DELAWARE DDC DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF THE ADA!



I am able to work take a wheelchair accessible taxi in Washington, D.C. because of the ADA!
-Daniese



I am able to enjoy the beach because of the ADA!
-Brigitte



I am able to enjoy the benefits of having the most talented, skilled, innovative, kind, dedicated employees and Council members on my team. Together we are working in service of our agency's mission and to the people of Delaware because of the ADA!
-Kristin



I am able to work with accomodations because of the ADA!
-Marissa

I am able to do fun activities, play in my school band and play softball because of the ADA!
-Liliana



I am able to play many adaptive sports because of the ADA!
-Christopher





I am able to work a full time job with my TBI and not have people question my work because of the ADA!
-Stefanie



I am able to live in my own apartment because of the ADA!
-Dielle

Meet our Council

Individuals with a developmental disability/advocate:

Daniese McMullin-Powell
Arte Mays
Dielle De Noon
Derrick George
Kelly Manogue
Amber Rivard
Kayla Kosmalski

Individual who now/ever lived in an institution:
Maitri Campbell - Advocate

Parent /guardian of a child with a developmental disability or immediate relative:
Nadine Chance
Andrea Creed
Patty Fazio
Terri Hancharick
Michael Harris
Nancy Lemus
Marcus Grothues

Members in accordance with other federal requirements:
University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities - Beth Mineo
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act - Dale Matusevich
Non-Governmental Agency Concerned w/Services for people w/DD- Susannah Eaton-Ryan
Rehabilitation Act of 1973- Gary Carter
Private Non-Profit Agency - Abby Stewart
Older Americans Act of 1965 - Molly Merrill
Title V of the Social Security Act - Isabel Rivera-Green
Title XIX of the Social Security Act/Medicaid - Jody Roberts
Protection and Advocacy Organization - Marissa Band

Who We Are

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is federally funded through the Administration for Community Living (ACL) 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 the 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 all people with disabilities can fully participate in community life, and that supports should be provided on an individual basis that honors each person's self-direction. Although people with developmental disabilities have equality under the law; vision and leadership are vital if they are to have equity in their everyday lives. The Delaware DDC strives to create opportunities in the everyday lives of people 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 systems 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:
https://ddc.delaware.gov



Dielle De Noon
Chairperson

“The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council stands as a beacon of empowerment and advocacy, dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Their commitment to fostering an inclusive community is reflected in their relentless pursuit of equal opportunities and respect for all. As they say, "*Empowerment is not just giving people a voice, but ensuring that voice is heard and valued*." Through their efforts, the Council ensures that every individual can lead a life of dignity and self-determination.”



"The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) connects us to the knowledge and resources we need to engage with the community. The DDC also loves to have your input and life experience to share with other families and those with disabilities. Come, join us. We are good people and so are you!"

Daniese McMullin-Powell
Vice - Chairperson



A Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect on this past year, I am reminded that progress is rarely made alone—and almost never without persistence.

Across Delaware and throughout the nation, people with disabilities, families, advocates, and community partners faced a year marked by uncertainty and change. Yet time and again, our community demonstrated resilience, determination, and a steadfast commitment to protecting the dignity, rights, and inclusion of all people.

The work of the Council this year was deeply rooted in partnership. Whether collaborating with self-advocates, legislators, educators, state agencies, grassroots organizations, or our sister disability organizations, we saw firsthand the power of people coming together around shared values. Real change happens when communities refuse to accept barriers as inevitable and instead work collectively toward solutions.

This year also reinforced the importance of civic engagement and advocacy at every level. From Legislative Hall in Delaware to conversations unfolding nationally around disability rights and access, we remained committed to ensuring that the voices of people with developmental disabilities were not only heard, but centered. Protecting and advancing civil rights requires vigilance, participation, and the courage to speak up—even when the path forward is uncertain.

Throughout our history, disability rights progress has been built by people who organized, persisted, and demanded equal opportunity and belonging. That legacy continues today in the advocates, families, professionals, and allies who show up every day to make Delaware a stronger, more inclusive place for everyone.

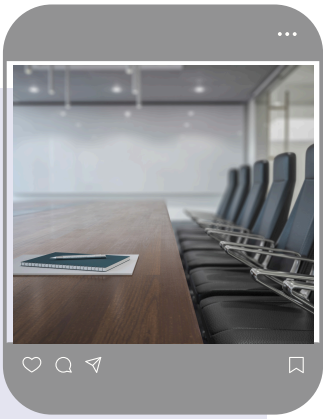
I am deeply grateful to our Council members, staff, partners, and community members for their leadership, dedication, and belief in what is possible. Because of your efforts, we continue moving forward together—with purpose, with hope, and with a shared commitment to building a state where all people are valued and included.
Thank you for being part of this work.

