



# Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities

Executive Summary for  
Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021

The Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities (ACDD) is federally funded through the Administration for Community Living's Administration on Disabilities, Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and is authorized by Public Law 106-402 to address the unmet needs of people with developmental disabilities through system-wide advocacy, planning, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion. More than 60 percent of the Alabama Developmental Disabilities Council membership consists of individuals with developmental disabilities or their family members who are appointed by the Governor. The remainder of Council membership includes state agency representatives. This diversity enables the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities to better analyze and improve systems and services within Alabama and ensure that the voices of people with developmental disabilities and their families are heard.

Every five years, the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities creates a State Plan, informed by statewide input from the disability community. The 2017-2021 Five-Year State Plan focuses primarily on two goals: to increase inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all lifestyle elements and to improve existing support systems so people with developmental disabilities can live independently and thrive in their community.

During Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), and continuing through Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), the world experienced a global public health emergency. Despite worldwide shutdowns and restrictions, the Council continued to implement efforts, although modified to limit exposure to COVID-19, to increase the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in the community, including in employment and transportation, and to facilitate leadership training and related educational opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Training for professionals, including first responders, and the support of the Community of Practice for Supporting Families of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities were among the efforts implemented to improve support systems. Learn more about the work of the Council over the last two years of the pandemic in the pages ahead.

## COVID-19 Efforts

### Alabama Developmental Disabilities Network (DD Network) Collaboration on the Provision of COVID-19 Resources

The Alabama Developmental Disabilities Network (DD Network) partners include the Council, the Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP), and the Alabama University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Civitan International Research Center and Sparks Clinics. During FY20, the DD Network Partners collaborated to provide COVID-19 web resources to keep people with developmental disabilities and their support systems informed of the latest updates. Links to stay-at-home orders, COVID-19 testing information, and other resources, such as resources written in plain language or in Spanish, from trusted sources were provided on the Council website. To learn more, visit [www.acdd.org/covid-19/](http://www.acdd.org/covid-19/)

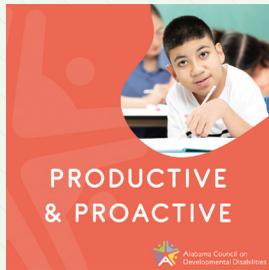
### Vaccine Advocacy: Collaborative Campaign Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy

During FY21, in conjunction with the Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS), Alabama Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers, and the Centers for Independent Living, the DD Network Partners supported a statewide marketing campaign to lessen COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in older adults and people with disabilities and promote the receipt of vaccines. Campaign resources included the ADSS 24-hour hotline, as well as links to vaccine and transportation providers in the state and resources for rural and multilingual communities. To learn more, visit <https://alabamaageline.gov/vaccine-campaign/>

## Awareness Efforts

### Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Yearly, to facilitate inclusion, the Council promotes Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month via a campaign inclusive of digital outdoor billboards around the state, print ads in local newspapers, and social media posts and graphics. Graphics from the 2020 and 2021 campaigns are below.



### Emergency Preparedness

To support being prepared for natural disasters, including tornadoes, the Council sponsored the 2021 WSFA Severe Weather Guide in FY21. During tornado and hurricane season, WSFA Severe Weather Specials, such as “The Unforgotten Tragedy,” aired on television and included recognition of sponsors during the breaks. Given that Alabama has been impacted by severe weather over the years, it is important that all Alabamians, including those with disabilities, be prepared for an emergency. To learn more, see the advertisement below.

An advertisement for the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities. It features the organization's logo, which consists of stylized human figures in various colors. The text 'Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities' is written in white on a dark purple background. Below the logo, the vision statement is written: 'Our vision is for all Alabamians, regardless of disability, to live, learn, work, and play in inclusive communities.' A paragraph of text follows, describing the organization's mission. At the bottom, contact information is provided: 'RSA Union Building / 100 North Union St. Suite 682 P. O. Box 301410, Montgomery, AL 36130 1 800 232 2158 / acdd.org'.

## Goal 1

### Highlights of Efforts Supporting Inclusive Community Participation (Goal One) in Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2021:

- Over 125 live interview broadcasts with individuals with disabilities, their family members, local disability organizations, and state agency representatives aired on disability related topics across FY20 and FY21
- Maintained one toll-free, English information and referral hotline in-house, which received requests for information on various disability supports and services in FY20 and FY21
- Supported one Korean information and referral hotline service in FY21
- Support of over 20 advocate artists in the Inside Out Art Studio in FY20
- Support of the Fashion Inside Out Show, where advocate artists showcased their creations in FY20
- BraveHeart Center for Place and Purpose hosted 12 participants in meaningful, inclusive community activities in FY20 and FY21
- Support of the Traveling Photography Exhibit: Celebrating Exceptional Talent and Promoting Disability Awareness and Inclusion in FY20
- Release of six educational, transportation videos, each including actors with a developmental disability, and video worksheets in FY21
- More than 130 Project SEARCH graduates secured employment at an average wage above the federal minimum wage across FY20 and FY21
- Supported an Employment First public service announcement which aired statewide 2086 times on over 50 radio stations and 483 times on over 25 TV stations in one month in FY20
- Supported an Employment First public service announcement which aired statewide 2033 times on almost 60 radio stations and 402 times on nearly 30 TV stations in one month in FY21

