



Virginia Board for  
People with Disabilities



# 2021 Program Performance Report HIGHLIGHTS



## **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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**T**he Virginia Board for People with Disabilities serves as Virginia's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council under the federal DD Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 and the Virginians with Disabilities Act. Since 1992, the Board has been an executive branch state agency located within the Secretariat of Health and Human Resources.

The Board advises the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, federal and state legislators, and other constituent groups on issues related to people with developmental disabilities (DD) and other disabilities in Virginia. Its purpose is to facilitate full inclusion of individuals with DD and other disabilities into all facets of community life.

The Board engages in advocacy and capacity-building activities focused on improving the system of services and supports that enable people with disabilities to exercise self-determination and maximum independence.

The Board's major activities include educating policymakers and influencing policy/practice; assessing and reporting on the disability services system; investing in new or promising approaches to community-based services and supports; conducting advocacy and leadership training; and educating communities through information dissemination and outreach.

The Governor appoints 31 of the Board's 39 members, while the remaining eight members are designees from state agencies and other organizations. Sixty percent of the Board's 39 members are people with DD or family members of people with DD.

The Board meets quarterly in Richmond, Virginia. The Board encourages public comment on its planning activities and at Board meetings, and encourages individuals to contact the Board regarding needs, information, or concerns about disability- and policy-related issues.

## MISSION

*To create a Commonwealth that advances opportunities for independence, personal decision-making, and full participation in community life for individuals with developmental and other disabilities.*

## VISION

*Virginians with developmental and other disabilities direct their own lives and choose how they live, learn, work, and play.*

# COVID-19




**P**eople with disabilities must have reliable information and equal access to vaccinations to prevent the spread of COVID-19. That is why the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities partnered with the VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities and the Arc of Virginia during the pandemic. Together, we worked to create, update and share plain language fact sheets to educate people with developmental disabilities (DD) about the COVID vaccines. This partnership distributed helpful information that was easier for the DD community to understand, while implementing best practices for providing plain language information.


The Board also played an important role in educating 130 key stakeholders, including state and local health department staff, about how to address the needs of people with DD during the COVID-19 vaccination process. Additionally, the Board partnered with the Arc of Virginia to submit recommendations to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to better address people with DD in the COVID-19 response.

Through work group participation and providing public comment, more than 100 recommendations that supported three promising practices and 31 best practices were





## FACT SHEET




### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE SAFETY OF THE COVID-19 VACCINE

*This fact sheet was updated on Dec. 21, 2021. It is based on information that was available at that time. This information might change in the future.*

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a new coronavirus. You can get very sick from **COVID-19**. It can make it hard for you to breathe.


New types of COVID-19 emerge over time. Each type is called a **variant**. The Delta variant is easier to catch and can make you sicker than previous variants. The Omicron variant is also easier to catch.

There are **vaccines** to help your body fight COVID-19. A vaccine is a shot in the arm. This fact sheet will help you understand whether the vaccine for COVID-19 is safe.



The COVID-19 vaccine is safe for most people. Thousands of people tested the vaccine. People who get the vaccine are much less likely to get sick.

Very few people had severe **side effects**. Severe sideeffects are shortness of breath, a rash, swelling of the tongue, shock, hives, wheezing, or other things. In rare cases, people have blood clots after receiving the vaccine from Johnson and Johnson. As a result, people are advised to get the vaccine from Pfizer or Moderna instead.




Different kinds of people tried the COVID-19 vaccine. Some had lung disease, heart disease, and diabetes. Some were Black, Hispanic, or Asian. Some were older. All of them did well.

The vaccine cannot give you COVID-19. The vaccine does not have the coronavirus in it.

Talk to your doctor about the vaccine if you have questions.




**Some people should talk to their doctor before getting the vaccine:**

- You should talk to your doctor if you have a weak immune system.
- You should talk to your doctor if you are allergic to other vaccines.



**Some people should not get the vaccine now:**

- People who currently have COVID-19 should wait to get the vaccine until they have recovered. Visit [this website](#) to learn when you are recovered.
- People under 5 years old cannot get the vaccine at this time.

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recommended by the Board. These promising and best practices included, but were not limited to, prioritizing people with DD and their support staff for the COVID-19 vaccine, providing cultural competency training to various stakeholders, providing clear and accessible COVID-19 communication, providing accessible vaccination sites, and providing various accommodations throughout the COVID-19 vaccination process.

