



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

EMPOWERMENT • OPPORTUNITY • INCLUSION

# 2021 Public Policy Priorities

**The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council creates change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need.**

*This is how we do that when we work with the Governor, state government, and state legislators*

<b>Education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote policies and practices that lead to more students with disabilities educated in the least restrictive environment. This means they have access to the general education curriculum, appropriate assessments, and the services and supports they need to succeed.</li><li>• Support strategies that prepare teachers to teach students with and without disabilities together.</li><li>• Advocate for policies and practices that ensure people with developmental disabilities successfully transition from high school to adult life. This includes work, college, and the community supports.</li></ul>	<b>Transportation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocate for policies and funding that increase the availability of reliable, affordable, and accessible transportation.</li></ul> <b>Healthcare</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support medical, dental, and behavioral healthcare policies and services that meet the needs of children and adults with developmental disabilities.</li></ul> <b>Technology</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lead efforts to increase access to technology for people with disabilities. They are disproportionately negatively impacted by the digital divide.</li></ul>
<b>Employment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to have jobs they want, in the community, alongside co-workers without disabilities.</li><li>• Increase support for community-based employment.</li></ul>	<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advocate for more rental housing options that are affordable to people with disabilities.</li><li>• Support innovative housing options that are fully integrated in the community.</li></ul>
<b>Supported Decision Making</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand the use of Supported Decision Making, which is a way for people with significant disabilities to make choices about their lives with support from a network of people they know and trust.</li></ul>	<b>Family Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the availability of formal and informal supports to families of people with developmental disabilities.</li><li>• Support efforts to increase access to paid family and medical leave.</li></ul>

Early Childhood Education	Community Supports & Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to early childhood education where children with disabilities learn and play alongside children without disabilities and are prepared to transition to school. Advocate for the services and support necessary to make this possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for funding to reduce the Developmental Disabilities Administration’s (DDA) waiting list for community services. Over 4,300 people are currently waiting.</li> <li>• Ensure DDA funding is sufficient to provide support to all “transitioning youth” – young adults with developmental disabilities who need support to get a job, go to college, and participate in their communities.</li> <li>• Advocate for service provider rates that ensure high quality supports.</li> <li>• Improve services and supports for people with developmental disabilities.</li> <li>• Support initiatives that increase opportunities for people to live, work, and meaningfully engage in their communities.</li> </ul>
Post-Secondary Education	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the development of post-secondary education programs that provide people with intellectual and developmental disabilities meaningful access to academics and campus life. This includes dual enrollment programs.</li> </ul>	
Institutions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for the closure of all state-funded institutions for people with intellectual disabilities.</li> <li>• Support expansion of high-quality community options.</li> </ul>	
Civil Rights	Leadership and Advocacy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for laws and policies that ensure people with developmental disabilities are afforded the same rights as other Marylanders.</li> <li>• Support and promote training for first responders and law enforcement that includes people with disabilities as trainers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support people with developmental disabilities to develop advocacy and leadership skills so they can play a meaningful role in shaping public policies, programs, and services that affect their lives.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Issues are listed in random order</i></p>

**The Council can provide information, perspective, ideas, and analysis about how legislation will affect people with developmental disabilities and their families.**

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*The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a statewide organization established through the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. One of the Council’s roles is to inform legislators about how legislation and budget decisions affect the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.*

*This document is available in alternate formats.*