



Maryland Developmental
Disabilities Council

► HIGHLIGHTS

2020 Annual Report







TABLE OF CONTENTS

01.....	A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP
02.....	VISION AND MISSION
03.....	WE LEAD
04.....	WE INFORM
05.....	WE PARTNER
06.....	WE EMPOWER
08.....	WE ADVOCATE
09.....	WE FIND SOLUTIONS
10.....	WE ADVISE
12.....	INVESTMENTS
13.....	FUTURE PROJECTS
15.....	COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF



A LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP



2020: CHANGING LIVES

Dear friends and colleagues,

COVID changed everyone's lives in 2020. It forced federal, state, and local governments to react quickly. Suddenly we were all home, away from friends and family, and figuring out new ways to live, learn, work, and play.

COVID didn't stop the Council! While lives looked different, and our advocacy went virtual, the Council continued to create change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need. We found solutions to problems created by COVID by using resources like staff expertise and Council funding to:

Lead advocacy to make sure people with developmental disabilities had a support person in the hospital, if needed.

Partner to provide access to technology so people with developmental disabilities remained comfortable and connected while schools closed, jobs went online, and services changed.

Inform people with developmental disabilities and families about COVID, vaccines, and other services and supports by creating a COVID webpage and developing fact sheets in plain language.

Change happens when everyone works together. And, together we continue to make Maryland a place where people with and without disabilities live, learn, work, and play together.

Sincerely,

Kalani Brown
CHAIRPERSON

Rachel London
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VISION AND MISSION

OUR VISION

People with and without disabilities in Maryland live, learn, work, and play together.

OUR MISSION

We create change to make it possible for people with developmental disabilities to live the lives they want with the support they need.

HOW WE CREATE CHANGE

We Lead: we take bold steps to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. We help lead the way with new ideas.

We Partner: we bring together people with developmental disabilities, their family members, organizations, and others. Together we find solutions to problems and take action to bring about change.

We Advise: we are a trusted advisor to leaders in state government and the state legislature. We work with them to improve laws, policies, programs, and services.

We Advocate: we advocate for people with developmental disabilities to have the same opportunities in life that other members of the community have. We advocate for people to be included and supported so they are successful.

We Inform: we provide information and resources so people with disabilities and their family members can understand their rights, increase their independence, and find the services and supports they need.

We Empower: we fund advocacy and leadership training. People with developmental disabilities and their family members learn how to effectively advocate for themselves and others.

We Educate: we help teachers, employers, and other community members understand developmental disabilities. Our goal is for them to welcome and include people with disabilities.

We Find Solutions: we are the leading organization in Maryland that funds grants focused on developmental disabilities. Grantees develop and test new ideas. We use what we learn to bring about change throughout Maryland.

We change lives

WE LEAD

The federal, state, and local governments reacted quickly to COVID. Requirements to social distance, isolate, and quarantine affected the lives of all Marylanders, including people with developmental disabilities and their families. It also affected many Council projects. The Council acted quickly and Council staff worked closely with people with developmental disabilities, families, state agencies, community providers, and others to make sure people were safe, supported, and had the information they needed and wanted.

CONNECTION AND COMFORT DURING COVID

The Council, in partnership with The Arc Maryland, provided funding to community provider agencies licensed, certified, or approved by the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration. Provider agencies purchased technology equipment, such as computers, tablets, and assistive technology and subscriptions, such as Zoom, virtual fitness classes, and virtual games, to help people remain connected to their family, friends, work, school, and the community during and after COVID. The project became a model for other State Developmental Disabilities Councils.



“This was the first emergency/ pandemic related grant opportunity that we were aware of and it was the fastest turnaround from submission to approval of funding.”

–The Arc Southern Maryland

“We knew this would be the perfect opportunity to engage, energize, and create teamwork and calmness. That is exactly what this project did.”

–Spring Dell Center

“By far the most popular activity that resulted from this grant was all the new virtual programming Jubilee was able to offer 5 days a week.”

–Jubilee Association

\$85K investment

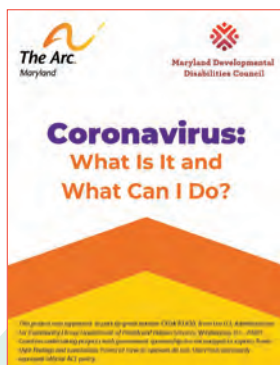
46 providers throughout Maryland

2,946 people with developmental disabilities

WE INFORM

COVID INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

The Council made it a priority to provide easy to understand information about COVID. We partnered with the Governor, state agencies, and other organizations to create accessible, plain language documents. More than 3,000 people visited the COVID Resource webpage and downloaded close to 200 resources.



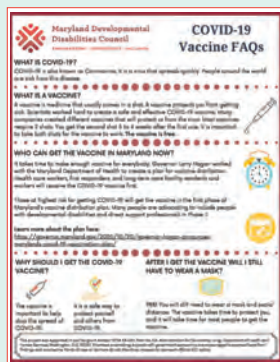
Coronavirus – What is it and What can I do?



