

NACDD Annual Conference 2024 DRAFT

Monday July 22, 2024

8:30 am – 5:30pm

ITACC – 4 Cs and More! Managing Key Aspects throughout a Project Lifecycle (ITACC) (in-person and recorded)

9:00 am – 6:00 pm

BADN – Community of Practice year 3 (In-Person)

6:30pm

Evening reception for BADN, board, staff (In-Person)

Tuesday July 23, 2024

9:00 am – 3:00 pm EST

BADN – COP Day 2

9:00 am – 12:30 pm EST

ITACC New ED Training

11:30 am – 1:30 pm EST

NACDD Board Meeting

1:30 pm – 7:00 pm EST

ITACC – State Plan Development Briefing

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm EST

NACDD Welcome Reception – All Invited

NACDD ANNUAL CONFERENCE BEGINS

Wednesday July 24, 2024

7:00 am – 8:30 am EST

Breakfast Buffet

8:00 am – 9:00 am EST

NACDD Annual Conference – Welcome and Opening Remarks (Jill, Kayla, Kirsten)

10:00 am – 12:00 pm EST

NACDD/NCIL at March and Rally on Capital Hill

12:00 pm – 2:30 pm EST

Lunch on your own for participants and walk back to Capital Hilton

Opportunity to join State/Territory CILs on Hill Visits

12:30 pm – 2:30 pm EST

Invite Only Lunch – EDS, Board, Staff, Jill

2:30 pm – 4:00 pm EST

Breakout Session 1 – (Rachel Ward, Nebraska DD Council)

- Roses (successes) and thorns (challenges) that NCDD has encountered to incorporate true PCP into HCBS and in other systems across the lifespan.
In 2014, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued the HCBS Settings Rule to require that every state ensure that services delivered to seniors and people with disabilities living in the community – outside of institutions – meet minimum standards for integration, access to community life, choice, autonomy, and other important consumer protections. Among the requirements of the rule are definitions and expectations for services to be community-based and for service planning through a person-centered process be directed by the service recipient. States had to come into compliance with the CMS Final Rule by March 2023. This coupled with the new CMS access and quality HCBS Rule, set the minimum requirements for PCP the importance of person-centered planning. NCDD will present their investment and activities in recent years

supporting PCP implementation within HCBS waivers, resulting in Systems Change.

NCDD's initial two-year investment (2020 through 2022) with Mark Friedman at The Center for Outcome Analysis provided robust virtual PCP training to service coordination staff, service recipients and their families/guardians, service providers, policymakers, advocates, and other interested persons. Systems change resulted, including the 2022 DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) commitment to using the UMKC Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework into the service planning process. DDD has also invested in a full membership contract with the NASDDS (National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services) and UMKC Community of Practice (CoP) for Supporting Families Across the Lifespan. NCDD belongs to the Nebraska Community of Practice. Participation in the CoP provides state CoP teams with state specific technical assistance and support from the National CoP Project Team, and a learning community across and between states. They provided overview information for broad stakeholder groups, focused on professional development, provided technical assistance, and implemented support to a team of Champions who expanded awareness of the framework and facilitated ongoing activities for creating buy-in and adoption of the principles in the day-to-day work of their peers. NCDD has played a pivotal role in funding training to strengthen and incorporate true Person-Centered Planning (PCP) for participants receiving HCBS waiver services in Nebraska. NCDD has challenged the Division of Developmental Disabilities, HCBS Providers, families, and self-advocates to go beyond the importance of PCP to full implementation. Systems change is happening within the HCBS system as a result of Council funded grass roots capacity building. The ripple effects are taking place in other systems. NCDD initiated and continues having the hard conversations on what is not working, listening to others on the progress they have made, and looking for opportunities to keep momentum moving forward.

