

**WASHINGTON STATE
DD LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
(Called Partners in Policymaking in other states)
1990 forward**

The Council's federal DD Act direct state Councils to "engage in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change activities that contribute to a coordinated, consumer-and family-centered, consumer-and family directed, comprehensive system that includes needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.."

The Council's Disabilities Leadership Development program accomplishes all these goals. The purpose is to educate people about service systems, train people in advocacy, develop capacity throughout the state and develop new leadership in the DD movement.

The Council has consistently put leadership development in each State Plan and appropriated funding to continue the training. It is attached to the goal of Self-Advocacy, with performance targets on training individuals with developmental disabilities and family members (with some community members) to become systems advocates. A new RFP is issued at the beginning of each State Plan period.

1990 to present

The Washington State DD Council started funding leadership classes in 1990 in partnership with our UCEDD, the University of Washington, where classes were held. It was a contracted project for the first 6 years, then the contract was brought in-house and Council staff took over responsibility, guided by a Leadership Advisory Committee. Participants were from all parts of the state.

Although the project was successful in many ways, several challenges arose that necessitated looking at new ways of doing leadership training.

1. If there was only one participant from a geographic area, the follow up at home was difficult. People needed a core group of people who had been trained and with whom they could work in their own community.

Isolation was an issue. We didn't think we were getting the kind of long-term community capacity building we wanted. For one year, we tried recruiting teams of people from an area to apply as a group. It helped to some extent.

2. Participants from another part of the state failed to see the relevance in learning about local programs/resources in King County (the biggest county in the state, where the UW is, and where we could get weekend speakers) when their smaller or more rural counties were quite different in what they could offer.
3. We were having accommodation issues at the UW.

So, the Advisory Committee developed a new model we called "Local Leadership". We looked at the number of graduates we had throughout the state and what they were doing. Many were quite successfully engaged in DD work. Those people would be in a position to conduct their own classes locally if they were funded and had guidance. Thus, local leadership was born. The Council embraced this idea and decided to fund three local leadership projects per year (actually about a year and a half with community project time) plus a Legislative Weekend in Olympia that brings people from all the projects together to learn legislative issues, process and advocacy.

2002-present

Three local leadership projects are funded per year and a half project period (July 1 through Sept 30 of the next year or December 31 of that next year, depending on which federal fiscal year dollars are being used). The projects are conducted by local non-profit agencies. There has been one Advanced Leadership class, composed of previous graduates, and held a Reunion Workshop with graduates from all classes and years where we brainstormed new ideas and directions.

Each project is given about \$16,000 (for the early years it was \$13,000) to hold six local training workshops for about 15 people, who are a mixture of self advocates, parents and a few interested parties, such as a state case manager or service provider. The Council organizes and pays for the "Leadership Legislative Weekend" in early December in Olympia. Project members follow that with participating in Advocacy Days during the legislative session starting in January.

The next revelation was that two project years in a row with the same people/community would yield much greater results than one year. Local project coordinators felt that they learned so much during a project period and people in their communities were clamoring to be a part of what was happening, and then all of a sudden it was over.

The nature of our families is that many people live with constant crises. People's ability to participate at any given time varies. Also, their ability to continue this work varies depending on what's happening in their lives at the time. Funding two projects in a row (with different sets of participants) provides continuity and momentum for more capacity in a community. So, most communities have had successive projects, sometimes skipping a year or two in between, but usually with the same coordinators.

The Council's commitment to this ongoing project has created new organizations and coalitions in communities throughout most of the state. Currently, there have been participants from 27 of the state's 39 counties. We're still trying to reach a few rural counties where there hasn't been an organization to hold a contract.

Council staff has developed a Local Leadership Coordinator's Handbook that guides the coordinators' workshop planning and to which they all contribute their ideas and learnings. It mirrors the RFP, with much more detail. Council staff provides ongoing technical assistance to each project and Council members receive information on outcomes, community projects and the long-term effect on people's lives. Our State Plan staff person tells us that we need to start surveying people after projects to show outcomes/results for reporting to the feds.

A number of leadership graduates have become Council members and we can see a significant difference in the amount of sophistication and knowledge they bring to the Council compared with other applicants.

The Council has added basic leadership classes that outreach to minority communities. In 2012-2013, the King County Arc held classes for Latino, Somali, Asian and African American participants, who were all bi-lingual. In 2014-2015, the Arc of Snohomish and Yakima counties conducted classes with all-Latino members, some of whom were bi-lingual. Materials were translated and interpreters utilized. Snohomish County was again funded

for an all-Latino class in 205-16 and Clark County funded its own local leadership classes in English and Spanish. Spokane and Clark counties have funded their own advanced leadership classes. The part they tell us they can't duplicate, whether it is a beginning or advanced class, is the Legislative Weekend that the Council organizes and funds for each group of classes. That usually costs about \$15-20,000 and each grantee only gets \$16,666 to conduct all their contracted activities, so that costs is borne through State Plan Implementation dollars.

In order to reach some more rural communities in the state where there is not a potential contracting entity, we have sought an organization from a neighboring county to act as the contractor. Contract details are conducted mostly by email, with classes held in a local community in a different area of the state. That model has had limited success. We are continuing to try to interest local non-profit organizations in the "non-DD world".

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