Working to ensure that people with disabilities enjoy the same quality of life as the rest of society.

2020 Annual Report
Who we are

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is federally funded through the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) and is authorized by Public Law 106-402 to address the unmet needs of people with developmental disabilities through system-wide advocacy, planning, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion.

More than 60 percent of the Delaware DDC membership consists of individuals with developmental disabilities or their family members. The remainder of Council membership includes advocates and state agency representatives. This diversity enables Delaware DDC to better analyze and improve systems and services within Delaware and ensure that the voices of people with developmental disabilities and their families are heard.

What we believe

The Delaware DDC believes that, given the appropriate supports, all people with disabilities can fully participate in community life. Although people with developmental disabilities have equality under the law; vision and leadership are vital if they are to have equality in their everyday lives. The Delaware DDC strives to create opportunities in the everyday lives of children and adults with developmental disabilities. We are committed to improving the quality of services for this population in Delaware and to serve as an advocate and an instrument of system change. We look to a future where all people will have the opportunity to be included and to exercise control over their own lives.

For more information on the Delaware DDC, please visit: www.ddc.delaware.gov
A Word from our Director

What a year 2020 turned out to be! It was certainly unforgettable in many ways. What stood out for me the most was how seamlessly the Delaware disability advocacy community pulled together as one to fight the disparities laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic together. I’ve never been prouder to work alongside the people with disabilities, their families, and agency representatives that make our Council the uniquely wonderful and impactful organization that it is. 2020 was the year that showed us that we can adapt, change, re-adjust, and keep moving forward and making positive change. While our memories will always include 2020 as the pandemic year, quite a bit else happened, too. New things happening at the Council included hiring a new Executive Director, tightening up our policies and procedures, starting new projects, pivoting other projects to our new virtual world, adapting to Zoom meetings, advocating at Legislative Hall virtually, welcoming new Council member leadership, launching fresh initiatives to help the Council interact with the public more effectively, and responding to emerging needs and gaps amplified by the pandemic. It hardly seems possible that one group of dedicated people could accomplish all that and during a pandemic no less—but we did it. We did it. And we emerged even wiser, more compassionate, more dedicated, and more connected than ever. We truly are stronger together. May it always be so.

With respect,

Kristin Harvey, Executive Director, Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC)
Check us out on Social Media

Like us: Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

Follow us: de_dd_council

Follow us: @Delaware_DDC

Subscribe to our channel: Delaware DDC

The following QR Code can also be used to access us on Social Media!
A Snapshot of Disability in Delaware 2020

According to the most recent American Community Survey (ACS), below are the one year estimates from 2020:

♦ The total non-institutionalized population of the State of Delaware is 956,378.
♦ Of that number, 131,972 non-institutionalized citizens are individuals with a disability (13.8%).
♦ Of the 131,972 individuals with a disability in Delaware, 0.9% are under five years old, 5.6% are between 5 and 17 years old, 7.9% are between 18 and 64 years old, and 63.6.0% are over the age of 65.
♦ Persons with one or more disabilities who worked year round full time are estimated at 11,304 people while 12,098 people with a disability worked less than full time year round

ACS data shows that as of 2020, the following are true:

♦ 25.1% of Delaware’s workforce is comprised of people with disabilities.
♦ Of 466,061 of Delaware citizens who are employed, 25.1% are people with disabilities while 66.9% have no disability. 71.3% of individuals with disabilities are not in the work force.
♦ Median income over the past 12 months is $26,951 for persons with a disability while for persons without a disability, their median income is 38,995.
Beth Mineo looks on as a presentation is given.

Photo Gallery

Center for Disabilities Studies
University of Delaware

Members of the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council and community listening in as discussion takes place during one of the Council’s Strategic Planning Sessions.

John McNeal with State Council for Persons with Disabilities speaks at one of the DDC council meetings.
What is Partners in Policymaking?

Partners in Policymaking is an innovative Leadership Training Program that teaches people to be community leaders. The program is designed for parents raising young or school-aged children with a developmental disability* or young adults with developmental* disabilities. "Partners" provides up-to-date information, education and skill building activities about the legislative process and local, state and national issues that affect individuals with disabilities.

Partners in Policymaking was developed by the Minnesota Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. The program has been offered in 40 states, as well as Great Britain, Scotland and the Virgin Islands. Over 5,000 people have been trained Nationwide. The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council began its program in 1993. Over 200 Delawareans have taken the training program.

Partners participants are people who are ready to work for change in public policy. The overall goal of the program is to foster a PARTNERship between people who need and use services for disabilities and those who make public policy. Partners graduates gain the abilities to teach policymakers a new way of thinking about people with disabilities.
What is Junior Partners in Policymaking?

Junior Partners in Policymaking™ is an exciting summer program for young adults ages 15 to 22. It is held at a University setting, where the participants live and learn for five nights and six days. During the day, participants are enrolled in fun, exploratory and hands-on classes to encourage leadership and self-advocacy. In the evenings, our young leaders have many opportunities to get together to enjoy activities and entertainment.

