



**T**he Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities is a leader in improving policies and practices that affect the lives of Tennesseans with developmental disabilities. In the area of education, we engage in projects at the state level in collaboration with the Dept. of Education and at the community level by working with schools, parents, and students. The Council's work is driven by the priorities of Tennesseans and informed by national best practices. A state agency, the Council carries out its work in close collaboration with other offices of state government and also has the flexibility to partner directly with private entities and communities to launch innovative projects in the field of disability services. Over our 40 years in Tennessee, the Council has accomplished groundbreaking work in the areas of education, employment, housing, health, person-centered organizations, leadership development, and recreation. The Council launched programs in Tennessee such as Youth Readiness Days at high schools; the statewide Project SEARCH program connecting high schools to employers, Next Chapter Book Clubs, Next Steps and IDEAL postsecondary education projects on the campuses of Vanderbilt and Lipscomb Universities, People First of TN, TN Disability Pathfinder, and the state's Family Support Program. Read more about these [initiatives here](#).



### What services or resources does this agency provide?

- Youth Leadership Development Programs. The Council offers a [youth readiness program](#) to students preparing to leave high school. The training is typically a one-day event organized by the school and presented by Council staff. Topics include setting goals for the future, advocating for oneself, identifying postsecondary options, employment and other topics identified by the school and Council staff. Talk to your school about scheduling this program in your community.
- Partners in Policymaking Leadership Academy is for adults who either have a disability or have a family member with a disability. “[Partners](#)” is a training program for educating participants about policies and practices that impact those



who experience disability. Sessions take place over seven weekends in Nashville. Information is presented by local and national experts in the disability field. A highlight of the experience is networking with other individuals with disabilities and family members. There is no cost to participants in the Partners program. This may be a great fit for parents of school-aged children with disabilities.

- Council Scholarship Fund. The [Council's Scholarship Fund](#) provides financial assistance to selected applicants with disabilities and their families to attend disability-related meetings, conferences, and trainings held in Tennessee and across the country. The fund also provides support to conferences in Tennessee that feature disability-related topics. Apply with us if you are a student or family member.
- Council Publications. The Council produces two weekly [e-newsletters](#).
- The Council E-News Update provides news about Tennessee's disability community, including activities led by the Council and by other disability organizations.
- The [Council Public Policy News](#) focuses on programs and policies affecting Tennesseans with disabilities.
- The Council bimonthly magazine, Breaking Ground, provides a deeper dive into disability stories across Tennessee. It is available in print and also electronically.
- Council Educational Presentations. The Council offers [trainings and presentations](#) on a number of disability-related topics. Topics include supported decision making, youth transition from high school, self-advocacy,

### Where can I learn more?

Visit their website at: [www.tn.gov/cdd](http://www.tn.gov/cdd)

disability public policy, and future planning tools for individuals and families. Staff are available to travel to any community or school event in the state to present.

### What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

The Council serves the entire state of Tennessee.

### Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

There is no cost to participants who take part in any Council program. Council programs are funded through the [federal Developmental Disabilities Act](#).

### Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?

- Tennesseans with any type of lifelong disability that requires long-term supports, as well as family members, including siblings, are eligible to participate in Council programs.
- Anyone in Tennessee can sign up to receive information related to disability programs and issues across the lifespan, including education, employment, independent living, and healthcare.
- Public and private agencies interested in improving services and supports for Tennesseans with developmental disabilities



can contact the Council about possible collaborative initiatives.

### **What is the family's responsibility?**

- Sign up to receive Council e-newsletters and Breaking Ground magazine at [www.tn.gov/cdd](http://www.tn.gov/cdd).
- Apply for the [Partners in Policymaking™ Leadership Institute](#) on the Council's website at [www.tn.gov/cdd](http://www.tn.gov/cdd).
- Apply for a grant from the Scholarship Fund to attend disability-related conferences, leadership coalitions & trainings on the Council's website at [www.tn.gov/cdd](http://www.tn.gov/cdd).
- Contact the Council to request a presentation for a local organization, school, support group, church or any group that could benefit from Council trainings.

### **What is the responsibility of an educator?**

- Provide information to families about the Council and help connect them to Council communications and programs.
- Contact the Council to schedule a presentation or training for their students with disabilities or families about youth readiness, supported decision making, self-advocacy, or other related topics.

### **How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?**

- Council presentations and publications can be helpful prior to and during the transition planning process:
- Families can explore the Council's website to explore the different projects, initiatives, and services available in Tennessee to fit their son or daughter's needs.

- Families can sign up for the Council's e-newsletters and publication Breaking Ground to learn about current issues that impact Tennesseans with disabilities.
- Teachers can invite a representative from the Council to provide a youth readiness training event or information about supported decision making for students with disabilities leaving high school.

### **What questions should I ask of the TN Council on DD?**

- How can I sign up to receive Council publications?
- How do I apply to participate in the Partners in Policymaking Leadership Institute?
- How do I apply for the Scholarship Fund?
- How do I schedule a presentation or training from the Council for a group in my community?
- Can I visit a Council meeting?

### **Additional contact information:**

- Give them a call: 615-532-6615
- Send them an email at: [tnddc@tn.gov](mailto:tnddc@tn.gov)
- Follow them on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TNCouncilonDD](http://www.facebook.com/TNCouncilonDD) and Twitter: @TNCouncilDD