



Virginia Board for People with Disabilities
Virginia's Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

Board Mission

To enrich the lives of Virginians with disabilities by providing a **VOICE** for their concerns.

Vision of communities that welcome people with disabilities
Outreach to individuals, families, and advocates
Innovation through grant projects and sponsored programs
Collaboration with providers of disability services
Education of policymakers on disability issues

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (VBPD), originally named the Board for Rights of the Disabled, was created in 1985 by the Virginia General Assembly "to advise the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Governor on issues and problems of interest to persons with disabilities."

State Authority for the Board is found in the *Code of Virginia* (§§51.5-31-33) which establishes the Board as an agency within the Health and Human Resources Secretariat and specifies requirements for its membership and lists its powers and duties.

The Board also serves as Virginia's **Developmental Disabilities (DD) Planning Council** under the national Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (P.L. 106-402, 2000). The DD Act authorizes federal funding to support advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities which contribute to a coordinated, consumer- and family-centered and directed, comprehensive system of

community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life.

The **Membership** of the Board is comprised of 40 representatives from across the state, including individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, advocates, state agency representatives, and community representatives. Additional information on requirements for

Board membership, appointment, terms, and organization can be found on the Board's website listed at the bottom of this page.

The Board is supported by 12 **Staff** responsible for program management and administration. Further support is provided by Policy Fellows and Policy Interns recruited from Virginia's universities and by temporary contractual staff as needed and appropriate.

The Board's operating **Budget** for state fiscal year 2009, consisting of both state and federal funds, is \$1,358,616.

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Examples of Board Activities include:

Constituent Outreach and Training: The Board monitors, sponsors, and actively participates in a wide range of public and private statewide councils, advisory committees, task groups, and educational programs addressing the full range of disability issues. It solicits the opinions and experiences of individuals with disabilities and their family members, service-providers, and policy-makers; shares up-to-date information on the state's service system and issues affecting it; and encourages a creative, responsive, and productive dialogue within and between those constituencies.

Service System Monitoring: The Board collects and analyzes information regarding the needs of people with disabilities and assesses the effectiveness of service systems intended to meet those needs. A comprehensive summary of this information can be found in the Board's recently published ***Biennial Assessment of the Disability Services System in Virginia***. Topics covered by this report include early intervention, education, community and institutional supports, health, housing, transportation, employment, and advocacy. It also identifies critical issues facing these service systems and details Board recommendations for addressing them.

Technical Assistance: Using its own staff and member resources, grant-funded activities,

and other community assets at its disposal, the Board provides information, referral, and support to committees, councils, and advisory groups addressing disability issues and to consumers, providers, and policy-makers needing information about services, rights, and public policies. Information is supplied both reactively by daily in-person, by telephone, and by e-mail correspondence and proactively using one-time and recurring publications such as its quarterly ***Voices & Visions*** newsletter and the Board's website.

Supporting and Educating Communities: In addition to its broad-based efforts to identify needs and share information, the Board sponsors targeted activities responsive to specific communities such as individuals with disabilities and their families, the Governor of Virginia and his policy staff, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and other members of the state's executive branch, state legislators, disability consumer and advocacy organizations, state and local disability services-providers, and members of the public at large.

Building Coalitions and Informing Policymakers: Leadership in informing and influencing policy in Virginia is an important and strengthening goal of the Board. The Board pursues its policy goals by being both a proactive and responsive advisor to the Governor and other state agencies, through regular and productive communications with advocates and policymakers, and by using local and statewide partnerships throughout its grant-

funding, training, and liaison activities.

Funding Systems-Change: Using a combination of competitive and solicited grants to other organizations and directly-funded and managed leadership and advocacy training programs such as **Partners in Policymaking** and the **Youth Leadership Forum**, the Board leverages federal and state dollars to stimulate the commitment of additional public and private resources, influence attitudes and practices, and build knowledge that has expanded and improved the effectiveness of Virginia disability services system. The Board has invested in over 200 best practice, model demonstration, and research grant projects in areas that include Community Supports, Education, Employment, Housing, and Transportation. It has worked in partnership with advocacy organizations, state and local agencies, private nonprofit service providers, and colleges and universities to develop innovative and effective programs to meet the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

To learn more or to obtain a copy of its state and federal plans or other publications, please contact the Board at:

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