

National Community of Practice: Supporting Families throughout the Lifespan
Application to Become a State CoP

Please provide the contact information for your state's DD Agency and DD Council Directors.

State DD Agency

Name: Terrence W. Macy, Ph.D, Commissioner

Organization: CT Department of Developmental Services

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Phone Number: 860-418-6011

Mailing Address: 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

State DD Council

Name: Molly Cole, Director of Council on Developmental Disabilities

Organization: CT Council on Developmental Disabilities

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Phone Number: 860-418-6157

Mailing Address: 460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106

Please provide the contact information for the Lead Facilitator for your state:

Name: Robin Wood, Director of Family Support Strategies and Advocacy

Organization: CT Department of Developmental Services

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State Intellectual/Developmental Disability Service System

The following questions should be answered by the state I/DD agency:

- 1. Please explain the types of activities, initiatives or policies that the state I/DD agency is currently involved in (or has been over the last five years) that focus on supports in the community, that are self-directed and that foster self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities.**

Approximately 1, 059 people served by CT DDS currently self-direct their residential and/or day services. This represents 5.2% of the persons receiving services from the Department.

Significant resources have been invested to support the growth of self-directed services in the Department. Each of the three DDS regions has a Self Determination (SD) Division. Each regional division is led by a Self Determination Director. The SD Director supervises a support broker supervisor, case manager support brokers, consumer advocates, and employment staff.

This team works to promote, support, evaluate, prioritize, and implement self-directed services in the region. The regional SD Directors are also responsible for providing self-determination, self-advocacy, person-centered planning, and employment and individual budget trainings in the regions and for developing and maintaining support services for individuals who self-direct their services.

DDS Central Office (CO) provides oversight of the Fiscal Intermediary contracts that manage the self-directed individual budgets. CO also provides oversight of the College of Direct Support online training services that are available to DDS staff, providers and to families and their staff who self-direct their services. DDS has a goal in its Five Year Plan to increase the number of people who self-direct their services. The CT DDS Employment First Initiative and the Department's Five Year Plan goals also support the development of community-based, self-directed services that support self-determination for the individuals we serve.

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2. Specific to services and supports directed to family members (parents, siblings, etc.), how does the state service system currently support (fund, administer, provide, contract, etc.) the following family support strategies (refer to *familysupportagenda.org* for further detail into each category) *if in a development stage, please give details of where you are in the process:

a. Strategies for providing information and education

CT DDS is in the process of developing a new family website that is organized across the lifespan stages as described in the national family support agenda. The family webpage will include links to other state agencies and groups that provide supports across the lifespan. We are also in the process of developing a video lab that will be used to create short, easy-to-understand video materials for stakeholders. Efforts to support and expand the use of Twitter, Facebook, SharePoint, and other social network sharing strategies are also underway. CT DDS staff organize family forums, transition fairs, leadership meetings and other types of informational sessions for stakeholders on a regular basis.

b. Activities that support peer-to-peer mentoring, networking or connections (parent-to-parent, sibling support, support groups, etc.)

CT DDS contracts with the **CT Family Support Network** to provide support services to families throughout Connecticut. The CT Family Support Network has 10 part-time staff that provide advocacy, mentoring, family/staff trainings, resources and information to local groups in their assigned area. There is a goal in DDS's Five Year Plan to support the development of sibling groups. The Department has created a new **Director of Family Supports Services Strategies and Advocacy** position and a new **Family Supports Youth Coordinator** position. Both of these positions are designed to help families receive the community-based support they need to help their child live a self-determined life across all stages of their lifespan.

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c. Day-to-day direct supports and services (respite, home adaptations, caregiver training, etc.)

CT DDS provides family support services state-wide to eligible families and individuals. Based upon availability, this support includes Family Support Resource Teams, Individual Grants, Respite, Helpline services, Case Management, Voluntary Services Program, Money Follows the Person services, Autism Division services and Birth to Three services.

The Individual Family Support (IFS) Resource Teams, which include nurses, behaviorists, educational liaisons, transition coordinators, recreation staff and direct care staff, provide a variety of critical services that are instrumental in helping to keep individuals healthy and safe, as well as ensuring the overall improvement of the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by reducing family stress that can lead to more costly services.