Beware of Frauds and Scams



Face Covering FAQs



Maryland COVID-19 Vaccine FAQs



Access to Support for People with Disabilities in Hospital Settings FAQs



Special COVID Payments FAQs

WE PARTNER

ADVOCACY

The Council works with people with developmental disabilities from across the state to improve issues that affect their lives. With support from the Council and the Maryland Center for Developmental Disabilities, People on the Go of Maryland (POG), the statewide self-advocacy group led by people with developmental disabilities, did just that. POG provided training, assistance, and support so more people serve on boards, testify in Annapolis, and lead advocacy groups.

“COVID has enabled POG to expand its membership, and I think that is a good thing. More people are involved. It helps us know how to make our voices heard. As the vice chairman of POG, it enables me to reach out to more people than just in my own county. POG is thankful for the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's continued support of its work of empowering all people, regardless of disability status, to be active participants in their communities. POG will continue to find alternative ways for members to stay connected and supported in self-advocacy during these challenging times.”

In FY2020, **299 more people with developmental disabilities** took part in **POG sponsored trainings** compared to FY2019.



WE EMPOWER

PERSON-CENTERED PLANNING

Expectations Matter: My Life, My Choice, My Plan launched this year to increase the number of people with developmental disabilities and family members who are actively involved in planning what they want and need to have a good life. The Council, in partnership with Shared Support Maryland, Inc., developed this training about person-centered planning (PCP). People with developmental disabilities and their family members must be involved in their own planning. They should guide the planning as much as possible. Each person's plan should include what is important to them. This can only happen if they understand the PCP process and planning tools. This project informs, trains, and supports people all over Maryland to understand and be involved in their PCP.

“This course provided new insights, tools, and questions to use in preparing for and conducting future meetings. From the slides provided, we will use some of the questions to make sure that the PCP truly reflects our daughter's hopes, dreams, and desires for her best life.”

62 people with developmental disabilities and 105 family members participated in Expectations Matter: My Life, My Choice, My Plan trainings.



LEADERSHIP

We know people with developmental disabilities and family members are effective advocates and leaders. They improve child care, education, family support, and other services. They become leaders and advocates who can talk about what they need and want in their own communities because of projects led by the Council. Partners in Policymaking® (PIP) trains people with developmental disabilities and family members to become effective advocates for long-term change. In FY2020, The Arc Maryland led training for PIP participants who also attended Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature in person before the mandatory stay at home order due to COVID. The pandemic did not stop PIP participants. They quickly shifted to virtual meetings, and even got together for social time.



“Partners in Policymaking has challenged my assumptions, shattered preconceived notions, inspired new ideas, and renewed passion. Through Partners I learned how to build coalitions to accomplish exponentially more than I could alone. I will work together and build upon the many accomplishments of those Partners before me.”

The Council also funded **3 Education and Event Sponsorships** and **6 Small Grants**. **125 people with developmental disabilities** and **397 family members** attended Council sponsored trainings.

WE ADVOCATE

CHILD CARE AND EDUCATION

Because of the Council's advocacy, schools, workplaces, and neighborhoods welcome, respect, and include more people with disabilities. There are more child care options for families where children with and without disabilities learn and play together. And more students with developmental disabilities receive services and supports to learn and succeed alongside students without disabilities. Training and assistance for child care providers, educators, and education professionals helped make this happen.

When COVID closed child care centers and schools, **the Council successfully advocated for reopening plans to address the needs of children with developmental disabilities.**

5 early childhood education and special education policies, practices, and procedures changed because of Council advocacy.



WE FIND SOLUTIONS

EMPLOYMENT

More people with developmental disabilities are working. The agencies that support them have made big changes in how they help people find and keep jobs. The Council funded technical assistance to help community providers better support people with developmental disabilities get competitive integrated employment and have meaningful days when they are not working.

“We are more focused on the value of services to our members and their families/caregivers who reside primarily in Baltimore City. They are challenged economically and affected by COVID, and they have seen our continued and persistent effort to serve our members in their quest to become contributing members of society, which has been and continues to be supported by the TIP Grant formed by our partners the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council and Maryland Works. Thank you!”



“We have learned from this project, we need to find a way to encourage businesses that already employ people with disabilities to speak to other businesses. Many businesses are paralyzed by the fear of the unknown.”

PRIOR TO THE COVID SHUT DOWN:

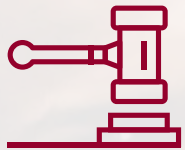
17 **community providers**
across Maryland received technical assistance.

47 **people**
living in rural Southern Maryland got jobs and increased participation in meaningful activities when not working.

237 **direct support professionals**
from across the state received training to better support people with developmental disabilities get and keep jobs in their communities and have meaningful days when not working.

WE ADVISE

The Council's work ensures that people with developmental disabilities and their family members receive the support they need in their homes and communities. People have left institutions and are now living in the community. They have more individualized support and are more independent. Council staff work closely with legislators and state leaders to advocate for laws that provide opportunities for people with disabilities to live where they want, have a job, and access services.

**10****improvements**

to statutes, regulations, and policies.

**22****committees and councils**

served on to advocate for improved programs, policies, and practices.

