2016

Annual Report

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council

the Council of 2015

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Council Members

President
John Hall/ Individual/ Newport

Vice President
Rachel MacMartin/ Individual/ Montpelier

Fred Breunig/ Family/ Brattleboro
Craig Davis/ Individual/ Middlebury
Gary DeCarolis/ Family/ Burlington
Dale Hackett/ Individual/ Barre
Terry Holden/ Family/ Jeffersonville
Catherine Hybels/ Family/ Norwich
Wendy Kruger/ Family/ Morrisville
Lisa Rudiakov/ Individual/ Bennington
Marcella Ryan/ Individual/ Winooski
Cynthia Smith/ Family/ Fair Haven
Kay Stambler/ Family/ South Burlington
Miriam Stoll/ Family/ Burlington

Council Staff

Karen Schwartz, Executive Director
Kirsten Murphy, Policy Analyst
Chelsea Hayward, Administrative Assistant

Council Agency Representatives

Danielle Delong/ Department of VT Health Access
Diane Dexter/ Department of Children and Families
Carol Hassler, MD/ Department of Health
Clare McFadden/ Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
Susan Ryan/ Center on Disability & Community Inclusion
Jennifer Stratton/ Lamoille County Mental Health
Ed Paquin/ Disability Rights VT
John Spinney/ Agency of Education
Vacant/ Division of Voc. Rehabilitation

Greetings from the 2016 Executive Director

At VTDDC we talk a lot about change. We advocate to change laws. We challenge people to change the way they think about disability. We support programs that change services and supports for the better.

The Council also changes. Recently, we celebrated the retirement of our Executive Director, Karen Schwartz, and soon we will elect a new Council President and write our next five year strategic plan.

What stays the same is our enthusiastic engagement with self-advocates and family members. We hope you enjoy this annual report about the work we do to transform the lives of Vermonters with developmental disabilities.

With Warm Regards,

A Powerful Partner...

The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council is a statewide board that advances social and policy change to ensure that individuals with disabilities and their family members have the supports they need to live, play, and learn in their communities. Created by federal law, the VTDDC is part of a national network of state councils committed to self-determination and community inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. Council activities include public policy research, advocacy, demonstration projects, and leadership education.

A Strategic Investor...

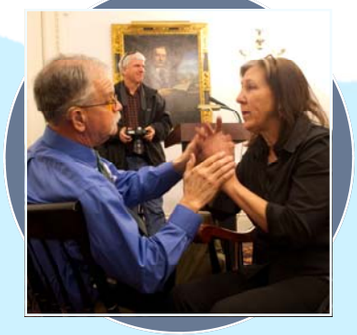
More than 60% of the Council's 23 members are self-advocates and family members who are appointed by the Governor of Vermont to serve up to six years. Other members include policymakers who represent various government agencies and organizations. Every five years, the council creates a plan that directs how its nearly $500,000 in annual federal funds will be used to achieve positive change for people with developmental disabilities in Vermont. The Council is also empowered to select its Executive Director, adopt an annual budget, and make grants to other organizations.

How are VTDDC's funds used?

OUTREACH

VTDDC supports projects that increase public awareness about the critical issues affecting people with disabilities and their families.

Press generated by Council initiatives resulted in an estimated 372,000 contacts with the general public in 2015.



POLICY-MAKER EDUCATION

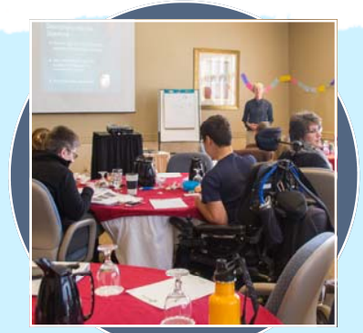
Consumers know best what supports and services they need to actively participate in their communities. VTDDC supports Vermonters with developmental disabilities and their families to be respected advocates at the State House.

Through direct advocacy, $600,000 in flexible, "one-time" funds were restored to Developmental Services Agencies to address emergency needs.

COALITION BUILDING

VTDDC works in partnership with a broad coalition of disability groups to move key legislation forward at the Vermont State House. The coalition believes all advocacy starts with the phrase, "Nothing about us, without us."

Victories in 2015 included passing enabling legislation for the Vermont ABLE Savings Program and maintaining funding levels for home and community based supports in the FY 16 budget.



TRAINING

VTDDC supports training through conference sponsorships, scholarships to individuals and families, and its Leadership Series.

More than 2,250 Vermonters were trained in disability issues, Leadership, and systems change in 2015 thanks to Council efforts.