The Board's advocacy work yielded several successes, and prompted the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to make the following changes to improve access for people with DD:

- Prioritized people with DD and their support staff for the COVID-19 vaccine by (a) amending their phase 1a priority groups to explicitly include home health care workers, staff and residents in DBHDS-licensed settings, and primary caregivers for people with I/DD, and (b) amending their phase 1b priority groups to broaden the eligible underlying conditions by allowing for medical provider discretion
- Amended its vaccine pre-registration system so that people with an eligible underlying condition, based on medical provider discretion, could self-identify as being in Phase 1b, per the amended state guidance
- Amended its crisis standard of care guidance to better support freedom from discrimination, accessible communication, and transparency
- Amended state guidance on designated support

persons in hospitals during COVID-19 to better support informed choice and maximize access to designated support persons in hospitals

- Amended its draft state vaccination plan, which led VDH to conduct targeted outreach to people with DD on COVID-19 through a December 2020 webinar

Additionally, the Board, also known as Virginia's DD Council, provided funding to four K-12 school systems in underserved areas of Virginia to purchase technological devices to allow

their students with developmental and other disabilities to learn virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. All projects began November 1, 2020 and ended June 2021. *See grants section of this report for additional information.*

Council finished funding a \$6,090 grant to the Hope House Foundation to develop videos to combat isolation of people with disabilities during the pandemic. The project began May 2020 and ended December 2020. *See grants section of this report for additional information.*



# POLICY



**T**he Board published two Assessments of the Disability Services System:

**1. Assessment of Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities**

**2. Assessment of Residential Services and Day & Employment Services available in the DD Waivers**

The assessments were presented by the Board at the Arc of Virginia's annual conference. The Board also met with state agency representatives to discuss its recommendations and distributed the assessments to all members of the Virginia General Assembly. A number of the recommendations made by Council are being discussed at the state level for possible implementation.



*Some policy successes, comments and recommendations made by the Board to further its goal of improving state policies and procedures are listed by topic area:*

### ***Improving Healthcare Services***

- The state legislature added a comprehensive Medicaid dental benefit for adults effective July 2021. This is a policy change that the Board had long advocated for in previous years. The Board began monitoring implementation of the new benefit and plans to assess dental care overall for people with DD in the new five-year State Plan.

### ***Community Supports***

- New law, successfully supported by Council, to develop and implement a program to educate individuals with DD, their families and others regarding supportive decision-making
- The Board provided written comment and recommendations to the Department of Medical Assistance Services for the use of the 10% enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage authorized in the CARES Act.
- Comments to the Department of Medical Assistance Services on changes to the Employer of Record manual for self-directed services
- Comment and recommendations to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services on the Marcus Alert System
- Comment on the draft and final Developmental Disability Waivers regulations

### ***Employment***

- The Board was also actively engaged in the passage of House Bill 2140 during the 2021 General Assembly session, which proposed creating an alternate application process for the employment of persons with disabilities in state jobs. Council provided comment in support of this bill to 32 legislative members of the House General Laws and Senate General Laws committees.



## Education

■ Council educated 37 legislators through a letter to the House and Senate Education committees detailing similar recommendations made in its 2017 Education Assessment and the 2020 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee reports on Special Education and Private Day schools. The recommendations were:

- 1. Support inclusion in and out of the classroom**
- 2. Incentivize integrated general education**
- 3. Increase technical assistance to low-performing schools**
- 4. Minimize restraint and seclusion disciplinary practices**
- 5. Improve communication about the long-term impact of educational decisions**

■ Improve transition planning. Council testified in support of House Bill (HB) 2299, passed and signed by the Governor of Virginia.

■ Comment on the Guidelines for the Consideration of the Need for Age and Developmentally Appropriate Instruction, urging that an IEP goal related to sexual health be proactive and positive rather than reactive and punitive.



