



## Current Projects

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### ADVOCACY

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

People on the Go of Maryland (POG) is a statewide self-advocacy group led by people with developmental disabilities. With support from the Council and the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities, POG works to improve issues that affect people with developmental disabilities. POG educates and advocates for change with state agencies, the state legislature, and the community. POG also provides training, assistance, and support to a network of local self-advocacy groups. This helps them be informed about issues, build skills, speak for themselves, and be strong advocates.

#### **Expectations Matter: “My Life, My Plan, My Choice”** *Shared Support Maryland, Inc.*

This is a two-year project. It will inform, train, and support people with developmental disabilities to understand and be involved in their person-centered planning (PCP). It will also inform and train family members of people with developmental disabilities. Person-centered planning helps people get services and supports they want and need. The project will:

- Develop PCP trainings,
- Develop and prepare a group of people to provide trainings now and in the future,
- Write a PCP guide, and
- Write a trainer’s guide.



## **Project Learn**

### ***The Arc Central Chesapeake Region***

This project will train 20 middle and high school students with developmental disabilities. The goal is to give them information and skills to:

- take control of their Individual Education Programs (IEP) and 504 plans, and
- advocate for their educational needs.

The project will also develop information and resources about IEPs and 504 plans. These are formal plans that schools develop to give students with disabilities the support they need. The resources will be available online and in different languages. As a result of this project, more students will get the services and supports they need to learn and succeed.

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## **COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

### **Learning the Basics: Strength-Based Training on Developmental Disabilities**

#### ***Abilities Network, Project ACT***

This project will train and support child care professionals about how to support children with developmental disabilities. Project Act will develop 6 trainings about different developmental disabilities. They will test the training with 20 to 40 child care professionals and make improvements, if necessary. Project ACT will work with the Office of Child Care to “license” the training. This will make it possible for professionals to get credit for taking the trainings. The trainings will be available to child care providers statewide. As a result, more children with developmental disabilities will get the support they need to learn, play, and grow in child care programs with other children.



## **Assistive Technology Supports for Students** ***The Parents' Place of Maryland***

COVID closed schools and students are learning from home. Some students with developmental disabilities need assistive technology devices to successfully learn from home. Some examples are accessible apps, specialized keyboards, touchscreens, and braille displays. More work needs to be done to make this possible for all students who need assistive technology. That is what this project focuses on. It is a demonstration project. That means it will try new things to learn what works. Lessons learned will improve how assistive technology is used to help students at home now and in the future.

## **Engagement and Connection during COVID** ***The Arc Maryland***

This project will help people with developmental disabilities stay active and connected to other people during COVID. Service providers will buy people they support computers and tablets, like iPads. This will make it possible for them to do things like:

- take fitness, cooking, and art classes.
- visit with friends and family using programs like Zoom.

As a result, people with developmental disabilities will be:

- less isolated,
- more connected with family, friends, work, school, and the community, and
- better supported.



## **Addressing the Technology Needs of People with Developmental Disabilities *Service Providers throughout Maryland***

This project focuses on agencies that had another grant from the Council. That grant helped agencies improve how they support people to get jobs and do other things they like when not working. The agencies must find new ways to provide supports because COVID shut down most in-person activities. This project will help agencies continue to support people by providing iPads. The iPads will make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to:

- receive employment support and training,
- participate in activities like exercise classes, music classes, and advocacy sessions, and
- stay in touch with friends and family.

## **Rebuilding DDA Providers with Technical Assistance *Penn-Mar Human Services and TransCen Inc.***

Community service providers across the state responded to COVID by developing different and creative ways to support people. This project builds on that work. It will improve the way people with developmental disabilities receive services and supports. As a result, more people will live the lives they want. To make this happen, Penn-Mar and TransCen will:

- Provide assistance and training to providers.
- Create a learning group to help the providers learn from each other.
- Help the providers develop and put in place plans to guide the change they want.
- Train a group of people with developmental disabilities.
- Support people with developmental disabilities and family members to share input with providers about what they need and want.
- Share the information learned from the project at a statewide conference.



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

The LEAD program was developed to train police officers and others who respond to emergencies. The training helps them understand the best ways to behave and communicate with people who have developmental disabilities. People with developmental disabilities are trainers in the program. This project will expand the LEAD program to make it an online training. The focus will be on fire fighters, emergency medical professionals, and others that respond to emergencies. They will be from Howard and Montgomery counties. This is a new way of providing the LEAD training. The project will try new things to learn what works. The lessons learned will help expand the training to more people in Maryland.

