



Alabama Council on
Developmental Disabilities

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Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2025



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. More than 60 percent of the Council membership consists of individuals with developmental disabilities or their family members who are appointed by the Governor. The remainder of Council membership includes representatives from state agencies that provide services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities; representatives from the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and the State Protection and Advocacy System; and a representative from a local and non-governmental agency, a non-profit governmental agency, and a private non-profit organization, each concerned with services for people with developmental disabilities.

Every five years, the **Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities** creates a State Plan informed by statewide input from the disability community. The 2022-2026 Five-Year State Plan has four priority areas: Education and Early Intervention, Employment, Formal and Informal Community Supports, and Health. As a result, the four goals focus on individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) receiving education that supports their rights, needs, and interests; obtaining competitive, integrated employment; accessing and using formal and informal community supports; and accessing healthcare services and supports that addresses their needs and choices and enhances their quality of life. Via these goals, the Council promotes and supports independence, advocacy, productivity, and inclusion for Alabamians with developmental disabilities.

Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) (October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2025) was the fourth year of the 2022-2026 Five-Year State Plan. Two citizen members (i.e., one person with I/DD and one family member of someone with I/DD) and three agency representatives concerned with services for people with I/DD were appointed to the Council by Governor Kay Ivey. Throughout this document, there are examples of projects, initiatives, and activities across all priority areas that were supported by the Council during FY25. For example, the Council supported activities related to education, respite, leadership and advocacy, and healthcare for persons with I/DD and their families as well as educated on disability related legislation such as the adult-size changing tables bill. Discover more about the FY25 accomplishments, activities, collaborators, and ongoing opportunities of the Council in the pages ahead.

New Council Members (Citizen Members)

- Ryan Alford (Tuscaloosa, AL)
- Melinda McGaughy (Mobile, AL)

Council members are geographically representative of Alabama. They also represent the diversity of the state with respect to race and ethnicity.

New Council Members (Agency Representatives)

- Jonathan Davis (Community Corrections Program)
- Donte Little (Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind)
- Aimee Lott (Alabama Head Injury Foundation)

These are mandated, by federal law and/or state executive order, agency/organizational members as explained earlier in this document.



Overview of Council Accomplishments

Education and Early Intervention Priority Area

- Continued participation in the Community of Practice (COP) for Supporting Families of Individuals with I/DD and distribution of related resource folders
- Provided sensory inclusion training to 83 education professionals in six schools
- Supported attendees (3) at the Best Buddies Leadership Conference
- Vendor at the 2025 Alabama Children's Policy Council Conference (411 attendees)

Employment Priority Area

- Supported 17 Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) delegates
- Supported 81 Project SEARCH graduates (62 secured employment)
- Five Project SEARCH sites received the national Excellent Outcome Award
- Supported the 2025 AL-APSE Conference (256 attendees)
- Promotion of Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM)
- Supported training for employment related professionals (91) to ensure agencies had qualified staff to support individuals with I/DD

Formal and Informal Community Supports Priority Area

- Senate Bill 83 passed (Adult-Size Changing Tables)
- Partners in Policymaking Alabama (20 participants with leadership projects)
- Speaker and vendor at the 2025 National Lifespan Respite Conference (208 attendees)
- Cosponsored the 2025 River Region Disability Expo (530 attendees)
- Cosponsored the 2025 Alabama Disability Conference (226 attendees)
- Supported 2025 Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Awareness Day, 2025 Disability Advocacy Day, and 2025 Ability Day
- Supported attendance at Camp SPEAK (camp for children who use augmentative and alternative communication devices and their families)

Health Priority Area

- 449 future healthcare professionals trained on assistive technology
- Four doctoral psychology interns provided home and community-based services and adapted psychotherapy to 51 adults with I/DD
- Panelist and vendor at the 2025 Alabama Human Trafficking Summit (181 attendees)
- Cosponsored the 2025 Assistive Technology (AT) Alabama Conference (410 attendees)

Other

- Wrapped up the Achieving Health Equity for Alabamians with Disabilities (AHEAD) project, which is a project resulting from funding provided to expand the public health workforce within the disability and aging networks
- Under the Bridging Aging and Disability Network (BADN) grant initiative, distributed 225 sample emergency preparedness kits at disability events, etc.; developed the Emergency Planning Guide: Natural Disaster Readiness for People with Disabilities; and supported a 30 second commercial that aired during a 30-minute weather special on a local news station and a 15 second safety tip [with audio and logo] to educate on the importance of inclusive disaster preparedness for older people and people with disabilities that aired on a local news station and related channels.





Examples of Collaborators

- Accessing Potential Through Assistive Technology (APTAT)
- Alabama APSE
- Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH)
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)
- Alabama Disabilities Advocacy Program (ADAP)
- Alabama UCEDD
- Arc of Central Alabama
- Kulture City
- People First of Alabama
- United Ability

Examples of Comments, Success Stories, or Awards

2025 Best Buddies Leadership Conference:

I took a workshop on public speaking and was selected to speak at the closing ceremony with over 2500 people in the audience!! It was the biggest audience I've ever spoken in front of and I rocked it! I shared this on social media and I am going to NYC this weekend to speak at another Best Buddies event. This conference was truly life changing for me!!!

