THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
CENTER ON DISABILITY &
COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Community Advisory Council Bylaws

Updated March 16, 2022

Introduction

The Center on Disability and Community Inclusion is at the University of Vermont. It is also called CDCI or the Center.

The Center has a group who give the CDCI director advice. This group is the Community Advisory Council. It is also called the CAC or Council.

The Center

There is a law that says every state should have a Center. It is called the DD Act. The DD Act says people with developmental disabilities have the same rights as non-disabled people. They have the rights to:

- Make choices that are important to them.
- Live, learn, work, and love as they choose.
- Be free from abuse and neglect.

The DD Act gives money to the University of Vermont to work on these issues. The money helps run the Center. The Center must do 4 things:

We teach

We provide services

We do research

We share information

For each of these 4 things we:

- Partner with people with disabilities, families, providers, and university.
- Promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence.
- Help connect the university and Vermont communities.

The DD Act says CDCI must get money from others to do more work. CDCI gets money from agencies, schools, grants, and other sources. This money lets us work with and support people with disabilities in many ways.

The Council

A Council is required by the DD Act. The Council makes recommendations that assist the Center in their mission. This includes:

1. Advise and guide the Center’s work.
2. Provide feedback to develop a 5-year plan.
3. Decide if the Center is meeting its goals. Give feedback every year.
4. Help connect the Center with people and communities in Vermont.

The Council is a way for people with disabilities, their families, and providers to say what is important. Members suggest ways to improve the Center. The Director and people at the Center use their ideas to improve their work.

Who Can Be a Member?

Most of the Council must be people with developmental disabilities or family members. The DD Act says what it means to have developmental disabilities. There should not be more than 20 members.

Members can also represent groups in Vermont. If they represent a group, they cannot be counted as a person with disability or family member.

There **should** be at least one person representing:

- Disability Rights Vermont,
- The Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council, and
- Green Mountain Self Advocates.

There **may** also be people from other groups:

- Vermont Family Network,
- Vermont Assistive Technology Project,
- Vermont Developmental Disabilities Services Division, or
- Other groups concerned about people with developmental disabilities.

The DD Act says race and ethnicity of members should be the same as Vermont.

Rules About Membership

Anyone who wants to be on the Council can fill out an application. They can complete it in different ways. CDCI can help if they want.

The Council Membership Committee interviews people who apply. The Committee writes notes about why a person wants to be on the Council. During a Council meeting they share their notes and applications with the Council. The Council votes “Yes” or “No” to accept new members.

One term as a member is 3 years. The Council makes a schedule, so people join and leave every year. The goal is to not to have everyone leave at the same time. It is best to have less than 5 new people each year.

Members can do 2 terms in a row. At the end of 3 years a member tells the Membership Committee if they want to apply for 3 more years. The Council votes “Yes” or “No” to accept a member to do a second term. No member may vote on their own membership.

Some members can serve for more than 6 years:

- Members from required groups.
- Members who finish someone’s term then start their own.
- Members the Council decides are needed to follow DD Act rules.
- Members the Council decides are important for the Council or CDCI.

The National Council

The Center is part of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). AUCD has a Council made up of people with disabilities and family members. They are from each state. This National Council is called the Leadership in Advocacy. The Council picks one person to be on the National Council each year. They get one vote.

Leaving the Council

Participation on the Council is voluntary. Members may choose to leave. If a member cannot attend a meeting they must let the Center know ahead of time. If a member misses two regular meetings in a year without telling the Center they can be asked to leave the Council.

Officers

Officers will be two Co-Chairs. One officer must be a person with a developmental disability and one officer must be a family member of a person with a developmental disability.

The duties of the Co-Chairs are to:

1. Create Council meeting agendas with the Director or designated staff at least one month before meeting,
2. Appoint members to committees as needed, and
3. Communicate with the Director and Center on a regular basis.

Officers will serve 2-year terms. They can be re-elected. If possible, one Co-Chair's term will begin on an even year and the other will begin on an odd year. Co-Chairs will be nominated and elected when needed.

Meetings

Regular meetings will be held at least 3 times a year. Meeting dates will be set for the year by the first meeting. Members of the Executive Committee may call special meetings.

A quorum means how many members must be present to have a meeting. A Council meeting must have most of the members present.

It is important for members to participate in meetings.

It is best to attend meetings in person. Participating remotely (phone) is allowed if necessary.

Minutes will be taken by Center staff.

Accessibility

The Center will provide accommodations requested by members. The Council will use the “Get on Board and Make a Difference! Effective Practices for Including People with Disabilities and New Members on Boards and Committees” (2003) written by Green Mountain Self Advocates and the ARC of Vermont to ensure accessibility for all members.

Responsibilities

Members are responsible to:

- Attend and participate in Council meetings.
- Become familiar enough with what the Center does. Be aware of current issues impacting people with disabilities. Think about this information when making suggestions for the Center.
- Give advice to the Center Director to make a 5-Year Work Plan.
- Each year, review and comment on the Center’s progress in meeting the goals in the 5-Year Work Plan.

The Center is responsible to:

- Find an accessible place to hold meetings.
- Provide refreshments.
- Take notes of all meetings.
- Keep a list of contact information for Council members.
- Keep copies of meeting minutes and committee lists.
- Send out information in a timely manner to the Council.
- Give information to Co-Chairs when asked.

Committees

The **Executive Committee** includes the Co-Chairs and the Center Director. The Associate Director of the Center may or may not be on this Committee. Duties of the Executive Committee include:

1. Set the agenda for the Council meetings;
2. Select members for other committees;
3. Address issues that come up outside the regular meetings.
4. Call special meetings if needed.

The **Membership Committee** should have at least 3 Council members. Their duties are to review member applications, conduct interviews, and share information with Council.

Other committees are formed when needed.

Reimbursement of Expenses

Travel Reimbursement

Any Council member can ask the Center to pay for travel costs to attend a meeting. It will be paid if they are not getting money from their employer to pay for travel. The University decides how much to pay for travel.

Stipends For Council Members

The Center will pay a stipend to Council members for attending meetings. The director of the Center decides how much to pay. The amount will be based on the length of the meeting. The amount will be like stipends paid by other Councils. Any Council member can get a stipend if:

1. They ask for it.
2. They are not already being paid to attend the meeting.
3. They are present for the whole meeting.

Annual Meeting in Washington DC

Each state has a Council. Each year, Council members from all over the country go to a conference in Washington DC. It is called the AUCD conference. At least once every 5 years travel costs will be paid for one member to go to this conference.

1. The member must represent people with developmental disabilities or families.
2. The member cannot be a representative from an organization.
3. If money is available, travel costs can be paid each year.
4. The Council decides who will go.

Changing these Bylaws

Any member can suggest a change to these bylaws. Here are the rules:

1. You must tell all Council members you want to change the bylaws. Let them know 2 weeks before you vote.
2. 75% of all members need to vote to change the bylaws.
3. Most of the people voting must be members with disabilities or family members.
4. It is okay to email or mail your ballot.