



Advocacy and Public Policy Agenda for FY24 and FY25

The Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) creates an Advocacy and Public Policy Agenda (Agenda) to identify the most important changes needed to enable people with developmental disabilities and their families to live their best lives in DC. This Agenda establishes priorities that will guide Council staff, Councilmembers, and advocacy partners in our work to engage in advocacy, systems change, and capacity building with our community.¹

Our previous Agenda (FY21-22) focused on effective responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, reforming eligibility criteria for services with the Developmental Disabilities Administration / Department on Disability Services (DDA/DDS), equitable and meaningful support and payment for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), and more informed and effective emergency and police responses to people with disabilities in crisis or connected to crimes.

For the FY24 Agenda, the DD Council establishes the following advocacy priorities, following the three major goals of our State Plan:

Self-Determination, Leadership, and Advocacy Priorities

1. Advocate for successful implementation of participant-directed services (PDS) in the Individual and Family Services (IFS) waiver and continued advocacy for PDS in the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) waiver.
2. Advocate for DC Statehood as a matter of racial equity and self-determination for DC residents.²
3. Support accessible voting efforts, including replacing inaccessible polling places with accessible ones in the same vicinity, ensuring voting machines are accessible, expanding absentee and mail-in voting options, and increasing access to information in plain language and languages other than English.
4. Support partner organizations' advocacy efforts that align with the Agenda's priorities.

¹ Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 mandates that Developmental Disabilities Councils work to address identified needs by conducting advocacy, systems change, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion. <https://acl.gov/about-acl/authorizing-statutes/developmental-disabilities-assistance-and-bill-rights-act-2000>

² <https://statehood.dc.gov/page/why-statehood-dc>

Employment

1. Advocate for increased and improved employment outcomes for DC residents with disabilities.
2. Support efforts to establish a State as a Model Employer program to increase DC government hiring of people with disabilities.
3. Support efforts to improve and enhance successful secondary transition for students with disabilities into higher education and employment.
4. Advocate for a Medicaid buy-in program to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

Community Living

1. Advocate for pay equity and other initiatives to support a high-quality, valued, and sufficient direct care workforce, including nurses.
2. Advocate that the FY24 increase in the Personal Needs Allowance (PNA) for people receiving DDA services is maintained or increased in future fiscal years.
3. Advocate for ongoing monitoring of the expansion of eligibility for services with DDA to ensure services are appropriate, effective, and high quality, especially for individuals with developmental disabilities who do not also have an intellectual disability.
4. Advocate for ongoing monitoring of and access to healthcare services for people with disabilities to ensure they are appropriate, effective, high quality, and equitable.
5. Support efforts for increasing and improving accessible and affordable transportation, including Metro rail and bus, Metro Access, taxis, and ride-sharing like Uber/Lyft.
6. Advocate for more accessible sidewalks and streets.
7. Promote increasing accessibility in DC venues and businesses, including more wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, gender-neutral bathrooms, and adult changing rooms.
8. Advocate for increasing affordable and accessible housing options, and ensuring that affordable and accessible units are matched with residents who need them.
9. Promote health literacy and public health practices like vaccination, access to exercise and healthy food, and self-care.
10. Advocate for disability awareness and acceptance in public safety issues, including ongoing promotion of the DD Council recommendations from 2020.³
11. Promote access to assistive technology and innovation around creating equitable spaces using technology.
12. Support efforts to promote effective inclusive learning environments in schools, including small class sizes and support for teachers working with learners with disabilities.
13. Support the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency's (HSEMA) Disability Community Advisory Group (DCAG) work to make emergency preparedness and response efforts accessible to people with disabilities.
14. Advocate for improving language access across government and community services that people with disabilities and their families need.

³ <https://ddc.dc.gov/page/disability-community-and-policing-working-group>