VT Leadership Series

Find your voice! Learn to advocate for change!

The Vermont Leadership Series is an intensive three-part training for people with intellectual or other disabilities and family members.

Participants learn about the history of the disability rights movement, the legislative process, and best practices in community inclusion. There is a strong emphasis on skill building, with participants practicing legislative testimony, telling one's story to policy makers, and working together as fully inclusive teams to create a final project.

Who should attend the Leadership Series?

Leadership is designed for Vermonters with diverse experiences of disability. Examples include: Parents of any age who support a son or daughter with a developmental disability; adults living with intellectual or other disabilities who want to take their advocacy to a new level; sisters, brothers, and grandparents who are growing into their role supporting a family member with a disability. Trainers will expect a high level of participation from everyone.

Your motto should be
"If I don't do it, who will?"
- Chester Finn,
guest speaker & self-advocate

Special Thanks to
The Vermont Leadership Series is sponsored by the Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, and Vermont Family Network, with support from the UVM Center on Disability and Community Inclusion and the Vermont Department of Health.

More than half of the 2015 Leadership Class has joined a board or advisory work group.

Inclusive Healthcare Partnership Project

Changing healthcare outcomes for adult Vermonters with developmental disabilities.

"The issue is not a need for more healthcare dollars, but for spending existing dollars more wisely."
- Kirsten Murphy, VTDDC Policy Analyst

What was our goal?

The Inclusive Healthcare Partnership Project (IHPP) was initiated by VTDDC to bring the voices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities into Vermont's conversation about healthcare reform. A team of self-advocates, family members, physicians, and other healthcare providers met monthly. They reviewed findings from focus groups, key stakeholder interviews, Medicaid claims data, and research into innovative best practices. They found that adult Vermonters with I/DD are a medically underserved population and recommended steps to improve the health and healthcare experience of this group.

40% of surveyed self-advocates said they've been to the Emergency Room in the past year.

What we learned...

The "triple aim" of healthcare reform promises *better health* and a *better care experience* at a *reduced cost.* These three goals can be achieved for adults with complex disabilities by:

- Ensuring that healthcare workers are trained in disability-related issues and provide appropriate accommodations.
- Adapting wellness supports and programs to the unique needs of people with disabilities.
- Supporting a "warm hand-off" when youth with disabilities transition to the adult healthcare system.
- Reimbursing provides for extra appointment time, pre-visit nursing assessments, and other best practices.

What's next?

VTDDC is proud to have received a second grant from the Vermont Health Care Innovation Project. In partnership with Green Mountain Self-Advocates, Vermont Family Network, and the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, we are developing and delivering a comprehensive, 20-hour training, both online and in person, in disability-related core competencies for health care providers.

"Our staff has no special training on the best way to care for people with intellectual disabilities—whether it's how to communicate or how to feel comfortable—nobody has had that training."
- a Vermont medical professional

other Projects

Self-Advocacy Project

Building a Strong Network

Green Mountain Self-Advocates, a statewide organization governed by people with developmental disabilities, provided peer-led support, training and technical assistance to over 20 local self-advocacy groups.

We Can

Ensuring our Voices are Heard

Through the We Can grant to Green Mountain Self-Advocates, VTDDC ensured that self-advocates received the coaching, accessible materials, and support that they need to speak with their elected officials.

2015 Awareness Days

Celebrating our Strengths

Two State House events, ***Disability Awareness Day*** and ***Autism Awareness Day***, brought more than 300 self-advocates and allies to the State House for workshops, press contact, testimony, and networking.

Information, Referral and Assistance

Empowering Vermonters

Vermont Family Network has developed a model program that fields nearly 10,000 inquiries each year from individuals and families impacted by a disability and requiring support to advocate for their needs.

Start Spreadin' the News

Promoting Positive Perceptions

Champlain Community Services, Inc. guided self-advocates in composing their personal stories. The group hosted a regional gathering of community leaders invited to listen and learn.