Breakout Session 2 – Advocacy (Cynthia Burrow, Owner of Strategic Education Solutions, and James Meadours)

- Empowering Self-Advocates to Lead: Lessons from a Successful Participatory Approach
Self-advocates have great potential to change their own lives and the world. They have unique talents, untapped creativity, and valuable lived experience. Yet, they are often left out of projects about their lives. This session will transform theory into practice. Most programs *want* to use participatory

approaches. Most self-advocates *want* to participate. But the process can be overwhelming. Our team has used participatory approaches for years. Now, we are sharing our knowledge through a participatory action research project funded by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities. We are creating a visual vocabulary of research terms. We are developing training for self-advocates and an aligned toolkit for program staff. We are also creating a network of trained self-advocates ready to participate meaningfully in projects. Each of our project teams is co-led by a person with IDD. Their lived experience and compelling stories enrich our work and expand our reach. In turn, our work supports them in building skills, finding community, and expanding their voices in service of change. Attendees will leave our session with a mix of inspiration and practical strategies they can apply to their own work.

Breakout Session 3 – Advocacy (Russell Lehman, Former DD Council Member, National Board, The Arc)

- Inclusion: Not Just “in” the Community, but “of” the Community!
Inclusion has become a trendy term when it comes to creating an equitable environment for all people. Yet, how often are our inclusion practices translating to the feeling of being included? We often think of inclusion as a goal, rather than a verb that has to be practiced every day.
A sense of belonging is a cornerstone to building a solid foundation upon which the possibilities of the future can be built. Too often, however, individuals with disabilities are left behind, invalidated, and dismissed, resulting in cracks not only in the foundation of an individual’s sense of self, but also in their self-esteem which often forms roadblocks to a fulfilling and purpose-driven life. It is indeed a world of opportunities out there, but that only matters if individuals have access to those opportunities, and access is only possible in inclusive environments.

Breakout Session 4 – Advocacy/SDM (Lauren Gerken and Brianna TenBrink from TCDD, Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice (CYVYC) Morgan Whitlatch, Michael Thornton from SABE, and Matt Leos from youth ambassadors)

- It’s Their Futures: Advancing Alternatives to Guardianship by Expanding State and National Youth Leadership
Guardianship is pervasive in the US, frequently treated as the default option for adults with I/DD, including youth ages of 14 and 26. Guardianship results in a

loss of personal autonomy, as the people subject to it are no longer recognized as having the legal right to direct their own lives. Based on an August 2021 National Core Indicators report, surveyed people with I/DD who had guardians were less likely to make important life decisions, including where to live, who to live with, their daily schedule, and what to buy with their own money. Yet decades of research show that people with disabilities who are supported to have greater control over their lives have better life outcomes, are more integrated into communities, are healthier, and are more able to resist and avoid abuse. CYVYC State Teams are finding innovative ways to promote alternatives to guardianship.

The Center on Youth Voice, Youth Choice (CYVYC) is a national resource center that promotes alternatives to guardianship for youth with I/DD through self-advocacy, coalition building, education, and research. CYVYC has built an innovative Community of Practice, comprised of State Teams who receive technical assistance and participate in a learning exchange that supports systems change, innovation, and identification of promising practices. A key component of CYVYC's work is to build a core of trained Youth Ambassadors with I/DD who are prepared to educate others on self-determination and pursuing alternatives to guardianship, including Supported Decision-Making, and collaborate with their State Teams to make state-wide change happen. This year's panel will highlight the work of the third cohort from Arizona, California, and Texas. It will also spotlight the work being done in Texas, which has a State Team co-led by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities and Texas Advocates.

CYVYC supports State Teams in making important strides to shift youth with I/DD away from overbroad and unnecessary guardianship and towards less-restrictive options. This presentation will be useful to attendees, because it will highlight lessons learned and promising practices for advancing diverse and inclusive effort.

Breakout Session 5 – Advocacy (Lacey Hautzinger, PPL)

- **Self-Direction and the I/DD Community: A Look into the Past & Future**
This session will discuss the growth of self-direction in the community serving individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities and how program systems differ from self-direction for the disabled / elderly community. We'll examine growth rates, program designs, advocacy/self-advocacy efforts, individual budgets and quality / monitoring. Specifically highlighting the work of Financial Management Services (FMS), we'll offer insight into effective models and look into the crystal ball to see how self-direction will look in the future.

4:00 – 4:30 pm EST

Break

4:30 pm – 6:00 pm EST

Breakout Session 6 – Mental Health (Katie Mitten)

- Promoting the Mental Wellbeing of Transition Age Youth with Developmental Disabilities

People with developmental disabilities experience mental health concerns at higher rates than the general population, however misconceptions and biases often lead to an undermining of their mental health needs or a belief they won't benefit from existing mental health treatments. Over the last 18 months, the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute completed extensive research and hosted two convenings in Austin focused on this topic. In this session we will share findings from this work and provide recommendations to improve how systems and individuals can better understand and address the mental health needs of transition age youth with developmental disabilities.

