



Councils on Developmental Disabilities (DD Councils), appointed by the Governor in every State and Territory, are a Federal-State partnership for and with people with developmental disabilities and their families. Councils develop innovative, cost-effective ways to promote the independence, integration and self-sufficiency of people with developmental disabilities.

People with Developmental Disabilities

Over 5.4 million Americans have developmental disabilities, which are severe, lifelong disabilities such as cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, and intellectual disabilities that manifest at birth or before age 22.

While opportunities for people with developmental disabilities have increased in recent years, they face enormous, lifelong challenges regarding health care, education, housing, transportation and employment.

People with developmental disabilities must navigate complex and sometimes contradictory systems that often fail to adequately coordinate services. They too often fall between the cracks and cannot access much-needed services and supports.

Councils on Developmental Disabilities

Councils are made up primarily of people with developmental disabilities or immediate family members.

Councils promote independent living whereby people with developmental disabilities live and work in their own communities and the cost of services is far less than in institutions.

Councils address the gaps faced by people with developmental disabilities and work on a range of issues, including education and early intervention, health care, child care, housing, transportation and employment. They develop innovative, cost-effective solutions. For a relatively small amount of federal money, Councils do a great deal of good.

For over 40 years, DD Councils have been at the forefront of remarkable changes

Councils have supported public-private partnerships to increase employment of people with developmental disabilities, and are at the forefront of advancing *Employment First* policies in States to fundamentally shift expectations and align services so that people with developmental disabilities have jobs where they earn at least minimum or prevailing wages.

Councils have trained community-based providers to improve access and quality of services for people with developmental disabilities, particularly in rural areas.

Councils have improved education systems to maximize the potential of children with developmental disabilities.

Councils have recommended and gained changes to state and local transportation systems to improve access. Often public transportation is essential to employment of people with developmental.

DD Councils in every State need your support

A key mission of state DD Councils is to advise governors, state agencies, and legislators on the use of available and potential resources to meet the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities. State DD Councils build capacity, and work to affect changes in state policies, practices and systems to enhance community services and supports that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to live in the own homes and work in their own communities.

State and Territorial Councils use federal funding for model demonstration grant projects that have increased access to housing, transportation, inclusive education, transition from school and employment services to persons with developmental and other disabilities.

The work of the DD Councils is far from finished. Too many people with developmental disabilities are not included in their communities and remain isolated from everyday experiences of friendship, participation in civic life and employment. Long waiting lists exist for needed services. Adults with developmental disabilities unnecessarily experience extremely high unemployment rates.

Support for DD Councils is crucial to continue the ability to protect, advocate for and support people with developmental disabilities in every state. For the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011, we respectfully request that Congress appropriate at least the same amount as FY2010, an annual \$75,068,640 for the DD Councils.