

THE ADVOCATOR

Vol 3, Issue 2

EXCITING NEWS!

The Self-Advocacy Advisory Council has been finalized. We are thrilled to announce the members who will be instrumental in guiding our initiatives and ensuring that the voices of self-advocates are heard. The council is composed of a diverse group of individuals with lived experience, bringing a wealth of knowledge and passion to the table. Their expertise will be invaluable as we work towards creating a more inclusive and accessible society for all.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The Self-Advocacy Advisory Council will be meeting regularly to discuss key issues affecting self-advocates and to develop recommendations for policy and program changes. They will also be actively involved in outreach and education efforts to raise awareness about self-advocacy and empower individuals to speak up for themselves.

GET INVOLVED!

We believe that everyone has a role to play in promoting self-advocacy. Here are some ways you can get involved:

- **Stay Informed:** Sign up for our newsletter to stay up-to-date on the latest news and events.
- **Attend Our Events:** We will be hosting a series of events and workshops throughout the year. These events are a great opportunity to learn more about self-advocacy and connect with other self-advocates.
- **Share Your Story:** Your story is powerful. By sharing your experiences, you can help to raise awareness and inspire others.
- **Become a Member:** If you are passionate about self-advocacy, we encourage you to become a member of our organization. As a member, you will have the opportunity to participate in our advocacy efforts and help to shape the future of our movement.

REMEMBER, YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

We believe that everyone has the right to self-advocacy. We are committed to empowering individuals to speak up for themselves and to create a world where everyone's voice is heard.

CONTACT US:

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the advisory council, please contact us at niles.valentine@mh.alabama.gov or call the Office of Self-Advocacy at 334-353-7032.

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Inaugural Meeting, November 15th, 2024 from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.



SELF-ADVOCACY PEER SPECIALIST PROGRAM UPDATE

We are excited to announce that the Self-Advocacy Peer Specialist Program is in its final stages of development! This innovative program will train and certify individuals with lived experience to provide support and guidance to their peers.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Peer-Led:** The program will be facilitated by individuals who have successfully navigated the challenges of self-advocacy. They will share their knowledge, experiences, and insights to empower others.
- **Comprehensive Curriculum:** The curriculum will cover a wide range of topics, including self-advocacy skills, navigating systems, building relationships, and promoting personal growth.
- **Certification:** Upon completion of the program, participants will receive a certification as a Self-Advocacy Peer Specialist, recognizing their expertise and commitment.

FINAL STEPS:

The only remaining step is to finalize the modules for the program. We are currently in the process of selecting speakers for each module, ensuring that participants receive the highest quality training from experts in the field.

Exciting News! The solicitation letter for trained professionals to teach the modules has been sent out. We have so far received a positive response from the community, and it is only a matter of time before this all-important final step has been completed.

STAY TUNED!

We will be announcing the official launch date of the Self-Advocacy Peer Specialist Program at a later date. This program represents a significant step forward in our efforts to empower individuals with disabilities to advocate for themselves and achieve their goals.

We are confident that this program will make a real difference in the lives of self-advocates across the state.

REGIONAL OFFICES

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Region 4

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Region 5

631 Beacon Pkwy West,
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UPCOMING PROJECTS FOR THE OFFICE OF SELF-ADVOCACY

The Office of Self-Advocacy is committed to continually improving and expanding its services to better support individuals with disabilities. The Director of Self-Advocacy has been made aware of certain gaps in services that need to be addressed, and he is actively working with the Self-Advocacy Advisory Council to develop strategies to bridge these gaps.

A key focus area is improving the Alabama Department of Mental Health's (ADMH) provision of waiver and disability services. The Office of Self-Advocacy recognizes the crucial role these services play in the lives of individuals with disabilities and is dedicated to ensuring their effective and efficient delivery.

Another critical area of focus is enhancing the training provided to professionals who work in-home with individuals receiving services. The Office of Self-Advocacy believes that well-trained professionals are essential to providing high-quality, person-centered support.

To achieve these goals, the Office of Self-Advocacy will be collaborating with the relevant departments within ADMH to identify areas for improvement and develop comprehensive plans for implementation. This collaborative approach ensures that the voices of individuals with disabilities are heard and that their needs are met.

The Office of Self-Advocacy is committed to transparency and will keep the community informed of its progress on these initiatives. By working together, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for individuals with disabilities in Alabama.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER IMPACT

The Office of Self-Advocacy is committed to working collaboratively with other organizations to advance the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities. We are excited to announce our plans to align ourselves more closely with the Council on Developmental Disabilities and AL-APSE (Alabama Association of People Supporting Employment First).

COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (CDD):

The CDD is a federally-funded, independent state agency that promotes the self-determination, independence, productivity, and inclusion of people with developmental disabilities. By collaborating with the CDD, we can leverage their resources and expertise to expand our reach and impact.

AL-APSE:

AL-APSE is a statewide organization dedicated to promoting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. We share their commitment to ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to work and contribute to their communities. By partnering with AL-APSE, we can strengthen our efforts to promote employment inclusion.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A COMMON GOAL:

Through these partnerships, we aim to:

- **Amplify the voices of self-advocates:** By collaborating with other organizations, we can create a stronger, more unified voice for self-advocacy.
- **Expand access to resources and services:** By sharing resources and information, we can ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the support they need to live fulfilling lives.
- **Advocate for policy change:** By working together, we can advocate for policies that promote the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities.

We believe that by working together, we can achieve even greater progress in our mission to empower individuals with disabilities and create a more inclusive society for all.

We want to hear from you, all of our self-advocates! Share your stories, experiences, and challenges related to self-advocacy in your daily life. Your unique perspective can inspire and empower others. Submit your stories to niles.valentine@mh.alabama.gov and let your voice be heard!



ACDD

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AL-APSE

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OFFICE OF SELF ADVOCACY SERVICES

<https://mh.alabama.gov/division-of-developmental-disabilities/self-advocacy-services/>

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