With gratitude,
Kristin Harvey
Executive Director, Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

DELAWARE DDC DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Committees

Executive



The Executive Committee includes the Council Chair, Vice Chair, Committee Chairs, and 2 Council Members at Large. The Executive Committee meets monthly to set the Council Agenda. Per DDC Bylaws the Executive Committee can sign on to letters and vote on time sensitive matters.

Members: Dielle De Noon, Daniese McMullin-Powell, Maitri Campbell, Arte Mays, Nadine Chance, and Amber Rivard.

Policy and Law



The Policy and Law Committee is made up of Council and community members. The committee reviews legislation that is introduced and provides public comment to educate policymakers on how legislation could impact the disability community.

Members: Maitri Campbell (Chairperson), Dielle De Noon (Vice Chairperson) Marissa Band, Selina Butcher, Jessica Davenport, Susannah Eaton – Ryan, Derrick George, Terri Hancharick, Nancy Lemus, Daniese McMullin-Powell, William Powell, and Pam Weir

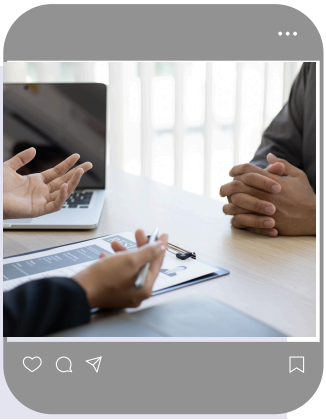
Advocacy and Outreach



The Advocacy and Outreach Committee is made up of Council and community members. The Committee oversees the goals within the Five Year State Plan.

Members: Arte Mays (Chairperson), Jacky Saez-Rosario (Vice-Chairperson), Jennifer Aaron, Selina Butcher, Andrea Creed, Dielle De Noon, Marcus Grothues, Kelly Manogue, Amber Rivard and Jody Roberts

Personnel



The Personnel Committee is comprised of five Council members. The Personnel Committee distributes an anonymous survey to each council member. The results are reviewed by the committee and used to provide an evaluation of the Executive Director.

Members: Dielle De Noon, Nancy Lemus, Daniese McMullin-Powell, Isabel Rivera-Green, and Michael Harris.



Strategic Planning

Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) developed its 2027–2031 Strategic Plan through an extensive, community-driven process that was ultimately brought in-house due to federal funding uncertainty. Despite these challenges, DDC engaged a wide range of stakeholders—including state agencies, service providers, individuals with disabilities, and families.

Engagement Overview

- 183 Survey Responses
- 6 Focus Groups | 12 Public Forums
- Multi-agency leadership input
- Participants included: individuals with disabilities, families, educators, and professionals

Top Priority Areas

1. Self-Advocacy
2. Healthcare
3. Education & Early Intervention
4. Employment
5. Housing

What the Community Wants

✓ More training & education (72%)
✓ Legislative advocacy (72–74%)
✓ Clear, accessible resources (64–65%)
✓ Public awareness campaigns (60–65%)

Key Barriers

- Lack of accessible & affordable housing
- Gaps in healthcare access & workforce
- Challenges in special education & communication
- Limited services for adults (post-transition)
- Transportation and service coordination issues

Final Draft Strategic Plan: https://shorturl.at/fvipR

Legal Support Options in Delaware



"Learning all the options. I did not know there were multiple options. "

"It needs to be heard by many families"

"The resources are amazing and such great experience and knowledge"

"Informative about a critical issue"

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) has taken a leadership role in educating people with disabilities and their families about legal support options through strong partnerships and targeted outreach. DDC partnered with the University of Delaware Center for Disabilities Studies (CDS) and a small working group of people with disabilities and their families to develop plain language guides and presentations that explain the full continuum of options in Delaware. These resources help individuals and families understand and compare options such as supported decision-making, power of attorney, advance healthcare directives, and guardianship so they can make informed choices that align with their goals and independence.

This work was driven by a clear need. Data from the National Core Indicators (NCI) IDD Family/Guardian Survey shows that only about half of families report learning about alternatives to guardianship. In Delaware, 2021 NCI data indicates that 68.7% of respondents reported having some form of guardianship—highlighting a significant gap in awareness of less restrictive options.

