



Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council



Nothing About Us Without Us.

2023 Public Policy Agenda

COMPETITIVE INTEGRATED EMPLOYMENT

People with disabilities are marginalized in job markets due to a misconception that they are unable to be productive participants. People with disabilities are often paid less than minimum wage and put to work in segregated sites. MiDDC is committed to working to change this mindset and promote competitive integrated employment (CIE) for all individuals with disabilities, through education, advocacy, legislation, and policy development.

COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports amending current state law to prohibit employers from paying less than the minimum wage to persons with physical or mental disabilities.



ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

States, municipalities, and employment service providers have implemented policies or statutes eliminating or phasing out the use of subminimum wage certificates. The shift toward CIE has been accomplished by:

- Educating policymakers and employment service providers on the value of CIE for people with disabilities.
- Expanding Michigan's self-advocacy network to phase-out the use of the FLSA 14(c) certificates.
- Partnering with out-of-state advocacy groups that have had success eliminating subminimum wage certificates in their states.
- Supporting Self-Advocates of Michigan by analyzing previous outreach efforts to coordinate future advocacy campaigns.
- Working with Self-Advocates of Michigan and employers that transitioned to CIE to help lawmakers, certificate holders, and other stakeholders understand the benefits of CIE.

TARGETED OUTCOME

Subminimum wages are eliminated in Michigan and people with disabilities are employed in competitive integrated employment.

ADVOCACY ON STATE AND FEDERAL POLICY ISSUES

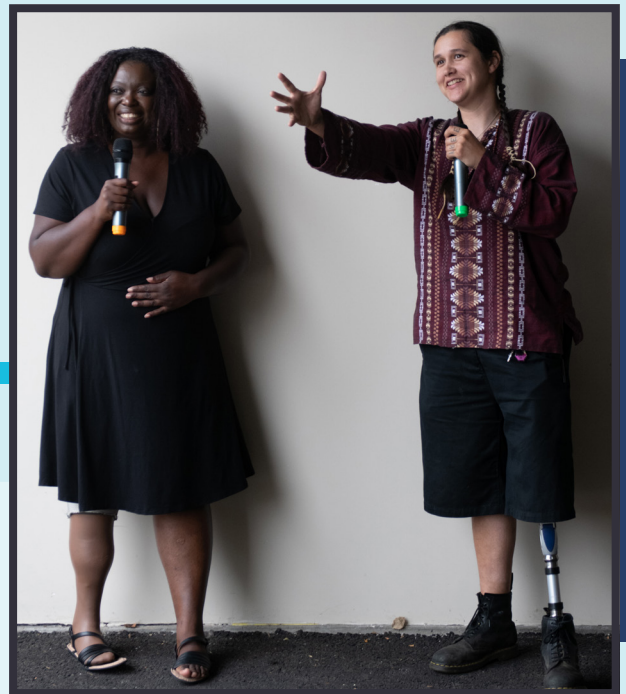
People with developmental disabilities must be included in the decision-making process on all issues impacting their lives. It is a deliberate effort by MiDDC to increase participation, leadership and influence in policy decisions. The Council's advocacy work should always be connected to the disability community's motto: "Nothing About Us, Without Us."

COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports and encourages people with disabilities to provide feedback and public comments on state and federal policy issues affecting their ability to live self-determined and self-directed lives in a diverse and inclusive community.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Educate people with disabilities, family members and other advocates on the importance of providing feedback on policy issues that impact a person's quality of life.
- Encourage people with disabilities to provide public comment on proposed policy changes, and provide needed support and expertise.
- People with disabilities and stakeholders will be able to work with the MiDDC Public Policy Committee, Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM), and the Statewide Self-Advocacy Action Team to formulate positions and draft responses on policy items impacting the lives of individuals with disabilities.



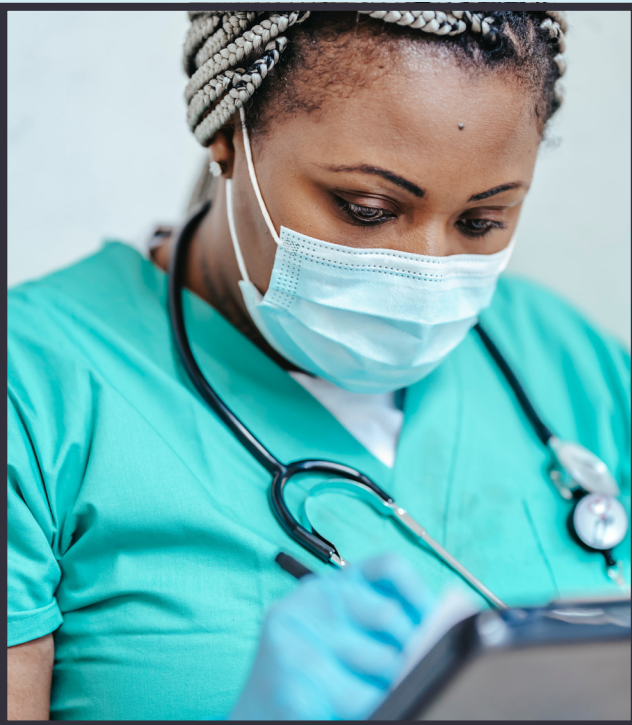
TARGETED OUTCOME

Increase the number of participants providing public comments on policy documents and the administrative rulemaking process that will impact quality of life, the delivery of supports and services, access to healthcare, and other disability related issues.

