

PADDCC Outlooks

FALL 2020

Go Vote!

Self Advocates United as 1 Lead Webinars to Help Others Participate in the Voting Process

The right to vote is embedded into the American system of government, and that includes roughly 26 percent of Americans who have disabilities.

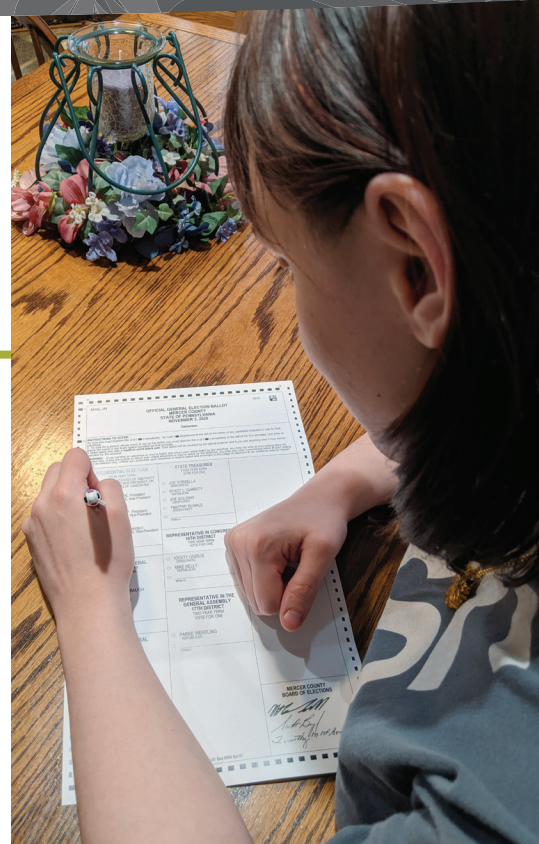
However, accessibility and other issues have prevented many people with disabilities from exercising this basic right. Through a grant from the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council, Self Advocates United as 1 (SAU1) has developed a series of events to help break down barriers to voting.

In their Go Voter! Let's Vote! webinar, participants learn about:

- The history of voting rights for people with disabilities
- How to register to vote
- What the whole voting process includes
- Differences in the kinds of ballots
- How to address issues that may arise when voting
- Ways to build a voting community

Self advocates who attend these webinars gain a sense of empowerment and the knowledge to advocate for themselves. Further, these sessions will be transformed into YouTube videos so that they may be used on demand. Eight sessions will have been hosted by mid-October and more than 120 people have participated.

If you want to check your voter registration status, SAU1 recommends using the PA Votes website at www.votespa.com or by calling 1-877-VOTESPA. They are also helping people to register at their events. For more information on SAU1's work on self advocacy visit their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/SAU1PA.



Marking Milestones, Creating Change

This is an historic year. We mark 50 years since the establishment of Developmental Disabilities Councils in the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act) and 30 years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). These milestones are an opportunity to both celebrate and reflect.

In 1970, the reauthorization of the DD Act created Councils to coordinate and integrate services for individuals with developmental disabilities. For 50 years, Councils have engaged in systems change, advocacy, and capacity building efforts to improve the lives and outcomes for individuals. In that time, we fought for deinstitutionalization and the creation of community-based services, changing the lives of Pennsylvanians with disabilities.

Twenty years later, the ADA was passed by Congress and signed into law. This landmark civil rights law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including employment, education, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The law opened the doors of opportunity for millions of Americans.

Typically, we would be hosting celebrations and coming together to mark these accomplishments, but this year is far from typical. We are living through one of the most difficult times in our history. Millions have been infected in a worldwide Pandemic. The tragic loss of life exposed the disparate impact of the COVID-19 virus on people with disabilities, people of color, and those in nursing homes.

Our guiding principles on Pandemic recovery* outlines our advocacy priorities as we recover and rebuild our communities. We are distributing funding through our Community Response Projects* to address emerging needs in these unprecedented times.

In May, the tragic killing of George Floyd spurred millions to demonstrate for racial justice in cities across the country and around the world. Protesters decry police violence, systemic racism, and social injustice. We stand with the Black Lives Matter movement and renew our commitment to addressing disparate impacts on marginalized communities. We promise to continue funding projects to disrupt the school to prison pipeline for students of color who have disabilities. We will build upon our Community Alliance Summit to fight alongside all communities who experience discrimination, marginalization, and oppression.

