

# Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

## Bylaws

### What are Bylaws?



- Bylaws are the rules the Council follows.
- Our bylaws explain:
  - ✓ Who we are
  - ✓ What we do
  - ✓ How we do it
- Our bylaws help the Council run good meetings and make good decisions.

### What is the DD Council?



- We are an organization in Delaware. We are called “the DD Council” or “the Council.”
- A federal law called the Developmental Disabilities Act created us. Most people call it the “DD Act.”
- We get our funding (money) from the federal government. We use our funding to run the Council and pay for grants and other activities.
- The DD Act lists the rules we must follow. These rules are important to follow or we will not get our funding. If we do not get our funding, we cannot do our work.

## Independence



The Council is a part of state government, but no one in state government tells us what to do. We are independent. That means we make our own decisions about everything. This includes decisions about:

- What we do.
- Who we hire as our staff.
- How we spend our money.

## What the Council Wants for People with Developmental Disabilities



The Council wants all people with developmental disabilities to be included, valued, and supported. This means:

- People with and without disabilities live, learn, work, and have fun together.
- Everyone has the same opportunities in life.
- People have power and control over their own lives.

The Council does many different things to help make this happen.

## What the Council Does



Every 5 years we develop a big plan. This is called our “State Plan.” The state plan lists the goals and activities we will work on over 5 years.

- Goals describe what the Council wants to see happen.
- Activities are how we will help make it happen.

## Council Membership

The Council has the following kinds of members:



- 1) People with developmental disabilities.
- 2) Family members of people with developmental disabilities. Family members are husbands, wives, parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters.

**Most Council members are people with developmental disabilities and family members.**



- 3) At least one Council member must be:  
A person with a developmental disability or a family member of a person with a developmental disability who:
  - Lives in an institution, or
  - Used to live in an institution.

Stockley Center is an example of an institution.



- 4) A staff member from these state agencies:
  - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
  - Delaware Department of Education
  - Division of Services for Aging and Adult with Physical Disabilities
  - Division of Developmental Disabilities Services
  - Division of Public Health



5) People who work for community organizations and advocacy groups that support the Council's mission.

6) A staff member from:

- Community Legal Aid Society
- Center for Disabilities Studies

### Council members:



- Have different kinds of developmental disabilities
- Are from different races and backgrounds
- Live in different parts of Delaware

### How people become Council members:



People are “appointed” to the Council by the Governor. This means they become a member.

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Members stay on the Council for 6 years at first. After 6 years, members can stay another 6 years.

Members must leave the Council sooner if they:

- Break the law,
- Behave badly, or
- Do not carry out their responsibilities.

## Council Leaders



The Council has a chairperson and vice-chairperson. They are called the “officers.” They lead the Council.

Council members pick who will be the chairperson and vice-chairperson. They serve for two years. This is called their “term.” They can serve more than one term.

### The Chairperson:

- Runs Executive Committee meetings and Council meetings. Helps decide what will be discussed at each meeting.
- Helps Council members participate in meetings.
- Picks who should be on each committee. And picks who should lead each committee. The Council must agree with who they pick.
- Works with the Executive Director to make sure the Council meets its goals.
- Helps the Executive Director work with the governor, legislators, and the community.
- Supervises the Executive Director.

### The Vice-Chairperson:

- Takes over the responsibilities listed above when the Chairperson cannot do them.
- Does other work when asked by the chairperson or executive director.

## Committees



The Council has 4 committees:

- Executive Committee
- Advocacy and Outreach Committee
- Policy and Law Committee
- Personnel Committee



Council members serve on the committees.

The Council can put people on the Advocacy & Outreach Committee, Policy & Law Committee, and Personnel Committee that **are not** Council members. They **may not** be the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the committee.



Committees vote on things like:

- Funding projects – giving them money.
- Advocating for things like policies and programs.

Committees give reports at Council meetings about what they are working on. The Council must agree with what the committees voted to do. If the Council agrees, the committee can move forward and take action.

