

Achieving Results with DD Council Initiatives

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council(DD Council) is one of a network of state councils encouraged to provide innovative activities that improve the lives of people with disabilities.

Federal law requires state councils to work toward changes in public policy and to support planning and advocacy so that people with developmental disabilities have opportunities to achieve their maximum potential. State councils receive federal funds to help carry out these activities. During the last two decades, many positive outcomes have occurred as a result of DD Council initiatives.

EMPLOYMENT

Vision

All people with a developmental disability should have equal access to productive employment in a vocation they have chosen, and they should have access to necessary supports to achieve success.

Initiatives

- Funded school-to-work projects that empowered students to transition into community employment by offering opportunities to participate in job shadowing, job clubs, job fairs, and career development seminars. Also provided teachers with employment related training.
- In order to develop innovative transportation systems, analyzed transportation resources and needs of people with disabilities. Informed policy makers of the collected information.
- Developed a variety of employment and transportation training resources (written and audio visual) for people with disabilities and their families, employment personnel, teachers, and employers.
- Promoted new directions and approaches in community employment that enabled people with disabilities to choose careers in the community - reducing the number of people in sheltered employment.

Outcomes

- Designed a model transportation system that could be used throughout Ohio.
- Educated Ohio employers about the benefits and practices of hiring people with disabilities.
- People with significant disabilities are employed in the community in nontraditional higher paying jobs.
- Over 500 students participated in school-to-work transition activities.
- Since 1990, employment personnel have been using person-centered planning to enable people with disabilities to find careers.
- Award winning employment and transportation videos are being used throughout the country and internationally.
- Accelerated movement has occurred from facility-based to community-based integrated employment opportunities.

EDUCATION

Vision

Increase the opportunity for children with developmental disabilities to spend more time in regular classrooms with children who do not have disabilities.

Initiatives

- Surveyed a representative sample of parents of children with developmental disabilities, teachers and administrators in public and county board of mental retardation and developmental disabilities schools to determine satisfaction with special education and knowledge of parental rights.
- Created an Education Task Force that analyzed the survey results, identified barriers to school integration, and researched exemplary programs in the country that demonstrated purposeful integration, and recommended strategies to accomplish system change.
- Funded an Education System Change Project (ESCP) that facilitated integration of children with developmental disabilities in regular classrooms and extracurricular activities.
- Currently funding a project to build on previous efforts by facilitating integration of children who may be more difficult to include, such as children with serious emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, and autism.

Outcomes

- ESCP supported 81 schools in 53 districts, over 2,700 teachers, 250 administrators, and 4,000 parents and potentially affected 51,000 students.
- Products were developed for parents, administrators, and teachers including:
 1. Individual information packets for parents, administrators, and teachers on "How to Begin the Process of Inclusion."
 2. An Administrator's Resource on Inclusive Education in Ohio.
 3. Parent Involvement: Strategies for Success.
 4. Catalog of products developed by participant schools.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Vision

Develop and implement an interagency, multidisciplinary system for the state that provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Identify children under three years of age who are at risk of delay or who have a developmental disability, and create simplified access to appropriate services for these children.

Initiatives

- Analyzed existing programs for finding and serving young children who were at risk or had a developmental delay:
 1. Number of children
 2. Programs
 3. Funding streams

- Developed and piloted a model system of comprehensive, coordinated early intervention services, consisting of 11 essential components.
- Developed curriculum and trained parents in how to successfully access and maintain early intervention services for their children.
- Developed curriculum and trained professionals in health, social service child care, and special education fields on how to identify and refer children in need of early intervention.

Outcomes

- Ohio was one of seven states involved in the national Zero to Three Project that laid the foundation for federal early intervention legislation, P.L. 99-457 in 1986 (currently Part C of IDEA).
- Ohio has a comprehensive, coordinated system of early intervention in all 88 counties. It:

- Identifies children

- Connects families to services

- Coordinates all early intervention programs

- Sixteen essential components are used to guide early intervention services in Ohio.
- The Early Intervention Council oversees early intervention services in the state, and today it serves more than 12,000 children, from birth to age three.