In the midst of these struggles, we are planning for the next five years and setting new goals. In these historic times, we strive to build upon 50 years of the Developmental Disabilities Council as a catalyst for change and continue to promote the civil rights promised in the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act. The future is ours to create, and we will build it together, with a collective responsibility to promote a culture of diversity, respect and inclusion for all.

*For more information about items mentioned, visit: www.paddc.org. For Pandemic response and recovery, click on the **Resources** tab and for Community Response Project funding click the **Grants & Funding** tab.

Planning Process for the 2022-2026 State Plan

Every five years, the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council adopts a new State Plan. Under the State Plan, funds are made available in a variety of areas for efforts to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities in Pennsylvania. Grants are awarded through Requests for Applications (RFAs) in a competitive bidding process.



- A.** Statewide listening tours were held in the fall of 2019
- B.** A Comprehensive Review & Analysis report was produced to provide data to inform the goal setting process
- C.** Council planning meetings in November 2019 and November 2020 determine the goals and objectives for 2022-2026
- D.** Survey was distributed in early fall 2020 to gain public input from people with disabilities and their family members
- E.** A draft of the plan will be available for public comment in winter 2021; it will be reviewed with changes by Council in spring 2021; Council will approve the plan in July 2021; and it will be submitted to the Administration for Community Living in August 2021.

School to Prison Pipeline

One of the priorities of PADDC during the 2017-2021 Five Year Plan was to address widespread disparities throughout Pennsylvania school districts in the treatment of children with disabilities, children of color (with and without disabilities), as well as LGBTQ youth through exclusionary policies such as zero tolerance, suspension/expulsion and reassignment to “disciplinary schools” as practices that are part and parcel of the **school to prison pipeline**.

Three grants were awarded, with two focused on diversion to prevent children from entering the pipeline, and one was focused on re-entry to support children with the transition back to school from suspension/expulsion and alternate placement.

Diversion

Delaware County Advocacy & Resource Organization has been providing education and training for staff, faculty and students in the Philadelphia and Delaware County area school districts, including charter schools. Their work includes training on topics such as implicit bias and mindfulness. They have been successful in reducing the frequency of harsh disciplinary practices in the schools as evidenced by fewer suspension, expulsions, and alternate placements.

Not only has the training helped the staff and faculty to be less punitive and biased in their dealings with marginalized children, but it also helps the children regulate their behaviors and emotions. Since the Pandemic, Delaware County

Advocacy & Resource Organization has pivoted and continues its work by providing online training for staff and faculty of the schools.



The Institute on Disabilities (IOD) at Temple University, Pennsylvania's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), in partnership with the Racial Empowerment Collaborative (REC) at the University of Pennsylvania, worked on the second school to prison pipeline diversion grant. Their grant concluded in July, 2020 and the outcome includes video training modules based on the PLAAY-Inclusive program, which are intended for schools and families. The videos address racism, ableism, and the second school to prison pipeline, and how it disproportionately affects children with disabilities and children of color. You can view the program materials at: <https://disabilities.temple.edu/school-to-prison/>

Re-Entry

Where the second school to prison pipeline diversion grants are focused on preventing children from being directed into the pipeline, the re-entry grant is focused on helping children

The rate of disconnected youth (defined as those who are neither working nor in school) in Pennsylvania is nearly 11 percent, or roughly 162,000 young people. This group is more likely to end up on public assistance or in prison due to criminal activity.

Meanwhile, the PA prison population is already over 47,000 at an average cost of \$45,288 per inmate. Though this number is still too high, there has been movement in the right direction. Thanks to the Justice Reinvestment Initiative in 2012, incarceration rates and crime are on the decline.*

**Source: Measure of America is a nonpartisan project of the nonprofit Social Science Research Council founded in 2007.*

School to Prison Pipeline (continued)

successfully transition back from alternative placement including institutions in the juvenile justice system, drug and alcohol treatment settings, and mental health settings.