## Executive Committee



The Executive Committee includes:

- The Council Chairperson
- The Council Vice-Chairperson
- The Chairperson of the following committees:
  - ✓ Advocacy and Outreach Committee
  - ✓ Policy and Law Committee
  - ✓ Personnel Committee
- Two other Council members. At least one must be a person with a disability. These members stay on the Executive Committee for 2 years.

The Executive Committee:

- Helps lead and guide the work of the Council.
- Makes decisions that the full Council would usually make, when the decision cannot wait for the next Council meeting.

## Advocacy and Outreach Committee



This committee focuses on activities in the Council's State Plan that have to do with advocacy and reaching out to the community.

The committee:

- Recommends projects to support and fund.
- Monitors progress on projects the Council funds.
- Does other work to support the Council's goals.

## Policy and Law Committee



This committee focuses on activities in the Council's State Plan that have to do with policy and laws.

The committee:

- Recommends projects to support and fund.
- Monitors progress on the projects.
- Reviews bills and other activity during legislative sessions.
- Develops "position statements" for the Council on issues that affect people with developmental disabilities and their families. Position statements explain what the Council thinks about different issues.
- Meets with lawmakers to educate them and give them resources. This information helps them understand how laws affect people with developmental disabilities. This helps them make good decisions.

## Personnel Committee



This committee does the Executive Director's evaluation each year. They look at whether the Executive Director is doing a good job. The committee talks with the Council chair and Council members to find out how they feel the Executive Director is doing.



## Consumer Caucus



A “caucus” is a group of people that come together for a specific reason.

Members of the Council who have developmental disabilities can be a part of the “Consumer Caucus.” So can other members who want to better understand information on meeting agendas.

This group of Council members gets education and training that helps them:

- Get ready for Council meetings, and
- Be active members.

## Council Meetings



- The Council meets almost every month.
- The Council can have more meetings if:
  - ✓ The Council chairperson wants to, or
  - ✓ At least half the Council members ask for an extra meeting.
- The Council lets members know when there will be an extra meeting.

## Rules about coming to Council meetings:



**It is important that you come to meetings to help the Council do its work!**

Missing Council meetings:

- If you miss three Council meetings in a row or 6 Council meetings in 12 months, the Council will work with you to fix any problems that get in the way of you coming to meetings.
- If you keep missing meetings, the Council will recommend that the Governor take you off the Council.

Missing committee meetings:

- If you miss more than 4 committee meetings in a row, you will be taken off the committee.
- You can ask to stay on the committee. This can happen if you promise to come to more meetings.

## Voting



The Council and committees can only take votes at meetings when at least half of the members are there. This is called a “quorum.”



- Only Council members can vote at Council meetings.
- Everyone who serves on a committee may vote on committee business. This includes Council members and people from outside the Council who serve on the committee.
- Each person gets 1 vote.



If someone comes to meetings to support you, they **may** help you understand what is being voted on. But they **may not** tell you how to vote.



Votes only pass when at least half the members at the meeting vote “yes.”

## Conflict of Interest



Sometimes Council members or their family members might “personally benefit” from the decisions the Council makes. That means the decision would help them.

For example, the Council might discuss supporting a project or advocating for an issue that could help people, including you or one of your family members. If this happens, you have a “conflict of interest.”



When we say “family member” we mean:

- Husband or wife
- Parent
- Siblings
- Children



You must tell the staff when you think you have a conflict of interest.



If you have a conflict of interest:

- You may not discuss the Council business you have a conflict with.
- You may not vote on the Council business you have a conflict with.

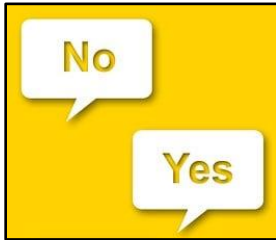


The Council puts information in meeting minutes when a member has a conflict of interest.

## Making Changes to these Bylaws



The Council can make changes to the bylaws. Changes are called “amendments.”



Changes to the bylaws are made at Council meetings.  
The Council can only vote to change the bylaws when at least half the members are at the meeting.



The changes are only made if at least half the members at the meeting vote “yes” to support the changes.



**If you have questions, talk to staff or other Council members.**