

Highlights: Annual Report

Maryland
Developmental
Disabilities
Council

A Message from

THE MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Dear Friends and colleagues:

We are pleased to provide a copy of The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's 2011 annual report, *Highlights*. For those of you not familiar with the Council, we are a federally funded public policy and advocacy organization focused on the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of life.

This report provides an overview of the Council's work in 2011, including what we advocated for and the initiatives, trainings, and activities we funded to advance our priorities and accomplish our goals.

Highlights 2011 wraps up the final year of our FY 2007-2011 State Plan. To develop our new State Plan, the Council conducted a comprehensive analysis of all major issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families in Maryland. We solicited public input into what our priorities should be and the goals we should dedicate staff and fiscal resources to over the next five years.

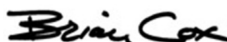
The Council's new FY2012-2016 State Plan, which will guide all of our advocacy, public policy work, and funding decisions, emerged after much consideration and debate among our diverse members. We believe it is a strong plan that will help us work with people with developmental disabilities, families, legislators, state officials and other stakeholders to bring about lasting improvements in Maryland— in terms of equal rights and opportunities, full inclusion and community participation, and exceptional supports and services.

Please visit our [website](#) to read the State Plan and to learn more about our work. We look forward to your partnership.

Sincerely,



Chairperson



Executive Director

OUR VISION:

The Council believes that all people with developmental disabilities should receive the support they need to maximize independence, be productive, and lead the lives they choose in the community.

Practices that segregate and isolate people with disabilities must end.

OUR MISSION:

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is a public policy organization that advocates for the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all facets of community life.

TO ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION THE COUNCIL:

- ◆ Educates and informs policymakers about issues of importance to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- ◆ Advocates for services, policies and practices that support people with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination and lead productive, fulfilling lives.
- ◆ Designs and funds innovative projects that promote community inclusion and improve services and supports.
- ◆ Focuses on bringing about lasting improvements in the areas of: education and early intervention, child care, employment, transportation, community supports, recreation, housing, health, and quality assurance.

The majority of Council members are people with developmental disabilities or family members of people with developmental disabilities. One member is a person who was once institutionalized. The Council includes representatives from state agencies, the Protection & Advocacy System (Maryland Disability Law Center) and the University Center on Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities). Other Council members include representatives from local agencies and non-profit organizations that provide services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.

WHO WE ARE:

A small staff works on behalf of the Council to carry-out our mission and address the priorities and goals established in the Council's Five-Year State Plan.

The Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council is part of a national network of DD Councils.

**Working for
communities
that include
and support
everyone.**

BUILDING CAPACITY THAT RESULTS IN INCREASED EMPLOYMENT

Supporting Organizational Change

Marylanders with developmental disabilities clearly express their desire for jobs in the community, earning living wages with benefits, and opportunities for career advancement. Community service providers are critical partners in making this a reality. With a second year of Council funding, four community services agencies are building their organizational capacity to offer customized employment services and supports to people with developmental disabilities.

The agencies—Friends Aware, The League for People with Disabilities, Family Service Foundation, and United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Maryland—received targeted, customized training and technical assistance to improve the employment outcomes of people with developmental disabilities they support, consistent with the principles of Employment First. So far, this initiative has resulted in the employment of 42 people in integrated community jobs. An additional 5 people had paid internships through summer youth employment and 15 gained work experience through volunteering.

Building Capacity

The MD Organizational Change Network provides opportunities for agencies implementing organizational changes to improve employment outcomes by sharing information and experiences, learning from each other, building knowledge, and identifying system issues.



In addition to the agencies that receive organizational change grants from the Council (noted above), members of the Network include The Arc Carroll County, Penn-Mar Human Services, and Goodwill of Monocacy Valley. TransCen, Inc. receives Council funding to facilitate the Network.

Pursuing New Employment Strategies

During the summer of 2011, the Council brought together employment stakeholders, including people with developmental disabilities, employment service providers, State agency representatives, Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities staff and advocates to develop strategies for increasing competitive employment outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities. The Council will bring the partners together to develop action steps in 2012.

ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

The Council continues to serve on DDA’s Employment First Advisory Group as it identifies ways to implement Employment First in Maryland. In the past year, the major focus of the group was to analyze and develop recommendations about regulations, policies, and funding mechanisms so that they reflect Maryland’s Employment First vision.

