

**FFY 2024 Update to Five-Year State Plan**

**Goals, Objectives, and Activities**

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to the U.S. Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

**For additional information, or to obtain this document in an alternate format, contact:**

Email: [info@vbpd.virginia.gov](mailto:info@vbpd.virginia.gov?subject=VBPD%20State%20Plan)

Web: <http://www.vaboard.org>

Mail: Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor

Richmond, VA 23219

Phone: 1-800-846-4464 (Voice/TTY) or 804-786-0016

## **Who is the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities?**

Under the federal law, each state is authorized to establish a Developmental Disabilities Council. The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities (the Board) serves as the Commonwealth’s Developmental Disabilities Council.

The Board’s mission is 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. The Board’s vision is that Virginians with developmental and other disabilities direct their own lives and choose how they live, learn, work, and play.

The Board has historically organized its work into three main functional areas in order to achieve its mission and vision. These areas include policy advocacy, grant funding, and training programs. These areas collectively aim to achieve systems change and build the capacity of the disability services system.

## **What is a State Plan?**

Developmental Disability Councils are required to develop five-year State Plans that provide a framework for how the Council will advance its mission. The current State Plan covers October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2026. It addresses five main areas of the disability services system: community supports, healthcare, quality assurance, education, and employment.

The current State Plan was developed by an ad hoc committee of the Board. The ad hoc committee considered relevant data, public input, and Board member knowledge of unmet needs. The ad hoc committee was also guided by four key factors: (1) priorities identified per the Developmental Disabilities Act and the relevant data, public input, and Board member knowledge of unmet needs; (2) purpose of Developmental Disability Councils per the Developmental Disabilities Act; (3) feasibility based on agency resources, staff expertise, and input from various external stakeholders; and (4) flexibility to adapt its strategy as information or resources change.

## **What is a State Plan Update?**

Developmental Disabilities Councils are required to update their State Plan annually for each federal fiscal year (FFY), which runs from October through September. This FFY 2024 State Plan Update reflects changes made during the first two years of the five-year plan. The Board submitted the changes on August 10, 2023 and received federal approval on September 28, 2023.

## **What is in the Board’s Current State Plan?**

The Board’s current State Plan goals, objectives, and activities are listed below. The Board has four goals and 17 objectives. Items that are completed, revised, or extended are identified.

**Goal 1 (Community Supports): By October 2026, more Virginians with developmental disabilities and their families, reflecting the state’s geographic and cultural diversity, will have increased ability to access paid and unpaid services and supports that enable community living.**

### **Objective 1-1 (Information Access)**: By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives to improve how people with DD and their families identify, understand, plan, access, and utilize available community services and supports.

Activity 1.1.1: (Completed in FFY 2022) Fund grant project to assess how people access information regarding community services and supports, and the helpfulness of available information, and to make related policy recommendations. (Completed in FFY 2023) Continue to advocate for recommendations in the Board’s FFY 2022 assessment of information access by convening a Summit and stakeholder workgroup, potentially with support from Project Living Well (a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance), to review the recommendations and develop implementation strategies. (FFY 2024; Revised wording) Continue to advocate for recommendations in the Board’s FFY 2022 assessment of information access.

Activity 1.1.2: (FFYs 2022-26) Share culturally and linguistically competent information on community supports and services that are available for people with developmental disabilities by providing more up-to-date and user-friendly information on the Board’s website.

Activity 1.1.3: (FFY 2024; Revised wording) Map the information ecology of Virginia’s Medicaid services and provide recommendations to manage the information more effectively.

Activity 1.1.4: (FFYs 2024-26; New activity) Provide culturally and linguistically competent information about disability services and resources to non-English speaking Virginians with disabilities and/or their families.

**Objective 1-2 (Rural Access):** By October 2026, the Board will support initiatives that increase the ability of Virginians with developmental disabilities who live in underserved rural areas to access culturally and linguistically competent services and supports that enable community living.

Activity 1.2.1: (FFYs 2023-24; Timeline extended) Assess the extent of, and contributing factors towards, disparities between urban, suburban, and rural areas in access to, and utilization of, paid and unpaid services and supports that enable community living, and advocate for related recommendations.

Activity 1.2.2: (FFYs 2022-25)Continue funding and/or monitoring grant to Emory & Henry College to increase access to assistive technologies through partnerships with early intervention programs administered by community service boards in the Southwest Virginia area.

Activity 1.2.3: (FFYs 2022-24)Continue funding and/or monitoring a grant with Brain Injury Services of Southwest Virginia to match people with developmental disabilities in Southwest, Central, and Southside Virginia with a trusted adult for socialization, community integration, and relationship building.

Activity 1.2.4: (FFYs 2025-26; Timeline extended)Fund and/or monitor grant project to implement recommendations from the Board’s FFY 2023 assessment of access to community services and supports in rural areas.

