



Virginia Board for
People with Disabilities

2019 Annual Report

highlights

2019 Program Performance Report Highlights

First edition

Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Washington Office Building
1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219

804-786-0016
800-846-4464 (Toll-free)
804-786-1118 (Fax)

email: info@vbpd.virginia.gov
www.vaboard.org

Funding for this project/product was supported, in part, by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities, under grant number 1901VASCDD-00, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official ACL policy.



Building Strong Foundations

The **Virginia Board for People with Disabilities** serves as Virginia's Developmental Disabilities (DD) Council under the federal DD Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 and the Virginians with Disabilities Act. Since 1992, the Board has been an executive branch state agency located within the Secretariat of Health and Human Resources.

The Board advises the Governor, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, federal and state legislators, and other constituent groups on issues related to people with DD and other disabilities in Virginia.

The Board's purpose is to facilitate full inclusion of individuals with DD and other disabilities into all facets of community life. The Board engages in advocacy and capacity-building activities focused on improving the system of services and supports that enable people with disabilities to exercise self-determination and maximum independence.

The Board's major activities include educating policymakers and influencing policy/practice; assessing and reporting on the disability services system; investing in new or promising approaches to community-based services and supports; conducting advocacy and leadership training; and educating communities through information dissemination and outreach.

The Governor appoints 31 of the Board's 39 members, while the remaining eight members are designees from state agencies and other organizations. Sixty percent of the Board's 39 members are people with DD or family members of people with DD.

The Board meets quarterly in Richmond, Virginia. The Board encourages public comment on its planning activities and at Board meetings, and encourages individuals to contact the Board regarding needs, information, or concerns about disability- and policy-related issues.

MISSION

To create a Commonwealth that advances opportunities for independence, personal decision-making, and full participation in community life for individuals with developmental and other disabilities.

VISION

Virginians with developmental and other disabilities direct their own lives and choose how they live, learn, work, and play.





GRANTS

**Investing in systems
change for Virginians**

**The Board awards grants to
non-profit organizations,
for-profit organizations,
local public agencies, state
agencies and institutions of
higher education. Grant
projects are intended to
benefit people with disabilities
by fostering systems change
and capacity building.**

Improving Health & Wellness Through Empowerment

Grant: \$182,581

Match: \$61,500



The Board funded **James Madison University's** project titled **Improving Health and Wellness through Empowerment**. The project aims to train wellness program staff in the Shenandoah Valley region on how to improve the accessibility of their program to people with disabilities. The grant, which began October 2017, was extended for three months through December 2019. The project trained wellness organization staff on planning and implementing inclusive programming via online web-based training modules, held coalition meetings, and also awarded a number of scholarships to people with disabilities and their family members to cover incurred expenses related to physical activity or wellness programs of interest. The grantee also provided funding to wellness organizations to purchase adaptive physical equipment.

The developed resources can be found at <https://inclusivewellness.org>



Communications & Health Advocacy Training (CHAT)

Grant: \$199,999

Match: \$66,906



The Board continued funding **Virginia's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities** to train people with developmental disabilities on how to communicate their health needs. The project, titled **Communication & Health Advocacy Training (CHAT)**, began October 2017 and was extended for 12 months through September 2020.

This year, the grantee finalized its pilot training curriculum, and piloted it to over 270 people, including people with disabilities, family members and direct support professionals. The grantee is also in the process of developing a companion guide for direct support professionals and healthcare providers. The grantee was awarded a Presidential Research Quest grant this year to develop instruments to evaluate the training curriculum, which will allow the project to be sustained after funding ends from the Board.



Critical Decision Points for Families of Children with Disabilities

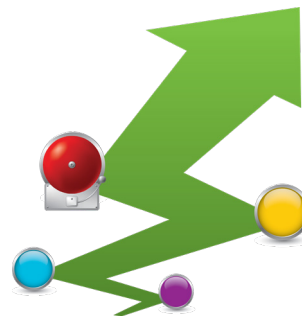
Grant: \$150,000

Match: \$50,000

The Board completed funding a grant to the **Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)** to develop and implement a training curriculum on critical decision-making points for students, families, school and parent resource staff, and other stakeholders. The goal of this project was to improve opportunities for high school students with disabilities to obtain employment and/or enroll in higher education following graduation.

This year, the grantee printed 20,000 copies (16,000 in English and 4,000 in Spanish) of its Critical Decision Points for Families of Students with Disabilities guide. The grantee held multiple training sessions for both parents of children with disabilities and school officials and administrators. A total of 571 individuals received training. Over 98 percent of parents who responded to a survey agreed that their knowledge increased and the training positively impacted their family and school relationships. Over 97 percent of school officials agreed that their knowledge/skills increased, and 99.5 percent agreed the training positively impacted their relationship with families.

