



**Maryland Developmental  
Disabilities Council**

**2022-2026  
State Plan Overview**

The central panel features the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council logo, which consists of a stylized red and white geometric design. Below the logo, the text "Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council" is written in a dark red serif font. Underneath that, "2022-2026" is written in a bold black sans-serif font, followed by "State Plan Overview" in a larger, bold black sans-serif font.

## Who We Are

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council (Council) has been creating change to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities since 1971. We focus on children, family, and adult issues.

**Our Vision:** People with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

**Our Mission:** Create change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need.

The Council is located within state government, but we are independent. People with developmental disabilities and family members of people with developmental disabilities lead our work.

The Council's funding comes from the federal government. We use our funding on the activities outlined in our State Plan. Council staff, members, and grantees complete our work.

## 5-Year State Plan

Every 5 years the Council develops a plan that guides our work. This is called our State Plan. The Council's State Plan includes our most important goals and how we will accomplish them. Our work is guided by a federal law called the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act – better known as the DD Act.

To identify the most important issues and what needs to change, the Council:



Gets input from a lot of different people. This includes people with developmental disabilities, family members, state agencies, advocates, service providers, community members, and others. We do this through surveys, meetings, and focus groups.



Gathers information and data from reports and other sources.



Thinks about all the information to decide where change needs to happen and where the Council can make a difference.



Decides how to use our staff time.



Decides what activities we will fund, for other organizations and groups to carry out.

The Council sets goals for the next 5 years after reviewing all of the public input and research. Our State Plan also includes the activities we will work on to reach our goals. The State Plan is like a roadmap we follow to get where we want to be. It shows how we will create change that improves people's lives.

This State Plan covers October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2026.

## State Plan Goals

The Council's goals for the 2022-2026 State Plan are:

1

People with developmental disabilities are leaders and advocates.

2

People with developmental disabilities and their families are empowered to live the lives they want.

3

People with developmental disabilities and their families have access to their communities, and services and supports. They are treated with dignity and respect.

These goals support the Council's vision and mission.

The chart on the following pages outlines the goals, objectives, and strategies the Council will work on.

- ❖ **Goals** describe what the Council wants to see happen.
- ❖ **Objectives** are the steps that will help us reach our goals.
- ❖ **Strategies** are more specific actions we will take to reach each objective.



Goal 1: People with developmental disabilities are leaders and advocates.

Objectives

Strategies

1.1 Support People On the Go of Maryland to be a strong, effective, and powerful organization.

1.1.1. Support and fund training and other activities that help POG staff and members increase and use advocacy and leadership skills.

1.1.2. Support and fund activities that help POG increase their membership.

1.1.3. Support and fund POG to educate policymakers, build partnerships, advocate on issues, and bring about change. Policymakers include the governor, legislators, and government officials.

1.2 Support activities that prepare people with developmental disabilities to be leaders in their community.

1.2.1. Fund POG to educate and train people with developmental disabilities about important issues that affect their lives.

1.2.2. Support people with developmental disabilities to provide leadership training to other people with developmental disabilities.

1.2.3. Use Council funds to expand and support youth self-advocacy projects and activities, like the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF).

1.3 Increase the number of people with developmental disabilities on leadership coalitions that include people with different types of disabilities and people from different backgrounds (cultural diversity). \* Support their participation so they are effective.

1.3.1. Identify coalitions that include people with different types of disabilities and people from different backgrounds.

1.3.2. Inform people with developmental disabilities of opportunities to participate in coalitions, committees, and boards.

1.3.3. As part of their Council grant, POG supports members to represent POG on leadership coalitions that include people with different types of disabilities and people from different backgrounds.

1.3.4. As part of their Council grant, POG works with other disability organizations during legislative session on shared issues.

*\* Coalitions are groups of individuals and organizations that work together on issues.*

Result: People with developmental disabilities bring about positive change to issues that are important to them.

Goal 2: People with developmental disabilities and their families are empowered to live the lives they want.

Objectives

Strategies

2.1 Provide education and training to people with developmental disabilities and families to increase their knowledge and skills.

2.1.1. Fund projects and activities that educate people with developmental disabilities and families about supported decision-making and alternatives to guardianship.

2.1.2. Provide small grants to local and statewide organizations to increase knowledge and skills that people with developmental disabilities and families use to advocate.

2.1.3. Support and fund leadership development for people with developmental disabilities and family members.

2.2 Increase awareness and understanding of issues that are important to people with developmental disabilities and their families by sharing information and resources.

2.2.1. Use Council communications to increase awareness about different kinds of relationships and sexuality for people with developmental disabilities.

2.2.2. Use Council communications to increase knowledge and awareness of employment options.

2.2.3. Conduct a photo contest to increase awareness about issues that are important to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

2.3 Increase the availability of information, resources, and training to people with developmental disabilities and their families from underserved communities. Focus on people who are African American, Black, Hispanic/Spanish/Latinx, or Asian-American living in areas with high amounts of poverty. \*

2.3.1. Focus funding on programs and trainings that: a) reach diverse and underserved populations and regions of the state, and b) understand and respond to the different cultures and languages of communities.

2.3.2. Use Council funds to make plain and accessible versions of Council publications and resources.

2.3.3. Use Council funds to translate more Council publications and resources into more languages.

*\* Targeted disparity objective. This means it focuses on people that are underserved or unserved compared to others.*

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2.3.4. Research ways to use cultural brokers to meet the needs of people from diverse communities. \* Create a request for proposals based on what is most effective and can be used in different communities.