**Objective 1-3 (Community Supports Barrier Reduction):** By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that reduce barriers to community living for Virginians with developmental disabilities.

Activity 1.3.1: (FFYs 2022-26)Advocate for culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices that seek to reduce barriers to community living.

Activity 1.3.2: (Completed in FFYs 2022-23) Assess consumer-directed services and supports within Virginia’s Medicaid program and advocate for related policy recommendations.

Activity 1.3.3: (FFYs 2023-26)Fund and/or monitor a grant with VDDHH to facilitate development of the Support Service Providers workforce and connecting them to consumers who are deafblind.

Activity 1.3.4: (FFYs 2022-25)Continue funding and/or monitoring a grant with Virginia Commonwealth University to train community-based organizations in Central Virginia and Hampton Roads on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Objective 1-4 (Public Awareness):** By October 2026, the Board will increase public awareness by sharing culturally and linguistically competent information and experiences about the contributions of Virginians with developmental disabilities to their communities.

Activity 1.4.1: (FFYs 2023-24; Timeline extended) Identify and fund a project for a culturally and linguistically competent public awareness campaign.

Activity 1.4.2: (FFY 2026; Timeline extended)Educate members of the news media on people with disabilities. Planned tasks include the creation of a resource guide and/or training curriculum.

**Objective 1-5 (Emerging Issues):** The Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that mitigate emerging issues related to community living for Virginians with developmental disabilities.

**Goal 2 (Healthcare & Quality Assurance): By October 2026, more Virginians with developmental disabilities and their families, reflecting the state’s geographic and cultural diversity, will have increased ability to access services and supports that enable health and safety.**

**Objective 2-1 (Healthcare Advocacy):** By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that increase the ability of Virginians with developmental disabilities to access healthcare.

Activity 2.1.1:(FFYs 2022-26) Advocate for culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices that promote the health of people with disabilities.

Activity 2.1.2: (FFYs 2022-25) Continue funding and/or monitoring grant to James Madison University to educate stakeholders in rural communities across the Shenandoah Valley about inclusive wellness programming to transform the physical and emotional health of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Activity 2.1.3: (FFYs 2024-25; Revised activity) Provide financial, educational, and/or other resources to dental professionals so they can improve their accessibility to people with disabilities.

**Objective 2-2 (DD Network Collaboration):** By October 2026, the Board will collaborate with the DD Network to identify, target, and reduce barriers that impede Virginians with developmental disabilities’ access to healthcare through assessment, advocacy, and education.

Activity 2.2.1: (FFYs 2023-24) In collaboration with the DD Network, assess the physical, programmatic, and/or communications accessibility of healthcare providers across the state of Virginia and advocate for related recommendations for improvement.

Activity 2.2.2: (FFYs 2024-26; Revised activity) In collaboration with the DD Network, share culturally and linguistically competent information with people with developmental disabilities and their family members to improve their oral health.

**Objective 2-3 (Quality Assurance):** By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that increase the ability of Virginians with developmental disabilities to be free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Activity 2.3.1: (FFYs 2022-26) Advocate for culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices that promote the health and safety of people with disabilities.

Activity 2.3.2: (Completed in FFY 2022) In collaboration with the DD Network, continue participating in *Project Living Well*, a Developmental Disabilities Project of National Significance.

Activity 2.3.3: (FFYs 2022-26) Monitor health and safety trends in intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities, and make related recommendations as needed.

Activity 2.3.4: (FFYs 2024-25) Advocate for the recommendations in the Council’s FFY 2024 assessment of inclusive emergency preparedness.

**Objective 2-4 (Emerging Issues):** The Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that mitigate emerging issues related to the health and safety of Virginians with developmental disabilities.

**Goal 3 (Education & Employment): By October 2026, more Virginians with developmental disabilities, reflecting the state’s geographic and cultural diversity, will have (1) increased ability to participate and learn in an inclusive school environment; and (2) increased ability to prepare for, and obtain, competitive, integrated employment and other career goals and opportunities.**

### **Objective 3-1 (School Inclusion):** By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that promote an inclusive school environment for Virginians with developmental disabilities, including opportunities for inclusive K-12 and postsecondary education.

Activity 3.1.1: (FFYs 2022-26) Advocate for culturally and linguistically competent policies and practices that promote access to an inclusive school environment in K-12 and postsecondary education for people with developmental disabilities.

Activity 3.1.2: (FFYs 2025-26; Timeline extended) Assess the impact of COVID-19 on learning among students with developmental disabilities, throughout the state, and provide related recommendations.

Activity 3.1.3: (FFYs 2024-26) Fund and/or monitor grant project to train parents of students with developmental disabilities about their rights to free and appropriate public education (FAPE), including during an emergency.

