



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council

A MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP



In 2023, the Council made great progress in improving our educational opportunities, advocacy efforts, and community inclusion initiatives. I'm very proud of the work that was accomplished this year.

We also said goodbye to Executive Director Vendella Collins when she announced her retirement in July 2023 after years of dedicated civil service. The Council made a positive difference under Vendella's leadership, and we are all grateful for her passionate advocacy.

Looking toward the future, I am thrilled an experienced leader such as Dr. Yasmina Bouraoui is our new Executive Director. Every individual deserves to live a fulfilling life, and I am confident our new Executive Director's expertise and vision will positively impact those we serve.



JEREMY MURPHY
COUNCIL CHAIR





DR. YASMINA BOURAQUI

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Executive Director of MiDDC.

As Deputy Director, I witnessed firsthand how our work has the power to create a meaningful and lasting impact on the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

My passion for disability rights and advocacy stems from a lifelong commitment to human rights and creating a more inclusive and equitable world for everyone.

This year, we made a concerted effort to create spaces where individuals with disabilities could feel connected and included in their community. We made progress, but much work needs to be done to remove barriers to full community inclusion.

I am confident MiDDC has the potential to become a true trailblazer for community inclusion and disability rights across the state, nation, and the world.

Together, we have the power to create a more inclusive, equitable, and just world. Let's continue to pave the way toward a better future for people with developmental disabilities and their families.



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EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MiDDC) provides educational workshops and presentations for people with developmental disabilities, family members, and professional staff. Topics include supported decision-making, youth employment, Charting the LifeCourse tools, sexuality education, and more. In 2023, **113 workshops and presentations** were conducted by, or in collaboration with, MiDDC. A total of **3,301 individuals** participated in both in-person and virtual presentations.



Having a disability does not mean that I should turn the decision-making power in my life over to someone else. I want other people with disabilities to know they should also be able to make decisions about their own lives. I became a Supported Decision-Making Youth Ambassador so I can advocate to other people with disabilities about the importance of alternatives to guardianship.



JEANIE ROWE
COPRESENTER

Copresenters

MiDDC regularly works with copresenters who share their lived experience during the workshop or presentation. MiDDC sought out copresenters from three specific categories:

1. Youth interested in employment and supported decision-making.
2. Diverse regions of the state and marginalized groups.
3. Individuals with high and complex needs.

Thirteen new copresenters representing the above categories were trained in 2023, increasing the total to **39 copresenters**.

New Copresenters: By the Numbers

11

YOUTH
WITH I/DD

7

PEOPLE
OF COLOR

13

NEW
COPRESENTERS

4

LGBTQIA+

5

HIGH AND
COMPLEX NEEDS

VOTING RIGHTS AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



ALL MICHIGANDERS HAVE
THE RIGHT TO VOTE.

MiDDC conducted the Voting Rights Awareness Campaign to educate people with developmental disabilities about accessible voting options, how to register to vote, and how to navigate any accessibility problems they may have when entering a voting precinct.

The campaign also focused on informing people of their voting options, including how to vote from home and how to vote in person.

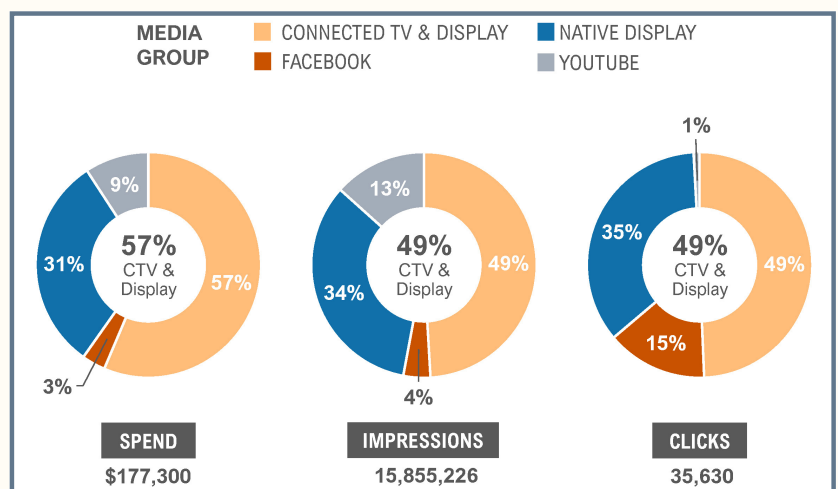
The awareness campaign targeted individuals with disabilities, family members, advocates, and service providers to improve public understanding of voting rights for people with disabilities.