The information in this presentation will provide concrete recommendations and tools to move beyond talking about the mental health needs of young people with developmental disabilities toward action, beginning with engaging communities in identifying solutions and opportunities that lead to better coordination across systems (IDD services, mental health services, schools, crisis services, and more).

Breakout Session 7 – Mental Health (Ling Debellis)

- Cultivating Strength in Loss for Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

People with IDD may experience disenfranchised grief when left out of conversations surrounding loss, expressions of grief, and communal grieving rituals, which is detrimental to their mental health. Existing resources to address grief and loss among adults with IDD are limited, which places them at greater risk for disenfranchised grief.

This presentation will provide an overview for the use of Research Practice Partnerships (RPP) to address disenfranchised grief among adults with IDD by outlining the collaborative process undertaken to develop resources that are unique to the mental health needs of adults with IDD. As part of this process, a network of collaborating partners has been created that will continue to advocate for the development of mental health resources for people with IDD to facilitate thriving in the face of adversity.

In this presentation, presenters will outline barriers and facilitators to the process of creating mental health resources for adults with IDD, along with

describing recommendations for the development of culturally and contextually appropriate resources for the IDD community

Breakout Session 8 – Mental Health (Eric Stoker)

- Teaching, Empowering, and Training on Navigating Sexuality and Healthy Relationships (TETONS)

This session aims to help people with intellectual and developmental disabilities learn about relationships in their lives. Attendees will learn to understand the signs of a healthy and unhealthy relationship, how to speak up and set boundaries, about gender identities and expressions.

Many People with disabilities want to be in relationships whether they are friendships, romantic relationships, or professional relationships. This Session will help self-advocates gain skills and create opportunities to form healthy connections with other people and identify types of relationships in their lives. This session shares in-depth information about healthy relationships and sexuality for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Attendees will learn about the program the Utah DD Council has developed using resources and information from ELEVATUS and Mad Hatter Wellness to train self-advocates about these topics. This session will preview some lessons from Utah's TETONS program.

Conference attendees will learn about the different styles of communication like shy, bossy, and assertive. They will role-play and engage with each other to practice healthy communication skills. We will introduce consent and discuss how important it is in all aspects of a healthy relationship. We define boundaries and how to assertively set them in all kinds of relationships. We will introduce types of gender identity and self-expression. Lastly, attendees will learn some characteristics of healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Breakout Session 9 – Neurodiversity (Sarah Ohanesian)

- Brains @ Work: The Invisible Power of Neurodiversity

Every day, across the country, there is someone at work who is neurodivergent and suffering. The years of trauma have left them too scared to ask for what they need for fear of seeming like a burden or a problem. They often feel their needs are invisible to others, so they try to blend in and become invisible.

Every day, there is someone with ADHD, Bipolar Disorder, PTSD, or Dyslexia who is struggling with an assignment, who others have labeled as "lazy," "checked out," or other labels that are even worse. They got by, for a while, but could only keep the mask up for so long. Now, they feel embarrassed and

ashamed. Yet, at the same time, these same people are waiting for their chance to shine. In the wrong environment, they hide their gifts. Deep down, they want the chance to show everyone that just because they are different, doesn't mean they're wrong. They want people to see that what makes them different is actually their hidden superpower.

We want to help teams everywhere see what it takes to create an environment where everyone feels seen, where everyone feels safe enough to ask for what they need, and where everyone trusts that they can be their beautiful, messy selves. That's the recipe for an amazing culture and one where people can accomplish extraordinary things, together.

HOLD: State/Territory Council Showcase and reception

Thursday July 25, 2024

8:00 am – 9:30 am EST

Breakfast Buffet

8:30 am – 9:00 am EST

Morning Housekeeping – Jill/Robin

9:00 am - 11:00 am EST **Keynote – Rylin Rodgers of Microsoft**

- Erin introduces
- Fireside chat with recent states who eliminated 14c on stage for panel with advocates.

