

WV DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL  
FIVE YEAR STATE PLAN  
(October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2026)

### **What Does the Council Do?**

The Developmental Disabilities Council is an independent, self-governing State agency established by Executive Order of the Governor in 1972 and is funded by the Federal Administration on Disabilities Office on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Council membership is by appointment of the Governor and is composed of over sixty percent (60%) persons with developmental disabilities and family members. The Council also includes representatives of State government and other public and private organizations.

*The Council's mission is to assure that West Virginia citizens with developmental disabilities receive the services, supports, and other forms of assistance they need to exercise self-determination and achieve independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion in their communities.*

The Council does not provide or manage direct services. Council activities include training and technical assistance, demonstration of innovative programs, outreach, applied research, supporting and educating communities, interagency collaboration, barrier elimination, and development of citizen coalitions. The Council also works to develop public policy recommendations which promote its vision and mission for supporting people with developmental disabilities.

### **Developing the State Plan**

The federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (PL 106-402) (DD Act) provides guidance to State Councils in planning, including the requirement that Plans must be based in part on the direct input of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Due to the pandemic, the West Virginia Council conducted an on-line survey during the summer and fall of 2020 that encouraged people to provide their views on a wide range of issues affecting people with developmental disabilities and their families. Over six hundred (600) people completed the Survey.

State Councils have flexibility in determining Plan priorities, however, all Councils are required to establish or strengthen **self-advocacy goals** by: a) establishing or strengthening a self-advocacy organization led by persons with developmental disabilities; b) supporting opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to **provide leadership training** to other individuals with developmental disabilities; and c) supporting participation of individuals with developmental disabilities in **cross-disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions**.

Each Council must develop a goal or objective to address a **targeted disparity**, a subpopulation of persons with I/DD who are especially vulnerable to inequalities in access to or quality of support they receive.

The DD Act also provides a mandate and guidance to states for **planning and collaboration** among the DD Councils, protection and advocacy programs (Disability Rights of WV), and the Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities), often called “the DD Network.”

This Plan seeks to strengthen advocacy and self-advocacy coalitions; improve how public services are provided to people with I/DD and their families; provide greater assurances that people with I/DD will be protected from abuse, isolation and neglect; facilitate efforts to improve supports for people who want to work; and assist and support communities in welcoming people with I/DD.

### **Goals and Objectives**

**Goal 1: Advocacy and Self-Advocacy: People with I/DD, their families, and allies will gain knowledge and develop necessary advocacy skills and use them to advocate for their rights, access to needed services, and systems’ changes.**

The Council will fund an independent statewide self-advocacy organization led by people with I/DD that will assist people with I/DD to learn ways to make more decisions that affect their lives including where they live and what they do during the day.

The Council will support and expand participation of people with I/DD, families and organizations in coalitions that represent diverse disability groups.

The Council will support opportunities for people with I/DD to provide leadership training to other individuals with I/DD who may become leaders.

The Council will provide funding and other supports so that parents and family members will gain knowledge of programs, policies, and a range of community services to advocate for necessary supports for their family members.

The Council will work to establish “Supported Decision Making” statewide as a recognized alternative to guardianship for people with I/DD.

The Council will support the development of an information toolkit for aging family caregivers of people with I/DD to help them be more aware of relevant public and private community resources.

**Goal 2: Community Building and Engagement: Communities will include people with I/DD as participating, valued members.**

The Council will sponsor a demonstration project of how people with I/DD can be successfully supported to join with non-disabled neighbors to develop and participate in local improvement projects or initiatives that enhance the quality of life for all in their communities.

The Council will provide and/or sponsor training to family members on how to assist their family members with I/DD attain and maintain age-appropriate and socially valued roles.

The Council will support or provide training for family members, advocates, and DD service personnel in the development of meaningful goals and strategies in service plans for people who are not likely to work full time.

**Goal 3: Service System: Public service systems will be more responsive to the needs of people with I/DD and their families so people will have better opportunities to learn, work, and thrive in their communities.**

The Council, in collaboration with the other DD Network members, will encourage and support the collection of data by state systems to enable the gathering, compilation, and examination of information on the impact of changes to relevant public services that serve people with I/DD, identify abuse and neglect, and identify service disparities for unserved and underserved groups of people with I/DD.

The Council will coordinate and collaborate with the other DD Network members to address mutual state plan goals and objectives that address the vision of the DD Council.

Council staff and Members will engage (both as the DD Council and in collaboration with others) in public policy advocacy at the State and Federal levels to improve or sustain essential public programs that support people with I/DD and their families.

The Council, in collaboration with DRWV, Office of the Secretary and other Bureaus of DHHR, Olmstead Council and the ICF/IID Transition Monitoring Committee will propose new or modified protections by policy or procedure that strengthen the prohibition of admission of people into State psychiatric hospitals due to their I/DD and improves how community supports are provided to people in institutional facilities who have I/DD in combination with mental illness and/or health conditions.

The Council will collaborate with others to identify gaps, prioritize needs, and design strategies for addressing gaps in the prevention of sexual violence against people with disabilities.

The DD Council will collaborate with key State agencies, people with I/DD, family members, advocates and others on the State Employment First Taskforce to develop policies, procedures, and initiatives that will increase opportunities for young people with I/DD to have community work experiences and for all working age people with I/DD to gain valued, integrated employment.

The Council's Employment First Workgroup will monitor efforts by the State Department of Education and the Division of Rehabilitation Services to assure that students with I/DD in all counties of the State have opportunities to participate in real, community-based work experiences as part of transition to adult living.

The Council will support an initiative to study the apparent disparity in reported data showing high incidences of African American and black students placed in Behavior Disorder classrooms and less than expected diagnosis of autism and propose recommendations to address the disparity.

The Council will study and develop recommendations for increased hours of respite care in the I/DD Waiver program.

The Council will develop (or otherwise participate in) a State Task Force to address the increasing inability of I/DD Waiver providers and families to find, hire, and keep adequate direct support personnel.