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Kevin T. Casey, *Executive Director*

**FY-2017 NJCDD Grants
Request for Proposals
January 20, 2017**

Introduction

In accordance with the goals outlined in the [New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities](#)' 5-Year Plan for 2017-2021, the Council is currently accepting grant proposals in the three following areas. Prospective grantees may submit proposals in as few as one, or as many as all three of the areas in which grant funds are available. However, interested entities must submit a separate proposal for each area in which they would like to receive grant funding.

In order for grant proposals to be considered, prospective grantees **MUST** submit proposals to the NJCDD within 45 days of this announcement (*please see the timeline outlined below*). Prospective grantees will be required to fill out the NJCDD's Grant Proposal Form for FY-2017 as well as a Budget Narrative, both of which are available to download on the Council's website at www.njcdd.org.

Entities who have never applied for NJCDD grants in the past are strongly encouraged to download and review the Council's *Effective Grant Writing* guide and *NJCDD Grant Budget Tips*, both also available at www.njcdd.org, in order to ensure that new grant proposals are completed correctly and in full.

All grant proposals **MUST** be received by the NJCDD by **5:00pm on Monday, March 06, 2017**. Proposals **MUST** be submitted by mail to the following:

The NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities
c/o Kevin Casey, Executive Director
20 West State Street, PO Box 700
Trenton, NJ 08625-0700

Please send three (3) signed copies of each proposal submitted.

NJCDD FY-2017 Grants Timeline

January 20, 2017	Notice of Funds Available submitted to the public
March 06, 2017	Grant Proposals due back to the NJCDD by 5:00pm
April 15, 2017	Successful proposals selected by NJCDD Grants Committee
May 25, 2017	Successful proposals submitted to full Council membership for final vote
May 26, 2017	Notice of Award sent to successful grant applicants
July 01, 2017	Grant funds distributed to successful grantees

Grant #1

Self-advocate and Family Material and Training

The Council has been concerned for some time about concerns from families and self-advocates that they lack information about how to navigate the various complicated systems that provide support. As a result, the Council would like to develop comprehensive information on what is available to families and self-advocates to help them get the supports they need out of the various complex systems that provide those supports in New Jersey.

The Council would like to do this in two stages; information gathering, and then implementation of a comprehensive information system.

At this time we are seeking grant proposals that;

1. Identify all the training and resources locally, statewide, and nationally for children and adults, and compile that information in an annotated database, that is easy for families and self-advocates to use.
2. Create a bibliography for children's services, and for adult services, in multiple languages, that details the current training and material available.
3. Develop both a computer based and hard copy of the bibliography.
4. Assess and identify gaps in the training and information and develop a list of training and materials that need to be developed.
5. Recommend a long-term information dissemination strategy for resolution of this problem.

We intend this first step to be a one-year project. The Grant recipient will deliver the product to the Council for comment and approval. The Council will then make a decision as to how to proceed, which may include an RFP to implement the product of # 4 above.

Anticipated contract length-1 year

Anticipated contract amount- up to \$75,000

Proposals will be due within 45 days of issuance of the RFP.

Grant #2

Direct Support Professional Advocacy Plan

The New Jersey Council on Developmental Disabilities is seeking grant proposals for the development and implementation of a comprehensive advocacy strategy and plan to address staffing issues within the Direct Support Profession. This Advocacy Plan will incorporate a thorough analysis of research data curated from existing studies done by advocacy organizations within the state of New Jersey and beyond regarding key aspects of the Direct Support Profession; a public awareness strategy to inform state residents of New Jersey's critical need to increase pay, benefits, and career opportunities for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs); and a legislative education/advocacy strategy to inform lawmakers of the dire state of the Direct Support Profession and compel them to take action.

GOAL – Direct Support Staffing Issues

Develop and implement an advocacy strategy and plan to address staffing issues that allow people with developmental disabilities in New Jersey to have a qualified, competent, and stable direct support workforce that they can rely on to provide the supports they need to be engaged in all aspects of community life.

Implementation Targets:

- Survey providers to determine the level of crisis and current issues, including gathering information on state salaries and benefits in similar positions and programs.
- Examine other states and human service programs to determine successful practices used in addressing staffing issues. Support pilot programs to determine the effectiveness of using these practices in New Jersey.
- Develop and implement an advocacy plan and strategies from best practices for resolving staffing support issues to inform political and administrative policy makers.

Description:

1. Analysis of Research Data

Over the past several years, numerous advocacy organizations within New Jersey and beyond have conducted research on the current state of the direct support profession relating to key areas including average wages and available hours/overtime, provider agency turnover rates, career training and advancement opportunities, employment benefits (including sick and vacation time and health insurance), the difference in salaries for DSPs working in publicly run settings vs. non-profits, and existing or proposed legislation on the state and national level. In order to properly convey to state and federal lawmakers the urgent need to take action on this issue, a comprehensive report will be prepared and comprised of data and research curated from the following state and national organizations (among others)

- New Jersey State Chamber of Commerce
- US Department of Labor
- NJ Department of Labor
- Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)
- American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)
- New Jersey Association of Community Providers (NJACP)
- The Arc of New Jersey
- Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities (ABCD)
- The Elizabeth Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities at Rutgers University

In addition, original research will be carried out by way of a survey of current and past Direct Support Professionals working in a broad array of settings (state-run institutions, group homes, on-the-job, healthcare settings, schools, family homes, individual homes, etc.). The purpose of this survey will be to clearly define the key areas of concern for DSPs in New Jersey; namely, compensation/benefits, career opportunities, occupational hazards, major job duties, level of training, reasons for entering/leaving the field. Information collected in this survey may be used as anecdotal support for advocacy efforts, and to round out a more comprehensive research report.

