



ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Production of this report was supported by Grant 2401MISCDD-00 pursuant to P.L. 106-402, as amended, the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, through the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MiDDC) and its designated state administering agency, the Michigan Department of Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

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.

The artwork featured throughout MiDDC's 2024 Annual Report comes from the Breaking Barriers Art Exhibit.

MiDDC hosted the art exhibit to celebrate the talent and creativity of artists with developmental disabilities. The exhibit explores the intersection between disability and art as a powerful form of self-expression and self-advocacy.

All artwork is used with permission from the artists, and views expressed through these pieces are those of the artists.

To view the full Breaking Barriers Art Exhibit, please visit our website at www.Michigan.gov/DDCouncil.



Table of Contents

05 **Message from Leadership**

08 **Mission and Vision**

10 **A Year in Review**

17 **Impact Stories**

21 **Grantee Spotlights**

24 **Financial Summary**

26 **Contact Information**

A photograph of a rushing stream flowing over dark rocks in a wooded area with autumn foliage. The water is turbulent and white with foam as it cascades over the rocks. The surrounding vegetation includes green evergreens, yellow and orange deciduous trees, and some moss on the rocks.

MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

Roxanne Riggo
Fall Stream

Dear Friends and Partners,

As I reflect on the past year, I am grateful for the dedication, passion and resilience of our community.

The work we do at the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council would not be possible without the voices of self-advocates, the unwavering support of family members, and the commitment of our community partners.

Throughout 2024, we made strides to break down barriers and create more opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to be included in communities across Michigan. Activities focused on community outreach, advocacy and leadership development have deepened our commitment to creating meaningful change.

This year's annual report highlights the progress we have made and the powerful stories of those who are impacted by our work. We remain focused on building an inclusive Michigan, where every person in every community has the opportunity to thrive and succeed.



Thank you for being a part of this journey. We look forward to continuing this important work together. As we look to the future, let's continue working to expand opportunities that support self-determined and self-directed lives for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Yasmina Bouraoui

Yasmina M. Bouraoui, MPH, DrPH
Executive Director, MiDDC

Dear Community Members,



I am honored to continue serving as Chairperson of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council.

Our mission - to advocate for and support people with developmental disabilities to achieve life dreams - has never been more important.

Our council members, community partners, family allies and self-advocates remain committed to

advocating for a society where the voices of people with developmental disabilities are not only heard, but valued. Together, the Council is working to shape a future where all people can live self-determined and self-directed lives.

As you read through this year's report, I encourage you to reflect on the collective impact our work has made. None of this would be possible without the strong collaboration of advocates and community partners coming together to support positive change for people with disabilities and their family members.

Thank you for your interest in the work of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. 2024 was an incredible year and I look forward to another year of progress and partnership.

Jeremy Murphy

Jeremy Murphy
Chairperson, MiDDC

An abstract painting featuring a vibrant, non-representational composition. The background is a deep, textured blue. In the upper left, a dark, silhouetted figure is partially visible. The lower half of the painting is dominated by large, bold, and somewhat geometric shapes in various colors: a large green area on the right, a pinkish-red shape in the center, a yellow circle on the left, and a blue circle below it. There are also smaller shapes in orange, purple, and red. The brushstrokes are visible and expressive, giving the painting a sense of movement and energy.

MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Samuel Howard
untitled

Mission, Vision and Values

Our annual report is more than a summary of our work - it is a statement of our purpose and our impact. Our mission and our vision are essential to understanding why we exist, who we serve and what we strive to achieve.

Taken together, MiDDC's mission, vision and values guide all of our activities.

Mission:

To support people with developmental disabilities in achieving their life dreams. This mission guides every initiative, policy and partnership we undertake.

Vision:

All people with disabilities are supported across their lifespan to live self-directed and self-determined lives in a diverse and inclusive community.

Restating our principles is more than a formality; it is a commitment to the core values that shape our work.

Values:

1. Including People with High and Complex Support Needs in all Activities.
2. Self-Determination.
3. Consumers' Voice at the Policy Table.
4. Economic Justice.
5. Community Inclusion.
6. Rights of People with Developmental Disabilities.
7. Diversity and Equity.

Our mission, vision and values are the foundation to ensure our work is intentional, impactful and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.