## Training Programs

Through its training programs, Council increased the number of people who engaged in self-advocacy, thus furthering its overall goal of creating more self-advocates. Key successes this year included the following, all of which stemmed from Council's in-house training programs:



- The July 2021 Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) graduated 14 youth with developmental disabilities. Participation in the YLA empowers young people with developmental and other disabilities to further develop their leadership skills. Students, serving as Delegates from communities throughout Virginia, participated in a wide range of activities and learning experiences during this summer program, typically set on a university campus but occurring virtually in 2021. The next YLA will occur in July 2023.

- This year, 50 people with developmental disabilities and their family members participated in the Training Alumni Association, which educated

various stakeholders, including 63 legislators, on key issues affecting the disability community. The Board developed the Training Alumni Association in 2016 to engage graduates of the Board's training programs, Partners in Policymaking and Youth Leadership Academy.



- To support the development of self-advocates as trainers, the Board held its annual daylong Train the Trainer training session in April 2021. This year, 18 self-advocates participated in the training and learned about the use of icebreakers, presentation tips and strategies, presentation development, group interactions, engagement and effective delivery. In addition, the Board is committed to providing self-advocates with opportunities to provide training. This



year, 38 people with developmental disabilities served as trainers in Council's training programs.



■ The Minnesota Developmental Disabilities Council created the Partners in Policymaking program in 1987. The Board implemented Partners in Policymaking (PIP) in Virginia in 1994. Partners is an innovative, competency based advocacy-training program for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with disabilities. In order to strengthen self-advocacy skills and increase personal empowerment, participants explore current developmental disabilities services and systems, best practices, policymaking and the legislative process at the federal, state and local levels. The overall goal of the Partners in Policymaking program is to achieve a productive partnership between people with disabilities and their family members and those in positions to make policy and law. The 2021-2022 PIP session began September 2021 and will graduate April 2022.



# GRANTS

## Post-Grant Activities

### James Madison University (JMU)



The Board completed monitoring its grant titled, “**Improving Health and Wellness through Empowerment,**” with James Madison University, to improve the accessibility of wellness

programs in the Shenandoah Valley region. The active grant period was October 2017 to December 2019, followed by a two-year post-grant monitoring phase, which ended December 2021.

Key accomplishments during 2021 included:

1. Training an additional 182 wellness personnel via online modules that were created during the active grant period
2. Distributing 3,456 electronic copies and 1,371 hard copies of a community resource guide that was created during the active grant period
3. Generating 6,601 hits to the Shenandoah Valley Inclusive Wellness Coalition website, which was created during the active grant period, and 142 hits to the resources webpage
4. Holding three events to provide wellness programming and/or promote wellness resources. The developed resources can be found at <https://inclusivewellness.org/>.

### Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)



The Board continued to monitor its grant, titled “**Communication & Health Advocacy Training (CHAT),**” to Virginia’s University

Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University to train people with DD on how to communicate health needs. The active grant period was October 2017 to September 2020, followed by a two-year post-grant monitoring phase that concludes September 2022.

During fiscal year 2021, the grantee focused on sustaining their training curriculum. The grantee trained an additional five people with DD, two of their family members, and distributed its previously-created companion guide to five direct support professionals. The grantee also began developing a board game prototype, based on the training curriculum, for a Presidential Research Quest grant they were awarded at the end of FFY 2020. The developed resources can be found at <https://cdl.partnership.vcu.edu/health-advocacy-training-chat/>.

The Board continued monitoring its grant with Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), which developed and implemented an in-person and online training program by and for people with DD, business leaders, and employment



services staff to increase Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) opportunities for persons with DD living in rural areas of the Commonwealth. The two-year post-grant monitoring phase for the project, entitled “**Promoting Integrated Employment with ABLES Teams**,” began October 2020 and concludes September 2022.

This year, the grantee continued to market online training modules that were created during the active grant period. The training modules addressed the benefits of CIE and highlighted individuals with DD working in inclusive employment settings. During the course of this year, the videos and other materials received a total of 953 views. Additionally, 74 employment specialists and business leaders participated in the training modules on the benefits of CIE.

All training participants who completed a survey afterwards indicated that the training increased their understanding of the role of an employment specialist, the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, and the true cost of providing accommodations to people with disabilities. Next year, the grantee plans to continue marketing the availability of resources developed during the active grant period and is hopeful that more individuals with developmental and other disabilities choose to pursue competitive and integrated employment in 2022.



