowing people with disabilities to make choices about their own lives with support from a network of people they know and trust.

## Supporting Families

Work with local and state partners to increase the availability of formal and informal supports to families of individuals with developmental disabilities across the lifespan.

Advocate for legislation that establishes a paid family and medical leave insurance program in Maryland. Access to paid family and medical leave is an important part of the range of supports people with developmental disabilities and their families need.

## Eliminating Reliance on Institutions

Support efforts to move the (under 100) residents in Maryland's two remaining institutions for people with intellectual disabilities to the community, advocating closure so Maryland can join the states that no longer finance state-operated institutions for people with intellectual disabilities.

Support expansion of high quality community options.

## Employment

Advocate for policies and services that increase opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to have jobs they want, in the community, alongside co-workers without disabilities.

Support, monitor, and advocate for effective implementation of the state's phase out of subminimum wages for people with disabilities (2016 Equal Employment Act). Concurrently, support and advocate for policies, initiatives, and services that lead to more employment and other meaningful community-based activities when people are not working.

Support implementation of Maryland's Employment First policy so that paid employment is the first option considered for all people with developmental disabilities.

Engage in and support education and awareness strategies that increase people with developmental disabilities and their families' understanding and support for community-based employment.

## Empowerment, Leadership, and Advocacy

Support people with developmental disabilities and their family members throughout Maryland to advocate for themselves and others, develop leadership skills, exercise choice and control over their lives, and play a meaningful role in shaping public policies, programs, and services that affect them.

Support and promote education, training, and information dissemination to increase skills, knowledge, and understanding of issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

## Healthcare

Support medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare policies and services that address the needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities.

## Housing

Advocate for and support policies, programs, and funding that result in more rental housing options that are accessible and affordable to people with developmental disabilities who have low incomes. Support the establishment of innovative housing options that are fully integrated in the general community.

## Transportation

Support policies and funding allocations that will increase the availability of reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation.

## Civil Rights

Support and advocate for public policy and laws that guarantee people with developmental disabilities the same rights afforded all other Marylanders.

Support and promote training for first responders and law enforcement that ensures people with developmental disabilities play a central role as educators.

*The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a public policy organization established through the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council advocates and supports the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life. This role includes informing policymakers about the impact of legislation and budget decisions on people with developmental disabilities and their families.*

*Issues are listed in random order. This document is available in alternate formats.*

