



## **Becoming a Member of the Council: Frequently asked Questions.**

### **What is the Council?**

The Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) is a group made up of people with disabilities, family members, advocates, and state department representatives who work to create favorable conditions for people with developmental disabilities and their families in the Commonwealth. Created under a federal act and Governor's Executive Order, the Council is both a planning group and a funding body.

The Council works to create a better future for Pennsylvanians with disabilities by:

- Funding short-term projects that show new and innovative ways for people with disabilities to live, learn, play, work and participate fully in communities throughout Pennsylvania.
- Supporting people with disabilities and their families in leadership roles, ensuring that they have a strong voice on matters in Pennsylvania which affect their lives.
- Engaging in long-term systems change efforts to enhance the lives of people with disabilities.
- Improved public policies and services to ensure that they are available to all other citizens and community members.
- Encouraging communities to remove barriers and provide a welcome to children and adults with developmental disabilities in local neighborhoods and community groups.

### **What is involved in being a PADDCC member?**

PADDCC Council and Committee members play a vital and active role in the life of the organization. The strength of our efforts is directly related to the time, energy and hard work of our membership, supported by Council staff. All members start as Committee members. Council members, who are officially appointed by the Governor, are selected from our current list of active Committee members, based on vacancies and current Council needs under federal law. All members, both Council and Committee, are expected to participate in the following:

- Attend four regular Council meetings and one Annual Planning Meeting per year.
- Participate in discussions, assist in planning the ongoing activities of the Council, learn about grant efforts and participate in funding decisions

- Bring and share your own expertise, knowledge and experiences as related to the Council's efforts as we work to support PA citizens with disabilities and their families.

Council and Committee members may also be asked to:

- Act as Lead Person for a particular grant effort for which you have a passion or experience. The Lead Person works with Council staff to review the work of that grant and to be a liaison back to their fellow Council members on those particular projects.
- Participate in Request for Proposal writing teams to determine those activities and outcomes that would be required in a given objective area.
- Participate in Proposal Review Teams.
- Participate in additional Council Committees or groups such as Finance, Nominations, or planning groups to enhance a particular area of the Council's work.

## **When and Where do we meet?**

As noted above, the Council generally meets for four regular meetings, in January, April, July and October, of each year. These meetings have traditionally been held beginning at 1:00 PM on a Wednesday afternoon through lunchtime on Thursday. We meet in Harrisburg, most often at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel, although this is subject to change based on availability and costs. All meetings of the PADDCC are open to the public under Sunshine Laws and are held in accessible locations.

In addition, the Council has one weekend meeting per year in November. This is our Annual Planning Meeting where we focus either on long range planning for the Council, on topics of critical importance for people with disabilities in PA, or once per five year plan, to hold our All Grantees Meeting.

The schedule for all regularly scheduled Council meetings is published each fall for the following year, so that members can plan accordingly.

## **Can I be reimbursed for expenses?**

Council provides all of our members with meals, parking, and hotel accommodations for those who have traveled for the meeting. We will assist in making travel arrangements or reimburse those costs for members who drive. In addition, we will work with you to arrange or reimburse costs for supports that will ensure your participation. This might include personal assistance services, interpreter or CART services, child care, or providing all meeting materials in accessible formats.

In addition, the Council provides a stipend to any member who is either required to miss work or take leave time due to their participation in a Council meeting or those who are not employed. The current stipend amount is \$60 per day.

Please note, however, that due to conflict of interest concerns, no member of either the Council or its Committees may be paid as an employee of a Council funded grant.

## **What should I expect to happen at my first PADDC meeting?**

The Nominations Committee reviews all applications and determines when to issue invitations for potential members to join us as a guest for an upcoming meeting. Having people attend a meeting as a guest gives everyone the chance to get to know each other better, for you to learn first-hand about the work of the Council, and for us to mutually decide if working together is a good fit. Your primary role at this first meeting is to learn about the process and to meet others who work with the Council.

Council staff will contact you to make all the necessary arrangements for that first meeting. This will include travel arrangements, hotel accommodations if needed, and any personal accommodations that will allow your full participation. They will share meeting schedules and agendas, and arrange to meet you when you arrive for the meeting. We ask that you arrive a bit early for this first meeting so that we have an opportunity to introduce you to some of the Council and Committee members, and to introduce you to a member of the Nominations Committee who will act as a mentor for the 2 day meeting. Your mentor will continue to introduce you to others in attendance, provide support and guidance as to what to expect through the flow of the meetings and answer any questions that you might have.

The Meetings often open with a General Session on Wednesday afternoon that focuses on broad issues. This might include policy issues having a broad impact on people with disabilities, budgetary concerns, orientation sessions for new members and the like. The General Session then moves into our Committee meetings. We have 3 Committees that meet on Wednesday including System Change, Social Change and Empowerment. These committees generally handle the 'content' work of the Council, are more focused on particular areas such as health care, education, employment or housing, and relates largely to the work of our grantees.

Thursday morning usually focuses on our 'function' work. We have four work groups including Evaluation, Multicultural Diversity, Policy and Information Exchange and Communications/Publications. The work of these groups has a broad impact across the whole of Council's efforts.

The final meeting of the 2 days is typically our formal Council meeting. This is our 'wrap-up' session for the meetings, where our legally appointed Council Members need to ratify any official motions and funding decisions that came out of the preceding Committee and Work Group sessions.

[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO GO TO THE NOMINATIONS FORM](#)

**For Additional Questions, Please Contact:**

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