Originally designed to build a shared, statewide understanding of supported decision-making through advisory group input, plain language materials, and community-based trainings, the project expanded beyond its initial scope. After developing the resources, DDC brought the work in-house due to federal funding uncertainty and increased its outreach. In 2025, DDC conducted seven trainings statewide—including Transition Cadre sessions, school-based presentations, a resource fair, and two virtual trainings for students/families and professionals—reaching 128 individuals.

Through this work, DDC is closing critical knowledge gaps and ensuring more Delawareans have the information needed to make informed, self-directed decisions about legal supports.



Plain Language Guides: https://shorturl.at/CAhQp

Book a training: rachel.engle@delaware.gov

“A Way Home: Addressing Housing Challenges for Persons with Disabilities”

The “A Way Home: Addressing Housing Challenges for Persons with Disabilities” project focused on collecting data and developing a training curriculum to highlight the barriers individuals with disabilities face in accessing affordable, accessible, and integrated housing in Delaware. Early phases included surveys, interviews, and focus groups to inform the content. In the final phase (2025), the project was brought in-house, where DDC staff revised lengthy materials to be shorter, more accessible, and written in plain language.

A final training engaging landlords and developers, supporting the project’s goal of cross-sector collaboration will happen in 2026. Overall, the project successfully awareness, strengthened advocacy , and highlighted the ongoing need for accessible and affordable housing for people with disabilities in Delaware.

Training Participation & Attendance

Legislator/expanded training:

- 27 registered
- 11 attended
- 0 legislators or legislative aides attended

General community training:

- 15 registered
- 5 attended
- 3 completed post-training survey
- Final training held for landlords and developers



Training Feedback & Ratings

Legislator/expanded training (4 respondents):

- 4/4 rated training “very good” or “excellent”
- 4/4 would recommend the training
- 3/4 reported increased advocacy skills
- 3/4 felt better able to express what is important to them/their family

General community training (3 respondents):

- 3/3 rated training “very good” or “excellent”
- 3/3 would recommend the training
- 3/3 reported increased advocacy skills
- 1/3 felt better able to express what is important to them/their family
- 3/3 felt better able to identify needed services and supports

To book a training email:
stefanie.lancaster@delaware.gov

Narrative Report:
https://shorturl.at/4jitu

2025 LIFE Conference

The annual LIFE Conference presents educational content and resources on emerging topics and issues relevant to Delawareans with disabilities and their families. The LIFE Conference Planning Committee creates each year's content carefully based on current events, issues brought to the table by planning committee members, and past attendee feedback and evaluation data. The LIFE Conference uses its content to promote and support full community integration by focusing on four main topic areas of Legislation, Independence, Families, and Education. The LIFE Conference empowers participants to become better advocates for themselves and others by encouraging participants to be NICE -Network, obtain up to date Information, Connect with providers and advocates in the disability community, and obtain Education on topics important to persons with disabilities.

The DDC is proud to be the contract holder and primary funding source for the 2025 conference, and to serve as active participants of the LIFE Conference Planning Committee. The conference is a collaborative effort, with representation on the planning committee from our University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), state Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency, partners from other state agencies and non-governmental advocacy agencies, and most importantly, people with disabilities and their families. Having the intended audience at the table right from the beginning is key to developing content that resonates with them. The 2025 LIFE Conference was held at Bally's Conference Center in Dover, DE with 651 registered attendees.

The LIFE Conference registration system asks attendees to self-identify which category they feel fits them best. LIFE Conference registration data showed that out of 651 registrants 277 identified as a person with a disability or a parent/family member of a person with a disability. All three counties in Delaware were represented with New Castle County - 41%, Kent County - 41%, Sussex County -11%, and 6% of registrants chose "other".

Final Narrative Report : https://shorturl.at/24ND8

Federal Dollars: $10,000
In-Kind Match: $20,200.19
Program Income: $135,444.50

Press Release:
https://shorturl.at/MXozm

Scan QR Code or go to website to stay up to date for the next LIFE Conference.
https://lifeconferencede.org/

2025 LIFE Conference


















Legislation Education LIFE Independence Families

Scan the QR Code or go to the website to stay up to date for the next LIFE Conference.
https://lifeconferencede.org/

















Scan the QR Code or go to the website to stay up to date for the next LIFE Conference.
https://lifeconferencede.org/

2025 LIFE Conference

What Attendees had to say...

