



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

Public Policy Quick Guide

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.

The 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.

We do so in these key areas:

Education <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote policies and practices so more students with disabilities are educated in the least restrictive environment with access to the general education curriculum, appropriate assessments, and the services and supports needed to succeed.• Support strategies that prepare teachers to teach students with and without disabilities together.• Promote policies and practices that improve successful transition from high school to work, college, and the adult service system.	Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support policies and funding that will increase the availability of reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation. Healthcare <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare policies and services that address the needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Access to Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead efforts to close the technological divide. People with disabilities are disproportionately impacted by a lack of access to technology
Employment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grow opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to have jobs they want, in the community, alongside co-workers without disabilities.• Increase understanding and support for community-based employment.	Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase rental housing options that are accessible and affordable to people with developmental disabilities.• Support innovative housing options that are fully integrated in the general community.
Supported Decision Making <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build awareness of Supported Decision Making (SDM) which allows people with disabilities to make choices about their own lives with support from a network of people they know and trust.	Supporting Families <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the availability of formal and informal supports to families of people with developmental disabilities.• Support efforts to increase access to paid family and medical leave to bolster the range of supports people with developmental disabilities and their families need.

<p>Eliminating Reliance on Institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate for the closure of state-funded institutions for people with intellectual disabilities. • Support expansion of high quality community options. <p>Empowerment, Leadership, and Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people with developmental disabilities 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. 	<p>Expanded and Improved Community Supports & Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve services and supports for people with developmental disabilities. • Increase funding to reduce the DDA’s waiting list for community supports and services, currently over 4,300 people are waiting. • Promote an annual funding allocation for “transitioning youth” - those leaving school entering services or the workplace. • Advocate for provider rates that ensure high quality supports. • Support initiatives that allow people live, work, and meaningfully engage in their communities.
<p>Civil Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support laws and policies that offer people with developmental disabilities the same rights afforded all other Marylanders. • Support and promote training for first responders and law enforcement that includes people with disabilities as trainers 	<p>Early Childhood Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Post-Secondary Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

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

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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.