Individual and Family Grants are cash subsidies for the purpose of providing individual and family supports or defraying extraordinary disability-related expenses. Supports that may be purchased with these subsidies include, but are not limited to: respite, in-home supports, behavioral supports, nursing, medical or clinical supports, temporary assistance, crisis support, skill training, family training, recreation, transportation, support coordination and assistance to access community supports.

The Department provides **respite services** to families through a variety of mechanisms. CT DDS has 11 state operated respite centers. Respite services are also provided through self-directed budgets. Families can use money from their individual budget to hire their own staff, or to hire private agency staff to provide respite services. Each region also has a **helpline** to provide assistance to individuals and families who do not have an assigned DDS case manager. In the past year, the Helpline has assisted more than 3,000 families.

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The DDS case manager is the primary contact for persons who are eligible for DDS supports and services and have fee-for-service Medicaid (Title XIX). The case manager assists family members in: 1) identifying needs through a level of need assessment and planning process, 2) gaining access to supports and services to meet those needs and 3) monitoring progress and evaluating the quality of supports and services.

The DDS Voluntary Services Program (VSP) supports children who have intellectual disability and emotional, behavioral, or mental health needs that substantially interfere with or limit the child's functioning in the family or community activities. Many of the children served in VSP exhibit extremely challenging behaviors. The services are intended to support families to care for their children within the family home.

Money Follows the Person grant funds provided by the Department of Social Services (DSS) are being used to help individuals who want to move from Long Term Care (LTC)/institutional settings to the community. CT DDS is in the process of transitioning approximately 70 people from nursing homes to community-based homes over the next three years.

The DDS Autism Division is committed to providing comprehensive, coordinated and effective supports and services for DDS consumers with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families. CT DDS is the lead agency for autism in the state. The Autism Division's services ensure that consumers engage in meaningful participation and self-determination in all aspects of life. CT DDS also works in partnership with **Birth to Three and Early Connections** staff to help strengthen the capacity of families to meet the developmental and health-related needs of infants and toddlers who have delays or disabilities. All family supports provided by CT DDS promote the self-determination of individuals and their families.

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d. Strategies that support and enable families to assist and participate in their family member's self-direction of services

DDS support brokers and the three regional Self Determination Directors provide one-to-one support, training, and technical assistance to individuals and families who self-direct their services. Two Fiscal Intermediary agencies contracted by DDS also provide support to families who have individual budgets. The Self Determination Directors provide training and technical assistance on self-direction policies and procedures and on other self-direction topics.

3. Please explain the many different ways that self-advocates and families are involved in informing and making decisions about state DD agency policy and practices?

DDS has ten paid state employee **Self Advocate Coordinator (SAC)** positions for consumers who receive services from the Department. The SACs are responsible for mentoring other consumers, supporting the development of self-advocacy groups, and advocating for system changes. The DDS Self Advocate Coordinators play a vital role in leading the Department efforts to assist individuals, families, and all support staff to live and support more self-determined lives. The SACs participate in a variety of DDS committees and are board members of a number of organizations. DDS providers also have a contract goal to include self-advocates on their boards and to support the development of self-advocacy groups.

DDS families participate in DDS mission events, are members of state and regional advisory councils and are invited to participate in a variety of DDS committees. Family members and other stakeholders are also members of a DDS readers group. Their role is to help ensure that materials created by DDS are clear, concise, and easy-to-read by all DDS stakeholders.

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State Councils on Developmental Disabilities

The following questions should be answered by the State DD Council Director.

1. Please explain the types of activities, initiatives or policies that the State DD Council is currently involved in (or has been over the last five years) that focus on community living and that foster self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities.

The CT Council on Developmental Disabilities engages in policy, advocacy and system change activities that promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities in their communities. These include a number of funded initiatives. The goal of the **Aging in Place** project is to demonstrate the organization and delivery of services and supports to people with developmental disabilities that are aging and already living independently, or with individuals they have chosen, in their homes and communities.

The Council has supported a training initiative focused on **Parents With Cognitive Limitations** (PWCL) since 2010. The PWCL project focuses on improving supports to parent with cognitive limitations in the community so that they may be successful in parenting their children with appropriate supports in place. The Council supports training through a task force that includes representatives from the Department of Developmental Services, the Department of Children and Families, the State Education Resource Center and the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities, among others. Members of this task force implement training modules across the state. In 2011, 124 people were trained through this effort.