A YEAR IN REVIEW

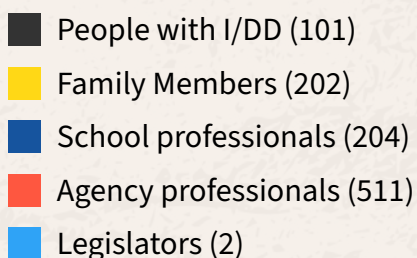
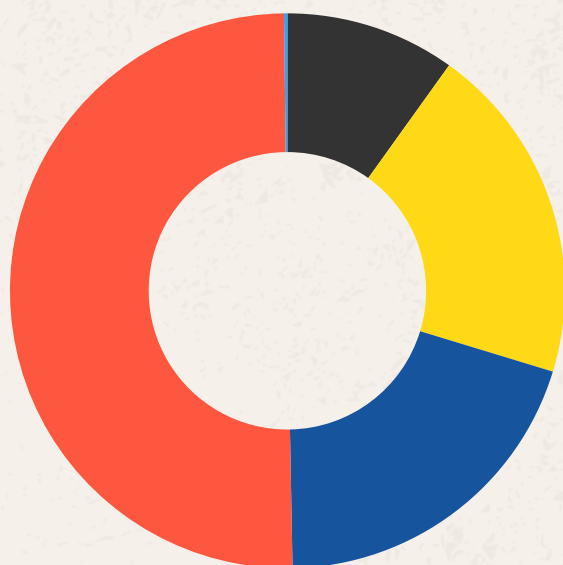
Samuel Howard
untitled

Educational Outreach

Each year, MiDDC hosts educational outreach to people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD), family members, and professional staff. Outreach consists of educational workshops, presentations, and virtual webinars.

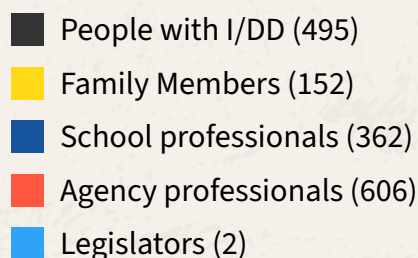
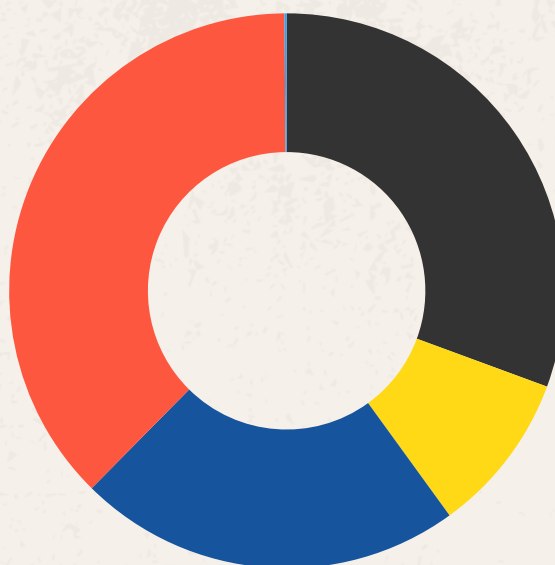
MiDDC's educational outreach focused on a number of topics such as employment, supported decision-making, tools for Charting the LifeCourse, and sexuality education.

Thirty one Supported Decision-Making workshops were offered in 2024. A total of **1,018 people** participated. Below is a breakdown of attendees:



MiDDC regularly works with copresenters to share their lived experience during educational workshops and presentations. In 2024, **12 new co-presenters with I/DD were trained, including four with high and complex needs.**

Fifty one Sexuality Education workshops were conducted in 2024. These workshops used a curriculum developed by Elevatus Training to promote healthy relationships for people with I/DD. A total of **1,539 people** participated. Below is a breakdown of attendees:





Voices in Action: Self-Advocacy Day

MiDDC and the Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM) hosted Voices in Action: Self-Advocacy Day on March 14, 2024.

This event was held at the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing. It provided an opportunity for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities who identify as self-advocates to grow their advocacy network by connecting with other advocates from across the state.

During the advocacy day, self-advocates also had a chance to meet with their state legislators. These meetings were for people with disabilities to directly advocate with their elected officials for issues that affect their lives.