- Results of the Employment First campaign and related activities:
  - 749 individuals in FY20 and 754 individuals in FY21 received individualized supported employment services
  - 97 individuals in FY20 and 79 individuals in FY21 received supported employment small group services
  - 189 individuals participated in pre-vocational services and were on a pathway to competitive integrated employment in FY20
- Facilitated employment opportunities and training for individuals with I/DD, such as the School House Granola Project and the Ability Baking Company on Wheels Project, which collectively impacted more than 100 persons with I/DD in FY20
- 150 individuals with I/DD, their family members, and professionals participated in the AL-APSE/ACDD Virtual Alabama Employment Conference in FY21
- Supported leadership development and advocacy training for over 275 persons with I/DD and 60 of their family members across FY20 and FY21
- 83 students participated in the Young Adults in Transition (YAiT) program in FY20
- Provided sexual assault reduction and prevention training to 15 individuals with I/DD in FY21
- Distributed trafficking facts and resources related to disability during National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month (January) on 46 television stations; 110 radio stations; and 155 newspapers/magazines in FY21
- Developed eight new Best Buddies chapters at high schools in the Birmingham and Huntsville areas in FY21
- Maintained a Consumer Involvement Fund throughout FY20 and FY21, which supported 32 individuals with I/DD and their family members in attending activities to increase their knowledge about services and supports, laws and policies, and leadership and advocacy
- Supported the distribution of 100 People First of Alabama leadership handbooks in FY21 to provide education on disability rights, disability history, and best practices in self-advocacy
- Supported 12 persons with I/DD and their family members in participating on the FY21 Partners in Policymaking Advisory Council to guide decision-making for the revamped Partners in Policymaking Alabama program
- 125 individuals with I/DD and their family members who are Hispanic received culturally competent outreach, information and referral, and education via the development of the Hispanic Training and Resource Advocacy Network in FY21
- Supported material (e.g., flyers) translation from English into Spanish and Korean and simultaneous language interpretation of virtual trainings in English, Spanish, and Korean

Example Comment from Council Activities (Goal One) in FY20

The following is a story from the Advocacy in Action Academy (AAA) project:

*“One story is very compelling because she came to the AAA workshop not knowing how to advocate for herself, and not truly understanding reasonable accommodations, or standing up for her specific needs. Since last November, she has constantly kept in contact with us, became a consumer, and is now regularly communicating with our employment specialist about the reasonable accommodation that she is asking for on her new job. She states that the workshop gave her the courage to continue to look for employment, and she feels confident enough to talk to employers about her disability and what she needs because she has the support of Disability Rights and Resources and the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities.”*

Example Comment from Council Activities (Goal One) in FY21

Translated comment from the Hispanic Training and Resource Advocacy Network (HTRAN) project:

*“I am very grateful that the ACDD agency has helped and supported other parents like me to have this information about Special Education in my language. It has been very difficult to find professionals who take the time to understand the Hispanic community and many times we do not know where to look for help for our children. I have been living in Anniston for more than 12 years and until I learned about the RANs, they told me about the other resources that my son with a mental disability and a syndrome can have access to. I always asked at the CRS, but the worker doesn't understand me and I didn't know about many other organizations. But thanks to the RAN and the doctors and Mrs. Lorena and Mrs. Maria, now I am learning more. Thank you.”*

## FY20 and FY21 Collaborators

Copperwing Design, Alabama Care Live, Alabama-Korea Education and Economic Partnership, Inside Out Studio, Auburn University, Music Room Foundation, Auburn University Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program, Alabama Broadcasters Association, Alabama University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Alabama Department of Mental Health, Alabama Association for Persons Supporting Employment First, Project SEARCH, Shelby County Schools Education Foundation, Arc of Madison County, Arc of Central Alabama, Disability Rights and Resources, Shelby County Board of Education, People First of Alabama, Coastal Family Partners, Fowler Davis LLC, Best Buddies International, and many others.