The Council, in partnership with the UCONN Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and the Office of Protection and Advocacy, implemented **Partners in Policymaking** leadership training in 2012 and 2013. This partnership venture utilizes staff and resources from the Council and leverages funds and support from our DD Council partners. Additional segments of the training are taught by state and national faculty, including many from

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the Department of Developmental Services. In 2012, the program graduated 23 individuals who were people with developmental disabilities or parents who have children with developmental disabilities. This project is exemplary in its leadership training, its outcomes and in the collaborative efforts of the DD Council and other agencies.

The Council has supported several other **parent leadership training** initiatives. This includes training on special education through African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities (AFCAMP) for parents who reside in Hartford, CT. This summit provided necessary information on special education, the educational process and the opportunities for parents to partner with the school system to improve services within the Hartford Public Schools. Seventy-nine parents attended the event. Additionally, the Council supported implementation of a Parent Leadership conference offered through PATH/Parent to Parent and Family Voices of Connecticut, which included training by the Family to Family Health Information Center at PATH. Council support included funding and trainers for the event.

Policy Initiatives in this current legislative session include efforts to safeguard funding for services to people with developmental disabilities in the state, including funding for services through the Department of Developmental Services. The Council is also focused on defeating a bill that would allow physician assisted suicide, and promoting another bill which clearly defines physical helplessness to better protect individuals with disabilities from sexual assault. At a federal level, the Council will be active with the disability policy seminar in April and will visit with our Congressional delegation to promote policies supporting people with disabilities.

The Council, the UCEDD and the Office of Protection and Advocacy have also supported a **Faith Based Coalition** to promote inclusion of people with disabilities in their local faith communities. This included a conference in the spring of 2012, attended by 78 people from

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faith communities. The Faith Coalition continues to meet, and includes representation from DDS.

The Council also promotes health and safety so that people can be effectively included in their communities. This includes the **Medical Safeguards Project** funded by the Council through Connecticut Legal Services to create and implement a legal-medical partnership that can educate local hospital staff and community providers on the complexities of providing medical services to people with developmental disabilities. This project will empower members of the community so that they can access adequate and appropriate health care. Numerous DDS staff have participated in this training. Additionally, following major storms that impacted Connecticut in the past two years, the Council has funded several **emergency preparedness** initiatives to ensure the safety of individuals in their communities, and to ensure that they are part of the emergency preparedness plans in their communities.

2. What are the specific goals or activities (funding, administration, collaboration, etc.) included in your State DD Council's five year plan that focus on the following strategies for supporting families and caregivers (refer to *familysupportagenda.org* for further detail into each category):

- a. Strategies for providing information and education**
- b. Activities that support peer-to-peer mentoring, networking or connections (parent-to-parent, sibling support, support groups, etc.)**
- c. Day-to-day direct supports (respite, home adaptations, caregiver training, etc.)**
- d. Strategies that support and enable families to assist and participate in their family members' self-direction of services**

The Council is engaging in numerous focus groups and informational sessions across the state to link with self-advocates, providers and parents in an effort better meet the needs of people with disabilities in our state. All of the information gathered in these **focus groups** will

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be utilized in revising our five year plan in the next year. Over the next five years the Council will increase opportunities to learn about and implement effective self-advocacy strategies that promote choice, independence and self-determination in all aspects of life and collaborate with **People First** of CT and other self-advocates so that people with disabilities will have opportunities to participate in the self-advocacy movement in the state.

The Council supports **housing initiatives** which raise the awareness of the housing needs of people with an array of disabilities, identify model communities that provide accessible housing and housing innovations to people with developmental disabilities and address the barriers to home ownership for people with disabilities. The Council will support **medical safeguards training** to hospital and emergency room staff regarding the rights of persons with disabilities who are receiving emergency or in-patient care, provide training on the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and its implications for people with disabilities, and support wellness programs for people with disabilities so that they will have full access to the health care system. All of the DD Council's projects foster community inclusion, independence and community involvement.

3. Please explain the many different ways that self-advocates and families are involved in informing and making decisions about state policy and practices?

