

2002 - 2006 State Plan of the Developmental Disabilities Planning & Advisory Council

With the signing of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, P.L. 106-402, several things changed in the way all Council's develop their State Plans and how we report on activities and outcomes.

The Council has previously developed a three-year Plan, but now is required to develop a five-year Plan based on the nine Areas of Emphasis found in the Act, P.L. 106-402 which are, Education and Early Intervention, Child Care, Health, Quality Assurance, Employment, Housing, Transportation, Recreation and Formal and Informal Supports. Plan development by the Council is based on public input the Council solicits through public forums and written survey tools.

The Council's five-year State Plan covering federal fiscal years 2002 - 2006 has been submitted and approved by our federal representatives at the Administration on Developmental Disabilities. This plan will guide the Council in our efforts to promote systemic change and advocate for services and programs that meet the needs of Montanans with developmental disabilities and their families.

The Council has selected the following Areas of Emphasis for the 2002-2006 State Plan.

EMPLOYMENT

Goal: Montana's citizens with disabilities get and keep employment consistent with their interests, abilities and needs.

The Council recognizes that employment provides far more than just a paycheck to individuals. Employment provides security, independence skills and achievements. Consistently, lack of employment and employment opportunities are identified by the public in forums and on survey tools as barriers to the community.

Through Council initiatives the Council has supported innovative and unique employment partnerships with local County government for people with disabilities.

EDUCATION

Goal: Montana's students with disabilities reach their educational potential and infants and young children reach their developmental potential.

The Council acknowledges that education does not end when a person exits the school system or program. The Council recognizes the need for ongoing educational opportunities in life skills, adult education and the arts.

Through Council initiatives persons with disabilities are participating in community arts and music programs.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Goal: Montana's citizens with disabilities have the information, skills, opportunities, and support to live free of abuse, neglect, financial and sexual exploitation, and violation of their human and legal rights and the inappropriate use of restraints or seclusion. Quality assurance systems contribute to and protect self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.

Contained within this Area of Emphasis are all Council activities pertaining to self-determination for persons with disabilities. The Council is committed to advancing the self-determination efforts of Montanans with disabilities.

The Council has demonstrated this support through Council initiatives including support for People 1st Chapters statewide, support for Partners in Policymaking as an organization and the Montana Youth Leadership Forum. Also contained with the goal of Quality Assurance are Council initiatives in the areas of reduction in turnover rates for Direct Support Professionals and medications training for Direct Support Professionals achieving a reduction in reported medication errors.

HEALTH

Goal: Montana's citizens with disabilities are healthy and benefit from the full range of needed health services.

Health care needs continue to be shared with the Council by self-advocates, family members, members of the public and professionals working in the developmental disabilities system.

Through Council initiatives training opportunities in the area of persons with disabilities who are seniors or medically fragile were facilitated to a statewide audience. Also through Council initiatives a video product was produced dealing with training on health concerns for persons with disabilities, by persons with disabilities.

TRANSPORTATION

Goal: Montana's citizens with disabilities have transportation services for work, school, medical and personal needs.

Lack of transportation options impact every aspect of a person's life, from necessary medical care and the prospect of employment, to the ability to attend a social event and build community relationships. Barriers to transportation effect not only persons with disabilities, but also a broad range of Montana's citizens.

Through Council initiatives in transportation the Council has provided support for a transportation system involving persons with disabilities in the coordination and operation of the system, provided support for a drivers training program for persons with disabilities leading to persons securing their Montana drivers license; the development of an inter-active, web-based "tool-kit" for transportation coordination will be developed and maintained; a Montana Handbook for Coordinated Transportation included best practices from Montana and nationally, will be created and disseminated statewide and support for Transportation Coordinator personnel.

FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Goal: Montana's citizens with disabilities have access to other services available or offered in a community, including formal and informal community supports that effect their quality of life.

The Council has been a long-standing supporter of training opportunities for persons with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities and Direct Support Professionals.

Through Council initiatives the Council has supported the attendance at the Annual Conference on Disabilities of persons with disabilities, families of persons with disabilities and direct support professionals. Activities performed by Council Staff pertaining to this Area of Emphasis include the production and publishing of the Directory of Services for People with Developmental Disabilities and the Annual Disabilities Awareness Month Poster Contest and Awards Ceremony.

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