Advocating for New Sources of Funding

Increasing funding for community services and supports for people with developmental disabilities remained a Council priority in 2011 because Maryland ranks 43rd in the nation in terms of spending on developmental disabilities services:

- ◆ Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) community services have been underfunded for over a decade.
- ◆ There are over 6500 people with developmental disabilities on DDA's Waiting List for community supports and services.

Through collaboration with the other developmental disability leaders and advocates for addictions treatment, mental health services, and health care, the Council worked for passage of legislation that increased the state sales tax on alcohol, with \$15 Million dedicated to the DDA Waiting List in FY2012. As a result, everyone in the highest priority category, crisis resolution, will receive the long term supports they need and hundreds of people in the crisis prevention category will receive up to \$10,000 of services of a short duration.

The Council will build on this effort in 2012 to address the needs of people remaining on the Waiting List, as well as underfunding of existing community supports that result in low wages for direct support staff, high staff turnover, less flexible and individualized services, and more limited transportation options and community participation.

Supporting the Grassroots

The End the Wait Now! Campaign, (ETWN) a grassroots campaign sponsored by the Council and coordinated by The Arc Maryland, continued its work in 2011 with a focus on increasing funding for the DDA Waiting List, including support of the alcohol tax legislation. Outreach in 16 counties, with a focus on the underserved areas of the Eastern Shore and Western Maryland, brought in over 600 new members to the campaign.

Highlights of strategies include:

- ◆ New stories of people on the Waiting List were added to the story corps and used to educate and raise the awareness of the Governor, legislators, the media and general public.
- ◆ ETWN Campaign representatives spoke at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Salisbury University, resulting in students signing up for the action alerts and letter writing activities to legislators and state officials.
- ◆ People with developmental disabilities on the waiting list and their family members were featured in print and TV news segments about the Waiting List crisis.



Educating Policymakers & the Public

We used our publication, *What's Possible: Nine Stories of Changed Lives*, and our documentary, *Departing Rosewood*, to educate diverse audiences throughout Maryland and the country about how community services and supports benefit people with developmental disabilities who once lived in institutions.

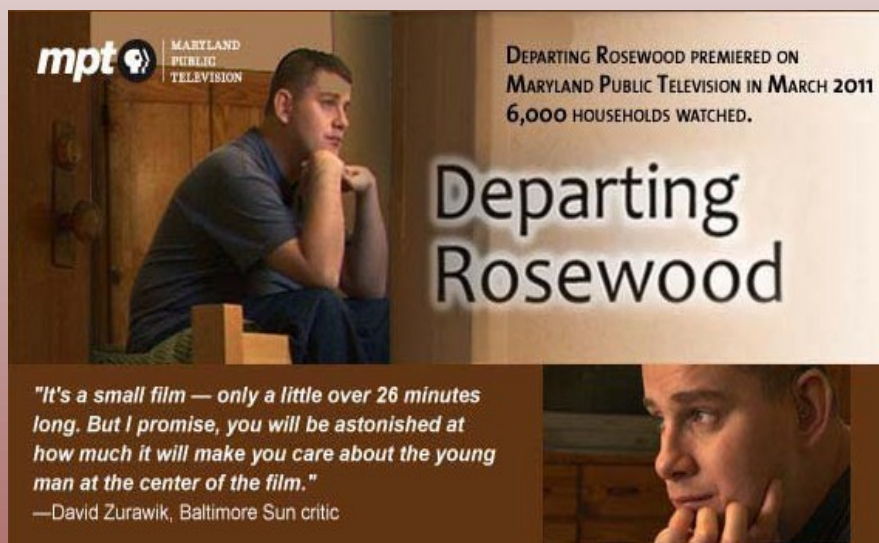
The Council has distributed over 3300 copies of *What's Possible* and 50 copies of *Departing Rosewood*, which has been viewed by thousands of people nationwide.

Feedback about the Council's publication and documentary includes:

"extremely powerful tool"

"inspiring and insightful"

"the best of any on the subject that I've seen"



To read *What's Possible* and for more information on how to receive free copies for educational and training purposes visit, [Publications/Reports](#)

To view *Departing Rosewood* and for more information on how to receive free DVDs for educational and training purposes visit, [Departing Rosewood](#)

ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

To support the expansion of community services for people with developmental disabilities involved in the criminal justice system, the Council arranged and paid for experts from other states to advise DDA and stakeholders. We helped lead the development of a report and recommendations for building more community capacity rather than using facility-based services.

The Council engaged in a range of education and advocacy activities with our DD Coalition partners that were successful in protecting funding for transitioning youth, and fighting cuts to developmental disability community supports and services.



