



STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Bylaws in Plain Language

What are Bylaws?



- Bylaws are the rules the Council follows.
- Our bylaws explain:
 - ✓ Who we are
 - ✓ What we do
 - ✓ How we do it
- Our bylaws help the Council run good meetings and make good decisions.

Information about the Council



- We are called “the State Council” or “the Council.”
- A federal law called the Developmental Disabilities Act created us. Most people call it the “DD Act.”
- We get our funding (money) from the federal government. We use our funding to run the Council and pay for grants and other activities.
- The DD Act lists some rules we have to follow. We have to follow those rules or we will not get our funding. If we do not get our funding, we cannot do our work.

Independence



The Council is a part of state government, but no one in state government tells us what to do. We are independent. We must follow some state laws, but in the end make decisions for ourselves.

This includes decisions about:

- What we do
- How we spend our money
- Who we hire as our staff

What the Council Wants for People with Developmental Disabilities



The Council works to make life better for people with developmental disabilities and their families.

We want people with developmental disabilities to have good lives. This means they have more chances to:

- Live where they want
- Go to school with their friends and neighbors who do not have disabilities
- Get a job
- Have the support they need

What the Council Does

This is how the Council decides what issues to work on:



- Every 5 years we must create a plan for the upcoming term. This is called our “State Plan.” The State Plan lists the goals and activities we will work on over 5 years. Goals describe what the Council wants to see happen.
- Every year we develop a work plan. The work plans have more information than the state plan. They help us decide how to use our budget and staff time.
- We are always checking to see if we are making progress on our goals.
- We send a report about this to the federal government every year so they know what we are doing with the money they give us.

These are the kinds of things Council members and staff work on together:



We make sure laws and policies in California help people with developmental disabilities.

- Laws and policies are rules we have to follow.
- For example, they tell us what services people can get to help them at home, in school, and in the community.



We help make services better. When services are better:

- More families get good support for their children with developmental disabilities.
- More adults with developmental disabilities get to live where they want, get a job, and do what they want in their community.



We train people with developmental disabilities and their families to be advocates.

- This means they speak up for what they want. They get people and organizations to do things that are good for people with disabilities.



We give people with developmental disabilities and their families information. The information helps them:

- Advocate for themselves
- Find the services and supports they need
- Have a good life

Council Membership

The Council has the following kinds of members:



- 1) People with developmental disabilities.
- 2) Family members of people with developmental disabilities.
Family members are husbands, wives, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters.

Most Council members are people with developmental disabilities and family members.



- 3) At least one Council member must be:
A person with a developmental disability or a family member of a person with a developmental disability who:
 - Lives in an institution, or
 - Used to live in an institution.



- 4) The Council also has members from each of these agencies:
 - Department of Health and Human Services
 - Department of Developmental Services
 - Department of Rehabilitation
 - The Superintendent of Public Instruction
 - Disability Rights California
 - Three people from California university centers working on issues for people with disabilities
 - Department of Aging
 - Department of Health Care Services

Council members:

- Have different kinds of developmental disabilities
- Are men and women
- Are from different races and backgrounds
- Live in all different parts of California

How people become Council members:



The Council looks for people that:

- Want to make life better for people with developmental disabilities and their families, and
- Can help us work on our goals.



People are “appointed” to the Council by the governor. This means they become a member.

Members stay on the Council for 3 years at first. After 3 years, members can stay another 3 years. This can happen if they are interested in staying and they have been good Council members – if so, the Governor appoints them again.

Rules about coming to Council meetings:



- There are 6 Council meetings each year.
- Members must come to as many meetings as they can
- If they miss too many meetings, their Council membership will end. This means they will stop being a Council member.

Conflict of Interest

Council Members



Sometimes a Council member or one of their family members has a connection to an organization that wants money from the Council. The organization wants money to support a project or activity. That means the Council member has a “conflict of interest.”



When we say “family member” we mean:

- Husband or wife
- Girlfriend, boyfriend, or partner
- Parent
- Siblings
- Children



Very Important:

Council members **cannot:**

- Be a part of any discussion about a request for money from an organization or group they are connected to.
- Be a part of any discussion about a request for money from an organization or group their family member is connected to.

- Vote on a request for money from an organization or group they are connected to.
- Be a part of any other Council activity related to a request for money from an organization or group they are connected to.



Council members must tell the Council staff when they are connected to an organization that has asked for Council money.

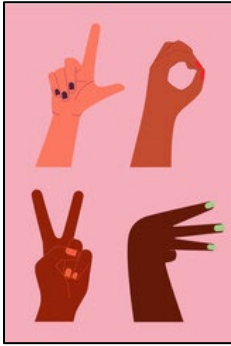


The Council puts information in meeting minutes when a member has a conflict of interest.

Council Meetings

- The Council meets 6 times a year.
- The Council can have more meetings if the Council decides more are needed.
- People that are not Council members can also come to meetings.
- Only Council members can vote at meetings. People that are not members can still come to meetings and make comments to the Council. The comments may have time limits so that everyone has a chance to speak.





- All meetings are at places everyone can get to and get around in, or by video online.
- The Council has a sign language interpreter at meetings if a member or guest needs one.
- The Council can change meeting materials to help members and guests read them. Examples are braille or large print.

Voting

VOTE

The Council can only take votes at meetings when at least half of the members are there. This is called a “quorum.”

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Each Council member gets 1 vote.

Council Leaders



- The Council has a chairperson and vice-chairperson. They are the leaders of the Council.
- Council members pick who will be the chairperson and vice-chairperson every two years. This is called their “term.”



- The Council tries to pick people with developmental disabilities and family members to be the chairperson and vice-chairperson.

LEADERSHIP



LEADERSHIP

The Chairperson:

- Attends Executive Committee meetings and Council meetings.
- Helps Council members participate in meetings and make good decisions.
- Picks Council members to be on the Executive Committee.
- Picks Council members to be on other committees.
- Helps the Executive Director and staff when they work with the governor, legislature, and other organizations.
- Supports the Executive Director.

The Vice-Chairperson:

- Takes over the responsibilities listed above when the chairperson cannot do them.
- Makes sure that meetings follow rules like taking comments, acting on motions, and ending the meeting properly.
- Does other things for the Council when the chairperson or Executive Director asks them to do so.

Committees and Work Teams



- The Council has committees that help run the Council: Executive Committee, Administrative Committee, Membership Committee, Legislative and Public Policy Committee, Self-advocates Advisory Committee, Employment first Committee, State Plan Committee.
- Each Council member is on at least 1 committee or work team.
- The Council can create other committees if needed.
- Committees give reports at Council meetings about what they are working on.

Council Staff



- The Council hires the Executive Director of the Council.
- The executive director hires and supervises the Council staff.

The executive director and staff only do what the Council wants. No one outside of the Council can tell them what to do.

Council Funding (Money)

Council Budget



The Council's budget is a list of everything the Council spends money on.

- The Council makes a new budget every year.
- The budget includes money to pay for:
 - Council staff
 - Council member support
 - Projects and activities
 - Other things that help the Council do its work

Making Changes to these Bylaws



The Council can make changes to the bylaws. Changes are called "amendments." Changes only happen if the Council agrees,

How changes are made:

- The Executive Committee decides what changes it wants.
- The recommended changes are sent to the Council.
- The Council talks about them at a meeting and asks members to vote "yes" or "no."