- **"It was excellent to hear people with lived experience talk about advocacy. Their journey, why its important and what it looked like for them."**

- **"This session gave a lot of informative information and provided knowledge to help individuals advocate for themselves and for their students and especially for their children who may rely on technology for a voice. Awesome job!"**

- **"Moderator was fantastic! The girls were terrific! So happy to see the conference highlighting our local friends and their experiences to share with all."**

- **"Highly valuable. Good techniques given for mindfulness and relaxation. Very helpful for stress relief and regulation. Also useful to transfer practices to use with my son to help at home with pain management and sleep!"**

- **"Amazing story, loved how the whole process of how supported decision making was made."**

- **"The panel was excellent! I'm so proud of people who have a voice! I want to be like them when I grow up!"**

Scan the QR Code or go to the website to stay up to date for the next LIFE Conference.
https://lifeconferencede.org/

Living with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and Co-Occurring Serious and Persistent Mental Health Conditions



The documentary titled "Everything to Somebody" focuses on the lives of five Delawareans from different backgrounds living with I/DD and co-occurring serious and persistent mental health conditions. Through sharing of their lived experience, background, and perspectives, some common themes emerged. These included:

- **a desire to bring the conversation about mental health out of the shadows**
- **improving services for mental health crisis response**
- **health care disparities experienced by people with I/DD and serious and persistent mental health conditions**
- **a need for more training to empower public facing employees to better assist people with I/DD and serious and persistent mental health conditions**

In 2025 DDC held 7 showings!
From those showings DDC received 136 survey responses.

- **90% rated the documentary very good or excellent**
- **67% increased their advocacy**
- **73% better able to say what they want/say what is important to them**

BREAKING NEWS

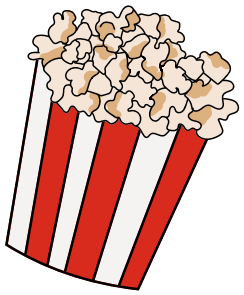
Book your showing of Everything to Somebody

Click Here to Book Your Showing

Click Here to Learn About Everything to Somebody

Living with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) and Co-Occurring Serious and Persistent Mental Health Conditions





NOW SHOWING

Everything to Somebody



What Critics are Saying:

"It was amazing. It brought unity and understanding to the disabilities community."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Did a nice job of representing intersectionality; it featured local Delawareans with lived experience!"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"The film was an honest portrayal of mental health stigma that people face."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"It brings clarity, reality, and urgency to a little known and poorly understood issue."

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Social Media Campaigns

ADA 35 Anniversary Celebration Posts

Disability Awareness posts go out all year long. These posts highlight people with disabilities, history, upcoming community events, and information.

Number of Posts: 8
Reached: 13,775



LIFE Conference

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council is the contract holder for the LIFE Conference. Posts go out to promote the conference, session topics, speakers, and registration reminders.

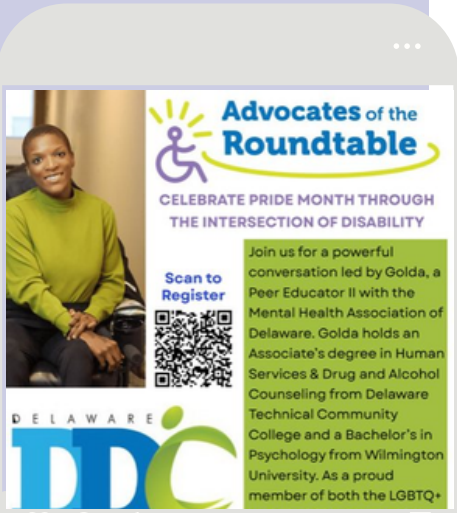
Number of Posts: 58
Reached: 43,487



Advocates of the Roundtable/Legal Support Options

Advocates of the Roundtable is a discussion series that is held throughout the year to share information about topics like mental health, voting, disability history, police safety, and many other topics.

Number of Posts: 2
Reached: 4,652



Social Media Campaigns

Strategic Planning

The Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap for advancing systems change and improving the lives of people with disabilities across the state.

