

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2024**

The Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (the Council) is part of the Minnesota network of programs funded under P.L. 106-402, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). The DD Act also funds the Minnesota Disability Law Center (the designated protection and advocacy agency for the state) and the Institute on Community Integration, a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, located at the University of Minnesota.

The Council's business is to provide information, education, and training to increase knowledge, develop skills, and change attitudes that will increase the Independence, Productivity, Self-Determination, Integration, and Inclusion (IPSII) of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

This Annual Report summarizes the results of the 2022-2026 Five Year State Plan program goals for FFY 2024.

## **CURRENT COUNCIL MEMBERS (November 2024)**

Jenny Arndt, Vice-Chair of the Council

Jason Blomquist

Dupree Edwards

Lisa Gemlo

Amy Hewitt

Lisa Jemtrud

Heather Kainz

Lesli Kerkhoff

Joel Liestman

Elizabeth Marsh

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Chris McVey

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Christine Mueller

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Garrett Petrie

Jennifer Purrington

Mary Raasch

Connie Rabideaux

Jenny Santema

Erin Schwab

Lee Shervheim, Council Chair

Bonnie Jean Smith

Sumukha Terakanambi

## **FEDERAL OUTCOMES (IPSII)**

The DD Act charges each state council to promote the development of a consumer and family-centered comprehensive system to assist individuals with developmental disabilities to achieve:

**Independence:** Personal freedom to make choices and have control over services, supports, and other assistance the individual receives.

**Productivity:** Meaningful income-producing work or volunteer work that contributes to a household or the community.

**Self-determination:** Authority to make decisions, control resources, and develop personal leadership skills.

**Integration and Inclusion:** Full participation in the same community activities as people without disabilities.

The Council measures success in the goals it funds relative to the degree each program contributes to the IPSII outcomes.

## **RESULTS**

In 2024, the Council received \$1,152,808 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Office on Intellectual and Developmental Disability (OIDDD). Of that amount, 70% was allocated for grants and contracts to fulfill the goals of the Council's Five-Year State Plan approved by the federal government.

## **SELF ADVOCACY**

Self-Advocates of Minnesota (SAM), the statewide self-advocacy network that was founded in 2007, operates in six regions in the state. Through more than 50 local self-advocacy groups and a Leadership Circle of regional representatives, SAM strengthens the personal empowerment of self-advocates, increases disability awareness through public education, makes community changes, and works towards systems change. Self-advocates have been actively involved in the implementation of the Minnesota Olmstead Plan, a cross-disability effort.

Training sessions were attended by 126 individuals (unduplicated count) in the Central and Northwest regions, funded by the Council, on topics including disability equality and rights (building personal power and leadership skills), voting, transportation, healthy relationships, and engaging in difficult conversations; and the Olmstead Academy (classroom sessions and fieldwork to help lead the state's Olmstead Plan).

Self-advocates evaluated training sessions and IPSII on a 5-point scale, with 5 being the highest. Across both regions and on average, knowledge gained was 4.8 usefulness was 4.7, and quality of presentations was 4.7. The self-advocates assessed their own Independence at 4.4; Productivity at 4.6; Self-determination at 4.6 and Integration and Inclusion at 4.6.

## Olmstead Academy

Advocating Change Together, Inc. (ACT) created an Olmstead Academy in FFY 2014 and has continued offering the Academy on an annual basis. The Academy includes training sessions on disability rights, leadership skills, the *Olmstead* decision, and Minnesota's Olmstead Plan. Field work consists of community projects that promote full community integration (Disability Integration Projects - DITs). Participants are selected through an application process. Both the Central and Northwest Regions of SAM sent teams to participate in the Olmstead Academy.

### Testimonials:

*"I had fun, and this training is going to be a good time."*

*"I gained a ton, but I know there's a way to go."*

*"I had a good time and learned a lot."*

*"It's an important opportunity to meet other people that I can work with in the future to make disability improvements. Also, it increases my network of friends, support, and provides a sense of community and family."*

### Supplier:

**Advocating Change Together, Inc.**

1821 University Avenue, Suite 177

St. Paul, MN 55104

<https://www.selfadvocacy.org/>

## Ambassadors for Respect

During FFY 2024, PeaceMaker Minnesota sponsored Ambassadors for Respect (A4R), a bullying prevention program that supported 63 self-advocates to become trainers for 4th grade students. Nine teams of self-advocate trainers from Focus House, Merrick, Choice, Inc. (2 locations), Focus Beyond, COMPASS transition program, STAARS, WACOSA, Cannon Valley Special Education Cooperative, and The BUILD program (Bethel University) participated. All trainers were certified to be *Ambassadors*. A total of 75 training sessions were provided in 25 elementary schools and 75 classrooms, teaching 1,719 4th graders along with their teachers and school principals.