The DD Council is comprised of 24 individuals who are appointed by the Governor. Eight of these individuals are self-advocates, eight are parents of children with disabilities, two represent non-profit agencies that serve people with disabilities and the remaining six are the designated agency representatives in the DD Act. By its design and by-laws, this Council is directed by self-advocates and parents. The Council is chaired by a self-advocate who is blind and the vice chair is the parent of twins with autism. Decisions about policy are made by the Council through the Legislative Program and Policy Committee, co-chaired by two self-advocates. Decisions

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about grant initiatives to be funded by the Council are made through the Proposal Review Committee, chaired by a parent and an agency representative. Following the review protocol approved by the Council, this committee will review funding proposals and make recommendations to the full Council for approval. The budget and priority areas for the Council are decided at the annual meeting each September, and reported on for approval at meetings of the Council every other month.

Combined Answers

The following questions should be answered jointly between the State DD agency and the State DD Council and may include other key stakeholders.

1. To understand the partnership relationship between the State DD agency and State DD Council, please answer the following questions:

- a. Describe 2 large system change initiatives in which both organizations participated and what was accomplished.**
- b. Describe the roles of the State DD Agency and the State DD Council and how you collaborated to achieve the outcomes of the initiative**
- c. Explain the strengths of the collaboration and any challenges, including how they were resolved.**
- d. Describe how self-advocates and families were included in the development, implementation and evaluation of the 2 initiatives.**

CT DDS has always had a strong partnership with the CT DD Council. DDS is the designated state agency for the DD Council, and as such has enjoyed a strong collaboration in many program initiatives. The Council staff members are physically located in the same building as DDS Central Office (CO) staff. CT DDS CO staff, self-advocates and family members have always been members of the DD Council. The DD Council was an active partner in the DDS Self Determination Initiative and its Employment First Initiative. The Council has

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provided “seed” money to pilot best practices in these initiatives and has participated in self-determination and employment steering committees. CT DDS and the DD Council have also partnered together to support People First self-advocacy activities. The partnership activities have helped both agencies find creative and flexible solutions to identified barriers.

2. To gain an understanding of the current issues and trends around “supports to families” in your state:

- a. Please describe, from the perspective of families, the types of supports specifically aimed at the family that are the most needed or that families would find most beneficial.**
- b. Please explain any current programs, policies or initiatives that focus on supports to families.**
- c. Please explain the strengths and challenges for each example provided.**

Surveys and other information collected by the DD Council, CT DDS, and the Family Support Network indicate that families want to receive clear, concise, and easy-to-read information about supports and services that are available in their local communities. Families benefit from support provided through other parents, either individually in a parent-to-parent model, or in support groups. They are increasingly frustrated with the lack of inclusive social, recreational and employment opportunities in their communities. Transition into adult services continues to be a concern. Families in Connecticut still struggle with access to appropriate, inclusive education settings, and continue to request advocacy and training to improve educational outcomes for their children. They also want respite services and in-home and out-of-home supports that are needed to address the challenges associated with raising their child with a disability.

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The CT DD Council and CT DDS are currently partnering to help create a statewide **CT Lifespan Cross Disability Alliance** whose purpose is to assist individuals and families to educate others about the needs of all people with disabilities and to advocate for the supports required to help people with disabilities and their families lead productive lives as contributing members of society. The Alliance consists of representatives from self-advocacy organizations, parent organizations and provider organizations. Over 70 organizations and individuals are now part of the Alliance. Effective cross-disability advocacy partnerships are critical given the current economy and the increased needs of an aging population. The DD Council and CT DDS are also in the process of developing a joint technology pilot. We believe that better use of technology will assist individuals and families to find creative, cost-effective solutions to helping people with disabilities lead more independent lives.

3. To ensure that this opportunity is the right fit for your state, please answer the following:

- a. What is your understanding of a “Community of Practice,” including what is different and beneficial about this type of initiative?**

- b. What ideas or plans do you have to improve supports to families that you think this grant can assist you with? What do you believe will be the biggest barriers or challenges to participating in this Community of Practice and how do you anticipate overcoming them?**

- c. Please describe all the potential stakeholders that will be involved in CoP activities or advisory roles throughout the five years.**

CT DDS and the CT DD Council will benefit from participating in the National Community of Practice by having access to national family support leaders and by being engaged in a structured process that will aid us in creating, refining, communicating and using

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knowledge in new ways. It will help both departments to enhance a culture that respects and values shared, ongoing learning. Most importantly, it will provide a process where individuals and family members take the lead in designing and delivering effective new ways for supporting families across the lifespan. Both agencies also want to re-shape their services so that they are more responsive to families across the lifespan. Our shared goal is to create an infrastructure that supports families to find answers to questions like those posed in the Missouri Family to Family Resource Center *Charting the Life Course* tool. We hope to improve service coordination, enhance relationships with families and find creative new ways to do business.