The full document can be viewed at <https://bit.ly/2Qj61Jh>



3 Cs Inclusion Project

Grant: \$144,187

Match: \$31,333

The Board continued funding a grant to **Radford University** to conduct its project titled **Building Inclusive School Communities through Culture Shift, Collaboration, and Coaching (3 Cs Inclusion Project)**. The project, which began October 1, 2018 and will conclude September 30, 2020, aims to increase the capacity of schools to sustain an inclusive academic, social, emotional and physical learning environment for students with developmental disabilities through professional development training, inclusion action plans, and online modules designed to assist schools with implementing those plans.

This year, the grantee trained students with developmental disabilities, family members and school officials on professional development, held disability awareness and pride day events, as well as created action plans with schools that were involved in the project. Next year, the grantee plans to hold inclusion workshops at conferences across the state, train coaches within school divisions on how to train others on collaborative inclusion teaming, and provide guidance to schools.



School Crisis Planning, Preparation, Response, and Recovery for Students with Disabilities

Grant: \$213,718

Match: \$72,290

The Board awarded a grant to the **Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS)** project that aimed to improve the emergency response process within schools for students with disabilities. The 21-month project titled **School Crisis Planning, Preparation, Response, and Recovery for Students with Disabilities**, began April 2019 and will update DCJS' existing Model School Crisis, Emergency Management and Medical Emergency Response Plan, to include a component in each chapter of the guide that would address the unique needs of students with disabilities. The project will also provide revised online guidance for accessibility, as well as develop a series of instructional videos designed for school division personnel, administrators and students with disabilities, about what to do in the event of a school crisis.

This year, the grantee developed an advisory committee, comprised of individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as representatives from local state agencies to provide subject matter expertise. They are also in the process of securing a vendor to create the instructional videos component of the project.



Promoting Integrated Employment with ABLES Teams

Grant: \$150,000

Match: \$16,667

The Board continued funding to **Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU)** for the two-year project titled **Promoting Integrated Employment with ABLES Teams**. It began on October 1, 2018, and aims to develop and implement an in-person and online training program by and for people with DD, business leaders, and employment services staff to increase competitive integrated employment opportunities for persons with DD living in rural areas of the Commonwealth.

This year, the grantee created videos which showed individuals with disabilities working in inclusive employment settings, collaborated with local organizations to promote the benefits of hiring individuals with disabilities, and developed a train-the-trainer curriculum and fact sheet to describe these benefits to employers.



The Next Move @ William & Mary

Grant: \$150,000

Match: \$74,441



EDUCATE. TRAIN. EMPOWER.

The Board continued funding a project at the **College of William & Mary (W&M)** to increase competitive integrated employment through a university-community organization partnership to provide internships and training for adults with developmental disabilities.

This project, titled **The Next Move @ William & Mary: An Innovative Approach to Training Young Adults with Disabilities**, began October 1, 2018, and will conclude September 30, 2020. This year, the grantee hired staff members and recruited students for job placements around the W&M campus. Sixteen individuals with developmental disabilities were accepted into a six-week pilot internship program during the first year of the project. All ten interns who completed a survey indicated they were satisfied with their choice of job and all ten family members of the interns indicated they were satisfied with their student's job placement. The grantee also trained 18 individuals to serve as mentors to the students.



Improving Transportation Planning in Cities and Counties to Increase Access to Community-Based Services



The Board continued monitoring its grant with the disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV) titled **Improving Transportation Planning in Cities and Counties to Increase Access to Community-Based Healthcare**. The project aimed to improve the ability of individuals with developmental and other disabilities to utilize public transportation to reach healthcare services. During the active project period from May 1, 2017, to September 30, 2018, a Transportation Accessibility Survey Toolkit was developed to allow any individual the ability to report any transportation barriers they encountered to dLCV and local officials.

During the first year of its two-year post-grant monitoring phase, which began October 1, 2018, dLCV received over 200 views to its website, which allowed users to review the developed toolkit. They also trained members of their own Board on how to utilize the resources. In addition, dLCV negotiated specific resolutions with a county involved in the project to prioritize non-compliant bus stops based on utilization by riders with disabilities and ensure that non-compliant bus stops are identified and brought into compliance as soon as possible.

These resources can be found at <https://www.dlc.org/transportation-access>.



Event Support

Virginia Oral Health Coalition - \$1,500

Supported a Virginia Oral Health Coalition summit in November 2018, which educated oral health professionals and others on topics like Medicaid coverage and serving people with special healthcare needs. Two-hundred and seventeen people attended the event and 91 percent of those who took a post-event survey reported that they gained knowledge about the health-related needs of people with disabilities. Additionally, 75 percent reported that they are better able to serve people with disabilities.

Centra Health - \$1,800

Provided person-centered thinking training in July 2019. Centra Health collaborated with Virginia Commonwealth University's Partnership for People with Disabilities to organize the event, which was attended by 19 healthcare professionals and community disability service providers. All attendees who took a survey reported being satisfied with the event and feeling better able to serve people with disabilities.