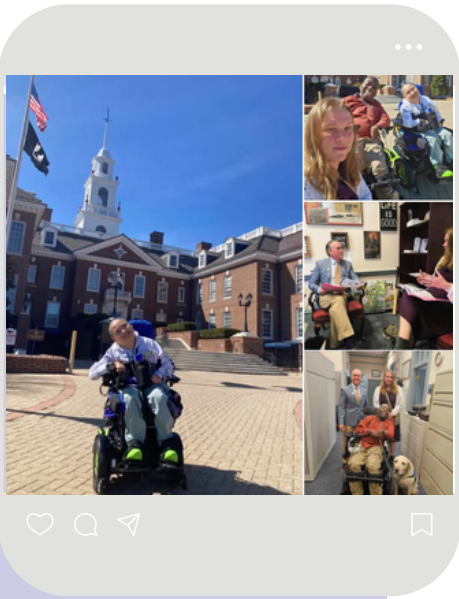
Number of Posts: 9
Reached: 18,584



Policy Posts

DDC policy posts keep the community informed about important legislation, disability rights, and advocacy efforts impacting Delawareans with disabilities. These posts break down complex policies into clear, plain language so individuals and families can understand their rights.

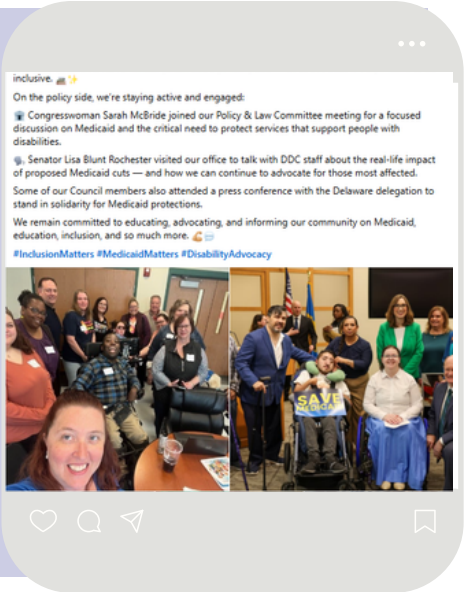
Number of Posts: 40
Reached: 38,244



For the Year

Across Facebook and Instagram the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council has shared information about projects, news, and advocacy opportunities.

Number of Posts: 140
Reached: 134,337



Out in the Community

DDC staff and Council members partnered with the Delaware Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDDS) and the Delaware Historical Society to support the creation and installation of disability history window posters. This project highlights and honors disability history in Delaware and beyond. DDC is grateful for the collaboration with the Delaware Historical Society and DDDS, including their contributions of important historical context. We also appreciate the recognition from Governor Matt Meyer and Lieutenant Governor Kyle Evans Gay for their thoughtful written remarks.

Link to view full display:https://shorturl.at/Y3gIN







Out in the Community

DDC staff and Council members participated in Inclusion Celebration Week at Booker T. Washington Elementary School, partnering with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens. Volunteers spent the morning reading in classrooms, followed by DDC hosting interactive assemblies focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility for the entire school.

This effort highlighted the importance of early education on inclusion and reflected DDC's commitment to fostering understanding, acceptance, and belonging for all students.