Consumers, family members, advocates and staff from both agencies will participate in the CoP activities. The DDS lead facilitator will share leadership responsibilities with a selected member of the CT Lifespan Cross Disability Alliance and with the Disability Policy Specialist from the DD Council. All three of these individuals are the parent of a child with a disability.

4. Please describe how the work of the Facilitator of the state community of practice will function within and between the State DD System and the State DD Council and have the ability to make recommendations and decisions that will influence policy and practices.

The facilitator will work with the identified member of the CT Lifespan Cross Disability Alliance and the DD Council Disability Policy Specialist and with members of the National Community of Practice to design and implement an assessment of family support services. Assessment results will be reviewed with both DDS and DD Council management teams and with both of the agency's family advisory groups. A joint DDS/DD Council action plan will be developed. The action plan will be evaluated and revised based upon learning that takes place at monthly Community of Practice meetings and on feedback from stakeholders.

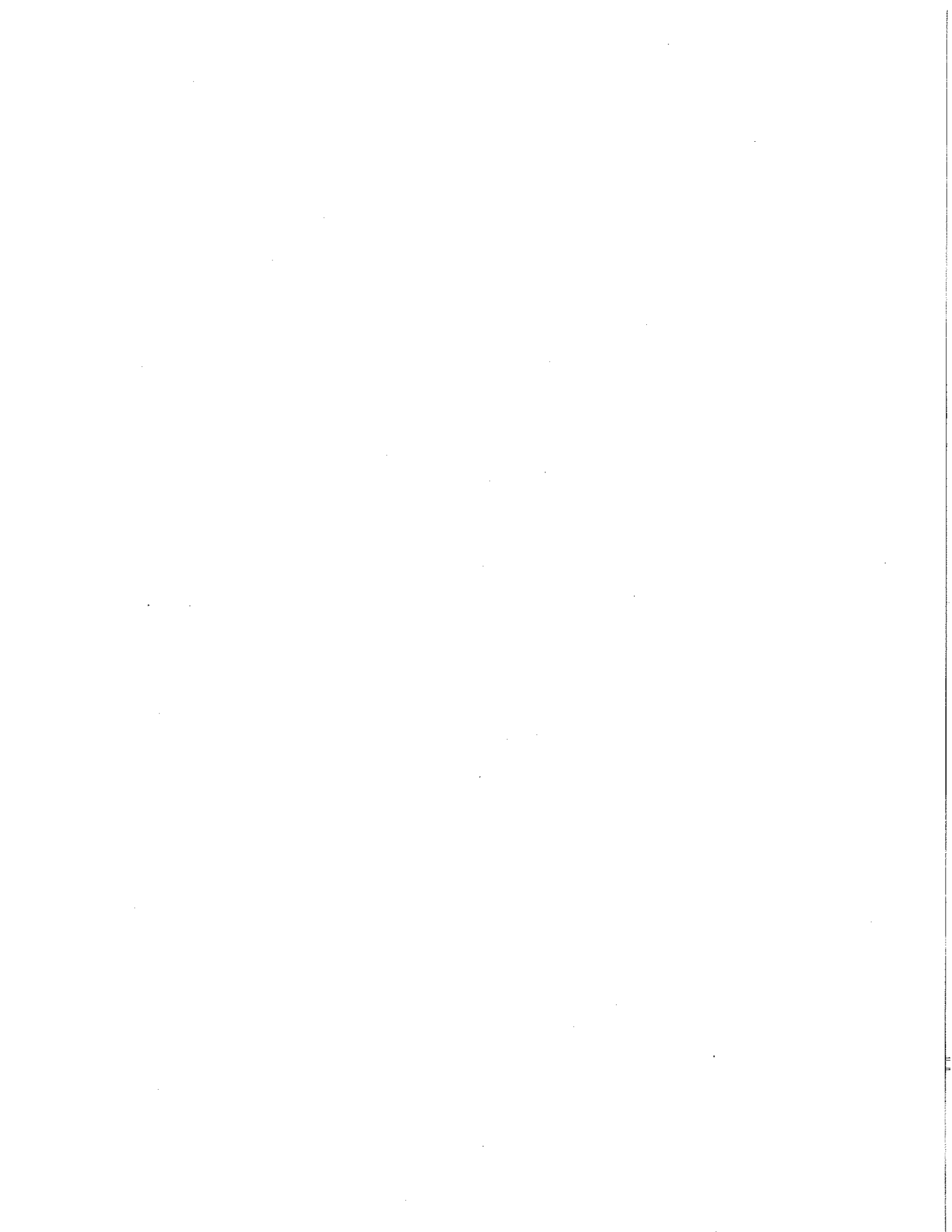
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The facilitator, members of the CT Lifespan Cross Disability Alliance and the DD Council Disability Policy Specialist will participate in monthly CoP teleconference calls and will meet monthly with the CT CoP stakeholder team. These three individuals (or their assigned representatives) will also participate in annual gatherings of the five Community of Practice states. The Commissioner of CT DDS and the Director of the CT DD Council will also actively participate in Community of Practice activities.

