



## Position Paper on Eligibility for DDS Long-term Disability Supports

### What is the issue?

Currently, the DC Department on Disability Services provides long-term supports through its Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDS/DDA) only to adults who are considered to have an intellectual disability. This means that adults with developmental disabilities - autism and cerebral palsy for example - who have an IQ score above 69 are not likely to be found eligible for long-term supports through DDA, even if they need such services to work and live independently. DC is behind other states in this regard, since most US states allow adults with developmental disabilities who have significant support needs to become eligible for long-term services.

### Why is this issue important to the DC DD Council?

The DC Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) represents the interests of all people in DC who have a developmental disability. Many of these people, whatever the extent of their needs, have to rely only on their families and short-term employment supports from the DDS Rehabilitation Support Agency (DCRSA) once they have left the school system. We believe there are more equitable ways to assess the needs of adults with disabilities than the outdated approach of IQ testing that DDS now relies on, and we want to see a system that is equitable for all people with developmental disabilities in DC.

### What is our position and what is the change we would like to see?

Advocates have been working with the DC Council, in particular the Committee on Human Services, to develop a bill for the Council to pass. In May 2021, eight DC councilmembers cosponsored Bill 24-0268, the “Developmental Disability Eligibility Reform Amendment Act” (<https://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B24-0268>). There was a hearing on the bill on October 21, 2021, followed by a first reading and unanimous vote on February 1 and a final reading and unanimous vote on March 1 (<https://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B24-0268>). The DDC believes that this bill is a major step forward toward making our system of long-term supports more equitable for adults with developmental disabilities in DC. If the bill clears its remaining hurdles and becomes law, we believe that DDS waiver renewal provisions and regulations developed to implement the bill will also need to be motivated by a desire to reach those most in need of ongoing supports. The DDC will remain engaged throughout the process.