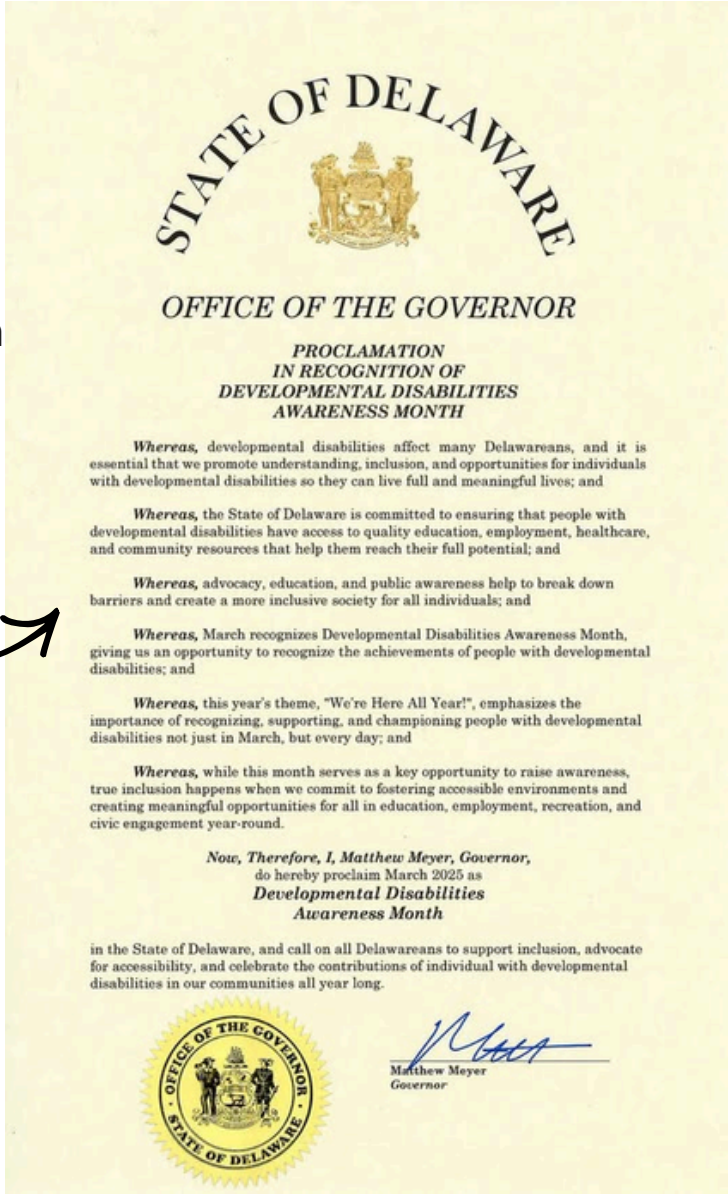






Out in the Community

DDC joined partners and state leaders to recognize March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in Delaware. As part of this effort, a proclamation was issued by Matt Meyer, reaffirming the state's commitment to inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities for people with developmental disabilities. This recognition highlights the importance of raising awareness and continuing efforts to support individuals with disabilities in living, working, and participating fully in their communities.



STATE OF DELAWARE

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PROCLAMATION
IN RECOGNITION OF
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
AWARENESS MONTH

Whereas, developmental disabilities affect many Delawareans, and it is essential that we promote understanding, inclusion, and opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities so they can live full and meaningful lives; and

Whereas, the State of Delaware is committed to ensuring that people with developmental disabilities have access to quality education, employment, healthcare, and community resources that help them reach their full potential; and

Whereas, advocacy, education, and public awareness help to break down barriers and create a more inclusive society for all individuals; and

Whereas, March recognizes Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, giving us an opportunity to recognize the achievements of people with developmental disabilities; and

Whereas, this year's theme, "We're Here All Year!", emphasizes the importance of recognizing, supporting, and championing people with developmental disabilities not just in March, but every day; and

Whereas, while this month serves as a key opportunity to raise awareness, true inclusion happens when we commit to fostering accessible environments and creating meaningful opportunities for all in education, employment, recreation, and civic engagement year-round.

Now, Therefore, I, Matthew Meyer, Governor,
do hereby proclaim March 2025 as
Developmental Disabilities
Awareness Month

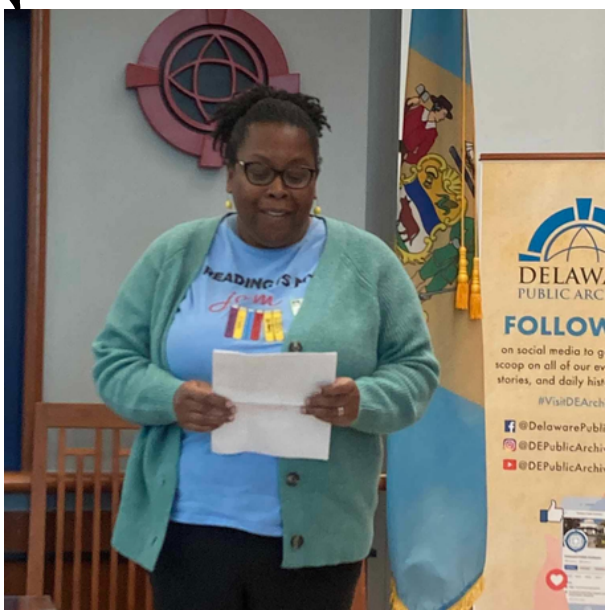
in the State of Delaware, and call on all Delawareans to support inclusion, advocate for accessibility, and celebrate the contributions of individual with developmental disabilities in our communities all year long.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR · STATE OF DELAWARE ·

Matthew Meyer
Governor

In April, DDC participated in Smart Cookie Day in recognition of Autism Acceptance and Inclusion Month, where Council member Andrea Creed was honored for her advocacy and commitment to inclusion. Andrea shared a powerful message on the importance of literacy and ensuring all children have the opportunity to learn and thrive. The event also included a proclamation from Governor Matt Meyer recognizing April as Autism Acceptance and Inclusion Month.