5. Resources: As a grant participant, each state will receive \$5,000 during year one and \$10,000 in each subsequent year. At a minimum, the state must commit to having the leadership team attend an annual face-to-face meeting in Kansas City. It is anticipated that this CoP will require resources beyond the yearly stipend. Please describe how your state anticipates using the funds and describe additional resources that both the State DD agency and State DD Council can dedicate to this CoP (staff time, travel expenses, family stipends, meeting space, etc.).

Funds will be used to support a minimum of three people (DDS facilitator, DD Council staff and a CT Lifespan Cross Disability Alliance member) to annual CoP meetings in Kansas City. Remaining funds will be used to cover costs incurred to increase participation of families and consumers in statewide CT CoP meetings (e.g. site costs, travel expenses, translators, personnel costs, stipends, etc.). Money will also be used to disseminate easy-to-read materials that are created for families and to plan and implement a statewide Family Conference to be held in Year 4 of the contract.

Both agencies will have management staff devote a minimum of one day a week to this project. Space for meetings, access to videoconferencing technology and other infrastructure support will be provided by DDS. The DD Council will make additional stipend supports available to families as needed.





University of Connecticut Health Center
A.J. Pappanikou Center for Developmental Disabilities

April 4, 2013

Robin Wood
Department of Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Robin:

I am delighted to write a letter of support for the Department of Developmental Services/Council on Developmental Disabilities application to participate in the National Community of Practice: Supporting Families through the Lifespan. We believe that participation in this opportunity will build on the substantial experience of both of these agencies in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

The collaboration among the various disability organizations in Connecticut has contributed significantly toward improving the lives of people with disabilities in Connecticut. These efforts have included the development of the newly forming Cross-Disability Alliance. I am heartened by our ability to collaborate, share resources and expertise and by our common passion to achieve the full inclusion for all people with disabilities in their communities.

The A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities is a disability research and training program located at the University of Connecticut Health Center. The Center is one of a national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Service (UCEDD) that strives to ensure that individuals with disabilities of all racial, ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds are fully included and valued in society. The mission of the A.J. Pappanikou Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities is to work collaboratively to promote advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families. It is our hope that the the Department of Developmental Services/Council participation in the National Community of Practice will be able to further promote this mission.

We feel that the Community of Practice affords an opportunity for the Connecticut Team to learn from other states and from national experts. This is an exciting opportunity, and one that we will support through participation from our organization, and through dissemination of information.

I look forward to working with you on this exciting initiative! I wish you well on this grant request.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Bruder

Mary Beth Bruder, PhD

*Professor of Pediatrics and Educational Psychology
Director, University of Connecticut A.J. Pappanikou
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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
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60B WESTON STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06120-1551

James D. McGaughey
Executive Director

Phone 1/860-297-4307
Confidential Fax 1/860-297-4305

April 10, 2013

Robin Wood, Director
Family Support Strategies and Advocacy
Department of Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Robin:

This is to support the application that the Department of Developmental Services and the Council on Developmental Disabilities are jointly submitting to participate in the National Community of Practice project being sponsored by the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS). By all appearances, this will be a wonderful opportunity to explore the "community of practice" approach to developing better ways to support individuals with disabilities and their families across the lifespan.