The campaign used a mixed media advertising strategy, including Connected TV, native articles, YouTube videos, Facebook, and Instagram. The campaign launched on September 5, 2022, and ran until Election Day on November 8, 2022.

Campaign Results

Connected TV and native advertising performed exceptionally well compared to Facebook and YouTube for this campaign. Native ads were particularly impactful because they allowed for a long-form explanation of voting rights in Michigan.

In total, \$177,300 was spent on the Voting Rights Awareness Campaign with a total of 15,855,226 impressions and 35,630 clicks. Clicks from digital advertising were measured by directing the public to a nonpartisan website focused on helping educate voters about their voting rights in Michigan. The non-partisan website also mentioned tips to make voting easier for people with disabilities, including how to discover accessible voting locations and how to request an absentee ballot to vote from home.



DISABILITY ADVOCACY DAY AT THE CAPITOL



Jason Reaves, Ryan Klotz, and State Rep. Kevin Coleman meet during Disability Advocacy Day.

MiDDC and the Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM) co-hosted Disability Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Lansing. Self-advocates had an opportunity to network with other advocates from all regions of the state. Self-advocates also met with their state representatives and state senators to discuss issues that impacted their lives.

More than 70 self-advocates attended Disability Advocacy Day and more than 80 meetings occurred with elected officials. Participants met with their lawmakers, shared personal stories, and discussed key legislative issues. Some of the legislative issues that self-advocates discussed included accessible and affordable housing, transportation, and subminimum wages.

“As a self-advocate, it was important to share how policy issues affect people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In particular, concerns around access to direct care workers, ending subminimum wages, and accessing Medicaid-related services. I was one of many self-advocates who spoke on how these issues affect them daily. We need to always have the opportunity to share our voices and connect with our legislators to impact statewide change.”

ANNA DUSBIBER
SAM BOARD MEMBER



“Ottawa County assembled a team of family members, and people served to work alongside staff from the local Community Mental Health Service Provider (CMHSP) and Intermediate School District (ISD). When the team first started, it felt like folks were not on the same page. After working together, attitudes about self-determination and how a system can work collaboratively with people served truly changed for the better.”



As a result, the Ottawa Team developed a new **individual budget process** for people directed by their services. **Two assessment tools** were developed to assist in the budgeting process for support coordinators to help them determine when extra services were necessary for behavioral or medical reasons. Additionally, a **self-directed services manual** was developed by the team for family members and those new to community mental health services. An **infographic map** was also developed which outlines the process for self-directed services in Ottawa County.



A word cloud conducted before and after 8 meetings illustrates the improvements made by PAS.

SELF ADVOCATES OF MICHIGAN

Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM) is the statewide organization for individuals with developmental disabilities. SAM members are people with lived experience working together to raise awareness and eliminate barriers to issues impacting people with disabilities. The motto of “Nothing About Us Without Us” guides all of SAM’s work. SAM held its first in-person meeting open to all members in 2023, and it made progress in growing its membership from people living across the state.



SAM values the diverse skills of its members and champions their equitable inclusion in every facet of life. Through SAM, I have grown both personally and professionally, collaborating with influential advocates and embracing a culture of belonging and acceptance that has profoundly shaped my approach to advocacy.

