

State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils) are catalysts that create effective solutions and fulfill the mandate of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) to improve service systems with and for people with developmental disabilities (DD).

Appointed by Governors in every state and territory, DD Councils consist of people with DD, their families, representatives of other programs funded under the DD Act, other stakeholders in the disability community, and representatives of state agencies. As mandated by the DD Act for close to 50 years, DD Councils work with policymakers and community partners to achieve long-term policy changes that promote the self-determination, independence, economic self-sufficiency, integration and inclusion of people with DD in all aspects of community life.

Recommendation:

NACDD respectfully requests that Congress appropriate \$76 million for the DD Councils in FY 2017 within the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. NACDD’s funding history includes:

	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
NACDD’s Request	\$75,000,000	\$75,000,000	\$75,000,000	\$75,000,000	\$76,000,000	\$76,000,000
Actual Appropriations	\$74,774,000	\$70,661,000*	\$70,876,000	\$71,692,000	\$73,000,000	President’s Request: TBD

*After sequestration

Justification:

DD Councils, part of the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) in ACL/HHS, are located in every state and territory. DD Councils serve a key role as catalysts for creating outstanding programs and policy changes through generating innovative solutions tailored to the unique needs of people living in each state, based on input from the community. DD Councils support the infrastructure that provides people with DD the opportunities that all of us want to have, including the right to live, work, and fully participate in the community as respected and valued members.

IMPROVED EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES



Given the high unemployment, underemployment and low employment retention rates for persons with developmental disabilities, the majority of DD Councils have prioritized efforts to improve employment outcomes for persons with developmental disabilities.

More than half of the DD Councils have been leaders in the innovative Project Search programs that immerse students with DD in their final years of special education in real employment opportunities. The projects teach independence and work skills that meet their and their employers’ needs. Very high percentages of Project Search graduates (about 80 percent) go on to hold regular, paid, integrated employment with these employers.

The Wisconsin DD Council, through a Partnerships in Employment (PIE) grant has also seen success in improving transition outcomes for youth with DD. The PIE grant uses a multi-tiered model of creating and implementing policy changes for students with DD. The project has assisted schools in implementing evidence-based practices, such as providing the schools and students with coaches who provide intense, on-site technical assistance to the school sites, 89 percent of students with significant disabilities in the pilot program had the opportunity to participate in at least one paid, community based employment opportunity while they were in high school. More information is at <http://www.letsgettoworkwi.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/LGTW-One-Page-for-AUCD.pdf>. Wisconsin's public instruction transition initiative also permanently adopted the strategies and resources developed in the PIE grant to focus on improving its post-school outcome data for students with disabilities.

ACCESS TO A QUALITY EDUCATION

DD Councils fund programs that support quality education for people with developmental disabilities. Education is critical to securing competitive community-based employment, launching and advancing in career, being independent and self-sufficient, and achieving one's personal goals.



The Connecticut DD Council worked to improve school climate by addressing the bullying of students with disabilities by developing and funding the *All Abilities Alliance* through a partnership with the Governor's Prevention Partnership. The Alliance is a school group for students with and without disabilities who have a passion for disability awareness and social justice regarding people with disabilities. Students work together to educate and make positive change in themselves, their school and their communities. The Alliance is a student-led group that chooses its own activities, such as sponsoring disability awareness days in their school, other schools or in the community; meeting with policymakers to share their opinions about disability issues; working with their school and other schools on adding accomplishments of people with disabilities and the history of the disability rights movement to curricula. The CT Council provided the funding to develop and finalize the Alliance training materials and to pilot the project in Woodstock Academy. In 2016, the Alliance will be expanded to five additional schools, and the CT State Department of Education agreed to partner with the Governor's Prevention Partnership to implement the Alliance in schools across the state. The project will also disseminate the training manual nationally in 2016. The All-Abilities Alliance Handbook is at <http://www.preventionworksct.org/resources/all-abilities-alliance-handbook.html>.

ENHANCED OPPORTUNITIES TO LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY



Many DD Councils work to ensure that people with developmental disabilities are able to live, work and play in their communities. The Georgia DD Council launched a statewide initiative in 2010 focused on partnering with local community-based organizations to build more inclusive and just communities. Real Communities is a thoughtful, action learning approach that equips community members at the local, grassroots level to work together toward common goals to improve their own community using person-centered supports, community-centered connections, and persistent and reflective learning. Purposefully involving people with and without developmental disabilities in collaborative projects is pivotal to the framework of Real Communities. Real Communities support communities who welcome and utilize the gifts of everyone, including those who have been historically marginalized, and create avenues toward reciprocity, interdependence, and social change.

In 2015, the GA Council supported community based initiatives in five communities in Georgia and supported 12 community organizers, six of whom have developmental disabilities. The community partners select the issues most important to them, such as food justice, youth, intentionally connecting neighbors, and mass incarceration. By bringing people with and without disabilities together around common interests, people with developmental disabilities have developed natural supports and reciprocal relationships that have altered the lives of both individual people as well as their larger communities.

For more information on your state's DD Council visit www.nacdd.org or contact Cindy Smith, Director of Public Policy at csmith@nacdd.org