After the training sessions, 98% of 4th graders could list three ways to include others, 96% could list three ways to advocate for themselves and others, and 96% indicated they learned how to use Person First Language. Ambassadors also benefited from the program; a total of 95% reported that, due to their participation, they are increasing their advocacy, 84% are now participating in advocacy activities, and 97% reported they are better able to say what they want and what is important to them [self-determination].

The self-advocates assessed themselves in terms of IPSII:

- Independence = 4.2
- Productivity = 4.2
- Self-determination = 4.2
- Integration and Inclusion = 4.2

#### **Testimonials:**

*When Ambassadors came to my school and talked about the impact bullying can have on a person it really resonated with me because I knew what it was like to be bullied. The program and Ambassadors made me feel not so alone and even showed me that I could be part of the solution. I see A4R as a very influential program in my life that helped shape how I see and treat people who are different from me."*

#### **Supplier:**

##### **PeaceMaker Minnesota**

2131 Fairview Avenue North, Suite E

Roseville, MN 55113

<http://www.peacemakermn.org>

## **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

In FFY 2024, Class 41 of Partners in Policymaking® (Partners) graduated 13 self-advocates and 16 parents. Participants evaluated themselves at the beginning of the program year on the federal outcomes of IPSII and again at graduation. The following IPSII changes were reported:

- Independence increased from 4.63 to 4.80;
- Productivity increased from 4.13 to 4.60;
- Self-determination increased from 4.44 to 4.60; and
- Integration and Inclusion increased from 3.06 to 4.07.

#### **Longitudinal Studies**

In FFY 2024, the Odyssey Group also conducted a follow-up survey of Partners graduates from Class 40 and a longitudinal study of Classes 37 through 39.

##### **Class 40 Follow-up Survey**

Pre- and post-IPSII scores for the 22 Partners graduates indicated an increase in Independence from 4.28 to 4.67; increase in Productivity from 3.83 to 4.61; increase in Self-determination from 4.17 to 4.56; and an increase in Integration and Inclusion from 3.31 to 4.00. The six-month follow-up survey of Class 39 Graduates showed increases in all four IPSII scores with averages of 4.31, 4.23, 4.54, and 4.8, respectively. Additionally, after six months, graduates indicated a 92% level of satisfaction with the Partners program, 92% indicated they were better able to say what services were important to them, and 23% now serve on cross-disability coalitions.

##### **Classes 37, 38 and 39 Longitudinal Study**

In FFY 2024, the Longitudinal Study surveyed Partners graduates from Classes 37, 38, and 39. Thirty graduates participated in the Study and reported IPSII scores of 4.00 (Independence), 4.12

(Productivity), 4.32 (Self-Determination), and 4.12 (Integration and Inclusion). A total of 92% of the Partners graduates were satisfied with the program; 92% rated the program as good to excellent; 47% are serving on coalitions; 88% are participating in advocacy activities; 96% are better able to say what services and supports are needed; and 100% reported increased advocacy activities as a result of participating in the Partners program.

**Testimonials:**

*"I now know how to communicate with policymakers and navigate the legislative system."*

*"I am grateful for the opportunity to participate. I can see the real impact that changed policies help support my child."*

*"I loved it."*

Supplier:

The Odyssey Group

1730 New Brighton Blvd, Suite 104 - #237

Minneapolis, MN 55413

<https://www.theodysseygroup.com/>

## **EMPLOYMENT**

During FFY 2024, the MSS employment project assisted transition students and adults with developmental disabilities. The Discovery Process, an information-gathering strategy that involves seven stages of learning about interest areas and skills, was used to identify individual vocational themes, better match or shape employment opportunities that would be successful and productive and helped individuals prepare for informational interviews with potential employers.

Twenty transition students and adults with developmental disabilities were employed during the grant year, working an average of 21 hours a per week, and earning wages averaging \$15.22 per hour.

Through the Discovery Process, 329 businesses were contacted to match job seekers based on their vocational themes. The impact of this approach can be seen with both transition students and adults with developmental disabilities-who were successful in finding jobs of their choosing, increasing their hours or wages, retaining employment, or changing jobs to expand their skills and work in other fields of interest.

The ratings for IPSII were:

- Independence = 4.25
- Productivity = 4.75
- Self-determination = 3.78
- Integration and Inclusion = 4.11

**Testimonial:**

*"I work at the Constellations Coffee Shop, and I invented a new message, Have a starry day."*

**Supplier:****MSS**

900 Ocean Street

St. Paul, MN 55106

<https://www.mssmn.org/>

**CULTURAL OUTREACH**

During FFY 2024, the focus has been on the Somali and Latinx communities living in a rural part of Southern Minnesota. The Somali Resettlement Services (SCRS) is a nonprofit organization with the mission of assisting Somali immigrants or the Latinx community with their social wellbeing. All participants were either individuals with developmental disabilities or family members.