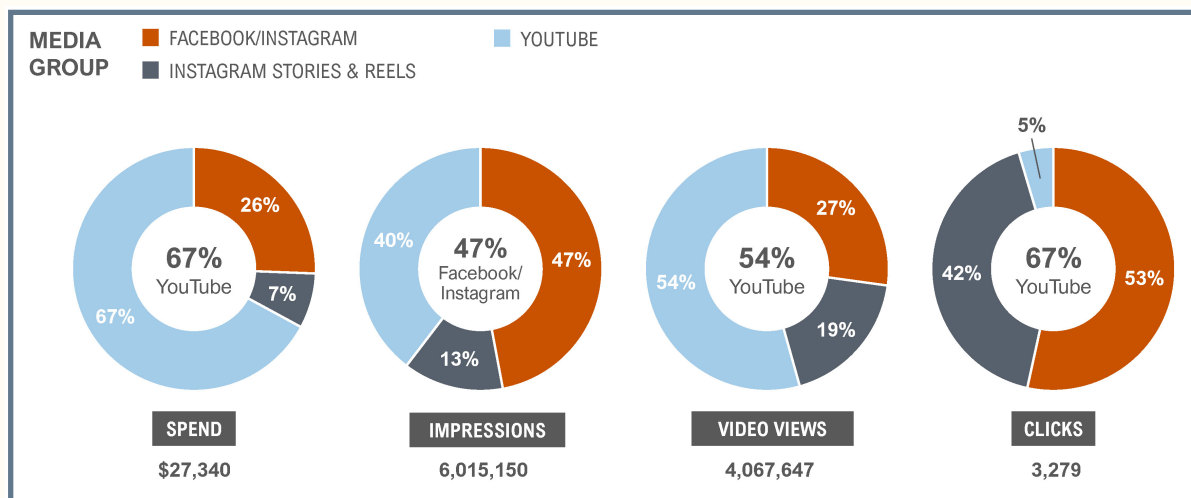


TYLER URIAS
SAM BOARD MEMBER



SAM Awareness Campaign

SAM conducted a digital media public awareness campaign to raise public awareness of SAM and increase membership. The campaign ran from October 24, 2022, through January 23, 2023. The majority of impressions came from video advertising on YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. After the campaign ended, SAM's total membership grew to **more than 100 individuals with developmental disabilities!**



GRANTEE SPOTLIGHT: FAMILY EMPOWERMENT

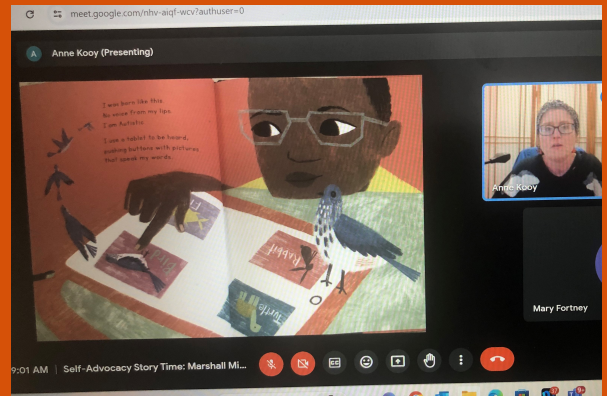
The Family Empowerment Initiative is a MiDDC grantee project implemented by Disability Network Southwest Michigan. The initiative supports educational opportunities for families with children with developmental disabilities. The initiative supports the journey of self-determination with the goal of setting it in motion at a younger age.

In 2023, a total of **41 virtual trainings** on **14 different topics** were offered to families. **232 individuals** participated in these trainings, including **38 children** with developmental disabilities and **194 family members**.

Self-Advocacy Story Time

The Family Empowerment Initiative added a new activity in 2023 called, "Self-Advocacy Story Time." This activity is offered via Zoom and Google Meet to schools across the state. Several books are used to engage children with developmental disabilities to help them better understand self-advocacy.

Three total classrooms took advantage of this opportunity in the 2022-23 school year. Self-Advocacy Story Time is expected to grow in the future as partnerships are established with local libraries, authors, and family-serving agencies.



We're thrilled to see the program gaining momentum and reaching so many families across the state! It has been gratifying to work directly with Michigan schools to provide 'Self Advocacy Story Time' to students and have crucial conversations about learning to advocate for their needs and desires.



MARY FORTNEY
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, DNSWM



DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH

**JULY IS
DISABILITY
PRIDE
MONTH**

For the first time ever, MiDDC and SAM celebrated Disability Pride Month in July 2023.

