NEW YORK STATE | Council on Developmental Disabilities

NYS CDD

DEIA Strategic Plan

2022-2026

DIVERSITY. EQUITY. INCLUSION. ACCESSIBILITY.

Thank You to Our Partners

We would like to thank the members of the NY Community of Practice on Cultural and Linguistic Competence in DD (NY CoP) for their support of the CDD's DEIA work over the last 6 years including: the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC), Disability Rights New York (DRNY), the Ibero-American Action League (Ibero), the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Rose F. Kennedy Center, UCEDD, the Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, UCEDD, and the Westchester Institute for Human Development, UCEDD.

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Ketrina Hazell
Christina Mule
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Thank You

Relevant Acronyms

Acronyms used in this document.

- **CDD -** NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities
- **CoP** - Community of Practice
- **CPC** - Chinese-American Planning Council
- **CRA -** Comprehensive Review and Analysis
- **DD** - Developmental Disability
- **DD Act** - (Refers to) The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000
- **DEIA** – Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility
- **DRNY** - Disability Rights New York
- **EAP** - Employee Assistance Program
- **LEP** - Limited English Proficient
- **LGBTQ+** - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer
- **NCCC** - National Center for Cultural Competence
- **NYS** - New York State
- **OER** - Office of Employee Relations
- **SPM** - Supplemental Poverty Measure (US Census Bureau)
- **OPWDD** - Office for People with Developmental Disabilities
- **UCEDD** - University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

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Message from Our Leadership

Vicky Hiffa - Acting Executive Director

I am so proud the NYS CDD is one of the first DD councils in the country to develop a strategic plan specifically aimed at embedding diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility into all aspects of our council and work. Seeking out diverse voices, perspectives and experiences will strengthen our initiatives and our mission to improve the lives of all people with developmental disabilities.

Dave Deuel - Council Chairperson

As Mahatma Gandhi said, *Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.* For me, the most fulfilling work we do on the council is work that looks to build towards the beauty about which Gandhi speaks.

Shameka Andrews - Caucus Chairperson

To me diversity is what the CDD is all about: diverse people working together to come up with diverse ideas to help diverse communities. It always puts a smile on my face seeing our projects come from ideas and conversations to something tangible that is supporting people with disabilities around NYS.

Our Mission

The mission of the New York State Council on Developmental Disabilities (NYS CDD) is to enhance the lives of New Yorkers with Developmental Disabilities (DD) and their families through programs that promote self-advocacy, participation, and inclusion in all facets of community life.

Our Core Values

- We view disability as a natural part of the diverse human experience.
- People with DD and their family members are decision makers on agency initiatives.
- We seek input from people representing diverse perspectives and experiences to strengthen our initiatives.
- We promote equity in access to DD services and resources and seek to drive positive change through a range of programs and projects.

About this Strategic Plan

This is the NYS CDD's first Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan. It is a 5-Year Plan that was created in partnership with our Council members. We have included the following information in our Strategic Plan:

- **Background** about our DEIA journey and who has helped us create this plan.
- **Data** on major racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic, and gender or sexuality-based disparities. This data helped inform our goals and objectives.
- Our DEIA **Goals** and **Objectives** under each core function of the NYS CDD.
- An **Action Plan** detailing how we will accomplish our Goals and Objectives.
- **Key Concepts and Definitions** for DEIA terms and ideas that we use throughout this Plan.

We aim to track progress, get continual input, and provide updates to our Council throughout the 5 years. ***We plan to learn, grow, and continue to improve our DEIA work as we move forward.***

Background: Our DEIA Journey

The New York CDD's diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) journey has been shaped by many self-advocates, family members, professionals, and leaders in DEIA across New York and beyond.

In 2016, the NYS CDD established its first Cultural Competency Workgroup to get input from diverse voices on our projects, grants, and initiatives, as well as to serve as a springboard to diversify the CDD's membership. This standing Workgroup of parents and self-advocates has met three times a year for over 6 years and contributed many ideas to DEIA initiatives and shaped this Strategic Plan.

In 2017, the NYS CDD was competitively selected by the National Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) to participate in a 6-year Community of Practice (CoP) on Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Developmental Disabilities. As part of the CoP, the NYS CDD received ongoing training and technical assistance from NCCC. We also met regularly with our CoP team and got invaluable advice and guidance from team members.

In June 2022, the NYS CDD dedicated a Full Council meeting to the topic of DEIA. The Council heard a presentation from the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities' (OPWDD) first, full-time Chief Diversity Officer and Director of the newly established Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We also welcomed speakers Wendy Jones and Angela Castillo-Epps from NCCC to present on key DEIA concepts and help set the stage for small group discussions.

At the June 2022 meeting, we received excellent input from our Council members and decided to establish a DEIA Workgroup. The aim of the workgroup was to reflect on the last 6 years of the CDD's DEIA work and chart a course for the future, to hone our strengths and make real progress on areas where we need to grow. The DEIA workgroup met throughout 2022 and brought forth this comprehensive DEIA Strategic Plan, which was voted on and approved by our Full Council in June 2023.

NYS CDD's Role in Driving DEIA Change in New York

As New York's Council on Developmental Disabilities, we have a responsibility to carry out our mission in a way that reflects the diverse needs, interests, and perspectives of all New Yorkers. We take this responsibility seriously and want to affirm our agency's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in all areas of our work.

The New York CDD is directed by a Council comprised of people with developmental disabilities, their families, representatives from state agencies, our University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs), Disability Rights New York, non-profit providers, and non-governmental organizations. It is vital that our Council is diverse and promotes a culture of inclusion given the Council's role as policymakers directing the work of our agency.

Part of our mission is to drive positive change in our state to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. We carry out our mission primarily through grant-funded projects and initiatives. Given our mission, it is also vital that the CDD is a primary leader of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) change in our state for people with developmental disabilities.

We know that people with developmental disabilities have faced historical trauma, that there were times in our Country's and state's history where government agencies were part of a system that caused harm. This is also true for some racial and ethnic communities in our Country, who have faced historical and on-going trauma. In light of this history, and in recognition of contemporary racial, socioeconomic, and gender inequalities, the CDD is committed to the long-term work of ensuring that government agencies dimmish disparities, change policies that promote inequities, and drive positive systems change.

Overview of Disparities for People with Developmental Disabilities

"People with disabilities are diverse, we aren't just one thing. That's why it's so important to think about race, background, culture, and disability together and it's important to remember there is not just one size fit all when it comes to disability just think about how culture is often viewed based on the person, disability can be seen through many lenses. As a self-advocate, I bring my full self to my advocacy work."

-Ketrina Hazell,
CDD Cultural Competency Workgroup Member

People with developmental disabilities are a diverse group. They include people from all races, cultures, genders, and communities. Overall, research has shown that people with developmental disabilities face disparities, or differences, in access to health care, education, transportation, jobs, and other facets of community life.

Some people with developmental disabilities face more profound disparities as a result of their race, gender, sexual orientation, language, or socioeconomic status. People have referred to this as a 'double burden' or 'triple burden' meaning that someone may face discrimination and barriers based on their disability, as well as on their race, or gender, sexuality, or other facet of their identity.

We want to highlight these disparities because it is important to bring more public attention to them. It is also important for the CDD to respond to these disparities through planning, attention, resources, and action. Below we highlight a few key disparities. In our Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan activities, we provide an outline of how we want to address existing disparities and try to diminish them.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

Data from 2011 indicated that people of color with a disability are more likely to report fair or poor health, be obese, have a chronic health condition, and have greater difficulty accessing care than do racial and ethnic minorities without a disability. [1]

The life expectancy for white people with Down syndrome is about 55 years compared to 25 years for Black/African American people with Down syndrome. [2]

People who are Black/African American and Latino(a) typically experience disability at a higher rate than people who are white. [3]

In 2019, disability rates in the United States were highest among American Indian and Alaska Native children (5.9 percent) and lowest among Asian children (2.3 percent). [1]

Linguistic Disparities

¡HOLA!

LEP students with disabilities have among the lowest graduation rates in New York. [4]

51% of physicians believe that their patients did not adhere to medical treatments as a result of cultural or linguistic barriers. [4]

1 in 5 Spanish speakers said yes when asked whether language barriers would prevent them from seeking medical care. [5]

Research has shown that language barriers may negatively affect parents' ability to access health care services for their child with Autism. [5]

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Economic Disparities

According to the Census Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM), people with disabilities experience poverty at double the rate of people without disabilities. In 2019, 21.6% of people with disabilities were considered poor under the SPM compared with just over 10% for those without disabilities. [6]

