

Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council

The Governor's DD Council is a federally funded state agency that advocates for the development of services and supports so that Iowans with developmental disabilities can make choices and take control of their lives. The Council is made up of 20 volunteers who represent Iowans with disabilities, family members, service providers, and organizations concerned with disability issues.

Vision:

People with disabilities and their families have access to supports and services they help to design, develop, and monitor to assure a quality of life necessary to fulfill their life choices and participate fully in society.

Mission:

The Council identifies, develops and promotes public policy and supportive practices through capacity building, advocacy, and systems change activities that ensure that people with disabilities and their families are included in planning, decision making, and policy setting activities related to services and supports that affect their quality of life and full participation in the communities of their choice.

The Council's Work:

The Council plans and advocates using and building upon the personal power of people with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council provides information, training and support for involvement in the development of policy that affects the lives of these individuals and families. The following are some examples of how the Council goes about this work.

- Collect, analyze and disseminate information
- Provide advocacy and leadership training
- Support grass roots efforts
- Develop and promote policy and service models based on what individuals with developmental disabilities and their families require.
- Build and support coalitions with other organizations
- Collaborate with individuals and organizations to identify needs and opportunities and to share resources and information.

The Council's State Plan:

The Governor's DD Council was created in response to a federal law, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). The purpose of the law is to assure that people with developmental disabilities and their families help design and have access to necessary services, supports and other assistance. The Council promotes the development of a coordinated system of services and supports that provide opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to be independent, productive, integrated and included in their communities. The Council does this with projects and activities that

- change the laws, policies and attitudes that determine supports and services used by Iowans with disabilities,

- build the capability of Iowans with disabilities to make choices and have control over their lives, and/or
- develop leadership skills and supportive service providers who will work effectively toward full participation on individuals with disabilities in their communities.

The Council's state plan describes how the Governor's DD Council will carry out these responsibilities. You may contact the DD Council office for a copy by phoning 1-800-452-1936 or 515-281-9082.

Development of the state plan is ongoing. Council members and Council staff gather information from other organizations and from reports from Federal, State and private sources that address the needs and status of Iowans with disabilities. The Council solicits input from a variety of sources, which includes state agency representatives, Iowans with disabilities, family members of Iowans with disabilities, service providers, and other advocates. Input is used to determine needs of Iowans with disabilities in the areas of emphasis identified and defined in the DD Act. Those areas are related to quality assurance, education and early intervention, childcare, health, employment, housing, transportation, recreation and other services available or offered to individuals in a community, including formal and informal community supports that affect their quality of life.

The Council then determines Iowa's highest priority need areas to address in the State Plan. The Council writes goals, objectives and identifies strategies to achieve measurable results. Strategies may include the development of demonstration projects, advocacy training programs, legislative agendas, public awareness campaigns and the dissemination of pertinent information. Strategies may also include activities for which no specific funds have been allocated. For example, Council members and staff participate in forums, on committees, in work groups, develop written materials and responses, meet with legislators and collaborate with other organizations which often results in positive results for Iowans with disabilities. Examples of the projects and activities currently funded by the Council appear in the list below.

Projects and Activities Funded by the Council

Civic Engagement and Outreach Project: The DD Council and the Iowa Secretary of State and have formed a partnership to increase the participation of Iowa students in civic activities. One role of the DD Council is to recruit and support students with disabilities to participate in the following training opportunities with their non-disabled classmates. The DD Council is also supporting an opportunity for adults with disabilities to learn more about civic participation through the Capitol Day-You Can Make a Difference project, tailored to the specific interests and needs of participants.

ID Action (Iowans with Disabilities in Action) gives people with disabilities the tools to do everything from registering to vote to running for office.

IOWA COMPASS Information and Referral: Funded by the Council since its inception in 1990 with the University Center for Developmental Disabilities, COMPASS is now funded by seven agencies. Each year it provides statewide, toll-free information and referral services to more than 10,000 Iowans with disabilities and family members, to assist them in their decision-making.

Key Coalition: The Key Coalition is a group of 21 public and private statewide organizations that represent the interests of people with disabilities, and was formed with leadership from the Council. It pursues a joint legislative agenda that focuses on system wide issues, particularly adequate funding and

consistency within the service delivery system. The Coalition's vision is that Iowans with disabilities in Iowa will equitably receive supports and services that are based on their functional need rather than on diagnostic labels or county of residence.

Council Publications:

InfoNet: During the legislative session, the DD Council publishes an informational policy publication for people interested in disability-related legislation, called InfoNet. People can receive this publication either by mail or by email.

Guardianship & Conservatorship Papers: Updated by Iowa Legal Aid in November 2006. Provides information for substitute decision makers.