Support Center for Child Advocates has been working to address specific issues that children face when returning to school after alternative placements, such as:

1. A lack of coordination between the alternate placement facility and the school district where the student will be returning
2. The frequently inferior education provided by the alternate setting
3. The failure of the alternate setting to create adequate Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) for children with disabilities.
4. The high frequency of dropout when students return to school

We still have much work to do as a society to address systemic racism and ableism. PADDC is proud to support projects such as these and others that help to address disparity.

Reduce Your Risk of Covid-19



Clean your hands often.

Cough or sneeze into
a tissue or your elbow—
NOT into your hand!



Avoid touching your eyes,
nose, and mouth.

Limit social gatherings
and time spent in
crowded spaces.



Avoid close contact
with someone who
is sick.

Clean and disinfect frequently
touched objects and surfaces.



Visit www.paddc.org/resources for more information and resources to address what may be the unique needs of individuals of all ages with disabilities on Coronavirus (Covid-19).

New Resources Available from PADDCC Grantees

New Report: Healthcare Access For People With Disabilities In Rural Pennsylvania

The report was produced by **Pennsylvania Health Access Network** and is based on over 300 conversations with community members with disabilities, their family members and caregivers, and community based organizations held during 2019 and 2020.

www.pahealthaccess.org/rural-access-report/

HEALTHCARE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN RURAL PENNSYLVANIA



PHAN Pennsylvania Health
Access Network
Stronger Voices for Better Health



RESOURCES FOR PENNSYLVANIA MILITARY VETERANS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



**DISABILITY RIGHTS
PENNSYLVANIA**



**PENNSYLVANIA
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES
COUNCIL**

Veteran's Resource Guide Now Available

This guide was conceived by PADDCC because young men and women serve their country faithfully and deserve the care and support they need—both while in the service and after returning to civilian life.

Disability Rights Pennsylvania produced this guide. It is available on their website at www.disabilityrightspa.org/resources

Scholarships & Community Response Funding Available

The PA Developmental Disabilities Council is pleased to share two new funding opportunities for organizations and individuals.

Community Response Projects are supported for up to \$5,000 over a 6-month time frame and will be awarded to community-based organizations that provide supports to people with developmental disabilities who have been affected by a local, statewide, or national, natural disasters. This can include, but is not limited to, addressing concerns related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Community Response Projects support organizations in developing training or increasing accessibility to information for individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members.

Examples of Currently Funded Community Response Projects

Integrate for Good's Virtual Civic Engagement Conference – a state-wide, inclusive conference that will include a multi-media presentation, a demonstration of accessible community-based volunteer projects, a virtual performance by an award-winning blues guitarist who lives with autism, and a panel discussion that includes individuals with diverse abilities. The presentations will showcase civic engagement as a means to gain social capital.

The Next Step Programs' Online Disability Transition Programming – an online education platform is being developed that will host a variety of educational programs including webinars discussing topics like COVID-19 and how

it impacts the transition process, and one-on-one remote trainings for interview skills, social skill development, and community integration. These webinars will focus on preparing high school aged students who are ready to transition to work but who can't participate in internship opportunities due to the current Pandemic.

Arc of Pennsylvania's Arc Advocacy Academy – a program to develop leadership within the disability community. The initial goal is to design a 3-day experience for adults with ID/A and non-disabled peers of the disability community that inspires them to think inclusively and with the needs of all people in mind. This program will offer guided leadership development in the following areas: disability history; ethics and values; policy, advocacy, and research; leadership education; board development; and communication and technology.



Leadership, Empowerment, and Advocacy Fund

(LEAF) Scholarships provide up to \$750 per person, per year, to assist individuals with disabilities and their family members to attend conferences,

training sessions, and comparable activities directly related to skill development in the areas of self-advocacy, leadership, and education.

Both of these projects are subject to the availability of federal funds. More information about eligibility, requirements, and application materials may be found at www.paddcc.org under the Grants & Funding tab.



PADDCC

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**PENNSYLVANIA
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**Every Election is Important!
Make Sure You Vote On or Before**

November 3 , 2020

Persons with disabilities who need
information or encounter problems
at their polling place on Election Day,
can contact:

**Disability Rights Pennsylvania
(DRP) hotline at: 717-839-5227 or
electionday@disabilityrightspa.org**