### The Arc of Northern Virginia



The Board completed monitoring its grant project with the Arc of Northern Virginia, entitled **“Increasing Access to Disability Resources in non-English Languages,”** during fiscal year 2021. The project began

May 2017 and concluded November 2018, after which the project entered a two-year post-grant monitoring phase that concluded November 1, 2020. The overall project goal was to translate six previously developed guides (“Starting Life with Your Child with a Disability,” “Getting the Most from Special Education,” “Securing a Future for Your Child with a Disability,” “Entering the World of Work,” “Finding a Home for Adults with Disabilities,” and “Aging with a Disability”) into five languages (Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Arabic and Chinese) for people with disabilities and their families who speak languages other than English.

During 2021, the grantee continued to advertise its six previously-translated guides through hosting of two virtual resource fairs with two school systems that were attended by 164 family members. Through these events, a total of 73 printed guides were disseminated to professionals and family members. In addition, a one-page flyer providing direct links to the guides on the grantee’s website was shared with family members at the two virtual events. Spanish editions of the guides were also viewed and/or downloaded once this period from the grantee’s website. The developed resources can be found at <https://thearcofnova.org/programs/transition/>.

### William & Mary



Council completed funding a \$150,000 grant (\$74,441 in matching funds) to the College of William & Mary to increase CIE through a university-community organization partnership to provide internships and training for adults with DD. This project, entitled **“The Next Move @ William & Mary: An Innovative Approach to Training Young Adults with Disabilities,”** began October 1, 2018 and concluded June 30, 2021.

This year, the grantee

1. Oriented three university employees to the Next Move program, who assisted with video training development and conducting mock interviews with participating interns
2. Accepted 10 individuals with DD into the seven-week virtual internship program. All five interns (100%) participating who completed a survey indicated they were satisfied with their participation in the program, citing they had improved confidence and felt better prepared for securing employment. One intern indicated that the virtual platform increased his level of comfort with interacting during virtual conference calls
3. Continued collaborating with the Next Move program, which provides matched work experience and targeted training and coaching, as well as two local school systems, to recruit project participants





The grantee's primary focus for 2022 will be to secure additional funding to continue to offer the internship program, while monitoring the effects of COVID-19 on the program and university campus. The grantee's two-year post-grant monitoring phase will conclude June 2023.

### The Arc of Virginia



The Board continued to monitor its grant with the Arc of Virginia where a 508-compliant website was developed to house COVID-19 resources for people with disabilities.

This year, the website received 1,148 views. Of the 86 individuals who answered a question about whether they were able to find the resources they were looking for on the website, 67 (78%) indicated they were.

Council continued monitoring its previously-funded grant project to the Arc of Virginia, titled “**A Life Like Yours Alliance – Strengthening Self-Advocacy in Virginia.**” The grant aimed to increase the availability of inclusive supports for residential, employment and day activities for people with developmental disabilities, through the formation of an alliance of self-advocacy groups, working to influence changes to policy, programs, and systems.

During 2021, the grantee facilitated skill-building and other advocacy activities that included the following:

1. Working with 10 Ally Alliance self-advocate members to advocate in various advisory committees, such as the Home and Community-based services and the Individual

## POST-GRANT ACTIVITIES

and Family Support Programs, and make recommendations on issues in their respective communities

2. Co-hosted two self-advocacy mobilization events to develop educational materials about advocacy needs for the 2021 legislative session. All 10 participating self-advocates (100%) who took post-event surveys indicated they were satisfied.

3. Provided skills-advocacy training to eight self-advocate Alliance members, all of whom (100%) later reported being satisfied with the training they received

4. Provided training to 35 service support providers on the

process for transitioning support services for individuals with DD from a segregated group home structure to a more inclusive community-based model that includes in-home services and supports

5. Continued to promote its previously-created “A Life Like Yours” Alliance video, which showcased inclusive services to support people with developmental and other disabilities in their communities. The video was viewed 941 times via YouTube. The developed resources can be found at [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2fPYS2pFzKmAtFDHDo\\_picybXAACG0\\_K](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2fPYS2pFzKmAtFDHDo_picybXAACG0_K).





# GRANTS

## Active Grants

### Radford University



The Board completed funding a **\$144,187 grant (\$31,333 in matching funds)** to Radford University. The project began October 2018 and aimed to

increase the capacity of schools to sustain an inclusive academic, social, emotional, and physical learning environment for students with DD through professional development training, inclusion action plans, and online modules designed to assist schools with implementing those plans.

