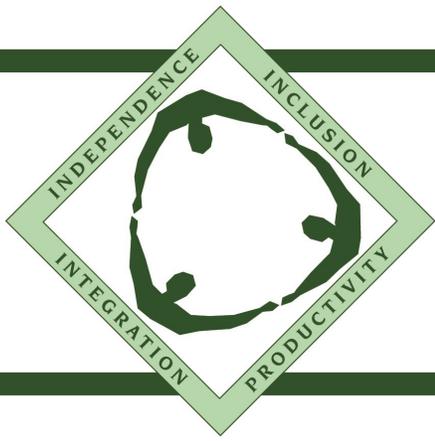


**NH Council on Developmental Disabilities**  
**Annual Report**  
**2019-2020**



## NEW HAMPSHIRE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

We are committed to dignity, full rights of citizenship, cultural diversity, equal opportunity, and full participation for all NH citizens with developmental disabilities.



2 1/2 Beacon St. Suite 10  
Concord, NH 03301  
[www.NHCDD.org](http://www.NHCDD.org)  
603-271-3236 TDD 1-800-735-2964

*This project was supported, in part with funding provided by the NH Council on Developmental Disabilities under grant number 2001NHSCDD, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.*

# Five Year Plan:

FY 2017— FY 2021

The New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities (NHCDD) develops and follows a State Plan every five years to establish specific goals, objectives and strategies to address the most important issues affecting people with developmental disabilities in New Hampshire.



*How we meet our goals: outreach and training, supporting and educating communities, technical assistance, eliminating barriers, encouraging citizen participation, informing our policymakers.*

*The Council's purpose is to engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change.*

## Five Year Plan Preparation for 2021-2026:

The Council is currently in the process of creating the Five Year Plan for 2021-2026. A workgroup made up of Council members and staff created a survey asking for input on issues of focus. The goal was to distribute the survey during in-person events and programming. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, work began to solicit input through an online survey, as well as through mailings to agencies and organizations throughout the state. Focus groups and listening sessions during a public input period will also guide the drafting of the plan. The plan will then be submitted to the Council for approval at the July 2021 meeting.

# Council Members:

Forrest Beaudoin-Friede

Shawna Bowman, *Policy Co-Chair*

Jean Crouch, NH BEAS

Joanne DeBello, NH DOE, Spec. Ed.

Carrie Duran, *Policy Co-Chair*

Peter Fleming, Vice Chair

Roberta Gallant

Krista Gilbert

Karen Hatch

Tim Houle

Joshua Madison

Sarah Menard, Crotched Mountain

Tammy Mills

Jo Moncher, NH BDS

Deborah Opramolla

Stephanie Patrick, DRC-NH

Michael Phillips

Jim Piet, Chair, NH Voc. Rehab.

Jennifer Pineo, *Program & Planning Chair*,  
NH Family Voices

Joy Sabolevski, *Membership Chair*

Mary Schuh, IOD

Jan Skoby, *Membership Chair*, NH BDS

Arielle Van De Water

Frank Vinceguerra



# Council Staff:

**Executive Director**

*Isadora Rodriguez-Legendre*

**Policy and Planning Director**

*Ronnieann Rakoski*

**Project Manager**

*Vanessa Blais*

**Senior Account Tech**

*Mary Lawson*

**Administrative Assistant**

*Patricia Vincent-Piet*

**AmeriCorps Vista**

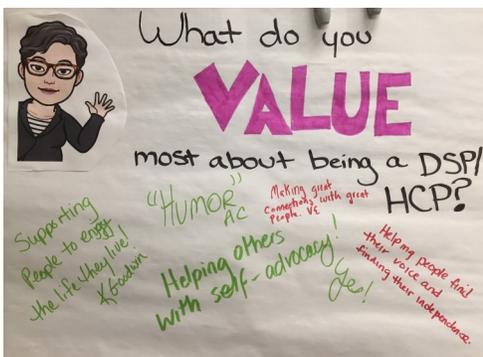
*Sierra Lubhan*

**Office Clerk**

*Miles Trier*

# Council Projects and Sponsored Activities:

- Employment Leadership Awards
- Winter Awards Ceremony awarding Legislator of the Year, Virginia Bowden Advocate of the Year, and the Smile Award for inclusive recreation
- People First of NH Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Training with the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence
- Legislative Bi-Partisan Disability Caucus Lunch and Learn
- Legislator Training
- Accessible Voter Training
- Voter Training Webinars
- Dream Big! DSP Virtual Trainings
- Gubernatorial Town Hall
- Caregiver's Conference
- Transition Summit
- NH AT Virtual Fair
- ADA 30th Anniversary
- Accessible Black Lives Matter Protest



# Disability-Led Leadership in Advocacy:



**People First of NH** is a statewide non-profit, directed by citizens who experience disabilities for the purpose of self-advocacy. They serve as consultants to projects and legislation that affect people with disabilities.