11:00 – 11:30 am EST

Break

11:30 am – 1:30pm EST

Champions of Equal Opportunity Lunch with Keynote from Jose Rosario

1:30 – 2:00 pm EST

Break

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm EST

Breakout Session 10 – GMSA – Employment

- **Walking the Walk: Building Professional Careers for Self-Advocates Within Disability Organization**
People with intellectual and developmental disabilities want to do more than serve on advisory committees. They want careers! Maxwell Barrows and Hasan Ko have held a variety of positions over the past 17 years at Green Mountain Self-Advocates. Our national and state partners are equally invested in supporting self-advocates to play key roles in training and advocacy that supports integrated employment. This session will share lessons on overcoming obstacles and helping people excel in their careers as disability advocates. Presenters will introduce strategies, tips, and tools for a more inclusive workplace that supports people with disabilities to have professional jobs within our field.
People with intellectual and developmental disabilities often encounter a “glass ceiling” when they try to advance in their careers, even within disability organizations. They can get stuck in entry-level jobs and few if any self-advocates are considered for jobs that match their desire to do professional advocacy work. If our disability movement is truly going to embrace the concept of Nothing About Us Without Us, more people with intellectual disabilities need professional opportunities. However, many organizations may be reluctant to hire self-advocates because they struggle with how to provide effective job support.

Breakout Session 11 – Storytelling (Kaitlyn Davis, Dept of Family and Community Medicine, Thomas Jefferson University)

- **The Benefit of Self-Advocate Story Telling in Medical Education**
There is a need to make space in medical education for learners to hear directly from people with lived experience with disabilities about their needs and desires. Attendees will hear about ways that our team has engaged self-advocates in storytelling and incorporated it into medical education for family medicine residents in the Philadelphia area. We will share what the impact has been on the knowledge and attitudes of the learners as well as the impact on the self-advocates that were able to present and share about their experiences.

This topic represents the endless opportunities available when we allow for dialogue directly between patients with disabilities and the providers who care for them. By bringing stories from self-advocates, in the form of live presentations or recorded testimonials, directly to family medicine residents, this educational series had a profound impact on learners and created a rich dialogue on how to improve health care access and quality for patients with disabilities.

Breakout Session 12 – Data Collection (Andrew Morris of ACL and HSRI, and Alixe Bonardi, and Gloria Krahn)

- Improving Data for Health Equity for People with I/DD
This session will focus on efforts by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD) to improve data collection and achieving health equity for the I/DD population. One mechanism being considered is to create a Center(s) of Excellence on I/DD Data. ACL and NCBDDD through a contract with Human Services Research Institute is working with federal and community partners to get feedback on the best design for proposed Center(s) of Excellence. ACL understands the importance DD prevalence for program funding and is also working on prevalence of I/DD in collaboration with the National Center for Health Statistics . This session is soliciting feedback on improving data on prevalence, health outcomes, and beyond.

Breakout Session 13 – Intersectionality (Pauline Bosma, Founder and Coordinator of Rainbow Support Groups of MA and Oscar Hughes, Ph.D.)

- The Lives of LGBTQIA2S+ People with Developmental Disabilities
LGBTQ+ people with developmental disabilities often do not have the support they need because people are not prepared to talk about and assist with gender and sexuality. This presentation will share the stories and perspectives of LGBTQ+ people with developmental disabilities so that more people can understand this community, support self-expression, and advocate alongside them for intersectional rights.

3:30 - 4:00pm EST **Break**

4:00 pm – 5:30 pm EST

Breakout Session 14 – Education (Georgia)

- College & Councils: How Inclusive Post Secondary Education and State DD Councils Make Each Other Stronger

The mission of The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) is to bring about social and policy changes that promote opportunities for the wide spectrum of diverse people/persons with developmental disabilities and their families to live, learn, work, play and worship in their communities. Inclusive Post Secondary Education (IPSE) has been both a beneficiary of and contributor to our work towards meeting that mission. We have found that the success of IPSE has boosted awareness about the strengths of Georgians with IDD as a whole, and has opened the door for us as a Council to build relationships and make policy gains.

IPSE is a relatively new but flourishing field of education which serves students with intellectual disabilities on college campuses. Along with academics, social networks, and job development, IPSE programs help students build the life skills needed to develop a more independent adult life after high school. In Georgia, IPSE programs focus heavily on not just building self-advocacy skills in everyday life, but also acquiring civic engagement and legislative advocacy skills.