During 2021, the grantee

1. Trained seven individuals with DD, 37 of their family members, and 305 school officials, educators and other professionals on the importance of advocating for inclusive school practices and strategies for successful implementation
2. Provided a cognitive coaching training session to 56 school coaches from the involved school systems regarding how to create and enhance a culture of inclusion, collaborate with educators, and implement inclusive practices

3. Trained 57 professionals at the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) annual conference on how culture, collaboration, and coaching can facilitate practices for students with DD.

The project concluded September 30, 2021 and the grantee will report post-grant outcomes for a period of two years through September 2023.

### Grants to purchase technology for K-12 students to learn virtually

The Board provided funding to the four K-12 school systems in underserved areas of Virginia, listed below, to purchase technological devices to allow their students with developmental and other disabilities to learn virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. All projects began November 1, 2020 and concluded by June 2021.

- **\$10,000 (\$5,643 matching funds)** to Alternative Paths Training School to purchase 40 iPad devices, which were utilized by 40 students with DD to participate in virtual classroom instruction. Evaluation activities indicate that the iPad devices had an overall positive impact on the participating students. All 21 students (100%) and all 35 family members who completed a survey indicated that they were satisfied with the students' ability to access virtual education using the iPad. Additionally, 14 of 18



parents (77%) and all 12 teachers (100%) who were surveyed reported that the iPads improved student performance.

■ **\$9,360 (\$2,951 matching funds)** to Carroll County Public Schools to purchase 20 MiFi hotspots and service plans, which were utilized by 18 students with DD to participate in virtual classroom instruction. Evaluation activities indicate that the hotspots had an overall positive impact on the participating students. All 15 students (100%) and all 15 family members (100%) who completed a survey indicated that they were satisfied with the students' ability to access virtual education using the hotspot devices. Additionally, seven of eight parents (88%) who were surveyed reported that the hotspots improved student performance.

■ **\$6,500 (\$1,625 matching funds)** to Colonial Beach Public Schools to purchase a variety of assistive technology, including reader pens, noise canceling headphones and instructional software, which were utilized by 29 students with DD to participate in virtual classroom instruction. Evaluation activities indicate that the assistive technology had an overall positive impact on the participating students. All 18 students (100%) and all 18 family members (100%) who completed a survey indicated that they were satisfied with their ability to access virtual education using the assistive devices.

■ **\$8,968.43 (\$996.49 matching funds)** to Richmond City Public Schools to purchase 25 touchscreen Chromebooks, which were utilized by 24 students with DD to participate in virtual classroom instruction. Evaluation activities indicate that the Chromebooks had an overall positive impact on the participating students. Additionally, 11 of 12 students (92%)

and 10 of 12 family members (83%) who completed a survey indicated that they were satisfied with their ability to access virtual education using the Chromebooks. And two of five parents (40%) and all two teachers (100%) who were surveyed reported that the Chromebooks improved student grades.

All grantees will continue to use the technological devices for virtual learning and/or in-classroom instruction, as needed, in the coming years.

### Virginia Commonwealth University



The Board completed funding an **\$89,252 grant (\$29,757 in matching funds)** to Virginia's University Center for Excellence in Developmental

Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University to conduct its project titled, "**Ensuring Accessibility to All Survivors.**" The project, which began August 2019 and concluded July 2021, aimed to translate information about abuse and obtaining protective orders into American Sign Language (ASL) for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. The grant also provided abuse awareness training to agencies that provide services to deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

During 2021, the grantee

1. Distributed an updated needs assessment survey to the Technology Assistance Program (TAP) specialists at the Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) to help inform the content for abuse awareness

training. The needs assessment found that the specialists knew the least about person-centered strategies for supporting abuse victims, how to help abuse victims develop a safety plan, and where to refer abuse victims.

