



District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council

Herald

Self Determination “Nothing About Us – Without Us”

LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Dear Friends, Community Members, & Colleagues:

On the eve of the spring season, it gives me great pride to report that the DC Developmental Disabilities Council has been extremely productive and active since the beginning of 2013. The DDC has shown an unwavering commitment to supporting DC residents with developmental disabilities and their families in their endeavors for greater independence and empowerment while maximizing their own potential by implementing two programs.

The DC Advocacy Partners Program kicked off its second year of existence in January. With representation from all 8 District wards, 24 people with developmental and intellectual disabilities and family members were competitively selected to take part in the leadership program and learn how to better utilize their advocacy skills to foster positive partnerships with people who are involved in the policy decisions surrounding services and programs that impact District residents with disabilities. The new financial literacy program, Becoming Economically Strong Together (B.E.S.T) Program, began in February and will train District residents and service providers on self-determination, financial education, and incorporating asset development strategies into existing activities throughout this year.

The DDC was also actively out in the community. In January, we participated in the District’s first Inclusive Schools Capstone at George Washington University. In partnership with the University Legal Services, the Georgetown UCEDD, and the Statewide Rehabilitation Council, the DDC conducted two successful community forums on employment in February. In preparation for the 12th Annual Fair Housing Symposium’s *Laying the Blueprint for Your Advocacy*, the DDC has been working with the Equal Rights Center, DC Office of Human Rights, and the DC Department of Housing and Community to conduct the upcoming April 18th event.

Finally, March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, and the DDC participated in the Reception Event on Wednesday, March 20th. Why is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month so significant? The month recognizes people with developmental disabilities for their valued contributions in their

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Communities, including their willingness to work and provide for their families and themselves in spite of the barriers placed before them. Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month also represents the common belief that we are leading and paving the way for others closely following behind us and providing great conviction, without hesitation, to proving that we are more than just productive citizens. *We are the next generation of leaders with answers, moving forward and not looking back!*

With the greatest respect and sincerity, Mat
DDC, Executive Director

NATIONAL DISABILITY INSTITUTE PRESENTS “BUILDING ASSETS & PROMOTING CHOICE AND COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES”



*Building a better economic future
for Americans with disabilities*

FREE 6-Hour Train the Trainer Course

WHEN: April 15, 2013
9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM (LUNCH ON YOUR OWN)

WHERE: 441 4th Street, NW
One Judiciary Square
Room #1112
Washington, DC 20001

The “Building Assets & Promoting Choice and Community Participation for People with Disabilities” training curriculum was created to increase access to accurate information about Asset Development programs that are available for people with disabilities, their families and professionals. The curriculum includes activities for students and adults to enhance their knowledge on building assets and how to apply the information they learn from the training. The training is divided into six categories of asset building programs:

- 1) Introduction and Next Steps
- 2) Financial Education and Access to Financial Services
- 3) Introduction and Next Steps
- 4) Financial Education and Access to Financial Services
- 5) Earned Income Tax Credit: Free Tax Preparation Assistance
- 6) Individual Development Accounts
- 7) Microenterprise Development and Home Ownership
- 8) Social Security Work Incentives

To register, contact Andrew Joseph at (202) 296-2040 or ajoseph@ndi-inc.org.

COMMUNITY FORUMS ON EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS FOR DC RESIDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Based upon feedback during the development of the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) Five Year Plan and last year's community forum update, employment for people with developmental disabilities emerged as a top priority for the DDC. On Thursday, February 21, 2013, and Saturday, February 23, 2013, community forums on employment options for DC residents with disabilities were hosted by the Statewide Rehabilitation Council and the DC TRIAD Partners, including the DC DDC, the University Legal Services/Protection and Advocacy Agency and Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. The Thursday forum was held at the True Reformer Building, 1200 U Street, NW, Washington, DC. The Saturday forum was held at the National Children's Center, 3400 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE, Washington, DC. This gave the attendees a choice of attending Thursday evening from 5:30 to 7:00 pm or Saturday from 12 noon to 1:30 pm. Dinner and lunch was provided respectively. There were 27 attendees at the meeting on Thursday and 30 at the meeting on Saturday.

The panel included representatives from Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), DC Public Schools (DCPS), Quality Trust (QT), DC Center for Independent Living (DCCIL) and National Children's Center (NCC). Mat McCollough, DDC, Executive Director, facilitated the meetings. The forums focused on questions received from the community and from those in attendance. The exchange between the panelists and the attendees gave way to an interesting, yet informative session. It was educational from both perspectives to learn about what had been and what is currently being done. The employment process requires that everyone needs to know their employment rights and pursue them. As parents and self-advocates, we must actively be a part of the IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and IPE (Individualized Plan for Employment) processes. RSA accepts its mandate, which is to help people with disabilities to obtain and maintain gainful employment and live more independently through the provision of supports such as counseling, medical and psychological services, job training and other individualized services. The schools are engaging in the process via transition services/activities. This is a collaborative effort. We are working together to improve outcomes for **all** with disabilities. For additional information, please refer to the following websites:

- www.dds.dc.gov/DC/DDS/Rehabilitation+Services+Administration;
- www.dcps.dc.gov/DCPS/In+the+Classroom/Special+Education/Plan+for+the+Future/Transition+Services+and+Programs;
- www.dcqualitytrust.org;
- www.dccil.org; and
- www.nccinc.org.



Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities
POWERING CHANGE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

WWW.DCQUALITYTRUST.ORG



DC HEALTH BENEFITS EXCHANGE

The Health Benefit Exchange Communication Summit was held on Tuesday, February 12, 2013 to provide an overview and solicit the support of everyone in the process of reaching out to District residents and small business owners to help them to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Affordable Care Act. The District's Health Benefit Exchange is an online marketplace for District residents and small businesses to enroll in private or public health insurance options. Enrollment in the District's Health Exchange will begin October, 2013 with coverage effective January 1, 2014. The Health Benefit Exchange will allow individuals and small businesses to compare health plans, to learn if they are eligible for tax credits for private insurance or health programs like DC Healthy Families Medicaid and to enroll in a health plan that meets their needs. The District's Essential Health Benefits Plan is a set of health care service categories that **must** be covered in certain health plans, starting in January 2014. The Affordable Care Act ensures that health plans offered in the individual and small group markets, both inside and outside of the District's Health Benefit Exchange, provide a comprehensive package of items and services, known as essential health benefits.

Essential health benefits must include items and services within at least the following 10 categories:

- ambulatory patient services;
- emergency services;
- hospitalization;
- maternity and newborn care;
- mental health and substance use disorder services, including behavioral health treatment;
- prescription drugs;
- rehabilitative and habilitative services and devices;
- laboratory services;
- preventive and wellness services and chronic disease management; and
- pediatric services, including oral and vision care.

There were group sessions at the end to discuss/identify strategies to reach District residents with information about obtaining health coverage, identify ways to work with community and business leaders in reaching out to the District's diverse communities and identify ways we can work together to achieve the critical goal of the Exchange – enrollment of all eligible residents in high-quality, affordable coverage. For more information, visit: www.hbx.dc.gov.

UNEMPLOYMENT SURGES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

By [Michelle Diament](#)

The unemployment rate among Americans with disabilities increased significantly in January, the U.S. Department of Labor said Friday. Statistics indicate that the jobless rate jumped to 13.7 percent last month for people with disabilities, a steep rise over the 11.7 percent unemployment rate reported for the final month of 2012. Multiple factors appear to have contributed to the growth in individuals with disabilities without jobs in January. Not only were there more without jobs, but the number of people seeking work also grew, according to Labor Department data.

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Despite the glum picture for Americans with disabilities, the employment situation was little changed for the general population. Statistics show that the economy added 157,000 jobs in January but the unemployment rate was relatively stable at 7.9 percent. The Labor Department began tracking employment among people with disabilities in October 2008. There is not yet enough data compiled to establish seasonal trends among this population, so statistics for this group are not seasonally adjusted. Data on people with disabilities covers those over the age of 16 who do not live in institutions. The first employment report specific to this population was made available in February 2009. Now, reports are released monthly.

February 1, 2013

Reprint from "disabilityscoop"

DISABILITY CHAMPION IS LEAVING CONGRESS



Senator Tom Harkins

Senator Tom Harkin, **D-Iowa and Disability Champion**, plans to retire next year. This leaves disability advocates pondering a future without our staunchest ally on Capitol Hill. Harkin, 73, said he will not seek a sixth term in the U.S. Senate. "When the current Congress is over, I will have served in the United States House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate for a total of 40 years. After 40 years, I just feel it's somebody else's turn," Harkin said in a statement.

Mark Perriello (President and CEO of the American Association of People with Disabilities) said, "Senator Harkin has been a huge champion in the disability community. Moving forward, I hope that we can find someone who can step into his very large shoes and it's going to be difficult." Katy Neas, who worked for Harkin as a congressional staffer in the 1980s and early 1990s and currently handles government relations for Easter Seal said, "While many members of Congress are sympathetic to the needs of those with disabilities, Harkin has a "laser focus" on this population that's not currently shared by any of his colleagues."

FEDERAL OFFICIALS STATE SCHOOLS MUST OPEN SPORTS TO KIDS WITH DISABILITIES

For the first time, federal officials are telling school districts that they must offer students with disabilities equal access to school sports. The United States Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights said that children with disabilities have the right to participate in their school's extracurricular activities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Students with intellectual, developmental, physical and other types of disabilities must be afforded opportunities to play for their school teams with modifications, aids and services as needed. "Sports can provide invaluable lessons in discipline, selflessness, passion and courage, and this guidance will help schools ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from the life lessons they can learn on the playing field or on the court," said Education Secretary, Arne Duncan. While students with disabilities have a right to participate in school sports, the Education Department made clear that they may have to meet certain standards of skill or ability in order to join a team as long as the criteria are not discriminatory.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

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Interested in becoming a member of the DDC, contact Mat McCollough at (202) -727-4467.

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.