The **Self-Advocacy Leadership Team** serves as consultants for the New Hampshire Council on Developmental Disabilities and other advocacy organizations. The groups' members are talented citizens who want to effect positive change in New Hampshire. They are committed to addressing the needs of people who experience disabilities by tackling big issues that support meaningful and quality living in the community.

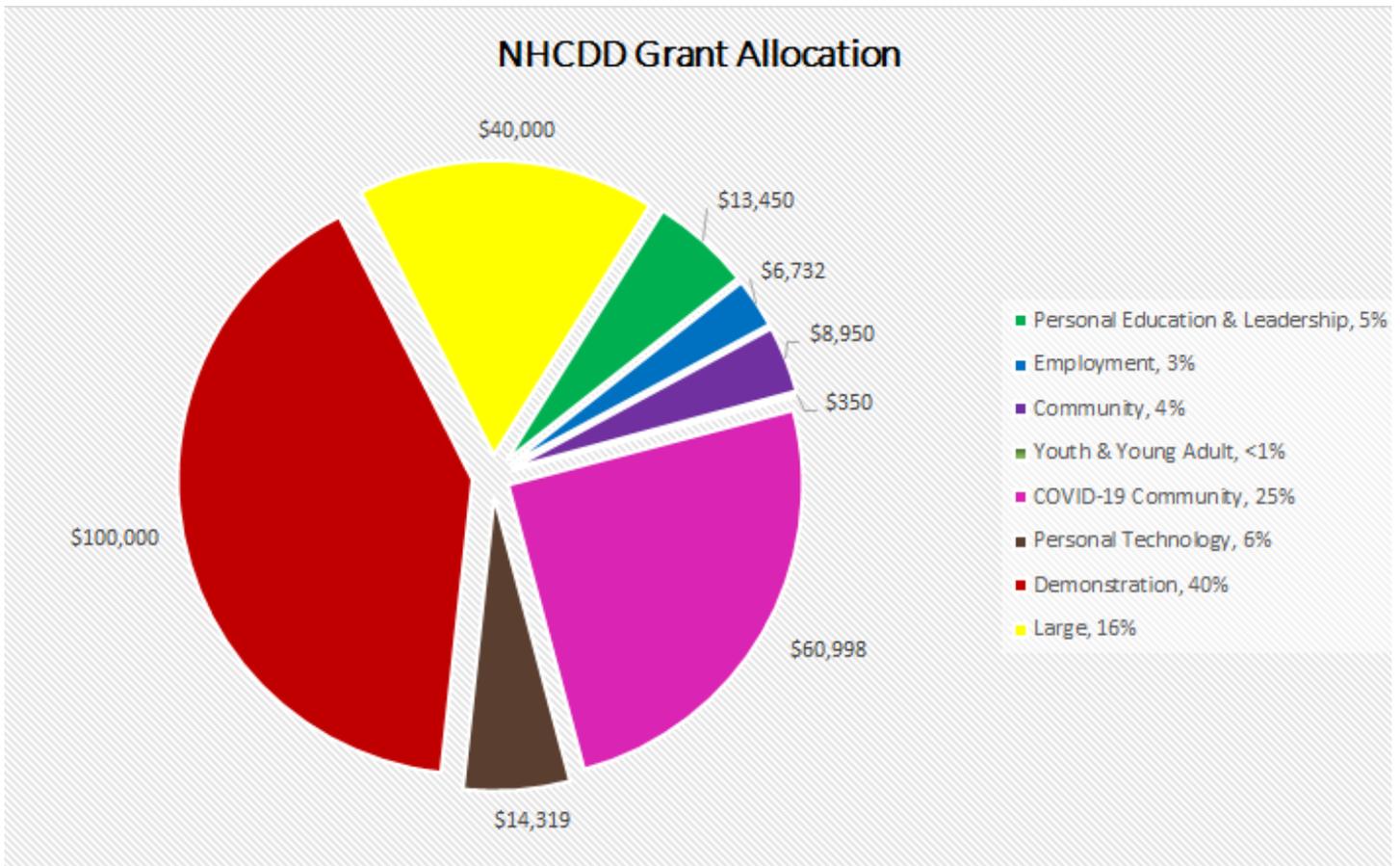


**The NH Leadership Series** is a training series using the Partners and Policy Making model. It brings together people that are passionate about supporting people with disabilities and family members within their communities. The NH Leadership Series is committed to building a culturally diverse class and encourages applications from people of color, individuals with disabilities, and veterans.