*\* A cultural broker is a member of the community they work with. They understand and share the values, beliefs, and practices of the community. A cultural broker helps build trust and connections between community members and the services and supports they need.*

2.3.5. Train and empower a diverse group of cultural brokers to address the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families in their communities.

Result: People with developmental disabilities and their families live the lives they want.

Goal 3: People with developmental disabilities and their families have access to their communities, and services and supports. They are treated with dignity and respect.

### Objectives

3.1 Increase access to informal and formal supports for children, youth, and adults with developmental disabilities and their families. \*

*\* Informal supports are provided by family, friends, and the community. Formal supports are provided by paid professionals.*

### Strategies

3.1.1. Assess how well the Council, grantees, and support systems understand and respond effectively to the cultural and language needs of different communities. This will increase the Council's understanding of the needs of diverse communities and changes that are needed.

3.1.2. Co-lead the Community of Practice for Supporting Families (CoP). This is a group of individuals and organizations working to improve family supports and services.

3.1.3. Support statewide CoP activities and the use of the Charting the LifeCourse tools.

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3.1.4. Advocate for increased funding for the Developmental Disabilities Administration waiting list so more people receive the supports and services they need and want.

3.1.5. Advocate for increased funding for the Autism Waiver and improved quality of services so more children and their families receive needed support.

3.1.6. Advocate for changes to a least 5 policies or programs that result in improved services and supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

3.1.7. Advocate for laws and regulations that improve supports for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

3.1.8. Co-sponsor DD Day with the DD Coalition.

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3.2 Improve polices, programs, and activities that make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to have the same opportunities in life that other members of the community have

3.2.1. Advocate for policies, practices, procedures, and funding that support inclusive, accessible, and affordable housing.

3.2.2. Advocate for and fund inclusive recreation programs and activities that are fully accessible.

3.2.3. Advocate for more medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare policies and services that meet the needs of all children and adults with developmental disabilities.

3.2.4. Support and fund projects and activities that provide technology that increases access to services, supports, and information.

3.2.5. Increase outreach and connections to groups and organizations related to the Council's priorities and mission.

3.2.6. Advocate for policies that increase access to reliable and accessible transportation throughout Maryland.

3.2.7. Support the development of information about transportation options and share it widely with people with developmental disabilities.

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3.3 Improve child care and education practices so all children and youth play and learn together with the services and supports they need to succeed.

3.3.1. Advocate for at least 5 policy changes that improve outcomes for students with developmental disabilities. This includes access to the general education curriculum, appropriate assessments, and equitable delivery of services and supports needed to succeed.

3.3.2. Advocate for policies and practices that better support children and youth with developmental disabilities and their families during all academic transitions. Academic transitions happen when children move to different services because of their age. \*

3.3.3. Advocate for school policies and practices that help staff understand and respond to trauma. This creates a positive, safe, and supportive school where students learn, and they are less likely to go to prison after school. \*

*\* Trauma is when something bad happens. It may have a lasting impact on a person.*

3.3.4. Fund technical assistance, training, and information-sharing to increase the ability of licensed childcare providers and others to support children with disabilities in their programs.

3.3.5. Advocate for state agencies and other organizations to fund more training and technical assistance for licensed childcare providers and school staff.

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3.4. Increase career exploration and employment opportunities in the community for people with developmental disabilities. \* This includes people with significant support needs.

*\* Career exploration means learning about different kinds of jobs and how they fit with your interests and skills.*

3.4.1. Advocate for policy and program improvements so students with developmental disabilities have career exploration opportunities and work experience that prepares them to work after school.

3.4.2. Fund technical assistance, peer support, and other activities that improve the ability of service providers to help people with developmental disabilities become employed and engaged in the community.

3.4.3. Advocate for state policy and program changes that increase career exploration and employment opportunities in the community for people with developmental disabilities.

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3.5 People with developmental disabilities are appropriately supported in all parts of the criminal justice system.

3.5.1. Advocate for improvements in policies and practices within Maryland’s jails and prisons so they are clear, consistent, and appropriately support people with developmental disabilities.

3.5.2. Advocate for a definition of developmental disabilities that all jails and prisons use. Advocate for reporting of the number of people with developmental disabilities in jails and prisons.

3.5.3. Use Council funds to establish a statewide community of practice focused on youth with developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system. \* Include stakeholders from all parts of the justice system. Implement effective practices for working with youth with developmental disabilities.

*\* A community of practice is a group of people that work together to understand and solve problems.*

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3.6 Increase what attorneys, judges, and other professionals within the criminal justice system know about people with developmental disabilities. The Council, Disability Rights Maryland (DRM), and Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities (MCDD) will work together. \*

3.6.1. Research and identify trainings that exist for attorneys, judges, and other professionals about people with developmental disabilities.

3.6.2. Identify priority topics and priority audiences to receive new training.

3.6.3. Develop resources, information, and trainings for each of the identified priority topics and audiences.

3.6.4. Widely share information and resources.

3.6.5. Provide training to attorneys, judges, and other professionals.

*\* Collaboration objective*

Result: Communities and state systems welcome, value, and support people with developmental disabilities and their families.