We hope you will join us for this unique week of wonderful activities that concludes with a trip to Legislative Hall in Dover. Participants will meet with legislators and use the advocacy skills learned and practiced earlier in the week. Certificates of participation, which can be added to your resume or college application, will be distributed at our farewell luncheon after the Legislative Hall visit.
♦ The United States battleship Delaware was commissioned in 1910.

♦ Delaware is the only state without any National Park System units such as national parks, seashores, historic sites, battlefields, memorials, and monuments.

♦ Delmar is popularized as the little town too big for one state. The community has the distinction of being located partly in Delaware and partly in Maryland.

♦ The most historic site in Frederica is Barratt's Chapel east of town. The chapel is where the Methodist Church of America was organized in 1784.

♦ Today about 500 descendants of the original Nanticoke Indians reside in Delaware. They celebrate their heritage each September with the Nanticoke Indian Pow Wow.

♦ The log cabin originated in Finland. Finnish settlers arrived in Delaware in the mid-1600s and brought with them plans for the log cabin, one of the enduring symbols of the American pioneer. One of the cabins has been preserved and is on display at the Delaware Agricultural Museum in Dover.

♦ John Dickinson was called the Penman of the Revolution for his writings on independence. His boyhood home is preserved in Dover.

♦ Tradition holds the first time Betsy Ross's famous flag was flown was at the Battle of Cooch's Bridge. This historic site is located on Route 4 in Newark.

♦ The Blue Hen chicken is the official state bird. The hens were noted for their fighting ability. Delaware is sometimes referred to as the Blue Hen State.

♦ The Lady Bug is Delaware's official state bug.
Meet The Council

Teesie Bonk- Family Member
Maitri Campbell – self advocate
Monica Edgar – Local & Non-Governmental Agency concerned with services for persons with disabilities
Alvin Emory – Self Advocate
Cynthia Fairwell (appointed mid-2020)– Member in Accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Karen Gallagher- Individual now/ever living in an institution
Derrick George- Self Advocate
Laura Greene- Self Advocate
Terri Hancharick – Family Member
Michael Harris- Family Member
Katie Howe – Member in Accordance with Title XIX of the Social Security Act
Rick Kosmalski- Family Member
Nancy Lemus- Family Member
HarrietAnn Litwin (resigned mid 2020)- Member in Accordance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Debra McCann- Family Member
Daniese McMullin-Powell – Self Advocate
Katie Macklin- Member in Accordance with Private Non-Profit Agency
Dale Matusевич – Member in Accordance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
Carrie Melchisky – Family Member
Joseph Merritt, Jr. – Self Advocate
Beth Mineo – Member in Accordance with the DD University Affiliated Program
Angela Mitchell – Family Member
Christine Oakes – Member in Accordance with the Older Americans Act of 1965
Isabel Rivera-Greene – Member in Accordance with the Title V of the Social Security Act
Shawn Rohe – Family Member
Laura Waterland – Member in Accordance with the Protection and Advocacy Organization
Down Syndrome and Alzheimer’s Disease Public Awareness Campaign

The Council has continued to distribute materials and resources developed in 2018 that share information concerning the staggering correlation between individuals with Down Syndrome and the development of early-onset Alzheimer’s disease. During this phase of this contract, the contractor (Aloysius, Butler & Clark) was able to secure the following interviews and leads for interviews about this project: Delaware Today’s 302 Health Magazine interviewed DD Council Member, Teesie Bonk, regarding her family’s struggle with this disease. This was able to grasp the attention of 27,719 viewers. The piece ran in the Senior Living Issue of this magazine in June 2020; WDEL’s Rick Jensen requested an interview with the DDC to share this information on this radio station which could potentially reach 61,549 views. The AB&C team developed a digital toolkit that was shared with key groups such as Down Syndrome Association (DSA) of Delaware Parent Group, Delaware Family Voices, Family Shade, The Arc of Delaware and Best Buddies DE. In addition to their posts, Stefanie Lancaster (Social Services Administrator for the DDC) compiled a video to share via the DSA Facebook Group. Via the paid media campaign, the campaign was able to secure 745,044 impressions and 3,639 unique clicks while engaging 488 post reactions and 12 comments.
Train the Trainer Project

The Train the Trainer project is intended to provide Partners in Policymaking Graduates the opportunity to participate in a training that will provide them with the tools and resources they need to feel more confident with becoming a presenter at a future Partners in Policymaking session. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the training had to pivot to a virtual training opportunity held in June 2020. The training included information on the basics of creating a presentation, dealing with anxiety, understanding body language, cultural competencies and how to create a PowerPoint. There were seven individuals who originally registered for the training when it was planned in person but due to the pivot to virtual, 5 individuals actually participated in this training opportunity. Their information will be compiled and added to the list of future potential speakers for the program.
Healthy Sexuality Education and Resource Program

Building on the previous two phases to this project, the Council continued this project into phase three to expand the training to include information for individuals with disabilities to have a healthy, safe relationships in more of a sex positive approach. Due to the COVID pandemic, virtual workshops were held. Information from participants were compiled through a Google form evaluation process where information was provided in plain language and accessible formats for screen readers.

