

The TRIAD

The TRIAD is a coalition of three organizations: University Legal Services (the Protection and Advocacy agency for the District of Columbia), the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development (the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service), and the District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council.

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/add/DDACT2.htm> authorizes and provides funding for all three programs which exist in each US state and territory. The Mayor of the District of Columbia designates a local agency to administer each program. All three organizations receive funding from the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Administration on Children and Families, which is a part of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Each program has a unique mission and function:

- The Protection and Advocacy (P&A) agency <http://www.dcpanda.org> provides information and referral services and uses legal, administrative and other remedies to resolve problems for individuals and groups of clients. The P&A reaches out to members of minority groups that historically have been underserved. In addition to the PADD program (P&As for individuals with developmental disabilities), the P&As also receive Federal grants authorized by seven additional laws, to help individuals with other disabilities or special needs (i.e., mental illness, traumatic brain injury) secure services from the Rehabilitation Services Administration, assistive technology or assistive technology services, assistance in acquiring any service, assistance in understanding benefits programs, and assistance with the voting process.
- The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) <http://www.gucchd.georgetown.edu> is part of a national network of universities that provide interdisciplinary training, community service and technical assistance, research, and information dissemination activities. The mission of UCEDDs is to serve as liaisons to service delivery systems to positively affect the lives of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and work towards increasing their independence, productivity, and integration into communities.
- The District of Columbia Developmental Disabilities Council is composed of individuals with significant disabilities, parents and family members of people with developmental disabilities, and representatives of State agencies that provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities. Together, this group of individuals develops and implements a statewide plan to address the Federally-mandated priority of employment, and optionally any of three other Federal priorities (case management, child development, and community living) as well as one optional State priority.

The emphasis of the Councils is to increase the independence, productivity,

inclusion and integration into the community of people with developmental disabilities, through a variety of systemic change, capacity building, and advocacy activities on their behalf, including development of a State Plan, which lays out activities for demonstration of new approaches to enhance their lives; training activities; supporting communities to respond positively; educating the public about their abilities, preferences, and needs; providing information to policy-makers to increase their opportunities; and eliminating barriers.

All three agencies are required to engage in activities that promote:

- independence
- productivity ,and
- inclusion in the larger society of people with developmental disabilities.

The three programs are required to collaborate in order to insure access to a broad range of services and supports for people with developmental and other disabilities.

In the past, the TRIAD has collaborated on several activities:

- conducted focus groups in different wards of the city to elicit input from individuals with developmental and other disabilities and their families as each entity developed its annual plan of activities.
- developed a strategic plan of action to undo proposed emergency legislation to amend the Home and Community based Service Waiver, to serve only individuals with mental retardation, eliminating individuals with other developmental disabilities.

Upcoming activities

- Convene a joint meeting of the three advisory councils
- Convene a meeting for government policy makers to share significant issues affecting the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families and communities
- Advocate for a District-level office on disability