Self-advocates discussed a variety of issues, including subminimum wages, accessible and affordable housing, transportation, Medicaid services, and supported decision-making.

In total, **81 self-advocates** attended Voices in Action: Self-Advocacy Day ensuring a strong presence at the Capitol. **Sixty two meetings** took place with state senators and state representatives.

Self-advocates often joined each other in group discussions while ensuring each person's voice was heard. This approach fostered meaningful conversations and allowed every advocate to engage directly with their elected officials.

Shaping Policy through Advocacy



In 2024, MiDDC worked to support the disability community in discussions and decisions about policies affecting their lives. MiDDC focused on strategic advocacy, partnerships and direct engagement with policymakers to address the concerns of Michigan's disability community.

MiDDC supported several advocacy initiatives, including the SAM Public Policy Committee and the Michigan disABILITY Action Group. MiDDC also remained actively engaged with the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Public Policy Committee, working alongside other state councils to influence national policy discussions.

Part of these national advocacy efforts included supporting SAM's leadership

team by attending the Disability Policy Seminar (DPS) held in Washington, D.C. During DPS, MiDDC and SAM members met with their congressional leaders to discuss SAM's public policy priorities.

In June 2024, MiDDC Public Policy Analyst Brett Williams represented MiDDC at the White House's **25th anniversary celebration of the Supreme Court's 1999 Olmstead decision**. He returned to Washington, D.C. in September 2024 to again represent MiDDC at the White House's celebration of Disability Pride and honor the **34th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**.

By engaging Michigan's disability community in policy discussions, MiDDC ensured the perspectives of individuals with lived experience were heard and valued both locally and nationally.





Breaking Barriers with Art

MiDDC and SAM hosted the **second annual** Breaking Barriers Art Exhibit during Disability Pride Month.

Disability Pride Month honors the historic passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in July 1990. Disability Pride Month is also a time to celebrate people with disabilities and raise awareness about the discrimination or marginalization many people face based on their disability.

The Breaking Barriers Art Exhibit was established for artists with developmental disabilities to share their talents with the public. The exhibit aimed to break down stigmas that prevent artists with disabilities from accessing similar opportunities in community art galleries.

Fifty one artists with disabilities shared their art on MiDDC's website throughout Disability Pride Month. **Twenty four artworks** were selected for the Breaking Barriers Art Exhibit hosted in downtown Lansing, MI.

On July 26, the 34th anniversary of the ADA, SAM and MiDDC hosted the Breaking Barriers Community Celebration. Artists were invited to attend a meet and greet. The event also included poetry, trivia and speeches celebrating the strengths and achievements of people with developmental disabilities.

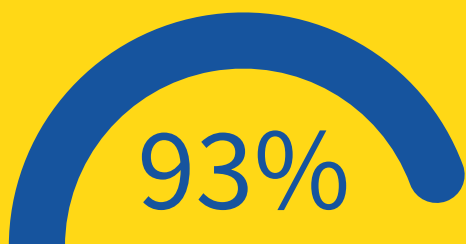
Ninety two people with disabilities and their families attended Breaking Barriers. **Twenty five volunteers and allies** provided support at the event.

Digital Media Outreach

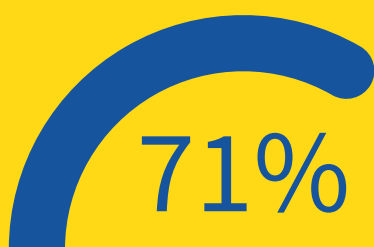
In 2024, MiDDC expanded its digital and social media presence to better connect with people with developmental disabilities, their families and ally organizations.

MiDDC increased engagement on Facebook by sharing more frequent updates, resources, and activities hosted by MiDDC and our grantees.

To reach individuals with disabilities and families who don't actively use Facebook, MiDDC launched an Instagram account in July 2024 to broaden our social media presence.



MiDDC's reach, which tracks the users who saw any content from MiDDC, was **65,303**. Reach **increased 93%** compared to 2023.



Link Clicks, which tracks number of clicks, taps or swipes on links, was **over 1,000 clicks**. Link clicks **increased 71%** compared to 2023.