2. Public Education/Awareness

Staff vacancies and high turnover rates have led to a considerable deficit in the number of qualified direct support professionals available to support individuals with developmental disabilities at home and in the community, and this is expected to increase substantially in the coming years. While this issue is becoming a major public health crisis in

not only New Jersey, but across the US, many within the general public are unaware that this crisis even exists. In order for lawmakers to feel compelled to act on this critical issue, public awareness and support for change is essential.

A key component of any advocacy strategy will be the design and implementation of a public awareness and education initiative. This effort should incorporate many aspects of mass communication including

- Audiovisual materials including YouTube videos and Public Service Announcements
- Social media campaigns incorporating Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram.
- Blog entries, Op-Eds, and Letters to Editors
- Testimonials from Direct Support Professionals, individuals with I/DD, and family members
- Possible spokespersons

Successful grantees will develop a detail and realistic implementation plan including clearly defined goals, timetables, success metrics, proposed messaging, possible partnerships, and communications methods tailored to numerous target audiences/demographics.

3. Legislative Advocacy/Education Plan

A plan to educate lawmakers on this crisis is critical. To that end, the successful grantee will convey the following messages to legislators

- a) The perception that Direct Support Professionals are little more than baby-sitters with minimal skills must be shattered. All parents, guardians, and individuals with I/DD themselves know this perception to be false, and recognize the need to compensate qualified DSPs in a way that is appropriate to the critical role they play in supporting individuals within the community and at home.
- b) This problem is not unique to New Jersey. Advocacy organizations across the country have been struggling to address the lack of compensation and career opportunities for DSPs.
- c) Legislative action has been attempted (with varying degrees of success) by numerous lawmakers in other states and on the federal level.

In developing a legislative education plan, the successful grantee will work side-by-side with family and self-advocates to meet with lawmakers and inform them of the key issues relating to our direct support crisis. Education materials will be created which will clearly outline the full scope of this crisis (utilizing data and research curated from numerous advocacy organizations), actions that other states have attempted to make to correct this problem, and necessary outcomes of any legislative action.

The successful grantee will also clearly define a legislative advocacy plan, collaborating with direct support professionals, families, and self-advocates to meet with lawmakers at all levels of government.

Please Note:

NJCDD is authorized by the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, and in New Jersey State government by NJSA 30:1AA 1.2 and is codified in Title 10 of the State Administrative Codes. State law places the Council "in but not of" the New Jersey Department of Human Services.

*The purpose of the Developmental Disabilities Councils, according to federal law, is to engage in advocacy, capacity building and systemic change that contribute to a coordinated, consumer and family-centered, consumer- and family-directed comprehensive system that includes needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. **NJCDD does not engage in 'lobbying' in the form of presenting an 'ask' to systems managers of governance or policy, nor is it permitted to 'endorse' candidates for public office under any circumstances.***

Anticipate contract length-one year with possible extensions based on the state of, and evaluation of, the project.

Anticipated budget \$75,000-\$100,000.

Proposals will be due within 45 days of the issuance of the RFP

Grant #3
Special Education

The Council has become concerned that families are frequently without assistance, and/or knowledge of the rules when attempting to gain educational supports for their family member with a disability. They are then faced with working their way through a complex system with complex rules to get the supports they need.

The Council seeks a vendor interested in developing a system to help remediate this problem. The prospective grantee must be able to meet the following goals;

Recruit, train, retain, and supervise a group of volunteer advocates who would be available to assist families as they work on gaining supports for their family member in the Special Education system.

1. Develop a curriculum that includes training in Special Education law and regulations in New Jersey, and training in how to be a successful advocate. The Curriculum must be approved by the Council and Disability Rights New Jersey prior to implementation.
2. Training should focus on negotiating with school districts, including attendance at IEP meetings with families.
3. Recruit at least two classes of 25 students to go through the training and become available to families. Recruitment and training must be distributed throughout the state, and must include individuals from non-English speaking communities. Collaboration with existing organizations is encouraged.
4. Market the availability of the trained advocates to families, and supervise their assignment to individual cases. Marketing must include an ability to provide assistance to non-English speaking individuals.
5. Referrals from DRNJ will take precedence.
6. DRNJ will provide technical assistance to advocates.
7. Supervise, and deliver ongoing training to the volunteer advocates.
8. Develop a process to pay a stipend or other incentives to volunteers, both for training attendance, and for advocacy assistance to families to meet the expectation that each person trained will commit to provide assistance to multiple families.
9. Develop and maintain a method to sustain the project once Council funding is completed.
10. Grantee must contract with an outside and independent evaluator to evaluate the project. Evaluation will include, in addition to the number of persons trained, the number of referrals received, the number of families assisted, and the number of trainees providing assistance to more than one family.

Grant time period-three years.

Grant funding range-\$100,000-150,000 each year.

Proposals will be due within 45 days of issuance of the RFP.