



District of Columbia
Developmental Disabilities Council

Herald

Self Determination "Nothing About Us – Without Us"

Inside . . .

Class of 2015
Graduation1

Five-Year State
Plan2

NACDD Technical
Assistance
Institute 2

APSE Conference. 3

WIOA Marks First
Anniversary . . . 3-4

IRS Proposes Rules
for New ABLE
Accounts 5

Did You Know? . . 6

National Disability
Employment
Awareness Month
20156



Class of 2015

Please join us for the graduation ceremony and reception for
the fourth class of DC Advocacy Partners (DC AP).

Saturday, September 19, 2015 - 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Reception to follow

Old City Council Chambers at One Judiciary Square Building

441 4th Street, N.W. - Washington, D.C. 20001

Contact Frances Vhay at vhayf@iel.org or 202-822-8405 ext. 121



DC AP is a nine-month leadership development program for self-advocates
and family members of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.

Funding is provided by the DC Developmental Disabilities Council.

FIVE-YEAR STATE PLAN

The District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is in the process of developing a Five Year State Plan that will identify the goals and directions for fiscal years 17 through 21. As part of the planning process, the DDC will be hosting public forums in several wards and communities and distributing surveys to members of the disability community, self-advocates and family members. Your input and responses are greatly appreciated, as this will help the DDC to enhance their programs and activities. Your feedback will help us determine if we need to strengthen existing programs and/or establish new ones that better meet the needs of the residents of the District. Please go to the DDC website www.ddc.dc.gov and complete the survey. The survey will be posted by the end of September 2015. In addition, we would like to meet you face-to-face at our public forums, which will be scheduled soon. The Five Year State Plan is due August 15, 2016.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNCILS ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES CONFERENCE (NACDD) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INSTITUTE

**July 21 -23, 2015
JA Nugget Conference Center**

Mat McCollough, Executive Director, District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council (DC DDC) and Sudie Johnson, Program Analyst, DC DDC, attended the NACDD Conference Technical Assistance Institute that was jointly hosted by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, United States Department of Health and Human Services and the NACDD. The theme for the NACDD Conference was **Impacting Communities Side-by-Side**. It speaks to the four pillars of the Americans with Disabilities Act: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency as we create communities in which these pillars stand strong and tall. These pillars remind us that when people learn, work, live and play side-by-side, our communities are stronger and safer and lives are impacted in positive ways.

The NACDD Conference/Technical Assistance Institute included sessions on self-advocacy, cultural and linguistic competence and diversity in various areas of emphasis. We heard from members of the NACDD's Self Advocates Leadership Circle. They shared their experiences working on advocacy issues, serving as leaders on the Developmental Disabilities Council, serving as members and leaders of statewide self-advocacy groups and more.

There were sessions that focused on how to embrace diversity and celebrate our uniqueness and heritage while finding equality of opportunity. Everyone has something to contribute and we should take the time to listen to the contributions each one makes. The Developmental Disabilities Councils (DDCs) will explore diversity from multiple perspectives including language, ethnicity, religions, various types of disabilities, etc. as the DDCs meet the needs of today's individuals and families. There were sessions that focused on the Revised Five Year Plan Template with summary of changes and expectations.

The DC DDC will reach out to residents with developmental disabilities, their families and other stakeholders of the District to solicit feedback and comments to develop priorities for the next five years.

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTEND
APSE CONFERENCE - PHILADELPHIA, PA
JUNE 23-25, 2015**

In Their Own Words



Victor Robinson

The Conference was great. People want to be qualified for jobs about their interests. They want to live on their own and be independent. Case managers and families are running their lives instead of them directing their own lives. People with disabilities can and want to make their own decisions. They just need supports. This includes social activities and relationships. For me, it is all about jobs and relationships. When a person wants to have their case manager look into what they are interested in, the personal care attendant should not be in the room.



Thomas Mangrum

I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. When trying to help people get a job, the staff/support people need to recognize age as a factor in the process. They need to consider their age as they consider what is suitable for them to keep them from losing their benefits. Some may want to get off public assistance to get more involved in the community. Getting off public assistance may not be the best thing for them if they do not have time to grow their retirement before they become eligible for retirement. There are other ways to engage with the community; i.e. part-time work and volunteering.

I do not want people living a worse life nor do I want people to take advantage of what people do not know. We all live on net pay and not gross pay. The gross is higher and sounds good; however, that is not what you have available to live on.

**“OUR EISENHOWER MOMENT”
WIOA MARKS FIRST ANNIVERSARY**



President Barack Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority; it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system.

WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In general, the Act takes effect

(Continued from page 3)

on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment, unless otherwise noted. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will issue further guidance on the timeframes for implementation of these changes and proposed regulations reflecting the changes in WIOA soon after enactment.

Highlights of WIOA Reforms

- ***Requires States to Strategically Align Workforce Development Programs:*** WIOA ensures that employment and training services provided by the core programs are coordinated and complementary so that job seekers acquire skills and credentials that meet employers' needs.
- ***Promotes Accountability and Transparency:*** WIOA ensures that Federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based and data-driven, and accountable to participants and tax-payers.
- ***Fosters Regional Collaboration:*** WIOA promotes alignment of workforce development programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and regional employers.
- ***Improves the American Job Center (AJC) System:*** WIOA increases the quality and accessibility of services that job seekers and employers receive at their local AJCs.
- ***Improves Services to Employers and Promotes Work-Based Training:*** WIOA contributes to economic growth and business expansion by ensuring the workforce system is job-driven, matching employers with skilled individuals.
- ***Provides Access to High Quality Training:*** WIOA helps job seekers acquire industry-recognized credentials for in-demand jobs.
- ***Enhances Workforce Services for the Unemployed and Other Job Seekers:*** WIOA ensures that unemployed and other job seekers have access to high-quality workforce services.
- ***Improves Services to Individuals with Disabilities:*** WIOA increases individuals with disabilities' access to high quality workforce services and prepares them for competitive integrated employment.
- ***Makes Key Investments in Serving Disconnected Youth and Other Vulnerable Populations:*** WIOA prepares vulnerable youth and other job seekers for successful employment through increasing the use of proven service models services.
- ***Enhances the Job Corps Program:*** WIOA increases the performance outcomes and quality of Job Corps.
- ***Streamlines and Strengthens the Strategic Roles of Workforce Development Boards:*** WIOA makes state and local boards more agile and well-positioned to meet local and regional employers' workforce needs.

