



We **build bridges** to connect the experiences of real people with disabilities to the policies and service systems that affect their lives. We **connect dots** to see the big picture and help state services work together to meet real needs. We **make change** toward greater inclusion, independence, and self-determination for people with disabilities in Tennessee.

The Council sees the big picture, connects our state systems to each other and to real people's experiences, and moves our entire disability services system toward the future people with disabilities want for themselves.

Our focus is broad, covering the lifespan for Tennesseans with intellectual and other types of life-long disabilities that need support services.

We are an independent agency within state government. Our work is informed by a [diverse group of citizens directly experiencing disability, appointed by the governor as Council representatives](#) from every region of the state. Policymakers from state agencies that oversee Tennessee's disability programs and other partner agencies also serve on the Council.

The Council is established by the federal [Developmental Disabilities Act](#) ([Spanish language version of the Developmental Disabilities Act.](#)) and by [Tennessee Executive Order 50](#).

In addition to Councils on Developmental Disabilities, the Developmental Disabilities Act ("DD Act") also created other partner agencies in every state and U.S. territory. These groups make up the state "DD Network" - state councils on developmental disabilities, protection and advocacy agencies, and university centers for excellence in developmental disabilities.

- [State Councils on Developmental Disabilities \(Councils\)](#) work to address identified needs by conducting advocacy, systems change, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion. Key activities include conducting outreach, providing training and technical assistance, removing barriers, developing coalitions, encouraging citizen participation, and keeping policy makers informed about disability issues.

Directions: Drag a word from the word bank to fill in the blanks.

WORD BANK

governor	bridges	picture	disabilities	intellectual
informed	training	coalitions	broad	dots
future	Policy makers	self-determination	inclusion	participation
Developmental Disabilities Act "DD Act"	change	citizens	barriers	advocacy

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