Contents

[Goal 1: Developing Engaged Leaders 1](#_Toc155883893)

[Partners in Policymaking 1](#_Toc155883894)

[Leadership Academy for Excellence in Disability Services 2](#_Toc155883895)

[Scholarship Fund 2](#_Toc155883896)

[Advocates in Motion 3](#_Toc155883897)

[Goal 2: Impacting Policy & Practice 3](#_Toc155883898)

[Policy information 3](#_Toc155883899)

[Systems barriers 4](#_Toc155883900)

[Policy progress 4](#_Toc155883901)

[Real world impact: better lives for Tennesseans with disabilities 4](#_Toc155883902)

[Goal 3: Informing the public 4](#_Toc155883903)

[For More Information 5](#_Toc155883904)

TN Council on Developmental Disabilities FY2023 Annual Report

Cover image description: photo of the TN state capitol with 3 circular photos of young people with visible disabilities. When you hover with your mouse over one of the images, the text for our 3 council goal areas appear. Cover also includes the Council logo.

# Goal 1: Developing Engaged Leaders

*Impact Statement: Tennesseans with disabilities and their family members will be more engaged leaders. This means developing more informed and resourceful leaders. The ability to better access information and resources means one is better able to make choices that affect their lives and exercise control of their lives.*

## Partners in Policymaking

*Provide leadership learning and development programs to Tennesseans with disabilities and their family members in order to increase advocacy skills and engagement.*

What did we do in 2023?

Partners in policymaking: 2023 graduates of the Council’s free leadership and advocacy training program for adults with disabilities and family members of people with disabilities reported:

* increased knowledge and being more informed regarding information resources and services: our target goal was 80%, and actual outcome was 95%
* increased leadership skills, service in leadership roles, or participation in leadership activities: our target goal was 80%, and actual outcome was 100%
* increased comfort sharing personal stories on important disability issues with policymakers: target 80%, actual outcome 95%
* increased ability to influence policymakers, public policy, and the legislative process: target 80%, actual outcome 90%
* better ability to track down and access information and resources: target 80%, actual outcome 95%
* increased ability to access services: target 80%, actual outcome 90%
* increased ability to address barriers or resolve problems: target 80%, actual outcome 100%

## Leadership Academy for Excellence in Disability Services

2023 graduates of our leadership training for state employees working in disability services reported:

* better knowledge of disability information, resources and services: target 80%; actual outcome 100%
* knowledge of disability services, policies, and practices: target 80%, actual outcome 100%
* better understanding of the impact that changes in policies and service delivery practice have on people’s lives: target 80%, actual outcome 100%
* increased ability to identify needed changes to service system policies and increased understanding of the impact that changes in policies and service delivery practices have people’s lives: target 80%, actual outcome 100%

## Scholarship Fund

The Council’s Scholarship Fund assists Tennesseans with disabilities and their families to attend disability-related meetings, conferences and trainings.

Recipients reported:

* increased independence and increased ability to make choices that affect their lives and exercise control of their lives: target 80%; actual 100%
* increased sense of being connected to others with a similar life experience: target 80%; actual 100%
* increased knowledge and feeling more informed regarding information, resources and services: target 80%, actual 100%
* agreed with “my life is better because of the Scholarship Fund”: target 80%, actual 100%

Testimonial quote: “We benefitted by connecting with other people in similar life situations and with similar experiences. We learned a lot about advocacy because of the strong emphasis on advocacy during the convention. We learned a lot about different companies and organizations that are benefitting the blind. The strong positive philosophy of blindness that resonates through every session gives me and my family confidence to fully engage in our world, and advocate when we encounter barriers. After attending this conference, I am better equipped to live my life as a blind person.” – FY23 scholarship fund recipient

## Advocates in Motion

This program works to support grassroots self-advocacy in Tennessee through training and program development to increase advocacy skills and engagement.