COMMUNITY LIVING

Vision

Assist individuals with disabilities to live as independently as possible in their own communities with the supports they choose.

Initiatives

- Created and operated task forces to develop written recommendations and action plans related to deinstitutionalization and community living.
- Provided training and technical assistance to direct service providers, county board staff, policymakers, individuals with disabilities, and parents about person-centered planning and self-determination.
- Served as catalyst for development of alternative community living arrangements beginning with foster care and continuing through semi-independent, independent, and supported living.

Outcomes

- Many state and local agencies in Ohio adopted the philosophy and goals promoted by DD Council documents, such as the DI Papers and the Community Living Papers.
- Legislation was passed in Ohio establishing the Supported Living Program, which incorporates all the goals and principles promoted by DD Council.
- Eighteen counties have agreed to embrace the concepts and principles of self-determination and person-centered planning.

- Direct service providers have been trained about "cutting edge" issues related to community living.
- Funding for group homes is based on an individual's functional levels. At one time an instrument called R-scan was used. Funding is based more on individual need.
- Eighteen county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities have signed a contract to base their service delivery on person-centered planning and to revise their policies and practices accordingly.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Vision

Ensure permanence of a family support system in Ohio for families of people with developmental disabilities.

Initiatives

- Researched existing respite care options in Ohio and prepared recommendations for ensuring the permanent existence of a family support system in the state.
- Designed and successfully followed through on a state level strategy to pass legislation to establish a statewide family resource program.
- Piloted in-home respite services through six projects throughout the state.
- Provided funds to the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities to facilitate implementation of the Family Resource Services Program that was created by legislation.
- Developed, piloted, and evaluated a cash subsidy program for families of children under 18.

Outcomes

- Council's initiative led to passage of legislation creating The Family Resource Services Program. Funding for this program has increased from \$2 to \$7 million since it was created in 1986.
- The cash subsidy pilot resulted in clarification/recognition that the Family Resource Services Program allows for provision of cash to families.

HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

Vision

Develop awareness of the medical and health-related needs of people with disabilities (prevention, acute care, rehabilitation, health maintenance and disability management), and of system changes needed for appropriate insurance coverage.

Initiatives

- Funded a health care model that put disability on the health care reform agenda by coordinating and implementing conferences, local forums, publications, testimony, and policy communications.
- Established DD Council as a leader in national, state, and local education, coalition-building, and advocacy for reform. With identified national influence and representatives

on most state-level health and insurance-related boards and commissions, Ohio influenced debate at all levels.

- Expanded awareness of the medical and health-related needs of people with disabilities and broadened understanding and policy interaction about health maintenance, disability management, longer term services and supports, and prevention of secondary disabilities.
- Confronted problems resulting from the managed care approach, which tends to restrict services paid for by insurance. Pursued technical assistance models to help people with disabilities navigate complicated service systems.
- Currently funding an educational program on "early aging" among people with disabilities.

Outcomes

- The Universal Health Care Action Network (UHCAN!) continues as a nationwide educational and coalition-building force working for health care reform, health care justice and consumer empowerment.
- The magazine, *Window on Wellness*, highlights practical information and resources and reaches some 14,000 people with disabilities and professionals in a wide range of medical and allied-medical areas.
- UHCAN offers managed care training for people with disabilities so they can better access services in managed care insurance plans.
- Several public policy recommendations were made from a disability perspective. Additionally, quality assurance research has led to potential legal and educational uses related to the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CHANGE OF DEFINITION LEADS TO MORE EQUITABLE SERVICE

Thanks to a DD Council project started in the late 1980s, a more functional legal definition of developmental disability came about in Ohio. It resulted in 3,000 more individuals receiving services from county boards of mental retardation and developmental disabilities. Previously these individuals were ineligible because they had developmental disabilities *other* than mental retardation.

Council continued to fund this project (ODDASE, or Ohio Developmental Disabilities Alliance for Service Eligibility) to develop and revise a statewide eligibility determination instrument for adults (OEDI) and for children (COEDI), which made eligibility more equitable across the state. Part of ODDASE's role was to inform newly eligible individuals of the new law, as well as to provide training to service professionals. OEDI and COEDI became models for the rest of the nation.