The challenges we face at both the State and national levels are daunting: the likelihood of continuing, perhaps indefinite fiscal retrenchment; the need to develop a new generation of safeguards amidst shifting paradigms of support (paradigms that increasingly emphasize self-direction, encourage self-advocacy, and yet also depend heavily on continuing family involvement); growing numbers of applicants waiting for relevant supports while, at the same time, the population currently receiving residential services ages and needs additional attention and resources. And these are only some of those daunting challenges – there are many others as well.

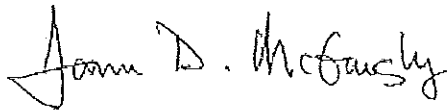
Many decades ago Connecticut faced a similar convergence of apparently intractable challenges. Students with disabilities were routinely excluded from school, or marginalized and consigned to one-size-fits-all basement classrooms where they prepared for dismal futures as clients in sheltered workshops. Adults were being warehoused in life-wasting institutions. Throughout the State and the nation, buildings were being built, public transportation and communication media were expanding without any thought being given to accessibility. And, perhaps worst of all, families were being pulled apart by policies and practices that heartlessly rewarded abandonment and punished loving commitment.

Fortunately, during the 1960s and 1970s, leaders emerged in the disability rights, education and human service reform movements in Connecticut who were able to see, and then work toward the common good. To a remarkable degree, they laid aside parochial concerns and came together to learn from and with each other, and to support a mutual quest for better things. Ideas that had helped in one arena were examined and adapted to others; experts and resources from across the country were identified and tapped; universal principles and core values were articulated and adopted. And, as these things happened, Connecticut began to recognize opportunities amidst its maze of seemingly insurmountable problems and to pursue positive change.

While the specific strategies those early leaders developed and successfully employed decades ago are not likely to be directly applicable today, their personal openness to each other and their willingness to engage in collaborative learning processes serve as an enduring example of the benefits of coming together in what we now recognize as an informal "community of practice". We are at a point where we can benefit from renewing our commitment to this approach. NASDDDS' National Community of Practice offers an opportunity to do just that. I have no doubt that a team from Connecticut could both contribute to, and learn deeply from the opportunity that participation would afford.

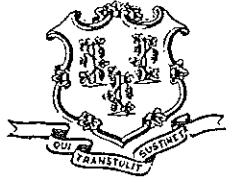
If our Office can be of further help in your pursuit of this important opportunity, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James D. McGaughey". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

James D. McGaughey
Executive Director

JDMc



Family Support Council
460 Capitol Avenue, Hartford Connecticut 06106

April 10, 2013

Robin Wood
Department of Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Robin:

I am delighted to write a letter of support for the Department of Developmental Services/Council on Developmental Disabilities application to participate in the National Community of Practice: Supporting Families through the Lifespan. We believe that participation in this opportunity will build on the substantial experience of both of these agencies in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

The collaboration among the various disability organizations in Connecticut has contributed significantly toward improving the lives of people with disabilities in Connecticut. These efforts have included the development of the newly forming Cross-Disability Alliance. I am heartened by our ability to collaborate, share resources and expertise and by our common passion to achieve the full inclusion for all people with disabilities in their communities.

The Connecticut Family Support Council has benefited substantially during the many years of its existence from the wealth of experience and inherent commitment to family support found within the Department of Developmental Services and the philosophy upon which it operates. We enthusiastically recognize this grant as a clear extension of that commitment and a powerful opportunity to impact family support services for Connecticut families.

We feel that the Community of Practice affords an opportunity for the Connecticut Team to learn from other states and from national experts. This is an exciting opportunity, and one that we will support through participation from our organization, and through dissemination of information.

I look forward to working with you on this exciting initiative! I wish you well on this grant request.

Sincerely,

Robyn Trowbridge
Co-Chair
CTFSC

Lisa Sheppard
Co-Chair
CTFSC

April 4, 2013

Robin Wood
Department of Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Robin:

People First CT is happy to write a letter of support for the Department of Developmental Services/Council on Developmental Disabilities application to participate in the National Community of Practice: Supporting Families through the Lifespan. We believe that participation in this opportunity will build on the substantial experience of both of these agencies in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

The collaboration among the various disability organizations in Connecticut has contributed significantly toward improving the lives of people with disabilities in Connecticut. These efforts have included the development of the newly forming Cross-Disability Alliance. We are glad that we will be able to collaborate, share resources and expertise and by our common passion to achieve the full inclusion for all people with disabilities in their communities.