**121****community providers**

implemented policies, procedures, or programs to support people with developmental disabilities during COVID.

**80****priority bills**

during the first shortened Maryland legislative session since the Civil War.

**188****legislators**

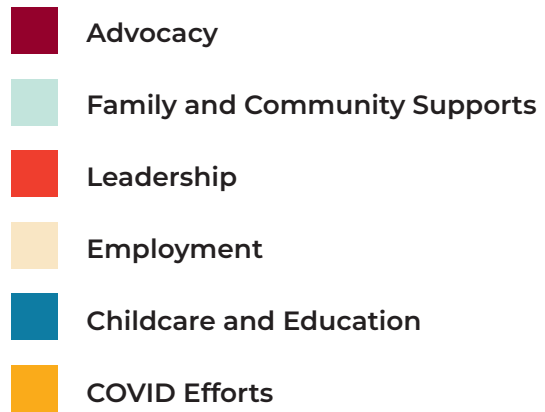
educated about issues related to developmental disabilities.

**1,700****people**

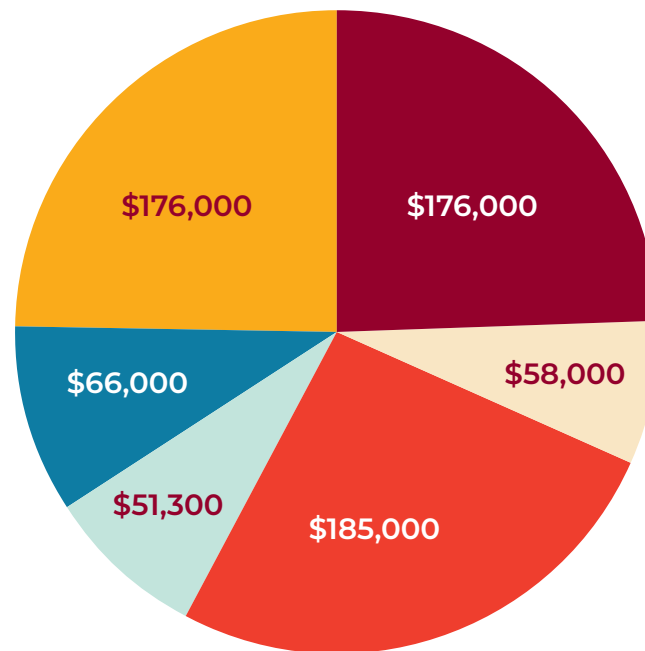
attended Developmental Disabilities Day at the Legislature in person and through Facebook Live.



INVESTMENTS



**includes money from multiple grant years*



FUTURE PROJECTS

WHAT THE COUNCIL IS DOING IN FY2021

People on the Go of Maryland – Enhancing Self-Advocacy and Public Policy Work

Support People on the Go to train, help, and support people with developmental disabilities and local self-advocacy groups to be informed about issues, build skills, speak for themselves, and be strong advocates.

Shared Support Maryland, Inc. – Expectations Matter: My Life, My Plan, My Choice

Year 2 of the project will inform, train, and support people all over Maryland to understand and be involved in their Person-Centered Plan. The user-friendly written guide and trainer's guide will be finalized, and the project will be evaluated.

The Arc Central Chesapeake Region – Project Learn

Train middle and high school students with developmental disabilities to take control of their Individual Education Programs (IEP) and 504 plans, and advocate for their educational needs. And, develop information and resources about IEPs and 504 plans.

Abilities Network, Project ACT – Learning the Basics: Strength-Based Training on Developmental Disabilities

Develop 6 trainings about different developmental disabilities, and train and support child care professionals about how to support children with different developmental disabilities.

Penn-Mar Human Services and TransCen, Inc. – Rebuilding DDA Providers with Technical Assistance

Provide technical assistance to 5 community service providers to develop, rebuild, and recreate services during and after COVID, and provide training to people with developmental disabilities and family members so they can tell providers what they need and want. Lessons learned will be shared at a statewide conference.

Loyola University of Maryland – Online LEAD Program Regional Pilot for Fire/EMS

Expand the existing LEAD program to make it an online training. More people with developmental disabilities will learn how to be Self-Advocate Educators and provide training to fire and EMS personnel.

Center for Transition and Career Innovation, University of Maryland – College Park – TerpsEXCEED

Develop and run a new inclusive higher education program at the University of Maryland – College Park. Students with developmental disabilities will participate in college campus life and take classes with students without disabilities.

#ExpectationsMatter Small Grants

To continue the work of #ExpectationsMatter #ExpectAbility, 4 organizations will use small grant funding to raise expectations about people with developmental disabilities in their schools, homes, workplaces, and communities so everyone feels respected, welcomed, and supported.

Tsinat Institute – 300 Leaders

Train and support youth with developmental disabilities from Ethiopian communities to develop the social and leadership skills needed for community engagement and employment.

The Arc Maryland – Partners in Policymaking®

Year 3 of Partners in Policymaking® will train more people with developmental disabilities and family members to be strong advocates and leaders.



COUNCIL MEMBERS AND STAFF

COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Brent Debnam, Vice Chair
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