MiDDC's Facebook page had **724 new followers** in 2024. This was an **increase of 41%** compared to the new followers in 2023.

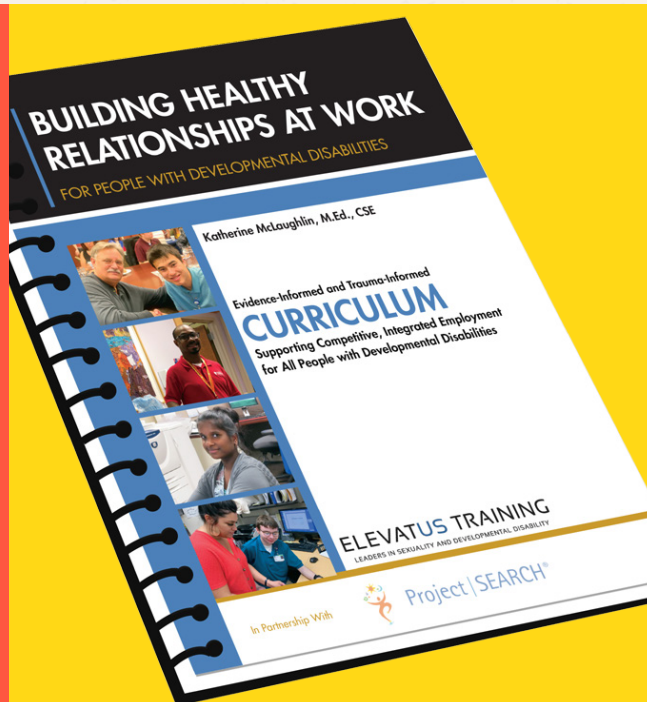


MiDDC's interactions, which include likes, saves, comments and shares, **increased by 53.9%** compared to 2023.

MiDDC also introduced the Inclusive Community Outreach Newsletter (ICON) in July to share important updates, advocacy opportunities, and stories with the disability community and interested members of the public.

Expanding MiDDC's digital network is a significant step toward building a more connected disability community. Moving forward, MiDDC plans to continue growing its digital and social media presence so more people can access valuable information and online resources.

Building Employment Skills



Every person wants to live full and happy lives with the ability to learn, live, work and have healthy relationships with other people. Unfortunately, people with I/DD have lost jobs because of how they interact with others at work.

The Building Healthy Relationships at Work curriculum helps teach people with I/DD how to navigate all types of relationships, including co-worker relationships. It also provides information on how to become great employees.

This curriculum is a collaboration between Elevatus Training and Project SEARCH with input from experts on competitive, integrated employment and relationships.

Building Healthy Relationships at Work is offered at least twice per

year to groups of people with I/DD. MiDDC also provides the curriculum and training materials to interested organizations that offer educational opportunities to people with I/DD in their community.



Frank Vaca is a person with I/DD who works with MiDDC as a co-presenter. Frank shared his thoughts on the Building Healthy Relationships at Work curriculum: *"I enjoy co-teaching this curriculum because all people with I/DD need to be strong advocates for expanding employment opportunities for our local communities."*

MiDDC held seven presentations throughout 2024. In total, **81 people with I/DD, 6 families, and 41 professionals** attended MiDDC's Building Healthy Relationships at Work series.

IMPACT STORIES



Megan Braun
Self-Portrait

A Journey to Leadership

When Jacqueline Cuevas joined the Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM), she was searching for a space where she could make a difference. Her experience as a person with a seizure disorder fueled her passion to become a self-advocate.

Jacqueline also saw the challenges people with disabilities faced in her community - education, housing, employment, or simply being seen as equals. Her firsthand experience ignited a powerful desire to make a difference in her community.

Jacqueline joined SAM in 2022 to connect with others who shared her experiences, challenges and dreams. She quickly became the Chair of SAM's Public Relations Committee. Her work was vital in SAM's rebranding, which led to an increase in SAM's membership.

Her peers at SAM saw her as a natural leader and strategic thinker. In 2024, Jacqueline was nominated by her peers and **elected to be the Chair of SAM's Board of Directors.**

In this new role, Jacqueline has thrived. She has been invited to speak at workshops, national conferences and community events.