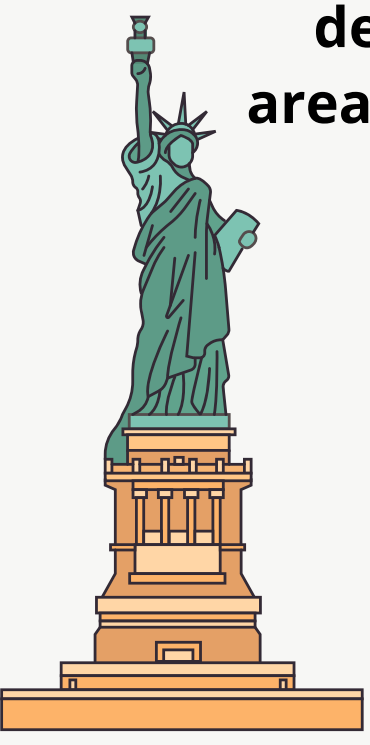
In 2019, disability affected more than a quarter of families in the United States. About a quarter of these families included two or more individuals with a disability, which may pose additional challenges to the family's financial well-being. [7]

While children in poverty were more likely to have a disability than children above the poverty threshold in 2008 and 2019, the prevalence of disability significantly increased for both groups over this period [2019]. [8]

Geographic Disparities

Rural participants in NYS CDD focus groups and surveys identified various challenges associated with living in rural areas. This included lack of transportation, a limited supply of health care providers, few job opportunities, and scarce opportunities for social interactions.

CDC research noted that there is a higher prevalence of children with developmental disabilities in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. [9]



The Journal of Rural Health noted that challenges posed by living in a rural area are more pronounced for nonwhite respondents in middle to older age categories. [10]

Gender and Sexuality Disparities

74% of people with DD do not have knowledge of LGBTQ+ issues and 70% have been shown to have negative attitudes towards people who identify as LGBTQ+. [11]

LGBTQ+ individuals with disabilities are overrepresented in juvenile & criminal justice systems. [12]

Women with disabilities have fewer Papanicolaou smears (Pap tests) and mammograms than do women without disabilities. Compared to women without disabilities, women with disabilities are less knowledgeable about and aware of risk factors for cardiovascular disease and are less likely to participate preventive screening. [13]

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Goals and Objectives

Over the next 5-years, the NYS CDD will make progress on the following goals:

1. **Goal 1. Council:**
   Increase the diversity of Council membership.

2. **Goal 2. Staff:**
   Increase the diversity of Staff.

3. **Goal 3. State Plan:**
   Embed DEIA throughout the CDD 5-Year State Plan.

4. **Goal 4. Grants:**
   Fund diverse grantees and grant projects focused on DEIA.

5. **Goal 5. Self-Advocacy & Advocacy:**
   Support the diversity of self-advocacy groups and advocacy efforts.

Goal 1. Council: Increase the diversity of Council membership.

1.1. Council Diversity: Increase the diversity* of Council membership to reflect the diversity of New York State. (*See diversity definition in Key Terms Section).

1.2 Mentoring: Maintain a mentorship program to support diverse members and diverse leadership.

1.3 Training: Provide ongoing training opportunities for members on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

1.4 Resources: Create member resources for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) and maintain on a dedicated NYS CDD webpage.

1.5 Recruitment: Increase Council member recruitment efforts for diverse candidates by partnering with the CDD Cultural Competency workgroup, the Community of Practice on DEI, CDD grantees, and other organizations who have connections to diverse networks.

Action Plan
Goal 1. Council

1.1. Council Diversity	• Create an internal Excel tracking sheet of the demographic makeup of CDD Council membership to track diversity progress. • Support Council membership attendance at meetings by offering flexible options for participation and supporting travel and accommodations.
1.2 Mentoring	• Establish and maintain a formal Mentor program among new and existing Council members. • Create materials and resources to support the mentorship program.
1.3 Training	• Schedule at least 1 DEIA Lunch and Learn session every year. • Offer additional DEIA training opportunities to members, including an Implicit Bias training.
1.4 Resources	• Create a DEIA landing page on the CDD website with resources. • Develop DEIA resources to share with Council and post to website, at least 2 per year.
1.5 Recruitment	• Increase member recruitment outreach to diverse communities. • Establish more formal recruitment and nomination processes that incorporate DEIA best practices. • Forge connections with Native American communities and extend invitation to join the Council.

Goal 2. Staff: Increase the diversity of Staff.

2.1 Recruitment: Increase staff recruitment efforts for diverse candidates by utilizing available state resources, like the internship, fellowship, 55b/c, and other successful state programs.

2.2 Staff Retention: Increase staff support by connecting staff with internal resources, trainings, and mentorship opportunities.

2.3 Staff Training: Provide ongoing opportunities for staff training on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA).

2.4 Staff Time: Identify a staff member to coordinate all agency DEIA initiatives.

2.5 Advocacy: Participate in interagency workgroups on recruiting a diverse state workforce and advocate for accessible state exams and hiring processes.