Responsibilities of Governor's DD Council members

- Council members make a minimum 3-year commitment to serve on the Council.
- Attend an orientation session for new members, and attend and participate in 6 (six) daylong, Council meetings each year.
- Actively participate in other related activities, such as committee and regional meetings and networking activities, on an average of once a month.
- Review and analyze information, form opinions, and prepare to discuss Council materials at Council meetings. (There is a considerable amount of material to be reviewed and analyzed.)
- Develop and adopt position statements and set policy for Council activities to fulfill the Council's mandate as described in the federal Developmental Disabilities and Bill of Rights Act. This includes planning, funding and conducting a wide range of initiatives to improve Iowa's system of services and supports.
- Advocate for the empowerment of persons with developmental disabilities, and promote the values of the Council.
- Be leaders in changing the system of supports and services to be more responsive to individuals and families, at local, regional, state and federal levels.
- Demonstrate a high level of knowledge and commitment to the values of independence, productivity, integration and inclusion for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Act as a team to establish policies and a plan of action consistent with the vision, mission and mandated roles of the Council.
- Provide the Executive Director with clear direction to accomplish the goals of the Council's State Plan.
- Participate in leadership activities, including mentoring other members of the Council.
- Assist in the recruitment of new members for the Governor's DD Council.
- Adhere to the Council's mission, vision, role, policies, procedures, position statements and initiatives when representing the Council.
- Be able to make connections between Council activities and the department, organization or affiliation the member represents on the Council.

Member Qualifications:

Council members are knowledgeable about disability issues, and work in partnership with other local, state and federal organizations, to increase the independence, productivity, integration and community inclusion of all individuals with disabilities. Council members share strengths in at least one of the following areas: quality assurance, education and early intervention, childcare, health, employment, housing, transportation, recreation.

Council business requires members who can recognize the underlying need for systems change activities. This challenge can be frustrating to those looking for immediate answers, services, or remedies. Systems change happens incrementally, over time through skillful planning, collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation. People with patience, tolerance and skills in these areas are best suited to carry out the business of the Council.

The following also are desirable qualifications:

- Knowledge of issues concerning individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Knowledge of one or more disability service delivery systems, funding issues and disability groups.
- Knowledge of other systems that affect persons with disabilities, such as housing, employment, health, education, self determination, and community support (e.g., transportation, personal assistance).
- Demonstrated leadership capabilities within communities or community organizations, such as facilitating groups, chairing meetings, or representing constituencies.
- Ability to work comfortably with the other Council members and the Council staff.
- Ability to use communication skills to listen to other members, bring views of constituents to Council meetings, assure Council actions are shared with constituents, and contribute to public relations efforts.
- Ability to participate in both large and small group meetings at the local, state and national levels.
- Demonstrated commitment to work as a team member willing to compromise, negotiate and agree to disagree while working toward the vision, mission and goals of the Council.

Reimbursements & Accommodations:

- Council members will be reimbursed for expenses to participate such as mileage, lodging, meals.
- The Council will also pay the cost of personal assistant services for members to attend and participate in Council sponsored activities.
- The Council will pay the cost of respite care required for a member to be able to participate.
- It is the responsibility of the Council members to recruit and hire their own attendant or respite care provider.
- Additional accommodations for Council member's with disabilities will be made upon request and may include but not be limited to large print, Braille, interpreters.

To Apply for Council Membership:

- Read the attached “Conflict of Interest Policy” to determine whether your membership on the Council would represent or appear to represent a conflict of interest. If you have questions, please phone Becky Harker at the Council Office at 1-800-452-1936.
- Please complete the attached forms: “Gubernatorial Appointments Resume” and “Executive Appointments Background information”
- Also complete the attached form: “Governor’s DD Council Application for Membership-Application Addendum”
- All Council meetings are open to the public. Those interested in being members are encouraged to attend to gain more information about the operation of the Council.

Mail the Gubernatorial Appointments Resume and the Governor’s DD Council Application for Membership (Application Addendum) to the Council Office.

Becky Maddy Harker, Executive Director
Governor’s DD Council
617 East 2nd Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

- Phone the Council office if you have questions (1-800-452-1936) or 515/281-9082.
- You may be asked to interview with members of the Council’s Membership Committee.
- The Governor’s office will notify new Council members of their appointment.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** The Council generally receives more applications than there are member positions available. Members will be selected on the basis of skills, interests, and experience. The Council is required to have 60% of its membership be people who have a developmental disability or a family member of a person with a developmental disability. Consideration with regard to balance of Council members by gender, geographical location, ethnic background and political affiliation will also be a factor in member selection.