**Virginia Bowden 2019 Advocate of the Year, Roberta Gallant,** was recognized for her lifelong advocacy in regards to education opportunities, disability justice, civil rights, and legislation that positively impacts people with disabilities. She is a member of the DD Council, where she enthusiastically serves on the Policy Committee. She is a long time member of SALT (Self-Advocacy Leadership Team) and People First NH. Roberta is a leader in the advocacy movement and has been a friend and ally to other advocates working for disability rights.



# Grants:



## **Small Grants for Community Projects and Educational Programs**

The Council provides grants of up to \$1000 to support community projects or educational programs that help achieve goals and objectives in the Council's five year plan.

## **Employment and Post-Secondary Education Grants**

The Council provides grants up to \$1000 for people with developmental disabilities to pursue integrated employment or secondary education. Funds can be used for driver's education, interview clothing/uniforms, trade tools, coursework/education/certification, assistance with resume, cover letters, job applications, temporary transportation, career/college consultations, etc.

## **Grants for Youth and Young Adults**

The Council provides grants up to \$500 for teens or young adults who want to make their schools or communities more welcoming to people of all disabilities through the implementation of inclusive activities.

## **Personal Education and Leadership Development Program**

The Council provides grants up to \$500 for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to attend conferences and workshops of local, regional or national significance, in order to increase their understanding of their disability or that of their child, develop leadership and self-advocacy skills, and learn strategies to lead more inclusive, self-directed lives in their community.

# Grants:

## Demonstration Projects



\$50,000, over two years, to **Center for Life Management and Community Crossroads** to implement new strategies that address the needs of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities who also have mental health needs. This will include training to increase capacity in the system and data collection in hopes of expanding this innovative service approach throughout the state of New Hampshire.



\$50,000, over 2 years, to **University of New Hampshire** to help provide post-secondary educational opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The UNH-4U pilot project will aid in the development and implementation of Think College National Standards for a cohort of individuals with labels of intellectual disability in NH.

## Large Grants

**The Refurbished Equipment Marketplace**  
High-quality pre-owned assistive technology at incredible discounts.



\$20,000 to **Refurbished Equipment Marketplace (REM)** for assisting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the purchasing, servicing, and delivery of REM equipment. With this grant, Refurbished Equipment Marketplace will be able to continue to assist individuals with I/DD in obtaining and sustaining necessary devices and equipment that will further their independence, community inclusion, and quality of life.

\$20,000 to the **NH Leadership Series** for training using the Partners in Policymaking model, developing leaders who are committed to supporting people with disabilities and their families in their communities.



NH LEADERSHIP SERIES

## Covid-19 Grants:

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a shift in council activities and priorities. The Council typically provides financial support for personal education and leadership scholarships, community projects and educational programs throughout the year to individuals, families, and caregivers impacted by intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Because many in-person activities were canceled in 2020, the Council re-evaluated the needs of the community. Participation in web-based activities, healthcare, and virtual learning opportunities was suddenly important to fostering community participation and reducing social isolation. The Council adapted its grants to address these needs.

The Council created the Personal Technology Grant for children, adults and families impacted by developmental disabilities. These scholarship funds paid reimbursements of up to \$500 for individuals and \$1000 for families who lacked necessary access to technology. Forty of these scholarship grants were funded through September, 2020, for a total of \$12,011.

The Council altered its existing Community Project and Educational Program grant to provide financial support for Covid-19 related needs. Increases in the grants assisted organizations and service providers affected by the pandemic, especially in the first few months before federal Covid-19 funding became available. Several grants funded personal protection equipment (PPE), workforce retention, and technology in residential and day program facilities. The total amount of the thirteen grants awarded was \$60,998.



# Policy:

*Because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the 2020 NH Legislative Session was suspended from March 14, 2020 until June 11, 2020. The legislature then adjourned on June 30, 2020. The suspension and rapid adjournment led to the tabling or death of many bills of interest during the session. Some bills were combined with others in order to expedite the hearing and voting process. This had a negative effect on our state legislature advancing policy initiatives that would positively impact the lives of people with developmental disabilities.*

## **2020 Council Policy Committee Priority Bills**

**HB1303 Establishing a commission to study expanding public testimony opportunities to remote locations statewide.** This bill was determined Inexpedient to Legislate, with the Policy Committee advising that the bill die.

**HB1473 Requiring schools to have a special education parent advisory council.** This bill was laid on the table, suspending its consideration.

**HB1513 Requiring the Commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services to study the conversion of the Medicaid program to block grant funding via a section 1115 waiver and making an appropriation therefor.** This bill was determined Inexpedient to Legislate, with the legislative Policy Committee advising that the bill die.