Action Plan: Goal 2. Staff

2.1 Recruitment	• Increase recruitment efforts for open staff positions to ensure they reach a diverse audience. • Attend or engage in at least 1 staff or internship recruitment activity per year. Utilize 55b/c portal for open positions where possible.
2.2 Staff Retention	• Share employee resources that are available through NYS with staff, including EAP, trainings, accommodation processes, etc. • Identify skills, trainings or professional development opportunities available to staff. • Offer opportunities to gain new skills, attend trainings, or engage in professional development to all staff. • Actively enforce all NYS anti-discrimination or accommodation policies.
2.3 Staff Training	• Incorporate DEIA trainings into onboarding process for new employees. • Offer a minimum of 2 DEIA trainings to staff each year. • Mandate all staff take OER DEIA themed trainings each year.
2.4 Staff Time	• Identify a staff member to coordinate all agency DEIA initiatives. • Ensure that there is an outline of Roles/Responsibilities of the DEIA staff that is reviewed and updated annually.
2.5 Advocacy	• Designate CDD rep on interagency workgroups that inform making the civil service process more accessible to diverse candidate. • Inform interagency workgroups on the barriers for diverse people with DD in taking exams or working for the state.

Goal 3. State Plan: Embed DEIA throughout the NYS CDD 5-Year State Plan.

3.1 Input: Ensure input from diverse communities for the State Plan.

3.2 Comprehensive Review and Analysis (CRA): Include research on diverse communities and disparities in our CRA.

3.3 Goals & Objectives: Embed diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) goals within the State Plan Goals and Objectives.

3.4 Targeted Disparity: Identify 1 Goal or Objective as a Targeted Disparity in the State Plan.

Action Plan
Goal 3. State Plan

3.1 Input	• Conduct focus groups with underserved communities, in accessible community hubs. • Translate State Plan survey into top NYS languages. • Partner with multicultural agencies and CBOs to get State Plan input. • Conduct interviews with communities of New Americans to better understand their unique needs and cultural perspectives.
3.2 Comprehensive Review and Analysis (CRA)	• Conduct research on racially, ethnically, linguistically diverse communities to include in CRA. • Conduct research on LGBTQ+ community to include in CRA. • Conduct research on rural and federally designated poverty areas in CRA.
3.3 Goals & Objectives	• Ensure that State Plan Goals and Objectives incorporate language about reaching and serving diverse and/or underserved communities.
3.4 Targeted Disparity	• Engage Council members to determine a Targeted Disparity Goal or Object for the 5-Year State Plan.

Goal 4. Grants: Fund diverse grantees and grant projects focused on DEIA.

4.1 Grant Opportunities: Increase reach of grant opportunity announcements by partnering with NYS CDD communications team.

4.2 Grant Projects: Fund at least 5 grants throughout the State Plan focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEIA) initiatives.

4.3 Grantee Technical Assistance:

a. Provide technical assistance sessions to grantees on collecting demographic data, recruitment of diverse grant participants, and diversifying grantee networks.

b. Provide special technical assistance to organizations run and led by underserved communities (as defined by the DD Act).

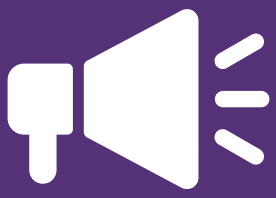
c. Provide special financial and technical assistance to organizations located in designated urban or rural poverty areas.

4.4 Grant Evaluation: Examine demographic data shared by grantees and provide feedback to grantees on diversity of grant participants.

Action Plan
Goal 4. Grants

4.1 Grant Opportunities	• Increase outreach for CDD grant opportunities by working with CDD communications team.
4.2 Grant Projects	• Fund at least 5 DEIA grant initiatives. • Support larger organizations to work in concert with community-based organizations (CBOs) that serve underserved communities to increase their capacity to apply for CDD grants.
4.3 Grantee Technical Assistance	• Offer at least 1 technical assistance session on a DEIA topic each year. • Offer more technical assistance to smaller organizations that serve underserved communities. • Create plain language tool about meeting the CDD match requirement. • Create a process to offer enhanced technical assistance to organizations that reach and serve underserved communities. • Build in more technical assistance for smaller community-based organizations (CBOs).
4.4 Grant Evaluation	• Analyze demographic data shared by grantees. • Provide ongoing feedback to grantees about the demographic characteristics of who they are reaching. • Offer technical assistance to grantees who are not reaching the diversity of NYS.

Goal 5. Self-Advocacy & Advocacy: Support the diversity of self-advocacy groups and advocacy efforts.



5.1 Self-Advocacy:

a. Increase the capacity of self-advocacy groups run and led by diverse communities.

b. Increase the capacity of self-advocacy groups to train and support a diverse membership.