The Council serves on Medicaid Matters! MD, a coalition of local, regional, and statewide organizations representing people with disabilities, at risk children, vulnerable seniors and the low income community. The Coalition continues to advocate for implementation of health care reform in Maryland that results in greater access to quality affordable health care.

As a gubernatorial appointee to the Autism Commission, the Council was active on workgroups dealing with funding and resources, early intervention services, and evidence-based practices.

We provided analysis and recommendations on legislation including housing, healthcare, therapeutic services, abuse and other bills.

An option to donate funds to the DDA Waiting List was added to MD Income Tax Return forms. The Council developed marketing strategies and funded fliers and posters for tax preparer offices, libraries and other public venues. Over 8000 marketing materials were distributed.

The Council participated on the State Coordinating Committee for Human Services Transportation; a committee that examines the transportation needs of the elderly, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. The Council works to ensure that the needs of people with developmental disabilities and their families are represented.

The Council serves on the Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities which, over the course of this past year, worked on implementation of its Strategic Plan, development of a transition conference, and issues regarding children with disabilities in foster care.

Self Advocacy on the Move

With support provided through two Council grants, People On the Go of Maryland (POG) continued to build and strengthen how it operates and increased its effectiveness through participation with the DD Coalition and representation on statewide workgroups and advisory groups. To enhance its presence and autonomy, POG developed its own logo, website, and business cards. www.pogmd.org

Council funds also supported training POG members from numerous local self-advocacy groups, transportation to make participation in legislative and advocacy activities possible, and expansion into areas of Maryland that lack active self-advocacy groups. POG members gained knowledge and skills and were active in systems advocacy on many priorities, including deinstitutionalization, adequate funding of services, and self-determination.

Developing Youth Self-Advocacy

The Council's new State Plan includes a goal to identify and implement replicable strategies that support the development of self-advocacy skills among youth with developmental disabilities. To determine the most effective approach to this goal, in 2011 we brought together individuals and organizations with experience in this area to identify and analyze activities underway in Maryland, strategies that other states have used, and promising ideas and opportunities. This information will guide the Council's investments in youth self-advocacy in 2012.

Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature

Nearly 400 people with disabilities, family members, advocates, and service providers gathered in the state capital, Annapolis, for the annual DD Day at the Legislature, which is co-sponsored by the Council.

After briefings about priority budgets and legislation and rallying calls from legislators who have championed our causes, participants marched to the State House, greeted legislators, and shared their stories with the press.

Information was delivered to all legislative offices and some attendees participated in committee hearings. DD Day was again a great educational, awareness and advocacy success.



Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature 2011



Building Capacity

Through a grant from the Council, Maryland Family Network continued to develop an e-learning module for child care providers about children with developmental disabilities, including specific strategies to use in child care settings to ensure inclusion. Through this online training, child care providers will gain more knowledge and understanding about supporting children with developmental disabilities. The training will be available in 2012. www.marylandfamilynetwork.org

Linking Families to Resources

The Family Networks website, an in-house initiative of the Council, is a comprehensive online resource for families of children with developmental disabilities. In 2011 the website averaged over 8,500 visitors per month. The most popular resources included those related to youth with disabilities and a Spanish version of a guide to special education services. Over 280 parents, advocates, and professionals belong to the Family Networks list-serve to gain access to resources, share ideas, and connect with their communities.

www.family-networks.org

Increasing Access to Child Care & Out of School Time Activities

The Council conducted two surveys about access to childcare for children and youth with disabilities. Over 450 families and over 480 childcare providers responded. A report with findings and recommendations will be available in 2012. The results will be used to guide the Council's and our collaborators' advocacy and public policy work aimed at increasing access to needed programs and services.



Inspiring and thought provoking presentation. It made me want to look for more ways to empower parents...

(child care provider after attending the Partnerships Make it Work: Including ALL Children seminar, supported by the Council)

PROMOTING INCLUSIVE CHILD CARE

ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

The Council was active in many ways with the Office of Child Care (OCC) to improve and expand access to high quality, inclusive child and after school care:

The Inclusive Child Care Workgroup was re-established by the OCC to review, revise and make new recommendations about policies and practices to ensure more high quality, inclusive child and after school care in Maryland. As a part of this effort, the Council chairs the Crosswalk Workgroup, which is charged with recommending that all current childcare initiatives have the same goals, activities, and outcomes. Through partnership and collaboration facilitated by the Council and Maryland Disability Law Center, strategies have been developed to accomplish this goal.