**HB1558 relative to the discipline of students, addressing students' behavioral needs, and making an appropriation therefor; kindergarten funding, violence in schools, policies for students with head injuries, child sexual abuse prevention education and training, authorizing the issuance of bonds or notes by a municipality, adding the chancellor of the university system of New Hampshire to the Department of Business and Economic Affairs Council of Partner Agencies; change of school or assignment due to manifest education hardship; school board expenditure of year-end fund balances; a children's system of care; student wellness; and criminal background checks for bus drivers.** This bill included modification of the definition of "child with a disability" to include persons 21 years of age. This bill was an example of combined bills put forth during the brief summer session. This bill was signed into law by the governor.

**HB1636 Relative to special education services for children in charter schools.** This bill was determined Inexpedient to Legislate, with the legislative Policy Committee advising that the bill die.

**HB1660 Establishing a protective order for vulnerable adults.** This bill passed both the House and the Senate, and was vetoed by the governor.

**HB1668 Relative to early voting for persons with disabilities.** This bill was referred to interim study.

**HB1687 Relative to the installation of audio and video surveillance equipment in special education school buses.** This bill was laid on the table, suspending its consideration.

# The 30th Anniversary of the ADA Intersection of Race and Disability:

The NHCDD joined ABLE NH, Disability Rights Center-NH, Granite State Organizing Project, the Manchester Inclusivity and Equity Committee, and the NH Office of Health Equity to host LeDerick Horne, a nationally recognized speaker, spoken word poet, and disability advocate for a virtual keynote presentation addressing the intersection of race and disability. This was one of the many projects the Council collaborated on in celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act while recognizing the continued struggle for justice in minority communities in New Hampshire.



## Social Change and People with Disabilities:



The Council was proud to support Black Lives Matter through sponsorship of American Sign Language interpreters for the Accessible Black Lives Matter Protest, which took place in Portsmouth, NH. The Council put out the following message on the continued fight for racial justice:

The NH Council on Developmental Disabilities cannot stay silent about the recent, and historic, murders of black Americans at the hands of law enforcement. We are disheartened by those injustices as we advocate for equal access and protection for all people. Many in the disability community face multiple barriers to inclusion and belonging. Because disability cuts across all demographics, we support the demands for justice across the nation.

ACCESSIBLE  
BLACK LIVES  
MATTER  
PROTEST

3:00-GATHER  
3:30-SPEAKERS  
4:15-MARCH

GATHER OUTSIDE OF NORTH  
CHURCH  
WEAR A MASK  
SERVICE ANIMALS ONLY



## Voices through Voting:

The Covid-19 Pandemic has opened the door for a temporary policy allowing anyone in N.H. to vote by mail in the event that they are concerned about their safety and well-being when going to a polling station. This prompted the Council and its collaborators to hold several voting forums, trainings, and webinars, informing people with I/DD on the importance of being heard through their vote. These events included:

- **The Power of the Disability Vote Webinar**
- **Accessible Voter Trainings**
- **Gubernatorial Town Halls on Disability Issues**

There has been great effort put into promoting voting by mail with instructions on how to do so through social media platforms, mass mailings, and email blasts asking partners to relay the information throughout their networks.

## 2020 Census:



Historically, people with developmental disabilities are undercounted in the U.S. Census. The Council developed a program to inform and encourage the disability community to be sure to fill out the 2020 Census, online or on paper. The Council did this through social media promotion and mass mailings of informative brochures in both English and Spanish. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the original plan to distribute these materials was adapted to include a digital presence. Mailings were also sent to advocates, advocacy groups, agencies, organizations and legislators throughout the state.

# Publications:



The NHCDD, the Disability Rights Center-NH, and the Institute on Disability decided to redesign the publication formally known as The RAPP Sheet to make it more accessible in both digital and hard copy formats. The Disability RAPP got a new name and new logo design, and continues to be a resource for NH families in research, advocacy, policy, and practice. It is our hope that The Disability RAPP achieves its mission to inform and support people with disabilities in breaking barriers and challenging traditional ideas of what it means to live with a disability. Our Spring issue explored the intersection of disability and sexuality. The Fall issue was a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## *Stepping Stones NH Magazine*

This year's edition of Stepping Stones Magazine went fully digital, due to restrictions on publication of paper copies. The theme of the latest edition was centered around how people with disabilities communicate, and entrepreneurship in the disability community. Employment and communication have been greatly impacted during the pandemic, leaving opportunity for innovation and education directed at making our state more accessible to everyone.



## Social Media:

With the Covid-19 Pandemic came the cancellation of projects, events, and activities that the Council had planned during 2020. The Council Staff had to shift quickly to having more of an online presence to meet our goals and ensure the advocacy community was engaged and heard. Our AmeriCorps Vista, Sierra Lubahn, has played a major part in accomplishing this by taking on our social media and creating a more exciting branding on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and the DD Council You Tube Channel. She created a plan to use these platforms more effectively. The Council is also working with the State of NH IT Department to create a new and improved accessible website to be rolled out in early 2021.



# Our Key Partners:

