



Voting—A Right, Privilege and Duty

Register and cast your vote

Voting is a fundamental right, privilege and duty. It is also a key means to make your voice heard. For people with disabilities, voting is important to ensure that elected officials work to protect and advance the rights and interests of the disability community. The general election will be held in Pennsylvania on November 8, 2022.

You cannot vote in Pennsylvania unless you are registered. You can register to vote in Pennsylvania at www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationApplication. You can also register to vote at your county board of elections office and at many state and local government offices. **You must register to vote by October 24, 2022 to vote in the general election.**

Voting In Person

If you are registered to vote, you can vote in person at your assigned polling place. If you are a first-time voter or are voting for the first time at a new polling place, you will need to show identification. You can find more information about identification at www.vote.pa.gov/Register-to-Vote/Pages/Voter-ID-for-First-Time-Voters.

Right to Assistance for In Person Voting

If you need assistance to cast your ballot due to your disability, you can have someone assist you to vote. You can be assisted by a relative, friend, neighbor, aide, or another voter.

your **VOTE**
is your **VOICE**

In order to receive assistance, you should note the need for assistance on your voter registration form. This will ensure that the information will be included at your polling location. If you did not indicate a need for assistance, you can complete a “Declaration of Need of Assistance” form at the polling place stating your name, address, the name and address of the person assisting you, and the reason for assistance.

What to Do if Your Polling Place is Inaccessible

A person with a disability probably wants to make sure that his polling place is accessible before Election Day. To find out the location of your polling place and whether it is accessible, you can visit www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/VoterRegistrationStatus or contact your county board of elections. For contact information for your county boards of election call 1-877-PAVOTES or visit www.votespa.com/Resources/Pages/Contact-Your-Election-Officials.

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A Note From the PADDCC Executive Director



It has been an exciting beginning to the fall season here at the Council. In addition to distributing the new grant book, sharing voting information, celebrating a Bill signing and submitting public comment, a couple of unanticipated opportunities came up recently and show how our Council is recognized as a leader across the country for our work.

Last month, I was asked to present at the ACL Webinar: *The Voices of People with Disabilities and Older Adults – Strengthening Advocacy in the HCBS Settings Rule*. It was an honor to speak to a national audience about how PADDCC supports advocacy efforts, especially concerning the HCBS Settings Rule. Starting in 2017, Council grant funding empowered individuals and families to have a voice in how this new rule would be implemented in PA. I invited Sally Gould-Taylor, the executive director of the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University, to join me to highlight the HCBS grant work, how we support the Coalition for Inclusive Community, and our participation in the Information Sharing and Advisory Committee (ISAC). People from all over the country learned about our efforts to support the authentic and meaningful implementation of the Final Rule and its underlying philosophies.

Only a few days later, another unforeseen invitation came from the Kansas Legislature. The Kansas Special Committee on Intellectual and Developmental Disability Waiver Modernization invited both state agencies and advocacy groups to a special hearing to learn from model states about ways to improve services and end waiting lists. My testimony provided the self-advocate and family perspective on PA's system and garnered a great deal of attention from Kansas advocates and legislators. They are especially interested in learning more about how Pennsylvania serves high school graduates. I look forward to working with the Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities as they move forward in their system change and waiting list advocacy.

While these invitations were unexpected, I guess I shouldn't really be surprised. PADDCC is known for its social and system change leadership and is a model to empower individuals and their families to shape public policy. I look forward to continuing this great work as we implement our state plan and advocacy agenda.

Lisa A. Tesler
PADDCC Executive Director



Voting (continued from page 1)

If your polling place is not accessible and you want to vote in person, you should also consider working with your county board of elections to find a new polling place for your division by proposing some alternatives. You can also contact the Department of State to complain about the inaccessibility of your polling place at www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/ReportElectionComplaints. You can find more information on your rights in this publication from Disability Rights PA www.disabilityrightspa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/June2020-Voting-AAA.pdf.

Voting By Mail

Any qualified registered voter in Pennsylvania can now vote by mail. A mail-in ballot does not require providing a reason. In order to ensure you apply for a mail-in ballot, rather than an absentee ballot, be sure to answer “no” to the third question, which asks “Are you applying for a ballot for the upcoming election because you cannot appear at your polling place due to an illness or physical disability?” If you answer “yes” to this question, the system will automatically lead you to the absentee ballot application. You can apply to request a mail-in ballot at www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/OnlineAbsenteeApplication/#/OnlineAbsenteeBegin.

