



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
MICHIGAN  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

Paul Palmer  
CHAIRPERSON  
VENDELLA M. COLLINS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 4, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

The Administration on Community Living (ACL), our Federal funder, is requiring all public comments on The Partnerships for Innovation, Inclusion, and Independence (P3I) proposal be submitted by Friday, August 11, 2017.

**We are asking you, the people who know our program the best, to provide comments that demonstrate the unique and important role the Michigan DD Council plays in our state.** If implemented as written, P3I would eliminate DD Councils, State Independent Living Councils, and Traumatic Brain Injury Programs as they currently exist. It would combine the existing functions of these very different programs while cutting \$57 million from the combined budget.

**Why is this proposal a problem?**

- Dismantling the infrastructure and accountability in the DD Councils directly compromises the opportunities of people with I/DD to advocate for and participate in projects that provide direct, innovative improvement to their quality of life.
- As structured, the DD Councils are required to support self-advocacy – we facilitate training and leadership opportunities for people with I/DD and their families, while encouraging and supporting engagement in public policy discussions, something unique from the other potential partners.
- As structured, DD Councils have a strong, focused voice in the process of educating and informing policymakers at the state, local, and federal levels; conducting the critical work of bringing together individuals with I/DD, families, organizations and state government agencies to collaborate on improving opportunities for people with I/DD towards real inclusion in their own communities.
- In place since 1973, the DD Council is a recognized resource in the DD community, playing a unique role in our state.
- We are respected for collaborating with and including adults with I/DD in meaningful ways to improve services, create public policy, and increase best practice in innovative ways.

- We provide consistent leadership development to adults with I/DD and families.
- Many self-advocates who have participated in DD Council activities have become leaders both in their own communities and at the state and national levels.

### **What Can We Do?**

First, consider sharing a personal story about how the Council assisted you or a loved one; show that these are real people and real-life impacts. Or, if you are with an agency that was part of the many initiatives the Council has spearheaded over the past years, we would appreciate you sharing your perspective on our contributions.

Projects made possible by the DD Council that you or a loved one may have benefitted from:

- Employment First Initiative
- Self-Advocates of Michigan
- Legislative Day
- Take Your Legislator to Work
- Advocacy training-state and federal
- Leaders In Policy Advocacy
- Universal Reduced Fare Card for public transportation (currently in progress)
- Peer Mentoring added to Medicaid policy

Services and policies advocated for by the DD Council that you or a loved one may have benefitted from:

- Freedom to Work
- Preventative Dental Services
- Disability Advocacy Trainings
- Removal of the practice of Seclusion and Restraint in Public Schools
- More choices in choosing durable medical equipment
- The elimination of the use of Electronic Stimulation Devices in mental health therapy
- Home and Community Based Services
  - Open and transparent process
  - Conflict free case management
- Increased access to dental services through mid-level dental therapist
- ABLE accounts for people with disabilities

Don't feel limited by these lists. There are many ways that the Council's work may have benefitted the quality of your life or the life of a loved one. Please tell your unique story!

**What are we asking the ACL to do?**

In addition to sharing your unique and important story, we would like you to ask the Administration to slow this process down! Before making such a sweeping change in the only organization in our state that is providing the services and projects listed above, the affected community (YOU!) should have more than a couple of weeks to respond and comment.

Additionally, many people in Michigan do not have access to the internet or do not use a computer. Therefore, we have no way to quickly get this information out. We also do not have time to translate this opportunity into additional languages.

**EVERYONE** who wishes to participate in this important process needs to submit their public comment or post a video of yourself speaking about the DD Council by Friday, August 11, to the following link: [P3I-comments@acl.hhs.gov](mailto:P3I-comments@acl.hhs.gov)

Thank you for your support!



Vendella M. Collins  
Executive Director  
Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council