



CREATING CHANGE THAT IMPROVES THE LIVES OF ALASKANS WITH DISABILITIES

ROLES OF THE COUNCIL

1. State Council on Developmental Disabilities
2. Special Education Advisory Panel
3. Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities
4. Governing Board of the Special Education Service Agency
5. Beneficiary Board for the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

State of Alaska
Department of Health & Social Services
Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education

3601 "C" Street, Suite 740
Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249

Toll Free: 1 (888) 269-8990
From Anchorage: (907) 269-8990
Fax: (907) 269-8995

On the Web: dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/
[Twitter](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Vimeo](#)

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES & SPECIAL EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

*The Council's Accomplishments for Federal Fiscal Year 2012
(October 2011-September 2012)*

Council Mission

Creating change that improves the lives of Alaskans with disabilities.

Advocacy and Leadership

The Council worked with self-advocates re-establishing a statewide self-advocacy group called Peer Power. The Council supported eight individuals to attend the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) Conference, November 17-19, 2011 in National Harbor, Maryland. The Alaska AFP team met during the conference to finalize a plan that would double the number of Alaskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are employed by 2016. The group identified several strategies to meet this goal including employment first legislation, revision of the supported employment regulations for the Individuals with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities Home and Community-Based waiver, peer to peer mentoring, job fairs, policy changes, collaboration between state agencies, and training for providers. Peer Power continues to meet monthly to work on these strategies. The Council also works with Partners in Policymaking to educate self-advocates and family members in grassroots advocacy.

Community Choice and Supports

The Council was also successful in advocating for \$650,000 of one-time funding for the Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC). The CBC provides intensive support and intervention to individuals at risk of being removed from their community or institutionalized outside of Alaska. The Division of Behavioral Health identified experts knowledgeable in behavior intervention for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental health diagnosis, brain injuries, and seniors with dementia. These experts provide individualized training and consultation to local providers and families, increasing their knowledge of behavior management.



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL
ON DISABILITIES &
SPECIAL EDUCATION

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2012

The Council provided recommendations to Senior and Disability Services (SDS) on the 42 pages of Alaska's proposed Home and Community Based waiver regulations. As a result of the Council's draft comments and public feedback, SDS altered several items in the proposed regulations including changes to nursing oversight and care management, the cap on hours for day habilitation services, limits on transportation to day habilitation sites, the cap on residential habilitation services, intensive active treatment, and pulled the *Conditions of Participation*.

The Council established an ad hoc committee to review the Medicaid system and develop ways in which to reduce waste and excessive costs. The Medicaid Ad Hoc Committee wrote a letter to Commissioner Streur with six areas of concern and recommended solutions for each concern.

During the legislative session the Council was successful, in collaboration with other boards and stakeholders, advocating for the passage of a legislative bill that increased protections for vulnerable adults by expanding the financial exploitation protections and a bill that allows for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) to be included as a mitigating factor in sentencing.

The Council also works with the Trust and the Stone Soup Group, Inc. to administer mini-grants (up to \$2,500, per individual, per fiscal year) for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities for services or equipment that improve their quality of life. In FY12, 186 individuals received grants totaling \$227,000.

Housing

The Council continues to participate in the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's housing focus area workgroup, which concentrates on increasing housing options for individuals with disabilities. This group supports several projects to keep individuals in their own homes or to provide housing options when they are homeless or released from institutions or from the Department of Corrections. The Housing Modification and Upgrades program provides capital funds to help individuals with disabilities make modifications so they can remain in their home. Home modifications are available to individuals with disabilities regardless if they own or rent. Of the 114 applications, 50 projects were completed and 64 are currently in progress.