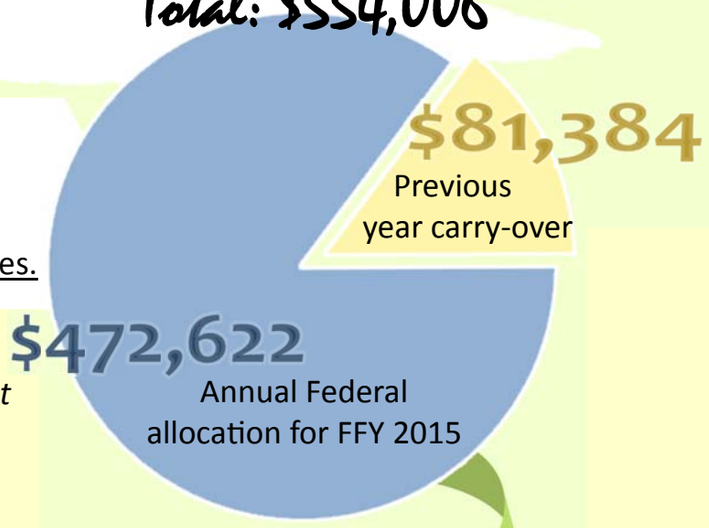
Financials for Federal Fiscal Year 2015

Council Income

Total: $554,006

We are funded by the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

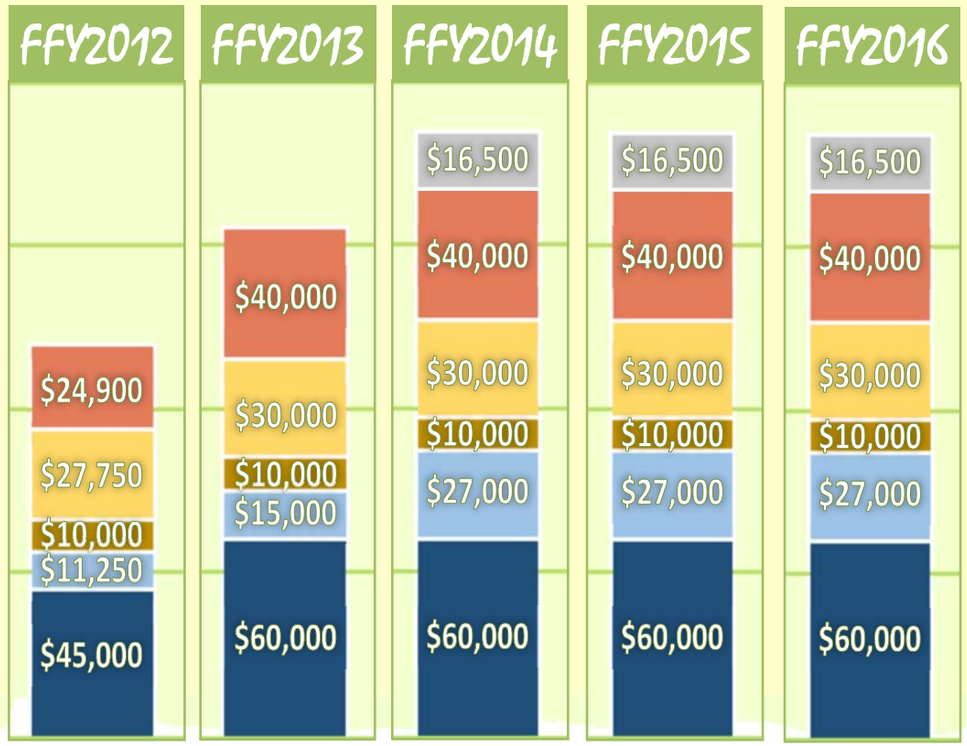
We are proud to share that VTDDC was awarded its first ever external grant for $160,000.



Council Expenses

Council expenses were distributed into three separate categories.

Major Grants: Five Year Overview



Five Year Total: $824,400

Over five years the Council extended its support to the following projects:

Green Mountain Self-Advocates (SAP) and (WeCan), VT Coalition for Disability Rights (ARN) and (DAD), VT Family Network, and Disability Law Project.

our Key Partners

Green Mountain Self-Advocates

2 Prospect Street, Suite 6
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
www.gmsavt.org
1-802-229-2600
info@gmsavt.org

Vermont Family Network

600 Blair Park Road
Williston, Vermont 05495
www.vermontfamilynetwork.org
1-802-876-5315
info@vermontfamilynetwork.org

Center on Disability and Community Inclusion

Mann Hall, 3rd Floor
208 Colchester Avenue
Burlington, VT 05405-1757
www.uvm.edu/~cdci
1-802-656-4031

Disability Rights Vermont

141 Main Street, Suite 7
Montpelier, VT 05602
www.disabilityrightsvt.org
1-802-229-1355
info@disabilityrightsvt.org

Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights

11 East State Street, Suite 2
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
www.vcdr.org
1-800-639-1522
info@vcdr.org

Vermont Center for Independent Living

11 East State Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
www.vcil.org
1-802-229-0501
info@vcil.org

The Mission of VTDDC is to help build connections and supports that bring people with developmental disabilities and their families into the heart of Vermont communities.