Legislative Advocacy Across State and Federal Issues

Over the past year, the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) has supported advocacy efforts at both the state and federal levels on a range of issues that impact people with disabilities and their families.

DDC focused on key areas including education, literacy, housing, Medicaid, SNAP benefits, and funding for essential programs. In education, we worked to raise awareness about the importance of inclusive learning environments, access to services, and the supports students need to succeed. We also highlighted the role of literacy and access to appropriate materials for all learners.

In housing, DDC supported efforts to promote safe, affordable, and accessible housing so individuals with disabilities can live independently in their communities. We also shared information about the importance of programs like Medicaid and SNAP, which many individuals and families rely on for healthcare, food access, and stability.

DDC worked with partners, policymakers, and state agencies to share information, provide input, and help increase understanding of these issues. This included participating in meetings, developing resources, and creating plain language materials to make information more accessible.

Through this work, DDC helped raise awareness about important issues affecting the disability community and supported efforts to improve access to services and supports.





SB 198: What We Did This Year!

Over the past year, the Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC), through its Policy and Law Committee, engaged in education and advocacy that resulted in the introduction of Senate Bill 198 (SB 198). This bill strengthens Delaware's Equal Accommodations Law by putting the protections of Section 504 into state law, helping ensure continued rights for people with disabilities.

The DDC Policy and Law Committee reviewed potential federal changes and identified the need for strong state-level protections. DDC worked with partners, including Disability Rights Delaware, to share information and help ensure the bill reflects the importance of equal access in education, healthcare, housing, employment, and public services.

Members of the Policy and Law Committee shared information and lived experiences during hearings to help increase understanding of how these protections impact people with disabilities in everyday life. DDC also provided educational resources, including position statements and plain language materials, to help policymakers, stakeholders, and community members better understand the purpose and impact of SB 198.

Through this work, DDC helped raise awareness about disability civil rights and the importance of clear, consistent protections in Delaware.

Acknowledgements -
DDC extends sincere thanks to the Governor's Office and staff, the Lieutenant Governor and staff, the Attorney General's Office, Senator Nicole Poore and Representative Debra Heffernan for their partnership and support. Their collaboration and commitment to the disability community helped move this work forward.