As a member of the OCC Credentialing Modification Workgroup, the Council helped modify credentialing requirements for child care professionals. As a result, those who choose to participate in the credentialing program will have to take additional trainings, including a specific training on the inclusion of children with disabilities in child care and after school care.

The Council participated in the development of Maryland EXCELS, the Quality Rating and Improvement System for child care providers, which is now being piloted in 45 child care settings across Maryland. MD EXCELS will be a voluntary program that will rate the quality of child care providers who meet higher standards than licensing requires. The Council successfully advocated for quality measures to be included that impact the inclusion of children with disabilities.

The Council led efforts by stakeholders to oppose a decision by the Division of Early Childhood Development at the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to completely cut supplemental funding to programs that serve children who are medically fragile. As a result, MSDE and legislators learned about the impact of these programs on children with disabilities and special health care needs and their families, leading to restoration of almost 70% of the funding.

ADVOCATING FOR EDUCATION RIGHTS & OPPORTUNITIES

The Council continued to address the low rate of inclusion of young children, students, and youth with developmental disabilities in all aspects of the education system. Since students with disabilities continue to have the lowest percentage of school readiness compared to all other specific groups, the Council worked extensively to promote school readiness and other programs, policies and practices that encourage the inclusion of young children with disabilities.

ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES

COLLABORATED—With MSDE to support the Birth through Five System of Services for young children with developmental disabilities and delays by providing extensive comments on changes to policies and procedures, actively participating on the State Interagency Coordinating Council and partnering to expand opportunities for young children with disabilities in the natural environment.

PROVIDED—Feedback to MSDE regarding the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant application. If awarded the grant, Maryland will receive \$50 Million over 4 years to implement Maryland EXCELS as well as other initiatives to ensure high quality early learning programs are available to young children, including children with disabilities.

ADVOCATED—Successfully in conjunction with other advocates, to stop changes to the pre-kindergarten regulations. The proposed changes could have taken much needed resources and options away from children with disabilities.

PARTNERED—With the Education Advocacy Coalition to comment on proposed regulations, and advocate for other changes in policies and practices related to the education of students with disabilities.



CREATIVELY ADDRESSING OTHER PRIORITIES

Outreach to the Hispanic Community

The Hispanic Outreach Project, an initiative of The Arc Maryland funded by the Council, developed the HOLA! (Hispanic Outreach Launch Assistant) Toolkit. This comprehensive resource will be used to improve the ability of organizations to serve people with developmental disabilities and their families in the Hispanic community. The HOLA! Toolkit features components for creating a successful outreach plan, including culturally competent practices, partnering strategies, community resources, and funding options.

The project assisted local Arcs in making their materials more accessible by translating brochures and website information. The Governor's Transitioning Youth Advisory Council also utilized the project to translate a parent survey to assess transitioning services for youth with disabilities. A formal partnership was formed with the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs to collaboratively explore funding opportunities for the project at federal and State levels.

Expanding the use of Assistive Technology

In its first year of funding the All Together in the Mountains project, an initiative of AT: LAST in Western Maryland, increased awareness of augmentative communication devices for children and adults with developmental disabilities by providing assistive technology trainings and presentations to over 170 people including service providers, college students, families and members of the business community. Fifty-six child care providers were taught how to create low-tech adaptations and implement simple accommodations necessary to include children with developmental disabilities in typical child care settings.

A new professional development course titled, Special Topics in Education: Introduction to Assistive Technology was developed and offered at Frostburg University; the course has now become a permanent part of Frostburg's curriculum. www.matcoop.org



I really enjoyed the “safe” environment. Parents were treated with respect and felt comfortable discussing issues regarding their children. Thank You!

(parent after attending the Caring for Your Challenging Child workshop, supported by the Council)

CREATIVELY ADDRESSING OTHER PRIORITIES

Providing Support through Small Grants

The Council’s Small Grants are utilized in many different ways to educate and train people with developmental disabilities and their families, support communities, and increase advocacy efforts.

Examples of the activities supported with Small Grants in 2011:

Increasing caregiver/family relationships: Over 100 child care providers were educated on national standards for inclusion, accommodations for children and their families, and cultural diversity.

Spreading awareness among students: Co-sponsored the 9th Annual “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Campaign and poster contest. Elementary students celebrated Disability History & Awareness month with culturally diverse activities. All winning posters were displayed at the State House in Annapolis.

Including children with autism in child care: Early childhood professionals and childcare staff were provided with strategies and tools to successfully include children with autism spectrum disorders in their classrooms.

