

# Disability Policy Consortium



**FOUNDED:** 1996

**CURRENT ORGANIZATION BUDGET:** \$1,570,000

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The Disability Policy Consortium (DPC) improves the lives of people with disabilities locally, statewide, and nationally through policy advocacy, groundbreaking research, and consumer support.

Its guiding principle is **“About Us, By Us”** – the belief that when decisions are made that impact the disability community, people with disabilities must be at the forefront of making them. Reflecting this, 80% of DPC’s staff and all of its senior leaders have disabilities.

Although it has been nearly 30 years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities continue to be marginalized. Compared to those without disabilities, the 20% of Americans who have a disability are:

- 3x less likely to be employed
- 2x more likely to be homeless
- 2x more likely not to get medical care due to cost
- 2x more likely to be victims of violence

DPC works every day to solve these problems. It provides expert guidance to policymakers and brings the voices of people with disabilities into the corridors of power. It develops new ideas through research, and supports people with disabilities in meeting their healthcare needs. DPC is engaged in developing the next generation of young leaders with disabilities.

## Investment Opportunity

With an investment of \$1M over the next two years, DPC will expand its advocacy and research teams to further address local and statewide issues, engaging greater numbers of people with disabilities and their families to advocate on their own behalf.

Investment at this time will leverage DPC’s recent growth in public funding designated for the ombudsman program. Philanthropy will provide vital resources for DPC to build its capacity to quickly respond to ever-changing policies that impact the health, housing, and employment of people with disabilities.

## Two-Year Goals

- Expand statewide presence by increasing the advocacy staff from three FTEs to seven FTEs
- Increase the size and scope of research efforts by increasing the research team from 1.5 FTEs to four FTEs
- Launch a student leadership program that engages 100 high school and college students with disabilities annually
- Expand number of clients served by the ombudsman program, while maintaining 95% consumer satisfaction rate

## Ways to Invest

### FINANCIAL

- \$65,000 to support an additional researcher to increase collaborations with academic institutions
- \$50,000 to support an additional community organizer
- \$2,000 to underwrite one high school student with a disability in DPC’s new youth program for a year

### IN-KIND

- Help with DPC events and fundraisers
- Provide public relations expertise and human resource services
- Become a board member to guide organizational development
- Speak out for policies that promote disability rights

## Leadership & Governance

In July 2019, Colin Killick will transition from his role as Deputy Director to be the new Executive Director of DPC. At DPC, Colin has been mentored and trained by veteran disability activists who fought to pass the ADA. He will take over from John Winske, who has led DPC through five years of growth and advocacy victories, and who will stay involved with the organization in an advisory role.

A 2012 graduate of Williams College, Colin received a Master's Degree from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 2018, where he founded the student Disability Justice Caucus and won the Robert F. Kennedy Award for Public Service.

Colin and the DPC staff work closely with an active 14-person Board of Directors who come from a wide range of fields and are predominately people with disabilities themselves.

“  
I've dealt with a lot of organizations....You guys are the only ones who took care of my needs. Changed my life.  
”

OMBUDSMAN CLIENT



## DISABILITY POLICY CONSORTIUM'S MODEL



### THREE TIERS TO SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE POLICY

*DPC is focused on three areas: Advocacy, Research, and Consumer Support, that work in combination to promote stronger public policy and greater access for people with disabilities.*

#### Advocacy:

- **Legislative Awareness:** DPC is intently focused on the Massachusetts State House and budget process, and leads multiple legislative campaigns that improve the lives of people with disabilities.
- **Community Organizing:** DPC trains and hires organizers, most of whom have a disability, to lead campaigns on legislative priorities that have won millions of dollars in funding for programs, and averted potentially devastating cuts.
- **Policy Development:** Seen as experts in the field, DPC partners with key stakeholders to develop innovative, inclusive policy solutions.
- **Youth Leadership:** DPC's new educational program with high schools and colleges engages the next generation of disability leaders.
- **Coalition Building:** DPC builds coalitions, both within and outside of the disability community, to share resources and advance the wellbeing of people with disabilities on issues ranging from housing to healthcare to transportation.
- **Local Support:** DPC leads the Commissions on Disability Alliance of Massachusetts (CODA), a project that convenes community disability commissions and ADA coordinators from across the state to advocate for people with disabilities on local and statewide issues.
- **Communication:** DPC provides up-to-date information about legislation and opportunities that impact people with disabilities and their families. It produces a weekly newsletter with a circulation of over 1,000 people.



DPC plays a critical role in ensuring that policies benefit all people. DPC asks important questions that may not otherwise get raised and has recommendations for solutions. DPC’s participation results in stronger policy and program proposals.



RACHEL HELLER

CEO, Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)

**Research:**

DPC partners with academic institutions to engage members of the disability community in every step of the research process. This *Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)* approach ensures that relevant questions are asked to determine what the community actually needs.

- DPC studies have led to new models of healthcare provision that emphasize independence and community living as health outcomes.
- DPC’s current studies focus on the importance of care coordination to independent living, as well as the impact of opiate policies on people with disabilities and chronic illnesses.
- All DPC research is led by people with disabilities.