In FFY 2024, 41 individuals were aided by the Council's subgrantee, Somali Community Resettlement Services (SCRS). The program is focused on providing outreach to immigrant families in East African and Latinx communities in southern Minnesota that have a child with disabilities, or to adults with disabilities. The outputs were on target for both the number of graduates and the IPSII scores. Some of the participants had access to PCA, adult day services, medical transportation, and social security while others had no idea that services were available. The first class was held from February 5-9, 2024, with 15 Somali participants. The second class was held from May 22-29, 2024, with 10 Latinx participants. The third class was held from August 12-19, 2024, with 16 participants. All training classes were in-person training sessions.

**Success Story:**

*"S\_ is a parent of a child with a disability. The child was diagnosed with autism. She attended our training on August 12-19, 2024 and gained a lot of information from the speakers. The family never knew what a waiver is or where to find the information. After the training, the family applied for a waiver and the child qualifies."*

**Supplier:****Somali Community Resettlement Services (SCRS)**

201 Lyndale Ave S

Faribault, MN 55021

<https://somalcrs.org/>

**QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Enacted in 2010, the Government Performance and Results Modernization Act (GPRAMA) requires federal agencies to set performance goals that deliver results for the American people, establish management processes to review progress, and regularly communicate progress being achieved against those goals. MH Consulting Group assisted in preparation of the federally required Program Performance Report.

During FFY 2024, MH Consulting Group focused on several projects included updating templates that grantees use for federal reporting; verified the Council's Business Results; assisted with preparation of the FFY 2024 Program Performance Report; created and deployed online customer satisfaction surveys for grantees; and produced two Workbooks as supplementary materials for the the 245D Bill of Rights training package.

**Testimonials:**

*"This information is important for people with disabilities and is presented in a clear, succinct way. Brief enough to guarantee a read but contains the most important information needed. Well done!"*

*"This is a very good project, and this is important stuff. Sad and frustrating we still have to do these projects in 2024."*

*"Overall, it's a great tool."*

**Supplier:**

**MH Consulting Group**

1111 3rd Street North  
Stillwater, MN 55082

## **TRAINING CONFERENCES**

The Council co-sponsored 10 training conferences during FFY 2024 with 692 attendees including people with developmental disabilities, families, and professionals. The conferences included:

Autism Society of Minnesota held on April 17-19, 2024 as a hybrid event. There were approximately 500 attendees, and the keynote was Paul Kluth who is an expert on building inclusion.

ELAP by SMRLS from August 1 -August 22, 2024 was a hybrid event with 64 attendees with several presenters (offered in both English and Spanish).

Great River Homes sponsored Colors Training for their staff during June 2024 with 8 attendees during in-person training.

Light in the Well was an in-person training held from June 4 to July 2, 2024 taught by Cow Tipping Press faculty for 8 attendees.

MNProv offered in-person improv classes to 17 attendees during the months of March, April, and May 2024.

MSS offered in-person classes from Cow Tipping Press from June 4 to July 25, 2024 for 5 attendees.

Pillsbury United offered in-person classes from Cow Tipping Press from June 13 – July 18, 2024 for 12 attendees.

RISE offered in-person classes from Cow Tipping Press from June – August 2024 for 4 attendees.

Special Olympics offered a Health Forum and Health Care Messenger training on March 30 and July 13 with 43 attendees (both hybrid and in-person).

The Arc Minnesota offered remote training about self-advocacy in cooperation with Winona State University on April 16 and April 23, 2024. There were 31 people who attended.

#### **Testimonial:**

*“MNprov thanks the Council for your generous co-sponsorship grant which allows us to provide free applied improvisation classes to adults with developmental disabilities and their family members. These workshops, Mnprov Mixers, provide the adults with an opportunity to experience belonging, develop social connections, and grow in their social-emotional skills in a fun and authentic way. We are grateful for your support and happy to report that we have secured a \$20,000 grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board to continue this valuable program.”* Kelly Kautz, MNprov co-founder

#### **Quotes:**

*“These trainings were so very good and informative. I passed this along to all the other co-workers and school staff. All the school and child welfare agencies should be made aware of this.”*

*“Fantastic training. I am glad I was able to watch it on you tube as I was not available on 8-1. I will be sharing this information with my families.”*

*“Estuvo entendido todo. (I understood everything)”*

## **PUBLICATIONS, WEBSITES, AND ONLINE LEARNING**

The goal of the Council's Publications, Websites, and Online Learning Courses is to provide information, education, and training that increases knowledge, skills, and abilities of end users through a broad range of multiple media formats by:

1. Promoting accurate historical archiving of resource materials.
2. Continuing to adopt the latest technological advancements in communications that may include social networking.
3. Showcasing the positive roles and contributions of people with developmental disabilities.
4. Increasing marketing efforts to ensure accessibility, language translations, and wide dissemination of Council products.