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

Direct support professionals (DSPs) for people with disabilities and seniors are in great shortage throughout the state. The shortage is due to several factors, including low compensation, inconsistent training requirements, restrictions for employment, lack of benefits, and more. The shortage will be amplified as people live longer and need continued supports. In Michigan, there are a minimum of 2000 direct support workers needed in any given day.

COUNCIL'S POSITION



The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports increasing the retention and recruitment of DSPs through increased wages, certification, increased benefits, and outreach. The Council also supports strategic alliances that will collectively work toward achieving this goal.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Collaborate with state lawmakers to continue appropriations supporting the increased wage of DSPs.
- Continue engaging with advocacy organizations to develop strategic legislative outreach, advocacy, and policy positions on issues impacting direct support workers.
- Support self-advocates and stakeholders to analyze any legislation or policy proposal that would impact wages, education, recruitment, retention, and certifications of direct support workers.

TARGETED OUTCOME

Increase the number people working as direct support professionals through increased compensation, alignment of education and certification, elimination of unreasonable barriers to employment, and highlight the value these professionals bring to the people they serve.

SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING

People with disabilities are too often stripped of their civil rights and freedoms through court-ordered guardianship. The ability for an adult to make personal life choices is a fundamental right that should not be infringed upon. All adults, at times, need guidance on specific issues that they face. Reaching out to friends, family, and other natural supports is a reasonable way to solve life's problems. People with disabilities are no different, and they should be able to make individual life choices with the support of people they choose.

COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports policies respecting the choice of people with disabilities to remain independent and autonomous. The Council also supports initiatives that assist people with disabilities in making life decisions with any guidance they may need.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Engage with the Michigan Supported Decision Making Advisory Group and coordinate educational opportunities and public policy advocacy with the goal of increasing the use of supported decision making in Michigan.
- Work with the Michigan Department of Education to investigate the most effective way to work with school districts to promote Supported Decision Making for all students with individual education plans and their parents/guardians as an alternative to guardianships.
- Produce informative materials to outline the benefits of Supported Decision Making as a viable alternative to guardianships and create a model for distribution.



TARGETED OUTCOME

Reduce the number of guardianships applied to people with disabilities through increased supported decision making and expanding the supports and services necessary to help a person avoid being placed as a ward.

ACCESSIBLE, ADAPTABLE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The availability of accessible, adaptable, and affordable housing is a barrier to people with disabilities, people of color, and other marginalized populations. Accessible housing can meet the needs of people with all abilities, and Adaptable housing can be easily renovated to meet tenant or owner's changing accessibility needs. Accessibility through Adaptability expands access to housing for all residents, regardless of their abilities, without risking affordability.

COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports expanding accessible, adaptable, and affordable housing for people with disabilities by educating policymakers and lawmakers on "accessibility through adaptability" and "affordability".



ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Educating lawmakers and policymakers on how the current housing crisis affects vulnerable populations, and how people with disabilities are often isolated from their families. This will be accomplished through MiDDC's advocacy network and the newly formed Michigan Disability Caucus.
- Coordinating outreach efforts with the Self-Advocates of Michigan and the Statewide Self-Advocacy Action Team to highlight accessibility/adaptability of housing options for people with disabilities.
- Engagement with other advocacy organizations to endorse the need for accessible, adaptable, and affordable housing in Michigan.

TARGETED OUTCOME

Generate a greater understanding of the shortage of accessible housing and promote the need for publicly funded housing projects to be readily adaptable to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Developmental disabilities impact all races, cultures, ethnicities, demographics, and sexual orientations. The Council's work must acknowledge the intersectionality of disability throughout all populations. There is no place for marginalization of anyone in a society comprised of such a diverse populace, and we must respect and include the valuable contributions of all individuals.

COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports a comprehensive review of all legislation and policy initiatives through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion.



ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Recognizing how diversity, equity and inclusion will improve legislation, policy development, and advocacy, the Council will:

- Work with MiDDC's Communications Representative and the Statewide Self-Advocacy Action Team to increase diversity, equity and inclusion throughout all council activities.
- Establish a concerted effort to increase partnerships with individuals and organizations that encompass the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion to coordinate advocacy efforts around legislative and policy efforts.

TARGETED OUTCOME

Support and empower deep, rich, and diverse participation in legislative and policy work with a strong focus on the intersectionality of disabilities and the social identities of marginalized populations.

STATEWIDE SELF-ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT

With the support of MiDDC, Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM) has made great strides in expanding membership throughout Michigan. As SAM continues to expand, consistent support and educational opportunities need to be in place for effective local, state, and federal advocacy efforts. Many of the self-advocates joining SAM have limited to no experience working with legislators or policy officials. MiDDC is committed to supporting self-advocates in individual and group advocacy efforts.

COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council supports advocacy with, and for, people with developmental disabilities to achieve policy, law, or systems change in order to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities.



ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SAM's Public Policy Committee is supported by MiDDC public policy staff. This creates a unique opportunity to develop and distribute educational materials regarding successful advocacy and how to initiate those efforts. MiDDC public policy staff will:

- Engage with SAM advisor to identify needed materials for local SAM chapters.
- Support SAM public policy committee in creating materials that are designed to educate SAM members on components of advocating.
- Work directly with local SAM chapters to provide educational workshops designed to increase individual knowledge on launching successful advocacy efforts to professionally engage with lawmakers and policy officials.

TARGETED OUTCOME

Self-Advocates of Michigan members will have the tools needed to initiate and engage in personal, peer, group, and grassroots advocacy efforts.