Reprint – Department of Labor

IRS PROPOSES RULES FOR NEW ABLE ACCOUNTS



The IRS issued a proposed rule this week on the implementation of the ABLE Act (Molly Riley/DC/TNS)

Six months after a federal law paved the way for tax-free savings accounts for people with disabilities; officials are providing details on how they expect the new program to operate.

In a proposed rule issued Monday, the Internal Revenue Service unveiled guidelines for the Achieving a Better Life Experience, or ABLE, Act. The federal law is designed to allow people with disabilities to save money without risking their government benefits.

The proposal offers specifics for the first time on how the new accounts should function and clarifies what types of expenses money saved in an ABLE account could be used for. Advocates say they're pleased that the IRS took a lenient view in determining what counts as "qualified disability expenses" under the law. Though the ABLE Act mandates that money can be used for specific purposes including transportation, housing and education, the law also allows for "other expenses" and it is up to regulators to determine what should qualify.

"The Treasury Department and the IRS conclude that the term 'qualified disability expenses' should be broadly construed to permit the inclusion of basic living expenses and should not be limited to expenses for items for which there is a medical necessity or which provide no benefits to others in addition to the benefit to the eligible individual," the proposal states. The view that expenses must merely offer a quality of life benefit for a person with a disability — rather than be of medical merit — is significant, said Heather Sachs, vice president of advocacy and public policy at the National Down Syndrome Society.

"We're glad to see that a person with a disability would not have to justify the purchase of an iPhone or something similar as a medical expense," Sachs said. Other details within the proposal are causing concern, however. The reporting and oversight requirements outlined go beyond those governing 529 college savings plans that the ABLE accounts were modeled on and could make the disability savings vehicles onerous to administer or utilize, advocates and state officials say.

"As I read the proposed regulations, every time individuals with disabilities want to spend even a single dollar of their money, from their own ABLE accounts, they have to file paperwork with the state demonstrating that each is a 'qualified disability expense,'" said Nebraska State Treasurer Don Stenberg.

"This is a slap in the face of Americans with disabilities, is an unreasonable and unnecessary burden on them, and will create administrative burdens that will increase the costs qualified individuals will need to pay to use the program." The proposed rules will be up for public comment for 90 days before the IRS issues final regulations. In the meantime, several states are working to make the ABLE Act a reality for their residents. Despite the federal law, each state must put their own regulations in place before making the accounts available. Currently, the ABLE Act has been enacted in 22 states, according to the National Down Syndrome Society. Each of these states, however, is still working out details related to administering the program. Sachs said she expects that states will likely wait for the final IRS rules to be issued before allowing financial institutions to begin offering ABLE accounts.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Assistive Technology Financing Loan Program offered through the Assistive Technology Program for the District of Columbia is a low-interest funding source for District of Columbia residents with disabilities and seniors to purchase assistive technology devices and services. Many different items are considered assistive technology, including hearing aids, communication devices, computers, specialized software, home modifications and more.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Persons with disabilities and their family members, guardians or advocates living in the District of Columbia can apply to purchase assistive technology that will allow them to live and function independently at home, school, work or in the community.

Loan Amounts and Interest Rate

Individual loan amounts can range between \$500 to \$10,000 with terms of 6 months to 5 years and a low 4% interest rate.

Where Can I Get More Information?

Contact: Sheena Jaffer
Assistive Technology Program for the District of Columbia
(202) 547-0198 Extension 105
sjaffer@uls-dc-.org

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH 2015

Celebrating 70 Years! (1945-2015)

Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a time to celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The theme for this year — which marks 70 years since the first observance — is "My Disability is One Part of Who I Am."

The District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) and the Office of Disability Rights (ODR) cordially invite college and high school students with disabilities to participate in the 2015 Disability Mentoring Days program with the District of Columbia Government.

The Disability Mentoring Days are open to high school, college, and graduate students with disabilities and this year's program will take place between October 21 and November 6, 2015. Disability Mentoring Days enable students with disabilities to visit a District government agency or DC metropolitan business that matches their interest for one-on-one time with volunteer mentors. It provides an opportunity to underscore the connection between school and work, evaluate personal goals, learn about career opportunities in the District and develop mentoring relationships with government and business leaders. History of the program illustrates that students' participation in Disability Mentoring Day can result in an internship opportunity with the host employer or function as a first interview on the way to an employment opportunity. If you would like additional information, please contact the DDC Executive Director Mathew McCollough (202-727-6744; mathew.mccollough@dc.gov) or ODR Public Affairs Specialist Kali Wasenko (202-481-3881; kali.wasenko@dc.gov).

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) of the District of Columbia seeks to strengthen the voice of people with developmental disabilities and their families in DC in support of greater independence, inclusion, empowerment and the pursuit of life as they choose. We strive to create change that eliminates discrimination and removes barriers to full inclusion through our advocacy.