The deadline to request a mail-in ballot is 5 p.m. on November 1, 2022. The ballot must be completed and received by your county board of elections by 8 p.m. on November 8, 2022, to be counted. This means that you should send it well in advance of election day to ensure it gets to the county board of elections on time.

Right to Assistance in Picking Up or Returning Your Mail-In Ballot

If you have a disability that prevents you from applying in person for your mail ballot or delivering your mail ballot, you may designate an agent to deliver your ballot materials for you. You

must designate an agent using this form: www.vote.pa.gov/Resources/Documents/Authorize-Designated-Agent-for-Mail-in-or-Absentee-Ballot.pdf.

Can Election Officials Bar a Person From Voting Because They Deem Them Not Competent to Vote or Understand the Ballot?

No! Pennsylvania has no voting competence laws. Election officials and poll workers, therefore, cannot question the ability of a voter with an intellectual disability, mental illness, brain injury, dementia, or other cognitive limits and certainly may not bar them from exercising their right to vote. If a person with a disability encounters such an obstacle, he or she can file a complaint by contacting 1-877- VOTESPA (1-877-868-3772) or fill in the complaint form online at www.pavoterservices.pa.gov/Pages/ReportElectionComplaints.

How can Disability Rights Pennsylvania Help Me with Voting Issues Prior to the Election?

If you encounter voting obstacles such as inaccessible polling places, inaccessible voting machines, refusal to allow assisted voting, refusal to provide reasonable accommodations or effective communication, barring or intimidating voters due to disability, you should contact Disability Rights Pennsylvania at 1-800-692-7443 ext. 400.

Election Day Hotline

On November 8th, 2022, Disability Rights PA will be participating in the **Election Protection Hotline** and assisting with calls.

- Please call 1-866-OUR-VOTE.
- You can also find more voting materials on our Election 2022 website: www.disabilityrightspa.org/election2022

ADVOCACY

Tip of the Month



Alan Holdsworth of Disability Equality in Education (PADDC'S Stigma grantee) shares his best advice for advocating for change following the passage of the Disability Inclusive Curriculum legislation.

Alan's Winning Strategy Tips

1. Start with a concern and convert it to an issue. Our concern was to eradicate stigma in education. The issue was disability wasn't taught in general education classrooms.

2. Identify who can give you what you want. After trying various possibilities, we realized only legislation could ensure a statewide disability inclusive curriculum.

3. See arguments from both sides of the political isle. Meet with representatives. Frame questions in yes or no terms. "Do you support a disability inclusive curriculum? Yes or no?"

4. Be specific, stay focused, and reach out to others to form a coalition. Avoid the temptation to include a list of other issues.

5. Look for allies who will work with you, not for you, and don't pressure people to join.

6. Respect people's opinions and hold action-based meetings. Don't just sit around and talk.

7. Reach across the aisle for bipartisanship and repeatedly educate legislators.

8. Decide where you are prepared to compromise and share this with the coalition.

9. Once legislation is passed, think about how the coalition can remain involved after the campaign is won.

10. Finally, keep it simple. Avoid getting lost in jargon. Use plain language to give clarity to what you are trying to do.

Keep it simple.

"This is not the end, this is not even the beginning of the end, but perhaps it is the end of the beginning."

- Winston Churchill

Victory in Pennsylvania

On July 7, 2022, the historic Disability Inclusive Curriculum legislation (H.R. 1642), introduced by **PA Representatives Joe Hohenstein** (D-Philadelphia) and **Jason Oritay** (R-Washington/Allegheny), passed by a vote of 181-19, recognizing that **ALL** children from grades K through 12 should have a curriculum that includes disability—the first and most disability inclusive curriculum in the US.

What Does the Legislation Mean?

First, it mandates the PA Department of Education to work with disabled led organizations to create

the curriculum. Second, a minimum of eight schools will test the curriculum over three years with a goal to roll it out to all schools in PA. Third, the PA Department of Education must employ a nationally recognized disability organization to evaluate and review the pilot.

For more information about the Disability Inclusive Curriculum legislation and the history behind it, read Disability Equality in Education's [latest newsletter](#).