People First CT is a statewide self advocacy organization made up of and run by people who have intellectual disabilities. We believe that all people, with and without disabilities, should be treated equally and respected for their abilities. We work together to make positive changes for people with disabilities. We encourage and advocate for choice, independence, freedom, respect, and dignity for everyone.

We feel that the Community of Practice affords an opportunity for the Connecticut Team to learn from other states and from national experts. This is an exciting opportunity, and one that we will support through participation from our organization, and through dissemination of information.

I look forward to working with you on this exciting initiative! I wish you well on this grant request.

Sincerely,

Carlos Colon
President, People First CT

Laura Maloney-Hastillo
Advisor



Toll Free: 877-FSN-2DAY (877-376-2329) www.ctfsn.org

April 4, 2013

Robin Wood
Department of Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Robin:

I am delighted to write a letter of support for the Department of Developmental Services/Council on Developmental Disabilities application to participate in the National Community of Practice: Supporting Families through the Lifespan. We believe that participation in this opportunity will build on the substantial experience of both of these agencies in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

The collaboration among the various disability organizations in Connecticut has contributed significantly toward improving the lives of people with disabilities in Connecticut. These efforts have included the development of the newly forming Cross-Disability Alliance. I am heartened by our ability to collaborate, share resources and expertise and by our common passion to achieve the full inclusion for all people with disabilities in their communities.

The Connecticut Family Support Network is a statewide network of families who have children with disabilities and special healthcare needs. We are parents interested in helping other parents to find the supports they need to become their child's best advocate. We assist parents directly, connect parents to each other for parent-to-parent support, offer help with navigating Connecticut's state service systems, provide training and offer information to parents and professionals regularly through email distribution lists.

We feel that the Community of Practice affords an opportunity for the Connecticut Team to learn from other states and from national experts. This is an exciting opportunity, and one that we will support through participation from our organization, and through dissemination of information.

I look forward to working with you on this exciting initiative! I wish you well on this grant request.

Sincerely,

Tesha Imperati
Interim Executive Director
CT Family Support Network
www.ctfsn.org
203-710-3041



PO Box 117 Northford, CT 06472 (800) 399-7284

Co-Directors

April 8, 2013

Carmina Cirioli

Robin Wood
Department of Developmental Services
460 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Nanfi Lubogo

Board of Directors

Patricia Dotson
President

Kate Cororan
Treasurer

Brendan Toohey
Secretary

Laura Wax

Ruth Nuss

Guy Riddick

Pamela Riddick

Ariana Balayan

Robin Planeta

Dear Robin:

I am delighted to write a letter of support on behalf of PATH Parent to Parent/Family Voices of CT (PATH/FVCT) for the Department of Developmental Services/Council on Developmental Disabilities application to participate in the National Community of Practice: Supporting Families through the Lifespan. We believe that participation in this opportunity will build on the substantial experience of both of these agencies in supporting individuals with disabilities and their families.

The collaboration among the various disability organizations in Connecticut has contributed significantly toward improving the lives of people with disabilities in Connecticut. These efforts have included the development of the newly forming CT Lifespan Cross-Disability Alliance. I am heartened by our ability to collaborate, share resources and expertise and by our common passion to achieve the full inclusion for all people with disabilities in their communities.

As the Parent to Parent, Family Voices and Family to Family Health Information Center of CT, we are committed to supporting families of children and youth with special health care needs/disabilities and work closely with both the DDC and DDS to provide supports and leadership opportunities for the families that we serve.

Individuals who participate through the Community of Practice will have access, training and support from PATH/FVCT and will be invited to participate in activities that promote leadership and advocacy skills. We feel that the Community of Practice affords an opportunity for the Connecticut Team to learn from other states and from national experts. This is an exciting opportunity, and one that we will support through participation from our organization, and through dissemination of information.

I look forward to working with you on this exciting initiative! I wish you well on this grant request.

Sincerely,

Nanfi N. Lubogo

Nanfi N. Lubogo
Co-Executive Director
PATH Parent to Parent/Family Voices of CT