GCDD engages the Georgia IPSE student population in an IPSE Advocacy Day at the State Capitol each year. GCDD collects quantitative and qualitative data throughout the year to support its IPSE agenda, through its Georgia Inclusive Post Secondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC) – a statewide alliance of IPSE programs, faculty, alumni, state agencies, and parents. Leading up to IPSE Advocacy Day, GCDD helps students identify and connect with their legislators, and provides training on how to speak to lawmakers about why IPSE is important to them. Many times, IPSE students are invited to take photographs with their legislators, connect on social media, or even enter the chamber floors to ring the roll call bell! After the Advocacy Day is complete, GCDD shows advocates how they can keep in touch with their legislators, and provides a link (with an editable letter and guidance) for digital advocacy that reaches legislators when policy or budget requests need further attention. GCDD staff keeps IPSE program directors apprised of advocacy needs and updates throughout the year, and often arranges students and families to submit public comment during legislative or state agency committee meetings.

Through these legislative touches, GCDD has developed and strengthened many significant policymaking connections over the years – connections that we can use to build upon for the advancement of disability issues at the state level. Year after year, we have observed an increase in legislators’ awareness of what IPSE is, what GCDD is, and how people with intellectual disabilities can widen the available pool of Georgia’s workforce.

Evidence of achievements that show how the support of IPSE contributes to GCDD’s reputation and visibility include:

- The State of Georgia allocates over \$700k (and counting!) annually in state funds that funnel through GCDD, including support for a full-time IPSE manager since 2018 and increased agency administrative support dollars.
- One of our key champions in the state legislature first learned about IPSE in his own days as an undergraduate, by advocating for the establishment of an IPSE program at his university. He eventually authored the 2023 bill that created state-level IPSE scholarships, with a nearly \$1M fiscal note attached. This same legislator worked with GCDD during the 2024 legislative session to increase the scholarship funding by well over 100%.
- GCDD’s current Public Policy Director is a former IPSE peer mentor, and our Legislative Advocacy Director is an IPSE graduate.
- IPSE graduates, students, and peer mentors are active in applying for volunteer, fellowship, work, and membership opportunities with GCDD.
- GCDD’s management of the Georgia Inclusive Post Secondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC) has provided community outreach opportunities at school resource/transition fairs, and increased the network of Georgians who know about and want to connect with GCDD.
- An IPSE graduate, Darien Todd, after having participated in IPSE Advocacy Days, is now employed at our sister agency, the Center for Leadership in Disability, which is also a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD).
- Through its GAIPSEC outreach, GCDD has onboarded two new IPSE programs in under 2 years, reaching potential students in critically underserved areas of the state.
- As of this proposal submission in March 2024, the state of Georgia is heading into the last week of its legislative session, and prospects are high that both a State as Model Employer bill and a bill eliminating 14c will pass. Because IPSE has greatly increased our state leaders’ knowledge about the valuable contributions of people with IDD, we believe IPSE helped lay the groundwork for these pieces of legislation.

Breakout Session 15 – Education (Massachusetts DD)

- A Mother’s Perspective: Through Education and Activism – The Special Education Challenge for Immigrant Families and the Power of Diverse Leadership

The needs of children who require special education are much more difficult to advocate for when they are from underrepresented and underserved communities. This is especially difficult for those families who are not native English speaking. School districts are often limited in the support they can provide because of funding, translation, and interpretation. There are also cultural differences that all parties need to work to understand.

The mother, who is central to the family often works as ambassadors, often volunteering and educating other families in their community. The mother, whether traditional, cultural or within the family, also find themselves needing to overcome those who undermine their efforts.