PADDC

SELF ADVOCATE

SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Upcoming Self Advocate Spotlight Sessions - Zoom Meetings



October 18, 2022

Oscar Drummond, co-founder of Self Advocates United as One (SAU1), former SAU1 Board President, and Lead Ambassador/Lead Power Coach. He will tell us about founding and ongoing work of Self Advocates United as One (SAU1). SAU1 is a self advocate led support and advocacy organization for people with developmental disabilities.



November 21, 2022

Thomas Hassell, director of Spectrum Friends of Greater Harrisburg, a self advocate led organization, and board member of both the Autism Society of Greater Harrisburg and United for Autism Foundation. Learn more about the session.



December 19, 2022

Khyll Robinson, trained as a Community Autism Peer Specialist (CAPS) and works as a CAPS for the Community Wellness Engagement Unit at the Philadelphia Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services (DBHIDS). Learn more about the session.

Visit the PADDC calendar of events for the times and Zoom information.

www.paddc.org/events

On Tuesday, September 20, 2022, some of the people who advocated for the passage of the Disability Inclusive Curriculum legislation gathered for Governor Wolf's ceremonial signing of the bill.



Pictured in photo:

(left to right, front row) Josie Badger, Representative Jessica Benham, Rep. Joe Hohenstein. Governor Tom Wolf, Rep. Jason Ortity, Alan Holdsworth (PADDC Grantee)

(left to right, second row) Sharon Janosik, Monte Whitehead, Lisa Aquila, Diane Logan, Kathy Brill, Amber Logan, John Logan, Lisa Tesler (PADDC Executive Director), Rachel Frometa (PADDC Committee Member), Betty Frometa (PADDC Council Member), Sharon Pennock, Dr. Amy Pastorak, Natalia Saddi, Jasper Saddi.

ANNOUNCING PADDC'S GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

What is a Golden Opportunity?

It is when there is an unexpected event or thing that abruptly happens, and the newly revealed situation gives you the perfect chance to influence or create change to make things better for people with developmental disabilities.

A Golden Opportunity Project will have the following features:

- Something has happened that is unanticipated and sudden.
- You have an idea for work that will take advantage of and/or respond to this unforeseen occasion or situation.
- People with disabilities will actively participate to plan and do the work of the project.
- Completing your project will make things better for people with developmental disabilities.
- **The project can be funded at up to \$5,000, for up to 6 months.**

The grants support organizations by:

- Bringing people together to talk about current disability issues,
- Support advocacy & systems change,
- Develop and provide training, or,
- Increase accessibility to information.



To get more information and the application form, scan this QR code, which will link you to the [PADD website](#).



SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

PADDC is seeking nominations for Council members who are:

- Individuals with developmental disabilities
- Parents of children with developmental disabilities
- Family members of adults with developmental disabilities

The PA Developmental Disabilities Council (PADDC) empowers individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to help shape policies that impact them. We have reopened our application process and are looking for people from diverse backgrounds to apply. Pennsylvania is a state with great diversity in race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, military/veteran status, disability, location, and lived experience, and we desire a Council that reflects that diversity. We believe that our differences make us stronger, and we encourage people from different backgrounds who believe they have something to contribute to the Council to apply.



You can nominate yourself, a family member or friend, or a leader in the community who is willing to serve. Please visit www.paddc.org/nominations to learn more about what it means to be a Council member and how the Council works. Nomination forms are also available on the page.

SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING PANEL DISCUSSION



On September 19th PADDC hosted a webinar called “Supported Decision Making Panel Discussion.” The webinar was designed to provide a general overview of supported decision making and discuss what is happening nationally on this topic.

Speakers included:

- Max Barrows, Outreach Director, Green Mountain Self Advocates (Vermont)
- Laura N. Butler, director of a supported decision making project at the University of Kentucky (My Choice Kentucky)
- Morgan Whitlatch, Director of Supported Decision Making Initiatives, Center for Public Representation (Massachusetts/Washington DC)

We are pleased that so many people were interested in the topic and apologize to any who were unable to join the live webinar because it filled up. To make it accessible to all, a video recording of the webinar and the PowerPoint presentations can be found on our website at www.paddc.org/resources-from-supported-decision-making-panel.



PADDCC

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