Sharing resources: Provided funding to support the Baltimore County Commission on Disabilities’ Resource Guide for People with Disabilities.

Supporting self-advocacy: Council funds were used to hire a facilitator for Howard County’s People Power self-advocacy group. The group has become more active in local and state self-advocacy issues, increased their membership and established a Facebook page and list-serve.

Empowering parents and educating providers: Supported a 10-week training class to help parents and caregivers learn effective strategies for working with children with developmental disabilities and challenging behaviors.

Celebrating the Americans with Disabilities Act: Co-sponsored the 21st Anniversary Celebration of the ADA.

For more information about funding opportunities from the Council and instructions on how to apply visit, [FUNDING](#)



MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

2011 Council Members

Thomas P. Webb
Chairperson
Kent County

George Flamer
Talbot County

Aileen O'Hare
Montgomery County

Eric Lee Cole
Vice Chair
Montgomery County

Gail Godwin
Baltimore City

Grace Pushparany-Williams
Prince George's County

Carol Ann Baglin*
Alice Harris*
Represented by Karla Saval
MD State Dept. of Education

Angela Harp
Baltimore County

Steve Pyles
Prince George's County

Patricia Bayliss
MD Department of Aging

Polly Huston
Division of Rehabilitation
Services

Cathy Raggio
Maryland Department of
Disabilities

Damon Briggs
Montgomery County

Aaron Kaufman
Montgomery County

David Schlegel
Cecil County

Michael Chapman*
Frank Kirkland*
Developmental Disabilities
Administration, DHMH

Rosemary King-Johnston
Baltimore County

Christopher Smith
Maryland Center for
Developmental Disabilities
Kennedy Krieger Institute

Eva Cowen
Montgomery County

Wendell McKay
Howard County

Paula Suter
Baltimore County

Sharon Dockery
Montgomery County

Lynne Pattison
Frederick County

Jeri Wasco
Montgomery County

William DuSold
Anne Arundel County

*Served partial terms

2011 Council Staff

Brian Cox
Executive Director

Angela Castillo-Epps
Director of Communications/
Policy Specialist

Linda Nelson
Office Manager

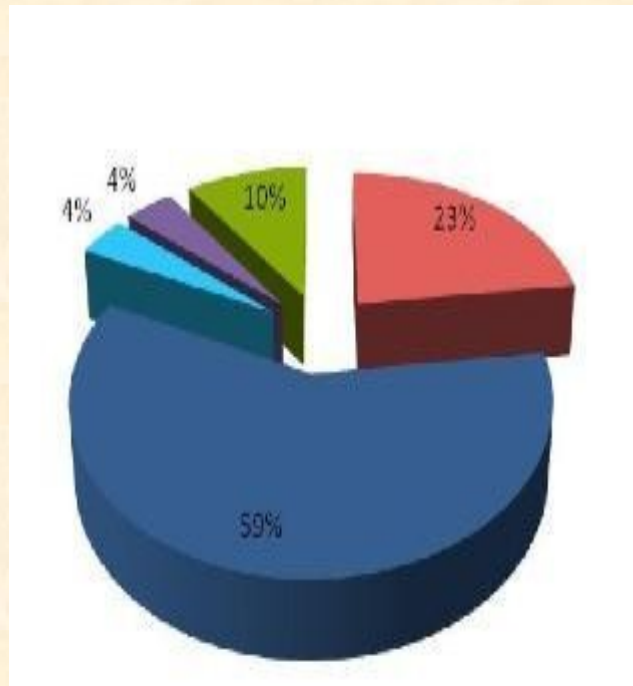
Catherine Lyle
Deputy Director

Rachel London
Director of Children &
Family Policy

Stephanie Watkins
Family NET Works,
Resource Specialist

TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURES IN 2011: \$432,809

- Family and Community Supports \$ 255,347/59%
- Leadership and Advocacy \$100,732/23%
- Employment \$43,284/10%
- Health \$16,746/4%
- Education and Early Intervention \$16,700/4%



MD Developmental Disabilities Council
217 E. Redwood Street, Suite 1300
Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 410.767.2914, 1.800.305.6441
MD Relay: 711
Fax: 410.333.3686
Email: info@md-council.org
www.md-council.org

“Like” our page where we share Council publications, announcements and funding opportunities, in addition to other timely news and information important to people with developmental disabilities, their families and allies in Maryland.

Funding for this publication is authorized by Subtitle B of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Washington, D.C.