



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). They advocate and educate people with developmental disabilities through leadership trainings and mentoring opportunities. They also provide support and training to local self-advocacy groups. POG is a driving force behind legislative changes in the state to ensure people with disabilities have equal rights and opportunities.

Expectations Matter: “My Life, My Plan, My Choice”

Shared Support Maryland, Inc.

The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) has instituted a new Person-Centered Planning (PCP) process, utilizing new approaches and tools. The Council and the DDA believe that people with developmental disabilities and their family members must be informed and engaged in their own planning. To do this effectively, they must understand PCP concepts, process, and tools. Funding for this two-year initiative supports development of two standardized PCP training modules, a user-friendly written guide to accompany the training, and a trainer’s guide that prepares others to provide PCP training.

CHILD CARE

Roots of Inclusion: Building Capacity through Leadership Development

Abilities Network/Project ACT

This project funds development of a three module training series for directors, owners, and other leaders in the child care community so they can design, implement, and sustain inclusive early childhood programs in Baltimore, Cecil, and Harford Counties. The training series will meet the Maryland State Department of Education’s Office of Child Care’s Core of Knowledge (COK) hourly training requirements. Final versions will be shared with the Maryland Child Care Resource Network (MCCRN) to become part of the training catalog and will be available statewide.



COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

#Expectations Matters

Small Grants

In 2017 the Council launched the #ExpectationsMatters #ExpectAbility campaign. We knew that hashtags alone would not raise every expectation, or change every mind or every action, but we wanted to spur all of us – family members, providers, educators, employers, everyday citizens – to stop and think twice about what we think people with disabilities can do. To continue this work, the Council funded small grants that focus on raising expectations about people with developmental disabilities in their schools, homes, workplaces, and communities so everyone feels respected, welcomed, and supported.

The following organizations received #ExpectationsMatters small grants: Sunflower Bakery, Howard County Autism Society, Towson University, and Spring Dell Center

Assistive Technology Supports for Students

The Parents' Place of Maryland

The COVID-19 pandemic closed schools and students moved to virtual learning. In partnership with the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), this time-limited demonstration project will identify strategies to support the assistive technology needs of students with developmental disabilities and their families, and funds will be used to purchase assistive technology to help students learn and succeed at home.

Addressing the Technology Needs of People with Developmental Disabilities

Service Providers throughout Maryland

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting all Marylanders, including people with developmental disabilities supported by the Council's Transforming and Improving Practices (TIP) grants. This time-limited demonstration project protects the Council's current investment in round 4 TIP grants, by addressing the urgent technology needs of people with developmental disabilities seeking virtual employment and meaningful day services.

Leading Forward: Training Self-Advocate Educators for First Responders Program

Loyola University of Maryland

This project funds stipends for people with developmental disabilities to be trainers. The Leading Forward program prepares and supports people with developmental disabilities to serve in training roles to educate law enforcement and other first responders on how to effectively interact with people with ID/DD.



Online LEAD Program Regional Pilot for Fire/EMS
Loyola University of Maryland

This project will expand the existing LEAD program model to an online regional pilot. People with developmental disabilities will be trained as Self-Advocate Educators (SAEs) to provide training to Fire and EMS personnel in Howard and Montgomery counties on how to effectively interact with people with developmental disabilities. The online regional pilot will inform future efforts to expand the training to more Fire and EMS personnel statewide.

Terps-EXCEED

Center for Transition and Career Innovation, University of Maryland – College Park

Council funds will establish an inclusive higher education program at the University of Maryland – College Park. Terps-EXCEED will provide students with developmental disabilities the opportunity to participate in college campus life, with coursework, accommodations, and mentors that promote inclusion.

EMPLOYMENT

Eastern Shore Provider Transformation Community of Practice
United Needs and Abilities, Inc.

A subject matter expert is providing technical assistance to the Eastern Shore Provider Transformation Community of Practice (CoP), a group of 12 community service providers supporting people with developmental disabilities in all 9 counties on the Shore. Technical assistance will help provider leadership address barriers to transportation, recruitment and retention of direct support professionals, and improve and enhance stakeholder buy-in and support. The providers will improve the success of Employment First initiatives, share their efforts, and receive mutual support, through a learning community. As a result, more people with developmental disabilities will be supported to get and keep the meaningful work they want in their communities, and have meaningful days when they are not working.



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

300 Leaders

Tsinat Institute

Over the course of 12 weeks, the Tsinat Institute will provide leadership development to youth with developmental disabilities, from Ethiopian communities in Montgomery County and the surrounding metropolitan area. The 300 Leaders curriculum will help youth develop the social and leadership skills needed for increased community engagement and future employment.

Partners in Policymaking®

The Arc Maryland

The Council is working closely with The Arc Maryland to train people with developmental disabilities and family members to become effective advocates for long-term change. Through a series of nine sessions and related hands-on activities, The Partners in Policymaking® program (Partners) is the most prominent leadership developmental program for people with developmental disabilities and their families in the country.

Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families

The Parents' Place of Maryland

Serving on Groups that make Decisions: A Guide for Families is a tool to help build leadership skills in families and other individuals who are interested in, or are currently serving on decision-making groups. This project funds leadership training to Special Education Citizens Advisory Committees (SECACs) and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs) in Maryland. These advisory groups play a crucial role in advising local school systems, and improving outcomes for children with disabilities.

LEADers Hybrid for Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore

The Parents' Place of Maryland

This project funds the development and implementation of hybrid leadership training in Western Maryland for parents of children with developmental disabilities. It also includes follow-up activities with LEADers on the Eastern Shore to ensure ongoing engagement in advocacy and leadership, specifically targeting parents of children with developmental disabilities in Spanish-speaking and Haitian communities.



INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Planning Now

In-house initiative

The Planning Now guide is a comprehensive, easy to use futures and estate planning guide for families of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Future and estates planning includes envisioning a desired future for your child. Topics covered include financial and healthcare benefits, wills, trusts, tax considerations, financial planning, and others. This publication is available in English and Spanish on our website. Limited hard copies are also available in English.

Developmental Disabilities Administration Informational Sheets

In-house initiative

These four informational sheets provide easy-to-understand explanations of key aspects of the Developmental Disabilities Administration's (DDA) service system. These documents are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese on our website. Hard copies are also available in English and Spanish.

User Friendly ABLE Guide

In-house initiative

This user-friendly guide will help people with disabilities and their families understand the Maryland ABLE program. Maryland ABLE is a savings and investment program that offers eligible people with disabilities the opportunity to save money for disability-related expenses without jeopardizing access to federal and state means-tested benefits.

What's Possible: 9 Stories of Changed Lives

In-house initiative

Nine people who used to live at Rosewood Center, a residential facility for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and who now call the community home, told their stories for this publication. Their stories exemplify what is possible when people are given new opportunities and the community supports they need.

What Matters: 9 Stories of Changed Lives

In-house initiative

What Matters tells the stories of nine people with developmental disabilities who work and have meaningful days in their communities. Their stories illustrate the success that is possible when the right planning, support, and expectations are in place.