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

The Center for Transition and Career Innovation will develop and run a new inclusive college program. Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities will:

- Take classes with students that do not have intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Use the same buildings and services the other students use.
- Participate in student activities with students that do not have intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities.

The students in the TerpsEXCEED program will also take some classes that are just for students with intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities. The program will prepare students for work and adult life. All classes and activities will be on the College Park campus.



## **#ExpectationsMatters**

***Sunflower Bakery, Howard County Autism Society, Towson University, and Spring Dell Center***

Expectations are what we think people can do. If we have high expectations of people, we are more likely to support them to try new things, take risks, and learn and grow. When we have high expectations that people with and without disabilities can live, learn, work, and play together, it is more likely to happen. That's why expectations matter. The #ExpectationsMatter small grants will develop and share videos about people with developmental disabilities. This will increase the number of people who understand and share the #ExpectationsMatter message.

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## **EMPLOYMENT**

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

This project will provide support, guidance, and ideas to the Eastern Shore Provider Transformation Community of Practice (CoP). This is a group of 12 service provider agencies that support people with developmental disabilities on the Eastern Shore. They work in all 9 Eastern Shore counties. An expert on the employment of people with disabilities will help the agencies improve how they provide employment supports. The providers will form a "learning community" so they can learn from each other and support each other. They will work together to break down barriers that make it hard for people with developmental disabilities on the Eastern Shore to get and keep jobs.

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## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

**300 Leaders  
Tsinat Institute**

The Tsinat Institute will provide leadership development to youth with developmental disabilities from Ethiopian communities. They will be from Montgomery County and nearby areas. Youth will develop social and leadership skills that will prepare them to contribute to their communities. It will also help them be better prepared for employment when they get older.

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## **Partners in Policymaking®**

### ***The Arc Maryland***

Partners in Policymaking® (Partners) is a leadership developmental program designed for people with developmental disabilities and their families. The program prepares participants to advocate for what they need in their own lives. It also prepares them to be leaders that bring about change that helps others. The Partners program is a series of nine sessions and other learning activities. Topics include: history of the disability movement, self-advocacy, inclusive education, assistive technology, legislative process, and advocacy. Partners graduates are prepared and supported to take action after they graduate. They support and learn from each other to bring about change.

## **Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families**

### ***The Parents' Place of Maryland***

This project will train family members to be effective members of Special Education Citizens Advisory Committees and Local Interagency Coordinating Councils. Special Education Citizens Advisory Committees give advice to county school systems about the needs of students with disabilities. Local Interagency Coordinating Councils give advice to their counties about early intervention services. These are provided to children under 5 who have developmental disabilities or delays. More children will get the early intervention and special education services they need as a result of this project.

## **LEADers for Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore**

### ***The Parents' Place of Maryland***

Parents' Place will train and support parents of children with developmental disabilities to be strong advocates and leaders. The focus will be on Western Maryland and the Eastern Shore. Parents will better understand the special education system. As a result, they will be more involved in issues that affect their children. They will develop advocacy skills and participate in leadership activities. This project will include Spanish speaking and Haitian parents.



## RESOURCES

*The following resources were developed by the Council. They are available on the Council's website or by contacting the Council.*

### **Planning Now**

Planning Now is an easy-to-use guide for families of children and adults with developmental disabilities. It includes information about government benefits, wills, trusts, taxes, and other things to help people plan. This publication is available in English and Spanish.

### **Developmental Disabilities Administration Fact Sheets**

These 4 fact sheets provide information about the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) that is easy to understand. They include:

- DDA Overview
- Waiting List
- Coordinators of Community Services
- Person Centered Planning

These fact sheets are available in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

### **User Friendly ABLE Guide**

This easy-to-use guide helps people with disabilities and their families understand the Maryland ABLE program. Maryland ABLE is a savings program. It makes it possible for people with disabilities and their families to save and invest money without losing the federal and state benefits they need. This includes Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid. ABLE accounts help people with disabilities improve their health, independence, and quality of life.



## **What's Possible: 9 Stories of Changed Lives**

What's Possible tells the story of 9 people who used to live at Rosewood Center. Rosewood was an institution for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It closed in 2009. People who lived there finally got a chance to live in the community again. Their stories show how much their lives improved.

## **What Matters**

What Matters shows how good planning and creative support helps people live good lives. It does that by telling the stories of 9 people with developmental disabilities who work and enjoy other activities in their communities.