



Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

CREATING CHANGE • IMPROVING LIVES

Current Projects

Updated October 2024

ADVOCACY

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

People on the Go 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.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Supported Decision-Making Training ***Parents' Place of Maryland***

A law was passed in 2022 that allows adults to use supported decision-making (SDM) to get support to understand, consider, and make decisions themselves. SDM is a way for adults to get help from other people to make choices and decisions for themselves.

The Parents' Place of Maryland, in partnership with People On the Go Maryland, Disability Rights Maryland, and The Arc Maryland, will develop a training for youth with developmental disabilities, their families, and the professionals who work with them.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE

LEADING to Learn: Training on Working with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities for Correctional Supervisors *Loyola University*

Loyola University is developing a training program to teach correctional supervisors about ways to work with people with developmental disabilities. More than 300 correctional supervisors in the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Division of Jessup Correctional Region will be trained on how to better support people with developmental disabilities in Maryland’s jails and prisons.

EDUCATION

Inclusive Teacher Development *Abilities Network - Project ACT*

Early childhood educators want and need training and support so they can better support children with and without disabilities to learn, play, and grow together. Project ACT will develop and deliver Cultivating Inclusion for Teachers training modules. Early childhood educators will also get individual coaching and participate in a community of practice.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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.

OTHER COUNCIL PROJECTS

Playgrounds for All - Inclusive Playground Website ***Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council and*** ***Maryland Department of Disabilities***

Maryland needs more playgrounds where all children and their families can play. In 2022, the Council and the Maryland Department of Disabilities (MDOD) began working together on inclusive playgrounds. Fully inclusive playgrounds are physically, socially, and emotionally welcoming to everyone.

In 2023, the Council and MDOD released the **Framework and Toolkit for Inclusive Playgrounds in Maryland**. It explains what inclusive playgrounds are and the benefits they provide to everybody. The report also includes a toolkit for how to expand inclusive playgrounds in communities across Maryland.

Now, we are making a full interactive website for this framework. This website will have detailed, step-by-step information about how to create an inclusive playground in your community. It will include an interactive map of public inclusive playgrounds in Maryland.

Housing Publication ***Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council***

This publication will highlight the stories of Marylanders with developmental disabilities who have moved into their own homes. Their stories will show different housing options available, barriers that were addressed, and the different kinds of supports.



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 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.

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.