

CALL TO ACTION

Your Help is Needed! We need YOUR voice and action!

Let's Build Better Supports for Adults with Developmental Disabilities in DC!

Thanks to everyone who turned out and testified at the DDS performance hearing on February 18! We still need you, and other supporters of people with developmental and intellectual disabilities who live in the District, to **help now by advocating with the DC government and DC Council to revise eligibility requirements for long-term services from DDS for people with developmental disabilities (DD).** **What do we mean by Developmental Disability.docx**

WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW if you or a family member has been impacted or may be impacted in the future by DC's restrictive eligibility requirements:

- **Write to the mayor, BY MID-MAY!** The DC Council's Committee on Human Services is drafting legislation to address the glaring inequities in the current DC government approach to long-term services. Use the attached template to send an email to the mayor and other key individuals, stating your support for this effort:
 - Mayor's office muriel.bowser@dc.gov and eom@dc.gov
 - Deputy Mayor Turnage wayne.turnage@dc.gov
 - DDS Director Andy Reese andrew.reese@dc.gov
 - OPLA Associate Director Erika Duthely erika.duthely@dc.gov

- **Testify!** The DC budget for FY2022 will be released on May 27, and the DC Council will hold a hearing on June 7:
 - **Budget Hearing for DDS and ODR (Committee on Human Services)**
June 7, 2021, 9:00 a.m.

Hearings are always an opportunity to be heard by the DC government and the DC council! Personal stories are strongest! To testify live, complete the witness form at <https://www.brianneknadeau.com/testify> or call the committee at 202-724-8170 – you can decide to testify right up until the day of the hearing. Testifying live is best, but you can also submit written testimony at humanservices@dccouncil.us. Either way, help is available (see below)!

- **Use the hashtags #DDEquityDC and #NotJustIQ on social media. Share your own story on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter about why this issue is important to you.**

- **Reach out to as many family members and people with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities to share this and get them to send messages to the DC government and/or testify on June 7!**

Have questions? Need help? Contact any of these advocates:

Morgan Whitlatch, Legal Director, *Quality Trust*, mwhitlatch@dcqualitytrust.org 202-459-4004

Sandy Bernstein, Legal Director, *Disability Rights DC at University Legal Services*, sbernstein@uls-dc.org
202-547-0198 ext. 117

Robin Shaffert, Senior Policy Associate and Adjunct Instructor, *Georgetown University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities*, rls160@georgetown.edu, 202-687-4892

Alison Whyte, Executive Director, *DC Developmental Disabilities Council*, alison.whyte@dc.gov, 202-340-8563

Carol Grigsby, Chair, *DC Developmental Disabilities Council*, carol.grigsby@dcbc.dc.gov

KEY BACKGROUND:

1) What is the problem that must be fixed?

- Currently, adults with developmental disabilities (DD), autism and cerebral palsy for example, who are assessed as having an IQ score above 69 are not likely to be found eligible for long-term home and community-based services through the DC Department on Disability Services/Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDS/DDA) – even if they need support services to work and live independently. We think that should change.
- Most states in the U.S. provide some kinds of services to adults with DD with significant support needs. DC is behind the curve in that it only provides limited services to adults with DD that do not have intellectual disabilities.

2) Why?

- DC's restrictive DDA eligibility requirements leave many adults with developmental disabilities, including those transitioning out of schools, without critical services, which can lead them to lose skills they learned in school. Similarly, as more and more parents age and become unable to provide support, their adult children with developmental disabilities will not be eligible for supports and services from DDA unless they also qualify as ID. This must change.
- Adults with DD who have significant, lifelong support needs in 3 or more major activities of life should not be denied the services and supports they need simply based on an IQ score. It is not fair.

Dear Mayor Bowser,

I am (we are) writing to urge you to favor more equitable supports for adults with disabilities in Washington, D.C. Currently, as you know, adults with developmental disabilities (DD) who are assessed as having an IQ score above 69 are not likely to be found eligible for long-term home and community-based services through the DC Department on Disability Services. This is true even when they need support services to work and live independently. DC is behind the curve in that it only provides limited services to adults with DD that do not have intellectual disabilities. *This is not fair.*

[You may want to insert your own personal story here – officials need to understand how this touches individual lives!]

DC's restrictive DDA eligibility requirements leave many adults with developmental disabilities, including those transitioning out of schools, without critical services. Similarly, as more and more caregivers age and become unable to provide support, their adult family members with developmental disabilities will not be eligible for supports and services from DDA unless they also qualify as having an intellectual disability (ID). Adults with DD who may not have an ID, but who have significant, lifelong support needs in three or more major activities of life, should not be denied the services and supports they need simply based on an IQ score.

I (We) strongly believe that this situation is wrong and needs to change. I (We) understand that the DC council is currently drafting legislation aimed at reforming eligibility to create a fair system of DC adult disability services, in step with 21st-century understandings of disability rights and needs. I (we) urge you and your administration to speak out in favor of this legislation and to take necessary action to implement it.