As a public speaker, Jacqueline uses storytelling to share her worldview and promote self-acceptance. She



encourages everyone to embrace their unique life story to build a more inclusive and compassionate society. Jacqueline hopes that others see her journey and use it as inspiration to write their own self-advocacy story.

From board member to chairperson to national speaker, Jacqueline's journey shows that anyone can overcome adversity with passion, determination, and a commitment to creating change. Her involvement in SAM has made a difference in her life and the lives of many others.

A Champion for Independence

Jake Schaafsma is more than a peer mentor - he's a guide, an advocate, and a champion for independence.

He worked with MiDDC to become a certified peer mentor. He received training through the Peer Mentor program to develop leadership skills and navigate disability services and systems. Jake uses his lived experience to guide peers with developmental disabilities on their path to independent living.



As a neurotypical individual who experienced a traumatic brain injury at 17, he offers a unique perspective. Jake understands the challenge of navigating complex systems because he has been in the shoes of those receiving services.

Jake assists his peers with various tasks, such as creating budgets, navigating public transportation, finding employment, and building self-advocacy skills. His **main goal is to help them gain confidence and achieve greater self-direction.**

He is passionate about helping his peers. **One of Jake's favorite parts** of being a peer mentor is seeing people **accomplish the goals they set for themselves.**

Over the year, Jake made a difference in the lives of his peers in West Michigan. He continued to advocate for systemic changes to help people with disabilities in communities across the state.

Jake is committed to seeing peer mentorship programs expand to all community mental health services in Michigan. His ultimate goal is for all organizations to recognize the vital role of a peer mentor.

By advocating for more widespread peer mentorship, Jake is helping to shape a future in which peer mentoring is a foundational support for people with disabilities.

A Passionate Voice for Change

Corissa Pittman is a youth leader with Kabuki syndrome and is a person who stutters. Corissa began working with MiDDC as a Center for Youth Voice, Youth Choice (CYVYC)- Supported Decision-Making Youth Ambassador at thirteen.

This year, Corissa was actively involved with several advocacy initiatives through MiDDC and other advocacy organizations, including:

- Youth Employment Ambassador Host (YEAH).
- Youth Member of Elevatus Training Advisory Panel.
- Multi-Cultural Student Achievement Network (MSAN).
- Youth Equity Ambassador for the National Center for Disability, Equity, and Intersectionality.
- Science Olympiad, studying epidemiology and disease rates in marginalized communities.

As a youth co-presenter, Corissa shared their lived experience to advocate for accessibility, inclusion and supported decision-making as an alternative to guardianship.

In 2024, Corissa presented at Grand Valley State University's Inclusion and Equity Institute. TASH also invited Corissa to their national conference to share how intersectionality impacted their formal diagnosis. Their presentation, *But You Don't Look Autistic*, shared Corissa's lived experience about

the bias people with hidden disabilities face in the health care system.

Corissa's commitment to advocacy has not gone unnoticed. They completed the CYVYC Youth Ambassador program, received **five Science Olympiad Awards**, and were honored with a **Self-Advocacy certificate** from the Self-Advocates of Michigan (SAM) for advocating for themselves and their peers.

Not only is Corissa raising awareness, but they are shaping policies and changing perspectives on inclusion and self-determination. Corissa's passion for advocacy is a bright light shaping a new generation of leaders.





GRANTEE SPOTLIGHTS

Samantha Zerlea
Trying to Dampen My Voice



Breaking Cultural Stigmas with LEAD's Latinx Program

Michigan Disability Rights Coalition established the Leadership Engagement and Advocacy Development (LEAD) program with funding from MiDDC. LEAD provides communities of color with increased access to disability resources.

In 2024, LEAD hosted **three cohorts for communities of color with a total of 35 participants**. Two of the cohorts provided resources to Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that identified as either adults with disabilities or family members of children with disabilities.

The third LEAD cohort provided workshops for Spanish-speaking parents of children with disabilities. Through culturally responsive tools and bilingual resources, LEAD's Latinx cohort helped families break cultural stigmas and foster strong

advocates. The LEAD Latinx cohort took major steps in 2024 to ensure **Spanish-speaking families are no longer left behind in Michigan**.

Parents from LEAD Spanish-speaking cohort were invited to a Latino Legislative Day hosted by the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan. This event brought together leaders in Michigan's Hispanic community to connect on collective advocacy goals.

Priscilla Cano attended the Latino Legislative Day and shared her experience: *"I was able to build meaningful connections and the experience reinforced my passion to empower historically marginalized communities. I am eager to continue engaging in policy discussions and grassroots efforts to drive meaningful change in our communities."*



A New Generation of Leaders

Leaders for Inclusion (LFI) was established by the Michigan Disability Rights Coalition with funding from MiDDC. LFI provides leadership skills training to cohorts of young adults ages 18-26 with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

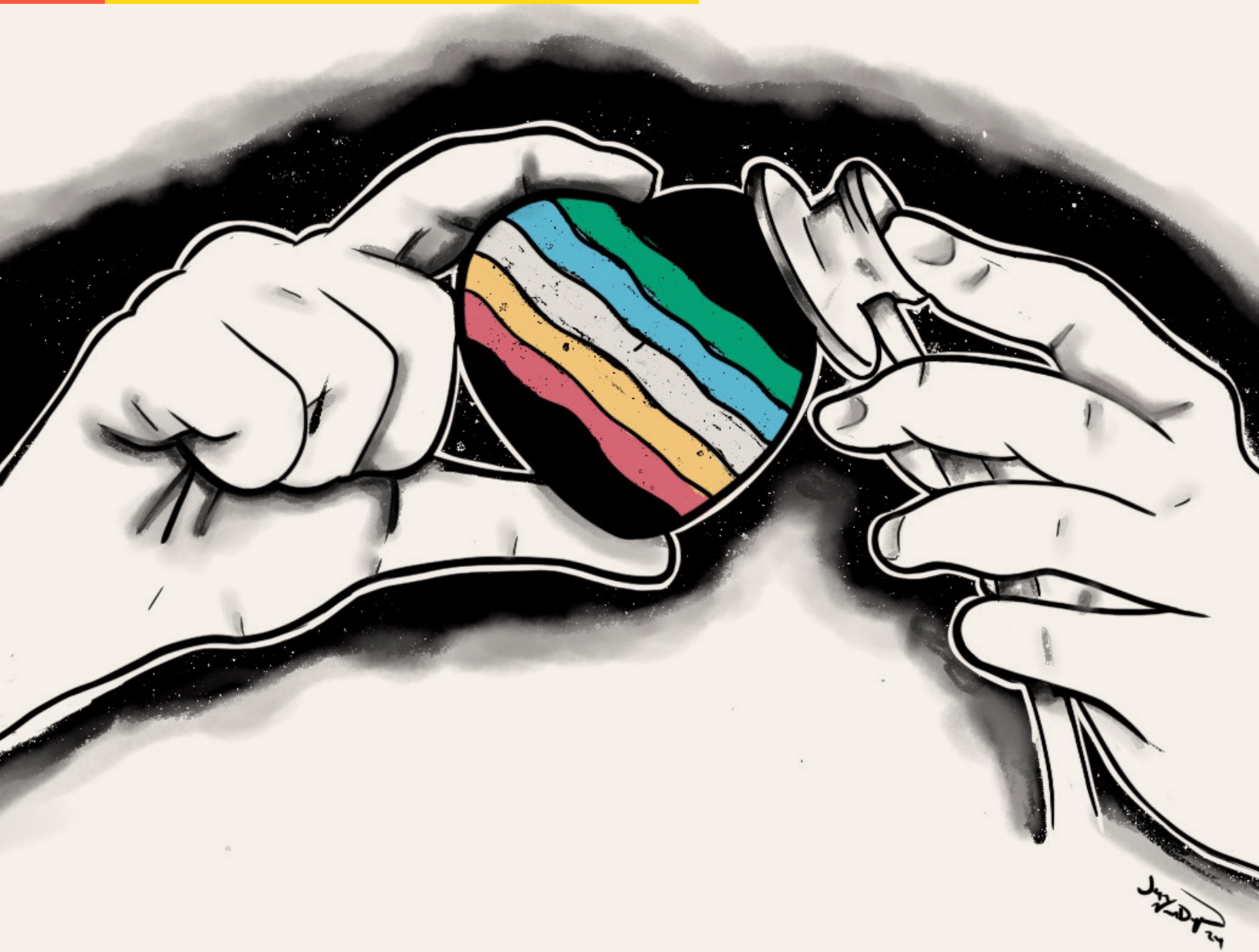
A total of **136 people with I/DD** participated in LFI trainings. LFI trained **33 new ambassadors with I/DD**. LFI Ambassadors use the skills they learn to advocate and become changemakers in their communities.