**Consumer Supports:**

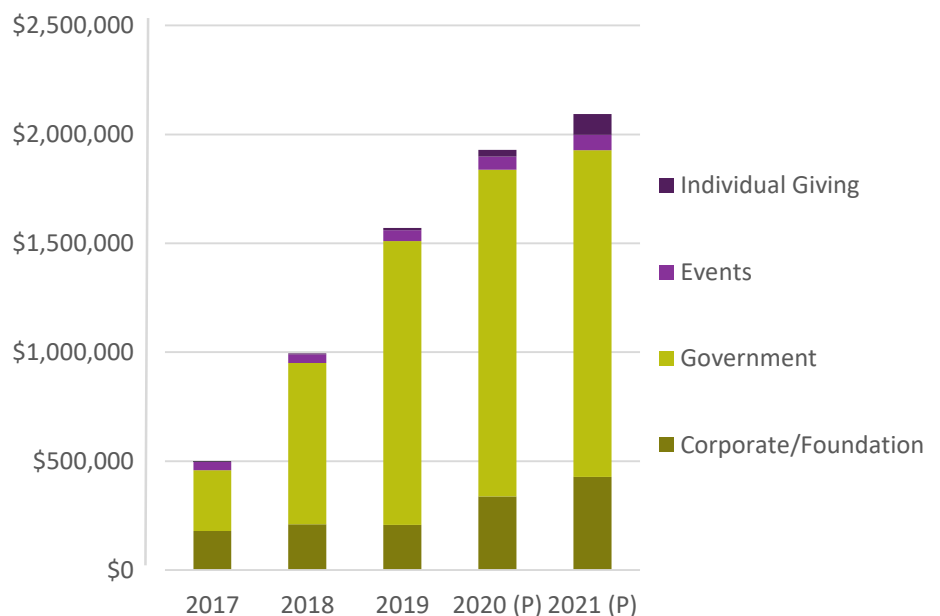
In 2018, DPC won the Massachusetts contract to provide healthcare ombudsman services for people with disabilities. In contrast, in every other state, large healthcare providers, or the state itself, fill this role. Through the My Ombudsman program, DPC serves approximately 200,000 people with disabilities enrolled in MassHealth’s Accountable Care Organizations.

- DPC ombudsman staff, 80% of whom have disabilities themselves, offer critical guidance to consumers, provide information and referrals, and investigate and mediate grievances.
- Ombudsman services are in Spanish, French, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Cantonese, and American Sign Language.
- The results are both strong relationships with healthcare providers as well as consumers. In 2018, the program had a 95% customer satisfaction rate.

**FINANCIAL STABILITY**

The new funding secured for the My Ombudsman program provides a strong anchor for financial stability over the next three years and beyond. DPC is now poised to attract new funders, including foundations and individuals, to leverage public investment to grow its advocacy and research efforts.

**Revenue by Source**



**Key Investors**

- THE BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD FOUNDATION OF MASSACHUSETTS
- COMMONWEALTH CARE ALLIANCE
- MASSHEALTH, MEDICARE/MEDICAID
- NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH
- UBER

**Partners**

- BOSTON CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING
- BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
- CHAPA (CITIZENS’ HOUSING AND PLANNING ASSOCIATION)
- EASTERSEALS MASSACHUSETTS
- JOIN (JEWISH ORGANIZING INSTITUTE & NETWORK)



### Success Story: Donna

Donna knew firsthand what it was like to be homeless and have a disability. When she joined the DPC Housing Advocacy Leadership Team, a partnership between DPC and Boston Center for Independent Living, Donna was living in a homeless shelter, and in chronic pain. DPC coached her on how to share her story and arranged for her to meet with elected officials and to speak at forums about the importance of the state investing in providing housing for people with disabilities.

With Donna’s help, that DPC housing campaign has accrued more than \$2.5M and helped nearly 300 people with disabilities find housing. Along the way, Donna found a home too, moving out of a shelter and into her own apartment. Five years later, she’s still there, continuing to fight for people with disabilities’ right to a safe, accessible place to live.



## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

Below is a summary of the key measures that DPC will use to track progress and guide internal development to incorporate lessons learned and allow DPC to adjust strategy when necessary.

	FY 2019	FY 2020 (P)	FY 2021 (P)
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>			
Research projects	2	3	4
Major advocacy campaigns led	3	5	7
Cases addressing healthcare issues closed per year by DPC My Ombudsman	880	975	1,080
High school and college students trained	10	50	100
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH/CAPACITY-BUILDING</b>			
Full-time equivalent employees	21	26	30
Development of a DPC advisory board	0	6	10
New foundation/corporate donors	2	6	10
Total revenue	\$1,570,000	\$1,928,000	\$2,093,000

## SOCIAL IMPACT

DPC has been a trailblazer in redefining the role that the government and large institutions play in the lives of people with disabilities. By involving people with disabilities directly in all aspects of their work and organizational structure, DPC has been the catalyst for changing the way services are delivered and resources are allocated. Through its work, DPC has improved the lives of thousands of people who have gained greater independence and access to housing, healthcare, and employment.

*Below is the summary of the social impact that DPC aspires to have on the lives of people with disabilities in the next two years.*

INDICATOR	2020 TARGET
State housing funding won for low-income people with disabilities	\$8M
High school and college students who complete DPC training in Massachusetts and who go on to participate in advocacy efforts	25%
My Ombudsman client satisfaction rating	95%
Municipalities engaged in Massachusetts Commissions on Disability Alliance (CODA) project	20