5.2 Advocacy:

a. Increase the capacity of parent and community-based advocacy groups run and led by diverse communities.

b. Increase the capacity of parent and community-based advocacy groups to train and support a diverse membership.

5.3 Policy: Develop and disseminate policy resources focused on DEIA.

Action Plan
Goal 5. Self-Advocacy & Advocacy

5.1 Self-Advocacy	• Fund Growing Advocacy small grants and give priority to organizations run and led by diverse communities. • Fund at least 1 self-advocacy grant that includes DEIA trainings by and for self-advocates every State Plan. • Work on combatting stigma in communities where perceptions of DD are not positive. • Create a culturally competent self-advocacy resource toolkit.
5.2 Advocacy	• Fund Growing Advocacy small grants and give priority to organizations run and led by diverse communities. • Fund at least 1 parent advocacy grant that includes DEIA trainings by and for parents every State Plan. • Work on combatting stigma in communities where perceptions of DD are not positive. • Create a culturally competent advocacy resource toolkit.
5.3 Policy	• Produce at least 1 policy paper in the area of DEIA each year. • Engage with diverse community leaders and have accessible conversations made available to the public through video or podcasts.

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

Accessibility – Ensuring that services, resources, materials, work environments, and meetings are intentionally designed so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently participate.

Cultural Competence – The ability to provide services or resources to a person or a community effectively. An agency that is culturally competent can adapt a service or resource to meet a person's cultural needs. A person's culture can include:

- Language (American Sign Language, Spanish, Mandarin)
- Values and beliefs
- Attitudes
- Religion
- Communication Style
- Home or community
- Food

Linguistic Competence - The capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences including persons of limited English proficiency, those who have low literacy skills or are not literate, and individuals with disabilities. Linguistic competency requires organizational and provider capacity to respond effectively to the health literacy needs of populations served (National Center for Cultural Competence, NCCC).

Lived Experience – Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by other people (Oxford).

LGBTQ+ -- Refers to people who identify as lesbian, bisexual, bigender, gay, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, aromantic, and other diverse gender and sexual identities (Proud and Supported Resources).

Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

Diversity - The wide range of factors that distinguish one group or individual from another. This can include differences in ethnic or racial background and self-identification, tribal affiliation, nationality, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic status, education, religion, spirituality, physical and intellectual abilities, geographic location, and other factors. (Adapted from the cultural diversity definition, Goode & Jackson, 2009)

Disparity – a noticeable and usually significant difference or dissimilarity. The word is often used to describe a social or economic condition that's considered unfairly unequal.

Equity - The consistent, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, especially those who may face systemic disparities, to ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

Inclusion - The recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of [people] of all backgrounds.

Targeted Disparity - The targeted disparity item in a Council's plan is written as a goal or objective. A disparity is identified, and the Council implements strategies to decrease the identified disparity for an identified population during a specific timeframe. The targeted disparity item appears in the Council's annual work plan and has associated key activities, expected outputs, outcomes, data and evaluation measurement information, and related performance measures (DD Act).

Underserved Communities – populations such as individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, disadvantaged individuals, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals from underserved geographic areas (rural or urban), and specific groups of individuals within the population of individuals with developmental disabilities, including individuals who require assistive technology in order to participate in and contribute to community life (DD Act).

Resources & References

The following are all the research articles, resources, and other Diversity Plans we used to inform this DEIA Strategic Plan.

Resources

ARC Diversity Action Plan: https://thearc.org/wp-content/uploads/forchapters/16-049-Diversity-Action-Plan-v13-DIGITAL.pdf

AUCD Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan:
https://www.aucd.org/docs/urc/20200124_Equity_Diversity_and_Inclusion_Action_Plan_Final.pdf

DD Act: Public Law 106-402 106th Congress October 30, 2000 (acl.gov)

Nation Center for Cultural Competence (NCCC) at Georgetown University:
fcclcguide.pdf (georgetown.edu)

NYS Power Authority DEI Strategic Plan:
https://www.nypa.gov/-/media/nypa/documents/document-library/dei/nypa-2021-dei-journey.pdf]

Proud and Supported: https://proudandsupported.org/resources/#_Toc95902488

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[12] Movement Advancement Project. 2019. *LGBT People with Developmental Disabilities.* https://www.lgbtmap.org/effective-messaging/lgbt-people-disabilities

[13] US Department of Health and Human Services; Office of Minority Health. 2011. *Assuring Health Equity for Minority Persons with Disabilities.* https://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/assets/pdf/checked/1/acmhhealthdisparitiesreport.pdf