Although mothers find themselves wearing many hats and with those multiple responsibilities, the common thread is the issues faced by other parents. These mothers are an example for them. Three mothers from Latino, Somalian, and Haitian families will share their stories, taking the conversation beyond the underrepresented and underserved to focus on engagement because these mothers are underestimated. These mothers took action, putting others before themselves, before their families when their communities need them. Beyond the conversation is about the sacrifices these mothers make for their family, the challenges at home and historical gender biases in and outside their communities.hu

Breakout Session 16 – Education (North Dakota DD Council)

- North Dakota's Peer-to-Peer Model to promote inclusion from Middle School to Higher Education and beyond

ND has taken a real peer approach in inclusion and mentorship within its school systems. Students without disabilities take a class to learn about disability, modifications for the classroom, social interactions, etc. Then the students with and without disabilities take a class together to learn more about leadership, working together, and inclusion. Students without disabilities provide in class supports to students with disabilities in lieu of a paraeducator. Part of the course work is in school and extracurricular activities together. Students journal and discuss what they've learned weekly. More than a course credit, real results are being seen with positive impacts of inclusion, graduation rates are increasing, school budgets are improved as they are relying less on paraeducators, and students graduating are choosing disability related careers because of their experiences in peer to peer. People with disabilities and their families are being truly included and integrated in all parts of school, people have real friendships, learning leadership skills, and they belong. Going beyond the conversation of inclusion to creating meaningful inclusion across the lifespan.

Breakout Session 17 – Accessibility

- **Advocating for and Expanding the Use of Plain Language**

Plain language is communication your reader understands the first time they read it. As Developmental Disabilities Councils use plain language more, how do we get other entities in our states to use it as well? We want people with disabilities to have access to understandable information so that they can make informed decisions. Clear communication opens up possibilities to people. How can we enlist our state's self-advocacy organization, state agencies, service providers, and other advocates to embrace plain language strategies? Join this session to hear from a council board member and a council staff member on the Wisconsin Council's efforts to embed plain language in all their work and advocacy.

5:30 – 7:30 pm EST

West Virginia Film Screening and Panel with snacks

DCARO's Divided Attention documentary film, funded through a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council, follows four students from Toby Farms, a public middle school in the historically underfunded Chester Upland School District, as they learn and practice mindfulness amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the school to prison pipeline, and threat of charter takeover.

The film serves to model how mindfulness skills instruction could be implemented in schools to impact students' social emotional wellbeing and potentially replace punitive practices that are a key factor in the School To Prison Pipeline epidemic. In overcrowded classrooms and understaffed institutions, educators can't address needs of students. In those conditions, school personnel may be more likely to use disciplinary measures which lead to juvenile justice system and subsequently the adult criminal system.

Empowering educators and students with tools like mindfulness training and techniques as alternative effective ways to avoid those negative outcomes is important.

Friday July 26, 2024

8:00 am – 9:30 am EST

Breakfast Buffet

8:00 am – 9:00 am EST

NACDD General Assembly Meeting

8:00 am – 9:30 am EST

Self-Advocates Breakfast

9:30 – 11:00 am EST

General Session 2 – Disaster preparedness with FEMA/ASPR/etc

11:00 – 11:30 am EST

Break

11:30 am – 1:00 pm EST

Breakout – Peer to Peer – Friedlander

The Ability Leadership Program of North Carolina (ALP-NC) is a pioneering initiative designed to educate and empower leaders and advocates within the disability rights community. Administered by Community Bridges, ALP-NC offers an innovative and inclusive leadership development program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their family members, guardians, professionals, and other stakeholders who are committed to systemic change. Rooted in the values of the disability justice movement, ALP aims to develop the leadership and advocacy skills of adults with I/DD, their families, and professionals through a comprehensive curriculum that includes historical perspectives, hands-on advocacy training, and community building, thereby fostering a robust network of changemakers dedicated to accessibility, inclusivity, and disability justice.

Breakout – Intersectionality (DD Council)

- **Vamos DC: Supporting the Latino Disability Community Living in Washington, DC**

In this interactive session we will show how Vamos DC recognizes and respects the diverse cultural needs of DC's Latino community while striving to break down barriers related to language, advocacy, networking, and communication. We will provide in-depth information about [Vamos DC](#), a collaborative effort between the DC government and community organizations which aims to build trust with Latino DC residents while centering the voices of people with disabilities. Vamos DC emerged when we asked ourselves "who is missing from our work?" After a comprehensive review of data, we saw that DC's Latino community was underrepresented compared to other populations receiving disability services. Recognizing this disparity, Vamos DC was established,

resulting in a doubling of Latino individuals served by DDS within four years. We will hear from a Spanish Speaking mother of a person with a disability about what Vamos DC means to her, and a Spanish Speaking self-advocate about his experience with Vamos DC.