Activity 3.1.4: (FFY 2026; Timeline extended) Fund and/or monitor grant project to train school personnel in the broader school community on best practices for supporting an inclusive, student-centered environment for students with developmental disabilities.

**Objective 3-2 (Targeted Disparity):** (Completed in FFY 2022) By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that reduce the percentage of school districts in Virginia that disproportionately suspend, expel, or otherwise seclude students with disabilities who are black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) from their typical learning environment.

Activity 3.2.1: (Completed in FFY 2022) Assess the extent of, and contributing factors for, disproportionate suspension, expulsion, and/or seclusion among students with disabilities who are black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) and advocate for related recommendations.

**Objective 3-3 (Employment Training):** By October 2026, more Virginians with developmental disabilities, their family members, employers, school personnel, and/or other key stakeholders will receive training and information about the abilities of people with developmental disabilities to increase opportunities for competitive, integrated employment.

Activity 3.3.1: (Completed in FFY 2023) Create and/or share culturally and linguistically competent information about competitive, integrated employment to address gaps identified through the Board’s policy work.

Activity 3.3.2: (FFYs 2024-26; Combination of two previous activities) Fund and/or monitor grant project to train self-advocates, their family members, and/or potential new employers about competitive, integrated employment.

**Objective 3-4 (Employment Barrier Reduction):** By October 2026, the Board will support culturally and linguistically competent initiatives that reduce barriers to Virginians with developmental disabilities obtaining competitive, integrated employment.

Activity 3.4.1: (FFYs 2022-26) Advocate for policies and practices that reduce barriers to competitive, integrated employment.

Activity 3.4.2: (FFYs 2025-26; Timeline extended) Assess the barriers to competitive, integrated employment, including but not limited to barriers stemming from COVID-19, and make related recommendations to mitigate them.

Activity 3.4.3: (FFYs 2025-26; Timeline extended) Assess barriers to the provision of transition services and supports for students with developmental disabilities and make related recommendations to mitigate them.

**Goal 4 (Self-Advocacy): By October 2026, more Virginians with developmental disabilities and their family members, reflecting the state’s geographic and cultural diversity, will be better able to advocate for themselves and others so that they are able to exercise maximum choice, independence, and control in their lives.**

**Objective 4-1 (Self-Advocacy Organization):** Each year, from FFY 2022 through 2026, the Board will establish or strengthen a state self-advocacy organization led by individuals with developmental disabilities through direct funding or other support.

Activity 4.1.1: (FFYs 2022-25) Continue funding and/or monitoring grant project with the Arc of Virginia to build the capacity of self-advocacy through expanding the membership and leadership of the ALLY Alliance.

Activity 4.1.2: (FFY 2024-25) Establish or strengthen a statewide self-advocacy organization led by individuals with developmental disabilities through direct funding or other support.

**Objective 4-2 (Self-Advocates as Trainers):** By October 2026, the Board will use at least 15 self-advocates as trainers in the Board’s advocacy and leadership development programs, and promote opportunities for them to provide leadership training within other organizations.

Activity 4.2.1: (FFYs 2022-26; Reduced frequency) Conduct a biennial train-the-trainer event to train self-advocates on how to train other self-advocates to be leaders.

Activity 4.2.2: (FFYs 2022-26)Use self-advocates as leadership trainers in Board programs.

**Objective 4-3 (Training and Development of Self-Advocates):** By October 2026, the Board will support training and development programs that result in at least 50 Virginians with developmental disabilities being actively engaged in public policy advocacy, and participating on cross-disability leadership coalitions.

Activity 4.3.1: (FFYs 2023 and 2025) Conduct a biennial Youth Leadership Academy in FFYs 2023 and 2025 for people with developmental and other disabilities.

Activity 4.3.2: (FFYs 2022, 2024, and 2026; Revised wording) Conduct a biennial evidence-based Partners in Policymaking program in FFYs 2021-22, 2023-24, and 2025-26 for people with developmental and other disabilities.

Activity 4.3.3: (FFYs 2022-26; Revised wording) Implement the year-round Alumni Development Program to provide continuing education and strategic communications to Virginians with developmental and other disabilities, including but not limited to alumni of the Youth Leadership Academy and/or Partners in Policymaking program.

**Objective 4-4 (Training and Development of Family Members):** By October 2026, the Board will support training and development programs that result in at least 100 family members of Virginians with developmental disabilities being actively engaged in public policy advocacy.

Activity 4.4.1: (FFYs 2022, 2024, and 2026; Revised wording) Conduct a biennial evidence-based Partners in Policymaking program in FFYs 2021-22, 2023-24, and 2025-26 for family members of people with developmental and other disabilities.

Activity 4.4.2: (FFYs 2022-26; Revised wording) Implement the year-round Alumni Development Program to provide continuing education and strategic communications to family members of people with developmental and other disabilities, including but not limited to alumni of the Youth Leadership Academy and/or Partners in Policymaking program.