SB 198 Tool Kit

https://shorturl.at/ZKHkB

Position Statement

https://shorturl.at/yuv3T

Legislative Advocacy in Action





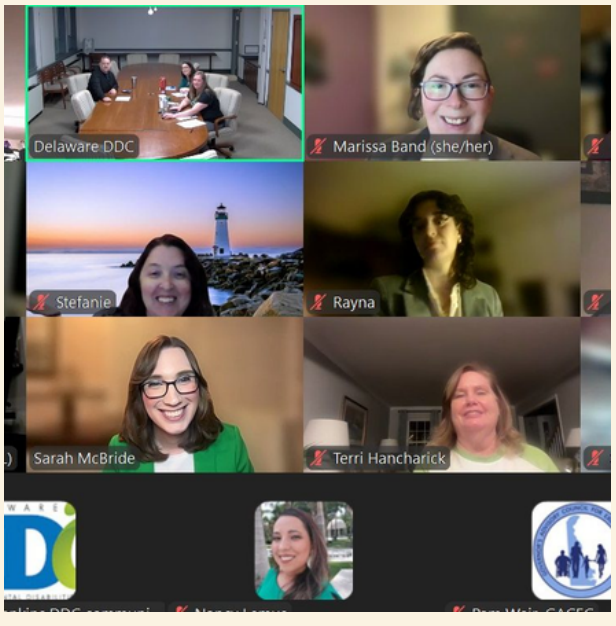










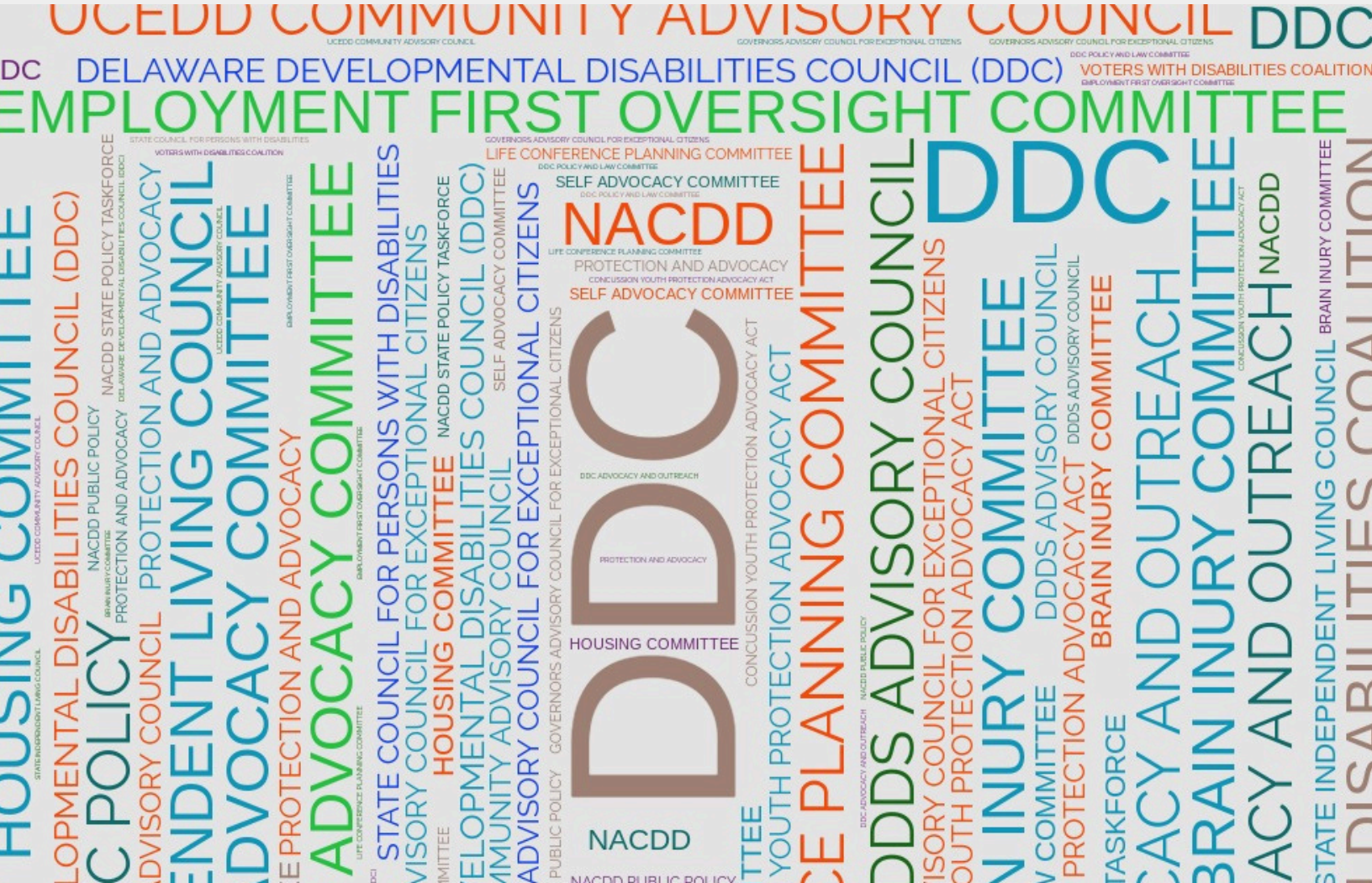


Stay Tuned

Apply to be a Council Member

Upcoming Meetings

https://shorturl.at/ouCOZ





facebook

Like us:
Delaware Developmental Disabilities Council

YouTube

Subscribe to our channel:
Delaware DDC

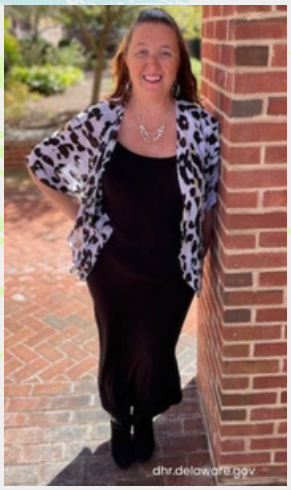
Scan the QR Code below to follow us on social media!

Follow us:
de_dd_council

Meet our staff



Kristin Harvey
Executive Director
Kristin.Harvey@delaware.gov
302-739-3623



Stefanie Lancaster
Social Services Administrator, Project Manager
Stefanie.Lancaster@delaware.gov
302-739-7193



Emmanuel Jenkins
Community Relations Officer
Emmanuel.Jenkins@delaware.gov
302-739-7192



Rachel Engle
Fiscal Advisor II, Policy Lead
Rachel.Engle@delaware.gov
302-739-2232