LFI Ambassador Cayla Melnykowycz said, *"I learned about federal policies, changes to disability justice, and advocacy strategies. My favorite part of the program was learning about the history of disability laws, oppression versus resistance, and different leadership styles."*

Another LFI Ambassador, Raquel Rodriguez, shared: *"Leaders for Inclusion was an incredible experience that deepened my understanding of disability rights and advocacy. From attending Día de Mujer to co-leading trainings, I gained invaluable skills and confidence. The program's support—whether through accommodations, transportation, or one-on-one mentorship—helped me embrace self-advocacy and connect with vital resources. I'm grateful for the opportunities and community I found through this program!"*

The impact of LFI reaches beyond individual growth. LFI is shaping a **new generation of disability leaders**. By investing in the leadership potential of young adults with I/DD, LFI is taking the steps needed to **create an inclusive future where everyone belongs**.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Jeffrey VanDyke

Disability is Vital to the Pulse of a Better World

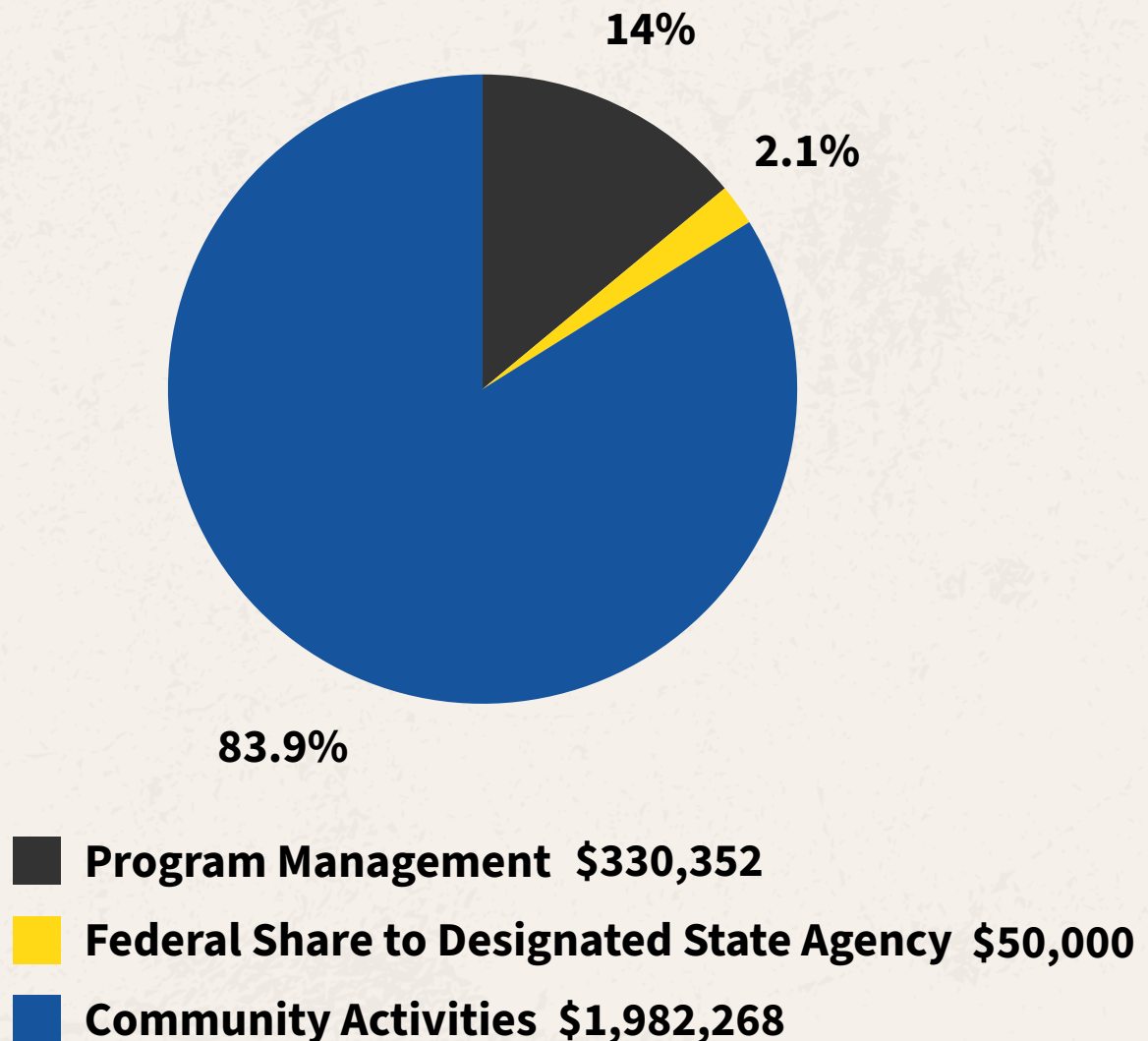
Financial Summary

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MiDDC) is primarily funded by federal grants administered by the Administration on Community Living (ACL).

These funds support key advocacy initiatives, grant funding, educational opportunities, events in community spaces, public awareness campaigns, and other projects to support people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.

By maintaining fiscal responsibility and prioritizing initiatives that align with our five-year state plan, MiDDC works toward positive change to services, supports and systems that are more responsive to the needs, wants and desires of people with developmental disabilities.

MiDDC is committed to sustainable financial stewardship in support of Michigan's disability community. Below is a breakdown of MiDDC's expenditures in 2024:



CONTACT MiDDC



Leah Turner
Winter Rose

Council Membership in 2024

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Jeremy Murphy..... | <i>Chairperson, Family Member</i> |
| Amaya Abdullah..... | <i>Self-Advocate</i> |