2. Finalized the creation of a Richmond-specific video in American Sign Language about the characteristics of abuse and the available resources to assist individuals who are deaf and/or hard of hearing that may have experienced abuse

3. Provided virtual abuse awareness training for 17 TAP specialists at VDDHH who support individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing

The Richmond-specific and statewide videos finalized during 2020, received 770 views in 2021 via a publicly facing YouTube page and via VDDHH's Facebook page. Based on results from pre- and post-participation surveys of 10 TAP specialists who attended the virtual training, the virtual training led to an 88% increase in understanding of how to support people who are deaf or hard of hearing when they disclose domestic violence/sexual assault; 97% increase in their understanding of person-centered strategies they could use to support individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing that disclose abuse; 85% increase in their understanding of how to help people who are deaf or hard of hearing develop a safety plan when they disclose abuse; 85% increase in their understanding of where to refer deaf and hard of hearing individuals when they disclose abuse, and 95% increase in understanding of the different types of protective orders.



### The Up Center

The Board completed funding a **\$20,055 (\$6,685 in matching funds)** grant to The Up Center to create a board game called **SAFARI**. The project, which began August 2019 and concluded January 2021, aimed to increase Direct Service Professionals' (DSP) job satisfaction and reduce turnover.

This year, the grantee contracted with a graphic artist to refine the game, which was disseminated to 18 DSPs in Virginia, who engaged in game play with three residents with DD. Due to the pandemic, the grantee pivoted its anticipated in-person DSP training to a virtual platform, and trained a total of 25 DSPs on the game.

Outcome information was unfortunately limited by the COVID-19 pandemic and low survey response rates. Of the 9 DSP respondents, 6 (66%) said that playing the game has influenced their decision to stay in their current job. The project ended January 2021, but the Board will continue to monitor project outcomes for an additional two years through January 2023.

### The Arc of Northern Virginia



Council continued to fund a **\$130,000 (\$45,025 in matching funds)** grant to The Arc of Northern Virginia to conduct its project, titled **"My Choice Virginia: Supported Decision-**



**Making for People with Developmental Disabilities.”** The project, which began August 2019 and concluded December 2020, aimed to empower people with developmental disabilities to use Supported Decision-Making (SDM). During 2021, the grantee

1. Created a handout on SDM that received 288 views and an accompanying video that received 1,437 views
2. Worked with Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University to study and document the impact of SDM on 10 project participants with DD and 12 family members
3. Administered SDM trainings, both in person and virtually to 184 professionals, three people with DD, 33 family members, and 368 other individuals. The project had promising early outcomes. All 10 participants with DD reported interest in discontinuing their pursuit or current use of guardianship as a result of the project.

### **Release of Community Supports Request for Proposal (RFP)**

The Board released an RFP, targeting the area of community supports and awarded four grant projects, which began August 1, 2021.

1. **\$10,000 (\$29,281 in matching funds)** to Brain Injury Services of Southwest Virginia to increase socialization and reduce isolation for individuals with DD, as a result of brain injury, and their families
2. **\$41,000 (\$11,000 in matching funds)** to Children’s

Assistive Technology Service to provide community service boards with assistive technology devices and technical assistance to support the development of infants and toddlers with DD and their families

3. **\$275,000 (\$91,667 in matching funds)** to James Madison University to assist rural counties in Virginia to leverage existing resources and access new opportunities intended to transform the physical and emotional health of individuals with DD and their families
4. **\$111,364 (\$37,123 in matching funds)** to Virginia Commonwealth University to develop a pilot foundational training on inclusion, diversity and equity for community-based organizations that serve people with DD and their families

Outcome data for each grant will be reported in 2022.

### **Hope House Foundation**

Council completed funding a **\$6,090** grant to the Hope House Foundation to conduct its project titled, “**Enhancing Engagement and Reducing Isolation During the COVID-19 Pandemic.**” The project, which began May 2020 and ended December 2020, aimed to develop videos to combat isolation of people with disabilities during the pandemic.

This year, the grantee created two videos on legislative advocacy and worked with a contractor to edit the videos and ensure their accessibility. The videos received 1,670 views. Additionally, 18 individuals with DD participated in the development of the videos, which premiered at the Arc of





Virginia's annual conference, attended by 68 people, five of whom were people with DD. The grantee also held a webinar showcasing the videos to eight people with DD, 18 family members and 10 professionals. Eight people with DD and eight family members who were at the webinar event, and took a post-event survey, reported satisfaction with the videos. The developed resources can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNC830eSLt9TdUyZgEbmWWA>.