Disability Pride Month is a celebration of the experiences, strengths, and achievements of people with disabilities. Activities were intended to celebrate the contributions of people with disabilities, promote inclusivity, and foster greater respect and understanding.

SAM honored **29 self-advocates** for their outstanding contributions and impact on the self-advocacy movement.

SAM and MiDDC co-hosted the Breaking Barriers Art Exhibition to highlight the contributions of artists with disabilities in a community-based venue while breaking down the stigmas that prevent artists with disabilities from accessing opportunities in the art world.

Breaking Barriers Art Exhibition

The Breaking Barriers Art Exhibition was held at the Lansing Shuffle on July 11, 2023, as a one-day pop-up art exhibit to celebrate artists with developmental disabilities in our state.

The pop-up art exhibit provided a platform for artists to share their talent, creativity, and passion for art with the public in a community-integrated setting.

MiDDC also hosted an online art gallery so the artists could display their artwork for all to see. More than **40 artworks** are still on display on MiDDC's website.



The reaction from my children and family when my painting was exhibited in July had a great impact on how I viewed myself. My children were, for a change, not annoyed by something I had done, but they were impressed by it. My community members applauded my accomplishment and became curious about self-advocacy and how they could be involved. The images that keep replaying in my head are the smiles of the artists, next to their artwork and the knowing in their eyes, knowing they were great.



JACQUELINE CUEVAS
ARTIST & SAM BOARD MEMBER



PEER MENTORING: GROWTH AND SUCCESS

Peer mentors are individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Peer mentors use their lived experience of using community mental health services to guide others toward greater self-advocacy, empowerment, and personal responsibility for their success.

MiDDC continues to strengthen and expand its peer mentor program. Community Mental Health Service Provider Agencies (CMHSPs) continue to refer individuals to the Council's Peer Mentor 101 training. MiDDC also conducted targeted outreach on social media to inform the public about peer mentoring.

In 2023, a total of **15 CMHSPs** employ peer mentors, including one in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. There are also **70 certified peer mentors** in Michigan. Once certified, peer mentors are employed, or contract with their local CMHSP to provide peer mentoring services.

“

I wanted to become a peer mentor to help change the lives of those with disabilities of diverse backgrounds as I will likely understand the struggles each mentee could be facing due to related struggles of living in and navigating the foster care system and with my own disabilities.

My favorite part of being a peer mentor is I get to help others learn that just because you have a disability does not mean you can't live a normal life to chase hopes and dreams just like anyone else. I believe the peer mentoring program can help others understand that much-needed perspective in today's world to help promote that change and greater understanding.

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RHIANNON PRINS
PEER MENTOR, NETWORK180

Peer Mentoring and CMHSPs

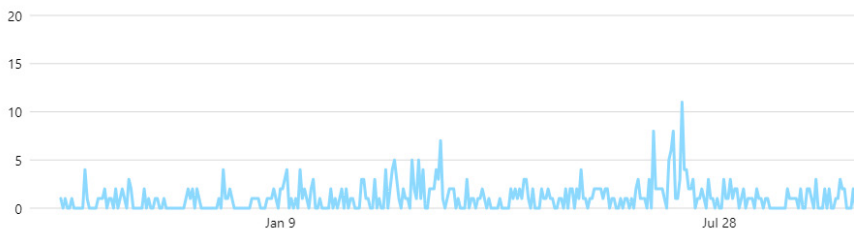
Katie LaPine, Support Services Manager for Northpointe Behavioral Healthcare, says more CMHSPs should participate in peer mentoring because, *"Peer mentors can provide education or input from their past experiences, history, or current services that may offer another avenue when working with clients. Having someone who can relate adds another layer and can bridge the gap to aid case managers in supporting our individuals. This program adds more tools and resources to be able to offer when working to improve the lives of those we serve."*

MIDDC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MiDDC focused on improving its outreach on Facebook. Promotion on Facebook focused on raising public awareness of programmatic activities like peer mentoring, Self-Advocates of Michigan, and Supported Decision-Making. Other outreach efforts focused on promoting MiDDC's educational opportunities as well as initiatives like Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month, Disability Pride Month, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Moving forward, MiDDC plans to continue its outreach on Facebook while expanding to other social media platforms.