The contractor participated in an interview with the DDC staff in May 2020 over Zoom to discuss this project to help parents, people with disabilities and their guardians to better understand the workshop content and get to know the facilitator. The interview was posted on the DDC Facebook page where over 1000 people viewed the post.

Marketing for all of the DDC workshops throughout this phase reached 793 people. Throughout this phase of the contract the following performance measures were met:

# of people with developmental disabilities who participated in the program – 11
# of family members who participated in the program – 6
# of people trained and educated through this phase - 17

let's talk about
sexual health
2020 LIFE Conference

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council, along with various community partners, was able to host the 2020 LIFE Conference at Dover Downs Hotel and Conference Center in January 2020. This conference is Delaware’s Premier disability conference whose goal is to be in the forefront of providing information and education in the four areas of Legislation, Independence (through AT), Families and Education for persons with disabilities, their families, caregivers, educators and providers.

In 2020, 578 people registered to attend the conference. 73.53% of those registrations took advantage of the early bird rates. Of this, 77 were sponsor/exhibitors while the rest was compiled of staff and general attendees. Of this – 82 attendees were persons with disabilities, 16 were their personal care attendants, and rest were a mix of general attendees, volunteers, planning committee members, legislators or other honored guests.

Some of the overall conference comments included the following:

This year’s conference was extremely informative and engaging.

Loved the keynote speaker.

Excellent presentations and keynote speaker.

I found it very engaging, informative, enlightening and exciting.

Great organization – most numbers of exhibitors see at a conference I have ever attended.

Congratulations to everyone who organized this well done. Thank you!
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Project for Persons with Disabilities

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) has partnered with the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies to provide information and resources to Persons/People with Disabilities (PWD) and healthcare providers in Delaware to assist PWD in accessing resources and key information, and to assist healthcare providers in supporting the needs of PWD in response to the COVID pandemic. The material that will be developed in plain language allowing for ease of accessibility tip sheets for PWD and their allies to promote self-advocacy skills among a diverse group of PWD and their families in connection with the healthcare services and resources. The DDC staff has met with the project managers for this at the University of Delaware to provide input on the materials being developed. The University of Delaware is currently working to develop a 90-minute LIVE webinar for physicians and nurses that will feature a panel of speakers, including self-advocate(s) and/or family member(s), to discuss best practices and quality of care. With this webinar will be the offer to earn Continuing Medical Education credits through the Medical Society of Delaware.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Technology Resource project for Persons with Disabilities

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) has partnered with the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies to provide technology and/or internet access to Persons/People with Developmental Disabilities (PWD) in Delaware who do not presently have access to technology to assist in promoting and enhancing remote learning, access to medical services (i.e. telemedicine) and social interaction as well as to reduce social isolation. The University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies is developing and conducting outreach to the community at large via network partners and social media. Flyers were developed and shared via the DDC’s Facebook and Webpage. Due to the start date of this project in 2020, there was only one person whose application was approved and received his equipment. Please check out the 2021 Annual report in early Spring 2022 to see the overall success of this project.
Strategic Planning Project

The Developmental Disabilities Council is funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD), which operates under the Administrative on Community Living (ACL) under the umbrella of the federal Department of Health and Social Services. Each state and U.S. Territory has a Developmental Disabilities Council, whose work is guided by the requirements of the federal Developmental Disabilities (DD) Act of 2000. Every five years, Councils must create a new Strategic Plan, and ensure that they gather input from the community at large that they serve to ensure that needs are being met. Information was gathered from the following: a Multi-Council Leadership meeting, three focus groups (held virtually due to COVID), and the first round of public forums (held virtually) where 10 different agencies were represented as well as 28 total members of the public both those with disabilities, family members and professionals attended. 85 survey responses were received via Survey Monkey. Upon the completion of this information gathering, the contractor – Qua Marketing- will develop a report that encompasses the information gathered from the public for the DD Council to review and vote upon a final version of the next Five-Year State Plan. This 2022-2027 Strategic/State Plan was submitted in August 2021 and be active as of October 1, 2021 (which is the start of the Federal Fiscal Year 2022).
Disability Pride Day project

The Disability Pride Day project has developed a project to host its 1st Annual Disability Pride Day event. This event is intended to be a day-long festival focused on celebrating the richness, diversity and accomplishments of this diverse community. This event will include talent, richness, unity and focus on the community’s abilities. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the original vision for this project has had to pivot to an online virtual event. Qua Marketing, the contractor awarded this contract, has been working with the DDC staff and Policy & Law Committee to gather ideas on the best approach to ensuring the project is a success. The Committee has also met with Disability Pride Philadelphia organizers to gather ideas and best practices they found helpful when planning their virtual event. Please look for details on the success of this project in the 2021 Annual report.