



Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities

Membership Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What does the Council do?

The Council identifies the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities in Alabama. The Council is responsible for developing a state plan and approving grant projects and other activities to carry out the objectives in the state plan to improve the lives of Alabamians with developmental disabilities and their families. Activities include providing outreach, education, and advocacy.

What are developmental disabilities?

Developmental disabilities are severe, life-long disabilities attributable to mental and/or physical impairments, which are manifested before age 22. Developmental disabilities result in substantial limitations in three or more areas of major life activities:

- self-care,
- receptive and expressive language,
- learning,
- capacity for independent living,
- mobility,
- economic self-sufficiency, and
- self-direction.

Persons with developmental disabilities require individually planned and coordinated services and supports for life, or for an extended period of time, in order to live in the community.

Who can be a Council member?

The 36-member, Governor-appointed Council consists of the following individuals:

- Individuals with developmental disabilities
- Parents or legal guardians of children with developmental disabilities under the age of 18
- Immediate relatives or legal guardians of adults with mentally impairing conditions who cannot advocate for themselves
- A person with a developmental disability who lives or has lived in an institution or an immediate relative or legal guardian of an individual with a developmental disability who lives or has lived in an institution
- Representatives from state agencies that provide services and supports to people with developmental disabilities
- Representatives from the Alabama University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities and the Protection and Advocacy System



- Representatives from a local and non-governmental agency concerned with services for people with developmental disabilities and a private non-profit group concerned with services for people with developmental disabilities

Note: No member of the Council may be a paid employee of a Council funded grant due to conflict-of-interest concerns. Also, no citizen member may be a managing employee of an organization or agency that receives Council funds.

How long do members serve on the Council?

A standard term for members is three years. A member, except for other DD Act Programs or State Agency members, may be appointed a maximum of two consecutive full terms.

What are the expectations for Council members?

- Council members are expected to attend scheduled Council meetings, which are held quarterly in November, February, May, and August. Council meetings typically begin at 1:00 PM CT on Thursday through noon on Friday and occur in various, accessible locations around the state.
- Members are expected to review meeting materials in advance of Council meetings. Council members may be asked to attend other meetings or events occasionally as needed.
- Council members are expected to contribute to discussions and participate in the planning activities of the Council and share their expertise and experience with the Council.
- Council members are expected to respond to Council emails and/or phone calls.
- Council members are expected to be involved in and/or aware of disability-related issues in their local communities. Members are expected to inform their local communities of the Council.

Do Council members receive support with traveling to attend Council meetings?

Yes. Council members serve without financial compensation. However, within budgeted and approved limits, the supports listed below are available to attend Council meetings:

- Meals, parking, and lodging are provided.
- Mileage reimbursement or assistance with travel arrangements is available.
- The costs of other supports, such as personal assistant services, childcare services, respite, interpreter or CART services, and services to provide meeting materials in accessible formats is covered.

How do I apply to be a Council member?

Complete the Council membership application. It is available on our website. Alternate formats are available by request by contacting Darryle Powell at (334) 242-3976 or darryle.powell@mh.alabama.gov. Applicants will receive a confirmation email and/or letter confirming receipt of the application.

What happens after I apply to be a Council member?

- When vacancies occur, membership applications are reviewed and/or additional applicants are recruited.
- Candidates are interviewed and recommendations are made to the full Council for approval.
- If approved, the Council's recommendations and candidate information are submitted to the Alabama Governor's Office for consideration.
- Candidates will receive an email or letter notifying them if they have been recommended for Council membership.
- New Council members will receive appointment letters from the Governor and a welcome letter from the Executive Director of the Council.

Note: The entire appointment process may take a few months. Applicants will receive a confirmation email and/or letter confirming receipt of the application. Applicants will receive an email or letter notifying them if they have been recommended for Council membership. New Council members will receive appointment letters from the Governor and a welcome letter from the Executive Director of the Council. Individuals who are not appointed to the Council will receive notification via email or letter. Please contact Darryle Powell at (334) 242-3976 or darryle.powell@mh.alabama.gov if you have any questions.

Are Council meetings open to the public?

Yes. All Council meetings are open to the public. Anyone interested in attending a Council meeting or in being a Council member is encouraged to attend a Council meeting to learn about the Council. In case the Council is unable to meet in-person, meetings may take place virtually via Zoom. Please contact Darryle Powell at (334) 242-3976 or darryle.powell@mh.alabama.gov for more information about Council meetings. Please request accommodations at least two to three days in advance of a Council meeting.



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