New likes and follows
Facebook Page new likes ①

397 ↑ 52.1%



The graphs on the left show the Council's performance results on Facebook in 2023.

The data indicated in each graph show how Facebook activity has changed from 2022 to 2023.

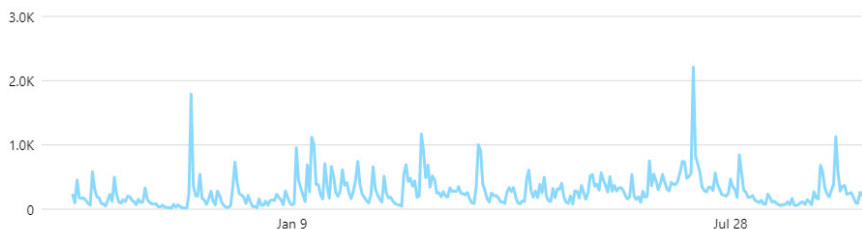
New likes and follows increased by 52.1 percent.

Reach increased by 67.4 percent.

Visits increased by 122.4 percent.

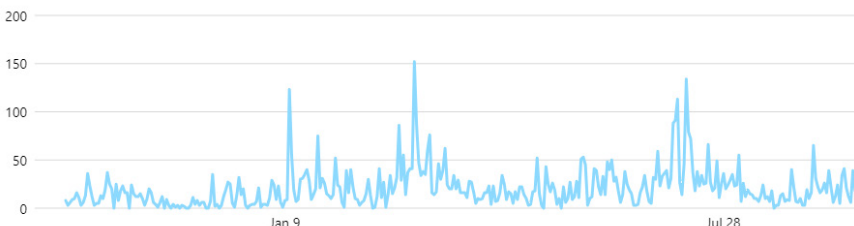
Reach
Facebook reach ①

42,519 ↑ 67.4%



Visits
Facebook visits ①

7,556 ↑ 122.4%



MICHIGAN LEGISLATIVE DISABILITY CAUCUS

Establishing the Caucus

MiDDC has worked with lawmakers in both chambers to ensure people with disabilities have their voices heard during policy development. Successes were experienced, but there was still a need to ensure disability policy had a unified voice in the legislative process. To address this need, MiDDC organized an advocacy group of self-advocates and advocacy organizations to create a statewide "Disability Caucus."



Disability Rights Michigan (DRM) and our advocacy partners have rallied for years to ensure the voice of the disability community is heard and considered when shaping public policies. The Michigan Legislative Disability Caucus will raise awareness among lawmakers about the complexities individuals with disabilities in Michigan face in their daily lives.

DRM was honored to work alongside Representative MacDonell and the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council to successfully launch the caucus. Our agency will continue to support our community through this important initiative.



MICHELLE ROBERTS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DRM

The First Meeting

An informal meeting was held with **12 legislative offices** and **101 advocates, self-advocates, and representatives of advocacy organizations** in attendance. Attendees represented the diverse geography of the state from Southeast Michigan to the Upper Peninsula.