### **Project Living-Well – A Project of National Significance**

The Board continued as a sub-grantee to the Partnership for People with Disabilities at Virginia Commonwealth University to participate in a grant project, titled “**Project Living Well.**” The goal of the project is to support people with DD who are using Home and Community-Based Services, as well as those waiting for services, by implementing a replicable and sustainable model of (1) evidence-based and informed capacity building; and (2) community monitoring that will align and augment disparate monitoring and quality initiatives. The five-year project began September 2017 and will conclude September 2022.

This year, the Board continued to promote trend reports that were released during 2020 regarding early intervention, housing, and education. The reports were viewed a total of 379 times. Trend reports on community supports, healthcare and employment are under final review and will be released in 2022. The resources developed through the Board's partnership with VCU can be found at <https://vaboard.org/projectlivingwell.htm>.



## disAbility Law Center of Virginia



Council funded a **\$100,000 grant (\$33,350 matching funds)** to the disAbility Law Center of Virginia, the state's Protection & Advocacy

organization, to create a database of abuse, neglect, and exploitation data. The project began May 2021 and ended September 30, 2021. The database will allow the grantee to analyze information from the Virginia Department for Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to

- Identify trends of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Make recommendations based on the trends
- Monitor critical incidents and health and safety of individuals with disabilities receiving services in programs operated or licensed by DBHDS

This year, the grantee

1. Contracted with a vendor to create the database
2. Collaborated with DBHDS and DARS to receive abuse and incident data
3. Recruited six volunteers to join a Coalition for Community Safety, which guides the direction of the project

4. Trained 15 individuals with DD, 10 family members, and 54 grantee staff, interns, and volunteers on how to interpret incident and abuse data received from DBHDS

Next year, the grantee will contract with an organization to install a server to house the incident data it receives from DBHDS and DARS, and will share its key findings and identified trends with the Board to improve the health and safety of individuals with developmental and other disabilities. The grantee will provide outcome data to Council for a period of two years following the end of the grant, from October 2021 through September 2023.

### Release of Self-Advocacy Request for Proposal (RFP)

During 2021, the Board released a new self-advocacy RFP designed to support a self-advocacy organization or program that would advocate for changes to policies, programs and systems for individuals with developmental disabilities. The Board began funding a \$50,000 grant to the Arc of Virginia titled, "**Strengthening Self-Advocacy in Virginia**," to build the capacity of self-advocates in Virginia as DD advocacy leaders, through grassroots expansion of the membership and leadership of the ALLY Alliance which was created in 2019 using Board funds. The grantee will be providing advocacy skills training to local self-advocates, as well as individualized coaching and experiential leadership training for liaisons from each member organization. The grant project began August 2021 and will conclude July 2022.

# WORKGROUPS

The Board participated on approximately 26 advisory councils, stakeholder groups and workgroups in FFY 2021:

- Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services No Wrong Door Resource Advisory Council
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Employment First Advisory Group
- Department of Special Education Advocacy Stakeholders Group
- Department of Education State Special Education Advisory Committee
- Department of Housing and Community Development Interagency Housing Advisory Committee
- Department of Medical Assistance Services Developmental Disabilities Waiver Advisory Council
- Project Living Well Advisory Council Leadership Team
- VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities I-CAN! Accessibility Project Advisory Board
- Virginia Department of Health Advisory Council on Health Disparity and Health Equity
- Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation Human Service Transportation Committee
- Virginia Department of Health Multi-Agency Coronavirus Health Equity Working Group
- Virginia Department of Health Vaccine Advisory Workgroup
- Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services Medicaid Managed Care Advisory Workgroup
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Community of Practice for Supporting Families
- Supported Decision Making Workgroup
- Virginia Department of Corrections HB 659 Workgroup

## WORKGROUPS

- Secretary of Health and Human Resources Scarce Resource Allocation Workgroup
- Virginia Ability Community Advisory Council
- HB 2197 Permanent Use of Virtual Supports Workgroup
- Coalition for Community Safety
- Home and Community Based Services Advisory Committee
- DD Waivers Rate Rebase & Waitlist Reduction Workgroup
- Health Catalyst Policy Committee
- Children's Services Act Workgroup
- Scarce Resource Allocation Stakeholders Group
- Access to Higher Education Advisory Committee







## **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities**

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