5. Exploring new technology that is focused on the individual and saves the user's preferences and choices and suggests additional resources or learning courses based on those preferences and choices.

As a result of intense and prodigious efforts, outputs exceeded expected targets with over 472,000 visitors and over 2.4 million downloads. The overall satisfaction rating was 8.79 (10-point scale) across all publications by a small sample of end users.

The Council has built a solid reputation through this goal by not only supporting and maintaining main website, but also administering several other websites including Partners in Policymaking®; Minnesota Project SEARCH; and the Disability Justice Resource Center.

The Council also provides five free online courses through the Partners website to increase the knowledge, skills, and abilities of visitors who take advantage of this learning experience.

**Testimonial:**

*"I can see a lot of care has gone into the indexing the history of developmental disabilities. No where else is so much information gathered that is life changing. I not only use it for myself but have recommended the Council's website to countless others."*

**Supplier:**

**Mastcom**

5775 Wayzata Boulevard, #700

St Louis Park, MN 55416

[www.mastcom.com](http://www.mastcom.com)

## **CUSTOMER RESEARCH**

In FFY 2024, MarketResponse International conducted two studies.

### **1. Youth Intersectionality Survey**

This study was completed in July 2024 and included 261 young Minnesotans ages 13-22. This quantitative and qualitative study divided respondents into four groups by race and ethnicity and disability status. The control group was made up of 176 individuals without disabilities and there were 85 respondents with disabilities. These groups were then broken down into white and BIPOC groups, 70% White, Caucasian, and 30% BIPOC, which closely matches the diversity of the general population of young Minnesotans.

BIPOC teens and young adults without disabilities experience twice as many incidences of discrimination reporting dissatisfaction with the way there are treated 12% of the time, as compared to white youth without disabilities who reported dissatisfaction at a rate of 6%. Minnesota teens and young adults with disabilities experience more than twice as many incidences of discrimination, the study revealed a 19% dissatisfaction rate as compared to youth without disabilities who reported dissatisfaction 9% of the time. The relative amounts of reported discrimination experiences were highest among young white Minnesotans with disabilities at 26%.

The qualitative study was completed on August 22, 2024, and includes the responses from youth and family members who participated in a two-week online dialogue. Young people urged better accessibility, increased access to assistive technologies, more education and training, better access to health, wellness, and social supports. By focusing on improving these areas, Minnesota can be a place where young people with disabilities can work towards achieving their aspirations and leading quality lives, rather than having to fight for their basic rights.

## **2. 2024 Employer Survey of State Government**

In 2023 MarketResponse International completed qualitative and quantitative research among 201 private sector companies regarding employment of people with developmental and other disabilities.

During FFY 2024 the employment study was replicated with a focus on the challenges and opportunities for employment of people with developmental and other disabilities in state government.

### **Qualitative Research Method**

A total of 26 in-depth interviews, each taking 45-60 minutes to complete, were conducted using a web-based audio-visual platform, enabling virtual face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and respondents. All interviews were transcribed and summarized with help from an AI analytics program.

Several benefits were identified for hiring people with disabilities in state government including:

- Opens up new employment opportunities for people with disabilities.
- It's good for the economy to employ people who would otherwise not be working.
- Provides the State with an additional talent pool of potential employees.
- Diversity of the State's workforce better matches the populations they serve.
- Higher retention rates are experienced among state employees with disabilities.
- People with disabilities bring new perspectives and abilities to the State's workforce.

### **Pilot Study**

The Department of Administration agreed to pilot study the quantitative phase of the Employer Study. During September 2024, 56 managers and supervisors completed the survey.

Two-thirds (65%) of hiring managers and supervisors from the Minnesota Department of Administration have positive impressions of the State's efforts to enhance employment opportunities for people with disabilities, with 58% giving the State a 'Good' rating, and 7% giving an 'Excellent' rating.

## **OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Create more flexible job opportunities, part-time positions, and ways to split up job duties to better accommodate people with developmental disabilities.
- Address concerns over losing benefits.

- Make the website friendlier and simplify the application process.
- Increase disability awareness and education across all levels of state agencies to breakdown stigma and misconceptions.
- Better training and education for hiring managers.
- More training and education are needed on what the C700 program is, how it works, and its benefits.
- Ensure needed accommodations are provided as quickly as possible.
- Make a concerted effort to place more people with developmental disabilities into positions that match their abilities.

**Supplier:**

**MarketResponse International**

<https://marketresponse.com>

**For more information, please contact:**

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**Disclaimer:**

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**November 20, 2024**