



Sunset Review Committee
Tuesday, July 30, 2024

Testimony of Carolyn Knight
Executive Director, Ohio DD Council

Chairwoman Wilkin and Members of the Sunset Review Committee, I am Carolyn Knight, executive director of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council. My testimony today will be brief and highlight most of the information contained within our report, which has been submitted to the Chairman's office.

The Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council is one of 56 state and territorial councils established under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). Developmental Disabilities Councils (DD Councils) were originally created in 1970 to give individuals with disabilities a voice in state and federal programs and policies that affect them.

The Ohio DD Council consists of 31 members, a majority of whom are people with developmental disabilities or parents and guardians of people with developmental disabilities. These members are all appointed by the governor. Additionally, 40 percent of Council is comprised of representatives from concerned state agencies, and non-profit organizations and local agencies providing services to people with developmental disabilities.

The Ohio DD Council receives approximately \$2.8 million in federal funds each year to conduct innovative advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities. These activities are designed to contribute to a coordinated system of services, supports and other assistance that is centered around and driven by individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. Our federal law requires that a minimum of 70 percent of our funding be provided for program activities and grants. In 2023, 83 percent of our funding was used for program activities and grants.

A majority of our work is accomplished through grants, which the Council offers on an annual and multi-year basis. Each DD Council is required to submit to the federal government a five-year state plan of activities. The Council and our grantees are currently in the fourth year of our five-year plan.

Our federal oversight body is the Administration on Community Living (ACL), housed within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities serves as our designated state agency and fiscal agent.

Council's grant and each subaward is also subject to Uniform Administrative Guidance, Cost Principals and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (OMB Super-circular)

Grants funded by Council are required to submit periodic performance reports and the Ohio DD Council annually submits to ACL a Program Performance Report (PPR).

A few highlights from our most recent PPR for 2023:

- ◆ Trained 455 Direct Support Professionals through our DSP Whitepaper in Action grant, providing valuable training on mental health first aid, social role valorization, and major unusual incidence training.
- ◆ Provided rides to 359 individuals covering more than 21,000 miles through a demonstration project to improve accessible transportation to rural areas of Athens County, Ohio and other counties nearby
- ◆ Trained 1,974 families on their school's special education system, Individual Education Plan process, parent's rights, confidence building and peer-to-peer support.
- ◆ Council's financial literacy grant for people with developmental disabilities educated nearly 900 individuals with developmental disabilities last year, providing a path to employment for those individuals.

These are just a few of the accomplishments of Council-funded projects in the last year alone. A full copy of our 2023 Program Performance Report can be found on our website.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.