Participants in this grassroots advocacy training we sponsor through the department of intellectual and developmental disabilities report:

* Increased leadership skills: target goal 80%; actual 94%
* increased ability to decide for myself (self-determination): target 80%; actual 96%
* increased ability to set my own goals and achieve them: target 80%; actual 98%
* Increased self-advocacy: target 80%, actual 94%
* satisfaction with experience: target 80%; actual 98%

Testimonial video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmlJEXplgKE>

# Goal 2: Impacting Policy & Practice

*Impact Statement: Tennesseans with disabilities influence policy and practice through the work of the Council on Developmental Disabilities.*

## Policy information

Track, summarize in plain language, and share information with Tennesseans about policies that impact disability. Position the council as a top resource for Tennesseans to learn about policy affecting disability.

Projected and actual outputs:

* Track policy proposals and opportunities to impact policymaking: projected number of 50; actual number was 177
* Disseminate weekly newsletters with information about policy affecting disability: projected number of 50; actual number of 44
* Council priority bills have a positive outcome based on council recommendations: target goal of 75%, actual outcome 100%
* Tennesseans with disabilities report increased knowledge of key disability policy that affects them and the disability community: target goal of 80%, actual outcome 85%

## Systems barriers

Solicit and study the perspectives of people with disabilities to identify system barriers and increase their influence on the design of policy changes.

Projected and actual outputs:

* Hold discussions for the purpose of gathering input: target goal 5, actual 15
* Respond to inquiries: target goal 50, actual output 185
* Participate in policy-focused groups: target goal 20, actual 36
* Council members engaged in policy activities: target goal 3, actual 17

## Policy progress

Measure progress toward increase inclusion, self-determination, and independence

Actual outputs:

* Provided consultations to policymakers on 32 policy decisions this year
* Tracked 14 new connections among state agencies
* Created 6 products about best practices

## Real world impact: better lives for Tennesseans with disabilities

Former Council member Alison Bynum used a new adult-size changing table at a welcome center on I-40 during a summer vacation with her family. “This was lifechanging for our family.”

# Goal 3: Informing the public

*Impact statement: Tennesseans with disabilities, their family members, policy leaders and the broader public will be equipped with clear, objective, trusted disability information. Clear information creates understanding, which leads to engagement and action toward core Developmental Disabilities Act principles.*

1. Communication tools – use a wide range of communication tools/platforms and partnerships to increase access to information and resources, build understanding, and engage underrepresented groups.
   1. E-news – subscribers 2,490 and 42% open rate
   2. Facebook page followers: 4,996; engagements: 6,532
   3. Twitter (X): followers: 1,421; engagements: 636
   4. Website unique visitors: 18,091
   5. Breaking Ground subscribers: 6,204
2. Provide plain language support to sister state agencies and disability organizations: target goal 5, actual outcome 13 instances
3. Contacts made with people and groups serving underrepresented communications: target goal 12, actual outcome 30
4. Tennesseans with disabilities, their families, and the public report they better understand disability issues and policy topics: target goal 90%, actual outcome 100% responded affirmatively
5. Tennesseans with disabilities, their families, and the public rate our information as easy to understand (plain language/accessibility): target goal 90%, actual outcome 98% responded affirmatively
6. Tennesseans with disabilities, their families, and the public act on info learned from Council communications: target goal 60%, actual outcome 86% responded affirmatively
7. Tennesseans with disabilities, their families, and the public report Council information helps with the disability issues most important to them (relevance): target goal 80%, actual outcome 83% responded affirmatively
8. Tennesseans with disabilities, their families, and the public trust the Council for objective, expert information: target goal 90%, actual outcome 94% responded affirmatively
9. Real-world impact: better lives for Tennesseans with disabilities – our top-viewed video for FY2023 was the Coleman family’s story. This story helped people see the human impact of getting the right services in place to help someone needing behavioral supports: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxX6T5s42oI&feature=youtu.be>.

# For More Information

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