Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council

Bylaws

What are Bylaws?

- Bylaws are the rules the Council follows
- Our bylaws explain what we do
- Our bylaws help the Council run good meetings and make good decisions

Information about the Council

- We are an organization in Iowa. We are called “the DD Council” or “the Council.”
- A federal law called the Developmental Disabilities Act created us. Most people call it the “DD Act.”
- We get our funding (money) from the federal government. We use our funding to run the Council and pay for grants and other activities.
- The DD Act lists the rules we must follow. We have to follow these rules, or we will not get our funding. If we do not get our funding, we cannot do our work.

What the Council Wants for People with Developmental Disabilities

The Council works to make life better for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

We want people with developmental disabilities to have good lives. This means they have more chances to:

- Live where they want
- Go to school with their friends and neighbors who do not have disabilities
• Get a job
• Do what they want in the community
• Have the support they need

Our Mission: To create change with and for persons with developmental disabilities so they can live, work, learn, and play in the community of their choosing.

Our vision: People with developmental disabilities are fully included in communities they choose.

What the Council Does

This is how the Council decides what issues to work on:

• Every 5 years we develop a big plan. This is called our “state plan.” The state plan lists the goals and activities we will work on over 5 years. Goals describe what the Council wants to see happen.
• Every year we develop a work plan. The work plans have more information than the state plan. They help us decide how to use our budget and staff time.
• We are always checking to see if we are making progress on our goals.
• We send a report about this to the federal government every year, so they know what we are doing with the money they give us.

Council Membership

The Council has the following kinds of members:

1) People with developmental disabilities.
2) Family members or guardians of people with developmental disabilities. Family members are parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters.
Most Council members are people with developmental disabilities and family members.

3) At least one Council member must be:
A person with a developmental disability or a family member of a person with a developmental disability who:
- Lives in an institution, or
- Used to live in and institution

Woodward Resource Center is an example of institution.

4) A staff member from these state agencies:
- Iowa Department of Education
- Maternal and Child Health Services Programs
- Iowa Medicaid
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation
- Iowa Department of Aging

5) People who work for community organizations and advocacy groups that support the Council’s mission.

6) A staff member from:
- University of Iowa Center for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities
- Disability Rights Iowa

People are “appointed” to the Council by the Governor of Iowa. This means they become a member.

Members stay on the Council for 3 years at first. After 3 years, members can stay another 3 years. This can happen if they are interested in staying, they have been good Council members, and the Governor says yes.
Ending Council membership

- If members miss more than 3 of the meetings, their Council membership could end. This means they will stop being a Council member.
- Members wishing to quit the council may write to the Governor.

Council Member Duties

- Must help decide what the council will work on
- Participate in planning for the 5-year plan
- Participate in the Council’s work
- Approve funding for Council activities
- Recruit new Council members
- Follow Council’s policies such as the Conflict of Interest Policy

Council Leadership

- The Council has 5 members that are the leaders of the Council. A Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and three additional members.
- These 5 members are called the Executive Committee.
- The Executive Committee must have 3 members that are people with disabilities or family members.
- The Executive Committee members are voted on by the Council.
- Members may serve one year or more.
- The Chairperson can serve as past chairperson on the executive committee.
• If someone leaves the Executive committee an emergency election will be held at next council meeting.

• The Executive Committee meets 6 times a year.

• Special meetings may be held.

• Agendas and minutes are shared with all council members.

• Three members of the Executive Committee must be at the meeting to vote on items.

**Executive Committee Duties:**

• Make decisions on emergency matters in between meeting

• Approve spending up to $5,000

• Establishes committees

• Oversees 5-year plan

• Review and oversee the budget and make suggestions

• Review projects and make suggestions

• Provide orientation to new members

• Provide yearly evaluation of the Executive Director

**Chairperson Duties:**

• The Chairperson runs the Council and executive committee meetings

• Serves as member of all committee meetings

• Works closely with the Executive Director to do work of the Council

• Represents the Council at state and national meetings

• Assign members to special committees as needed

**Vice Chairperson Duties:**

• Perform duties of Chairperson if absent or unavailable
Executive Director Duties:

• Hire staff within approved budget
• Perform duties as described in the job description approved by the Council
• Report any issues between meetings with Executive committee
• Approve expenses up to $30,000 a year for grants and small emergency projects

Meetings

• The Council meets 6 times a year. Four are required.
• The Council can have more meetings if the Executive Committee decides they are needed.
• Council Meetings are open to the public.
• Minutes are taken for each meeting and are open to the public.
• All members should attend council meetings in-person.
• Members may ask the Executive committee to attend meetings virtually. If approved, members may attend meetings virtually.
• During meetings there are items that the Council must vote on. Examples of things that may need be voted on are minutes, agendas, and budgets.
• For the Council to vote on items, two-thirds (more than half) of the council members must be present. This is called a quorum.
• If a Council member cannot attend a meeting, they may not have a person vote in their place.
• Meetings and all Council events are held in accessible areas.

Making Changes to these Bylaws

The Council can make changes to the Bylaws mission and vision. Changes are called “amendments.” Changes only happen if:

• The Executive Committee wants to make changes.
• Changes in state or federal law require a change.

How changes are made:

• The Executive Committee decides what changes it wants.
• The recommended changes are sent to Council members at least 30 days before a vote.
• The changes are only made if two-thirds (2/3) or more of the Council members at the meeting vote “yes” to support the changes.
• The Bylaws must be reviewed every 5 years.