The Discharge Incentive Grant program provides housing to individuals with disabilities being released from the Department of Corrections. This program served 69 individuals with disabilities, seven of which were individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The Bridge Home Program targets individuals with disabilities who cycle through institutional placements and Department of Corrections. Individuals in this program receive a rent subsidy and support to maintain their housing. This program served 101 individuals with disabilities, five of which were individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

Transportation

The Council worked with the Alaska Mobility Coalition to successfully advocate for a statute that would create the "Community Transportation



Executive Director, Teresa Holt



Research Analyst III, Carrie Predeger



Project Coordinator, Rich Sanders

Advisory Board” and include disability representation. This legislation passed during the 2011/2012 session. The Board replaces the Governor’s Coordinated Transportation Task Force. The Governor appointed the board members, whom met once during 2012, with plans for quarterly meetings going forward. The Council follows the work of this board closely, paying particular attention to efforts that improve transportation options for persons with disabilities.

Employment

Project SEARCH (PS) continues to be a major emphasis of the Council. Council staff coordinates statewide efforts and provides technical assistance to each PS site. One new site was established in FY 2012 for a total of four sites statewide. Of the 43 students who entered the Project SEARCH program this year, 16 students found either part-time or full-time integrated employment and 21 are still engaged in on-the-job training. Additionally, the Council hosted a statewide Project SEARCH meeting for everyone involved in the project, including the students. The Council also assisted each site in establishing a Business Advisory Council, charged with developing placement options for PS graduates in other businesses throughout the community.

The Council participates in a microenterprise funding program in which individuals with disabilities are provided technical assistance and funding to start their own businesses. The Microenterprise Program was able to fund 17 new businesses run by Trust beneficiaries. The Council successfully advocated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

to increase funding for the Microenterprise Program from \$100,000 to \$125,000 annually.

Through our Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grant, Council staff continued to work with the Alaska Workforce Investment Board and the Employment Security Division at the Department of Labor and Workforce Development on training Disability Resource Coordinators at each Job Center around the state. In addition, five Job Centers became Employment Networks under the Ticket to Work program. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development trained and now employs a full-time Community Work Incentives Coordinator to work with Ticket to Work clients at Job Centers throughout the state.



Project Coordinator, Patrick Reinhart



Administrative Assistant, Sheryl Cobb



Office Assistant, Michelle Jenkins

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2012

Early Intervention

The Council has been working with the state Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program (EI/ILP) office and the Alaska Infant Learning Providers Association (AILPA) to create an early childhood credential and training program. As our state is geographically large, the training program is based on distance learning, with quality assurance measures to ensure proper training. After three years of hard work by the state EI/ILP office and the training committee, this system is complete and will be implemented in FY13.

With funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust), the Council was able to implement an ad campaign with six television and two newspaper spots that promoted the importance of early intervention. The ad features a Council member with cerebral palsy who received early intervention services and is now a student at the University of Alaska Anchorage. This campaign was implemented in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau but most rural communities receive their television and print news from these larger communities. The estimated audience reached with the ads was 1,070,468 Alaskan residents.

Education

The Council provided testimony to the State Board of Education and Early Development on many issues including: the need for accommodations for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP) when taking the Work Keys test; the effect of the proposed state Elementary and Secondary Education Act waiver application on students with disabilities; changes to the state regulations on the number of days (45 school days to 90 calendar days) to determine if a student is eligible for special education services; and proposed regulation changes requiring 50% of teacher evaluations to be based on student achievement data.

The Council worked with Department of Education and Early Development (EED) staff and the University of Alaska Southeast to create a four-year bachelor's degree in special education program, as well as a master's degree in special education. It has taken several years to bring this project to fruition; however it was finally approved by the University Board of Regents and the State Board of EED. Prior to this program, the only way to obtain a bachelor's degree in special education was to obtain a regular education degree and then take an additional year to specialize; this resulted in very few teachers opting to become special education teachers.

Health

The primary legislative priority for the Council this year was to support the passage of Senate Bill 74, which mandates insurance coverage for individuals with autism (unless they are State of Alaska employees or work for a company that is self-insured). Senate Bill 74 passed during the final hours of the legislative session.