Project SEARCH:

I am doing very well and proud of myself.

Kulture City Sensory Inclusion Training:

We are excited about the partnership and the growth for our students and families.

Project SEARCH:

There were five sites in the state of Alabama that received the Excellent Outcome Award.

1. Gadsden Regional Medical Center:

Out-of-School Project Search Gadsden/Etowah

2. Renaissance Birmingham Ross Bridge:

Birmingham Project Search

3. Renaissance Riverview Mobile Plaza:

Mobile Project Search

4. USA Health Providence Mobile:

Mobile Project Search

5. Rehab Select at Shelby Ridge:

Project Search of Shelby County

Alabama Governor's Youth Leadership Forum (YLF):

I learned to be a leader.

Alabama APSE Conference:

Content and speakers were great as always and were relevant to the purpose of the conference.

Camp SPEAK:

This camp gave my daughter the opportunity to have a fun camp experience with other children who communicate using assistive communication devices while allowing me to participate in parent sessions to gain resources, knowledge, and network with other parents and professionals. It was a wonderful experience that I hope to share with others.

2025 National Lifespan Respite Conference:

Keynote speakers and general panelists were amazing - great intersection of personal and professional experiences!



Partners in Policymaking Alabama (PIPA):

PIPA is an amazing opportunity. Maybe consider making advocacy day a part of the program. A huge opportunity to get involved with your specific representative and see the State House in action.

Improving Access to Healthcare through Assistive Technology (AT) Education:

Every student should experience this.

Expanding Behavioral Health Access for People with I/DD (Psychology Internship Program):

A 29-year-old man with mild intellectual disability and co-occurring antisocial behavior (e.g., physical aggression and property destruction), had previously gone without access to mental health counseling. Through the Arc's new internship program, he began weekly adapted psychotherapy sessions with a psychology intern under the supervision of a licensed psychologist. Over several months, he learned to use relaxation and communication strategies to manage anxiety triggers and express his needs more effectively to his direct support staff. His direct support professionals report fewer outbursts, and he described feeling "more in control and calm."

2025 Assistive Technology (AT) Alabama Conference:

I really enjoy the variety and diversity of topics at AT-AL, it's nice to learn about all forms of AT, and not just those related to my particular field. I feel that this makes me more rounded as a professional. I truly enjoyed all sessions, however, when the speakers have lived experience, I find that this resonates so much deeper and I come away with a better understanding of AT and the barriers faced by people living with disabilities. I really enjoyed Lance McLemore's session on employment.



Overview of the Council's Quarterly Meeting Topics/ Speakers

- Peer Mentoring from Middle School through High School (North Dakota Developmental Disabilities Council)
- Stop Special Campaign (New Hampshire Developmental Disabilities Council)
- National Public Policy Update (National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities)
- Self-Advocacy Advisory Council (Alabama Department of Mental Health)
- 2025 Legislative Updates (Alabama Department of Mental Health)
- Children's Policy Councils of Alabama (Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education)
- Centers for Independent Living Overview (Disability Rights and Resources)
- Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Coalition (Alabama Department of Senior Services)
- Community of Practice (COP) for Supporting Families of Individuals with I/DD (Alabama Department of Mental Health)

Examples of Council Involvement in other Disability Related Boards, Organizations, and/or Committees

- Alabama Lifespan Respite Coalition
- Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind Deaf-Blind Coalition
- Alabama Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Coalition
- Alabama Head and Spinal Cord Injury Trust Fund
- Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council
- Disability Leadership Coalition of Alabama
- State Councils on Developmental Disabilities Federal Reporting Streamlining Workgroup



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 as positions become vacant and/or terms of members expire. 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 <https://www.acdd.org/council-member-application/>

Consumer Involvement Fund Application

The Council also continued to provide awareness about its Consumer Involvement Fund (CIF), 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 <https://www.acdd.org/funding/>

inclusive



Council Meetings

The Council continued to hold hybrid quarterly meetings via Zoom to facilitate accessibility. To learn more about attending a Council meeting, **contact our office at 334-242-3976 or darryle.powell@mh.alabama.gov.**

ACDD Newsletter or Request for Proposals Announcements

If you would like to join our email list to receive the ACDD newsletter and/or other updates, then **contact our office at 334-242-3976 or darryle.powell@mh.alabama.gov.**

Contact Us

We at the Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities want to hear from you. Feel free to use the message form on our website, mail, email, or call us directly. For the message form, visit **<https://www.acdd.org/contact/>**



Mission

The Alabama Council on Developmental Disabilities promotes and supports 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.

Contact Information

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