## Goal Two

### Highlights of Efforts Supporting the Improvement of Support Systems (Goal Two) in Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2021:

- Among 12 state of Alabama facilitators and team members for the Alabama Community of Practice (COP) for Supporting Families of Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in FY20 and FY21
- Supported the development of five Regional Family Advisory Networks for the Alabama COP in FY20 and FY21
- 99 individuals attended the inaugural Alabama ACE-Arc/ASPA Professional Development Conference in FY21
- Education provided on current and future initiatives to enhance service delivery in Alabama via two self-advocate and family focused educational sessions in FY21
- More than 1100 first responders trained across FY20 and FY21
- Educated over 700 school resource officers in FY21
- Developed a Community Awareness Responsibility Excellence (CARE) Award in FY20 for any police department that had 100% of its department/officers trained, such as the Huntsville Police Department
- One academic manuscript disseminated on how well people with I/DD understand their Miranda rights in FY20
- 16 adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and 127 family members of persons with ASD participated in research to understand facilitators and barriers to inclusive, “autism friendly” environments in FY20
- 52 hotels (e.g., select service, extended stay, resort style hotels) across the state were trained on sensory awareness in FY21
- 21 hotel partners in the Tourism ALL-a-Bama sensory awareness initiative in seven cities in FY21
- 18 families participated in the hotel practice stays of the Tourism ALL-a-Bama initiative in FY21
- In FY21, the new Alabama ABLE Savings Plan administered by the Alabama Treasurer’s Office allowed contributions up to \$5000.00 to have a state tax deduction

Example Story from Council Activities (Goal Two) in FY20:

Another State DD Council, the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, was interested in starting an initiative similar to the Alabama First Responder Training, which would also be led by the Interaction Advisory Group from Alabama.

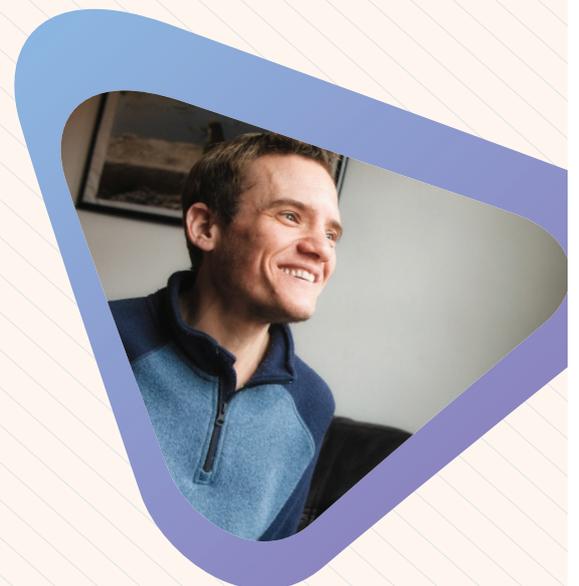
Example Comment from Council Activities (Goal Two) in FY21

From the Tourism ALL-a-Bama initiative:

*“This was such a breath of fresh air for my family. They even allowed late check out for us so that the transitions were fewer for my son (and for me as I navigated specs for my family during travel). My oldest son had the chance for some quiet in the hotel while his brother and I explored Tuscaloosa, and we felt so safe in this space and accepted. The team members at the AC by Marriott were kind and accommodating, and ALL-a-Bama helped me create the surprise of the year for my guys. We are grateful for this incredible option for our families, but moreover, for the awareness it brings. As the industry is trained on the needs of sensory-awesome families, compassion grows and the safe spaces for our families to travel will expand. This is a win not only for our families, but for Alabama as a whole. Thank you, ALL-a-Bama!”*

### FY20 and FY21 Collaborators

National Community of Practice, Alabama Department of Mental Health, VOA Southeast, Autism Society of Alabama, Interaction Advisory Group, University of Alabama, State of Alabama Treasurer’s Office, United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley, and many others.



# Ongoing Opportunities

## Council Member Application

The Council continued to encourage individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members to complete an application to become a member of the Council throughout 2020 and 2021. The application is available on the Council website and can be translated into multiple languages. Alternate formats are available upon request. To learn more, visit [www.acdd.org/council-member-application/](http://www.acdd.org/council-member-application/)

## Consumer Involvement Fund Application

The Council also continued to provide awareness about its Consumer Involvement Fund (CIF) during 2020 and 2021 which can support individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members with participating in educational events. The CIF application is also available on the Council website and can be translated into multiple languages. Alternate formats are available upon request. To learn more, visit [www.acdd.org/funding/](http://www.acdd.org/funding/)

## Council Meetings

The Council held a combination of completely virtual and hybrid quarterly meetings via Zoom in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To learn more about attending a Council meeting, contact our office at 334-242-3976.



Alabama Council on  
Developmental Disabilities

### MISSION:

To support independence, advocacy, productivity, and inclusion for Alabamians with developmental disabilities.

### VISION:

All Alabamians, regardless of disability, will live, learn, work, and play in inclusive communities.

100 North Union Street / P.O. Box 301410 / Montgomery, AL 36130-1410

800-232-2158 / [www.ocdd.org](http://www.ocdd.org)