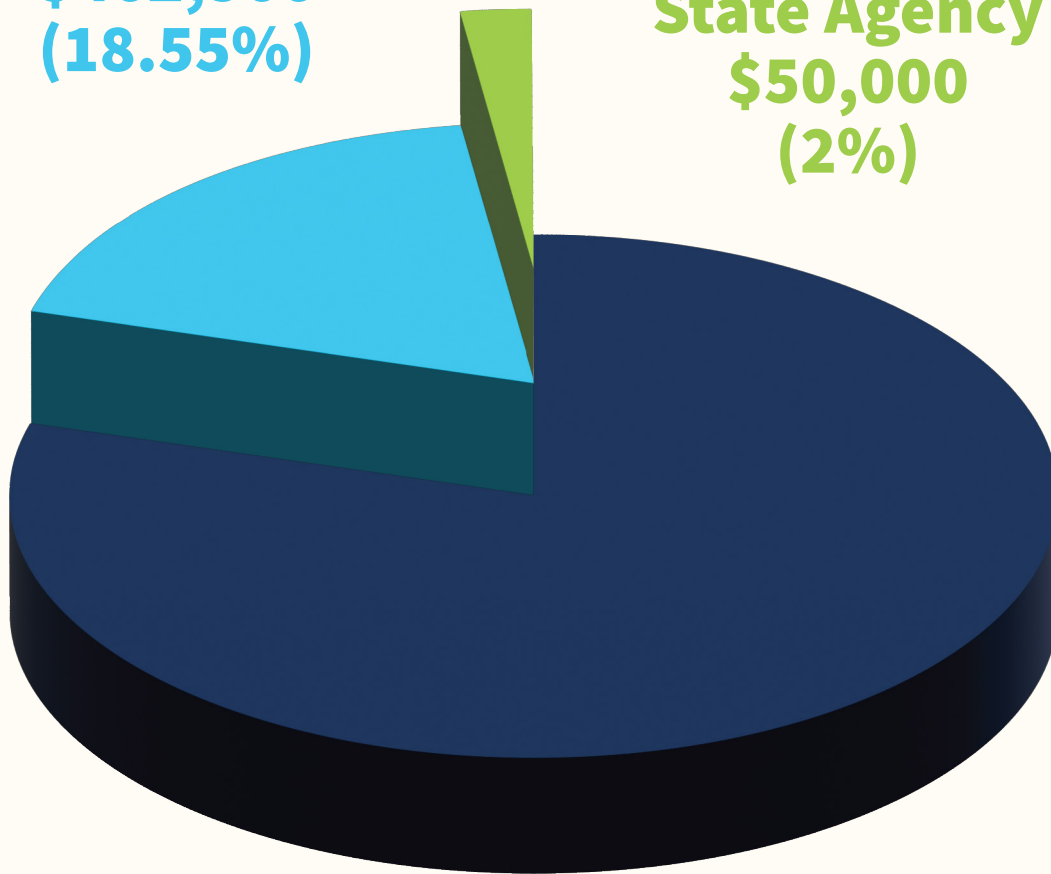
After the meeting, the advocacy group was contacted by State Rep. Sharon MacDonell (D-Troy) to establish a formal disability caucus. The advocacy group worked with Rep. MacDonell over the next several months to draft bylaws and materials needed to establish a new legislative caucus.

The Michigan Legislative Disability Caucus held its first formal meeting on October 10, 2023, with Rep. MacDonell as chair of the caucus. The purpose of the caucus is to, "establish a consistent base of support, bringing together legislators and stakeholders in the disability community, to advance policies to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities."

COUNCIL SPENDING IN 2023

**Program
Management**
\$462,566
(18.55%)

**Federal Share
to Designated
State Agency**
\$50,000
(2%)



Community Activities
\$1,982,268
(79.45%)

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP IN 2023

Jeremy Murphy.....Chairperson, Family Member

Jeanne Anderson-Tippett.....MDE, Office of Special Education

Lonnie Barnett.. MDHHS, Children's Special Healthcare Services

Ericka Fletcher.....Self-Advocate

Bonnie Gonzalez..... Self-Advocate

Steven Johnson..... Family Member

Jaime Junior..... Self-Advocate

Beth Kohler.....Family Member

Dennis Matthews..... Family Member

Mark McWilliams.....Disability Rights Michigan

Sharon Milberger.....Wayne State University, MI-DDI

Blake Perry..... Self-Advocates of Michigan

Suzanne Proctor..... Color of Autism Foundation, Non-Profit

Price Pullins..... MDHHS, BPHASA, Title V & XIX

Bradley Rivard..... Family Member

Kelly Rockwell..... MI Work Matters, Non-Profit

Sheryl Stumbaugh.....Self-Advocate

Marisa VanZile.....Family Member

Scott Wamsley.....MDHHS, Aging and Adult Services

Sarah Winslow..... Family Member

CONTACT US



facebook.com/MIDDCouncil



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MiDDC supports MDHHS APR 211 which states: "The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) does not discriminate against any individual or group on the basis of race, national origin, color, sex, disability, religion, age, height, weight, familial status, partisan considerations, or genetic information. Sex-based discrimination includes, but is not limited to, discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, and pregnancy.