| Rosalie Austin..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Lonnie Barnett.. | <i>MDHHS, Children's Special Health Care Services</i> |
| Joseph Bione..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Shawan Dortch..... | <i>MDE, Office of Special Education</i> |
| Tiffany Gaiter..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Belinda Hawks..... | <i>MDHHS, Title XIX</i> |
| Angel Irvin..... | <i>Self-Advocate</i> |
| Jaime Junior..... | <i>Self-Advocate</i> |
| Beth Kohler..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Mark McWilliams..... | <i>Disability Rights Michigan</i> |
| Iris Mehler..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Sharon Milberger..... | <i>Wayne State University, MI-DDI</i> |
| Areeba Nadeem..... | <i>Self-Advocate</i> |
| Leah Ortiz..... | <i>Non-Profit Representative</i> |
| Camille Proctor..... | <i>Non-Profit Representative</i> |
| Jason Reaves..... | <i>Self-Advocates of Michigan Representative</i> |
| Amanda Rhines..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Ray Schuholz..... | <i>Self-Advocate</i> |
| Sheryl Stumbaugh..... | <i>Self-Advocate</i> |
| Janet Turner..... | <i>Family Member</i> |
| Scott Wamsley..... | <i>MDHHS, Aging and Adult Services</i> |
| Maureen Webster..... | <i>LEO, Michigan Rehabilitation Services</i> |
| Sarah Winslow..... | <i>Family Member</i> |

Contact Us



Thank you for taking the time to read our Annual Report for 2024.

The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council (MiDDC) is committed to helping people with developmental disabilities have the opportunities and support to achieve their life dreams.

Do you have questions about content in this report? Would you like to learn more about any resources or advocacy opportunities available through MiDDC?

We would love to hear from you! Visit our website, call our office, subscribe to our newsletter, or connect with us on social media to stay informed and engaged!

Together, we can build a Michigan that is inclusive of all people.

[instagram.com/middcouncil](https://www.instagram.com/middcouncil)



[facebook.com/Middcouncil](https://www.facebook.com/Middcouncil)



[Michigan.gov/DDCouncil](https://www.michigan.gov/DDCouncil)



Mailing Address:
DD Council, Suite 218
235 S Grand Ave.
Lansing, MI 48909

Phone:
(517) 335-3158

Email:
mdhhs-dd-council@michigan.gov