Down Syndrome Association of Greater Richmond (DSAGR) - \$2,500

Sponsored an event in February 2019, which focused on inclusive education and transition. Over 400 individuals attended, including 173 professionals, at least three people with developmental disabilities (DD), at least 80 family members of people with DD, and 34 exhibitors. Ninety-four percent of family members of people with developmental disabilities who attended and took a survey reported being satisfied with the event, and 75 percent reported increasing their advocacy.



Virginia Dept. for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (VDDHH) - \$2,200

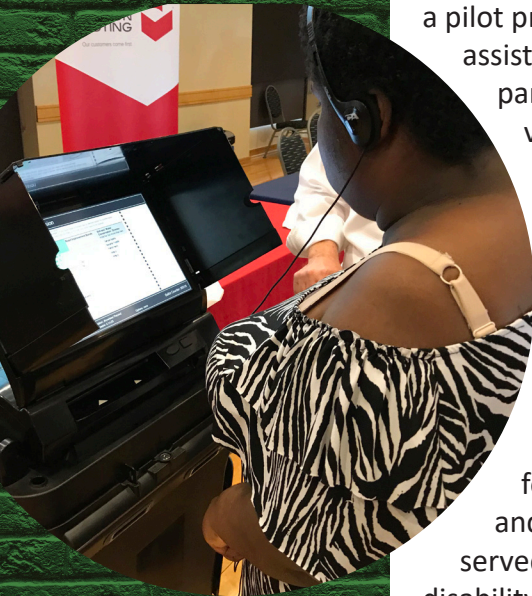
Held a legislative training event in November 2018 for members of the deaf and hard of hearing community. The training featured sessions including how members from the deaf and hard of hearing community can become more engaged in the legislative process, how to differentiate between advocacy and lobbying, and how to propose legislative ideas affecting individuals who are deaf, deafblind, and/or hard of hearing. Fifteen people with developmental disabilities and one of their family members attended, all of whom reported being satisfied with the event. All attendees who responded to a survey 6 months after the event indicated they had increased their advocacy.

Department of Elections - \$2,000

Supported a Voters with Disabilities Engagement Expo on April 30, 2019. The Expo was a pilot program aimed to promote awareness about the resources available in order to assist members of the disability community with the voting process. It allowed participants to receive educational and instructional information regarding voting, as well as gain hands-on experience with voting equipment and interact directly with staff members from the department. Nearly two hundred people attended. All 40 attendees who reported having a developmental disability were satisfied with the event, and 97 percent reported being better able to say what they want or what is important to them.

VAULT - \$750

Held its Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Pride Day event, held in August 2019. This event aimed to bring the disability community together for a day of celebrating the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act and for attendees to network with colleagues, family and friends. The event also served as an educational opportunity for attendees to learn about available disability-related resources within the community from guest speakers.



Policy

Advocating & Educating for Change

A key aspect of the Board's work is to advise the Governor, legislators, and government agencies on public policy issues in order to foster full inclusion of people with disabilities in all facets of community life.





The Board submitted numerous recommendations regarding the 2019 **Commonwealth Coordinated Care Plus** contract between the Commonwealth and Medicaid managed care organizations. Nineteen of the more than 50 recommendations were either fully or partially adopted, one of which added a requirement that managed care organizations' policies and procedures include intermediate steps to address emerging issues prior to involuntarily de-enrolling someone from consumer-directed services.

The Board presented to 100 local health department staff, community health workers, and other stakeholders at the Virginia Department of Health's **Health Equity Conference**. Audience members expressed appreciation for the information shared by the Board on health disparities between people with and without disabilities and on low-cost action items for local health departments.



Improving Healthcare Services

Improving Healthcare Services

The Board also signed on to a Virginia Oral Health Coalition letter encouraging the Governor to recommend funding **comprehensive dental coverage** for adults receiving Medicaid. The Governor's proposed budget in December 2019 did not include this recommendation, but a related bill and budget amendment will be considered during the 2020 General Assembly session.

It also collaborated with the Virginia Department of Health and other stakeholders to develop a statewide **Basic Screening Survey** to better understand the oral health needs of people with special health care needs. Over 400 people took the survey, which consisted of a questionnaire and basic oral health screening by dental hygienists. Findings are forthcoming.



Improving the Education System

The Board provided recommendations to the Board of Education on draft **seclusion and restraint regulations**, and signed on to a Coalition for Improvement of School Safety letter to the Board of Education regarding these regulations. Recommendations addressed several aspects including definitions, notification, reporting, and elimination of circumstances in which seclusion and restraint are permissible. While the regulations are still pending approval, many of the Board's recommendations were reflected in the most recent version.

Additionally, the Board collaborated with other stakeholders to recommend to the Department of Education outcome measures for **assessing student progress in private day placements**. Recommendations including disaggregating graduate rate measures by diploma type and post-secondary activity by activity type. Several were adopted in the final recommendations to the Department of Education, which has not yet finalized the measures.



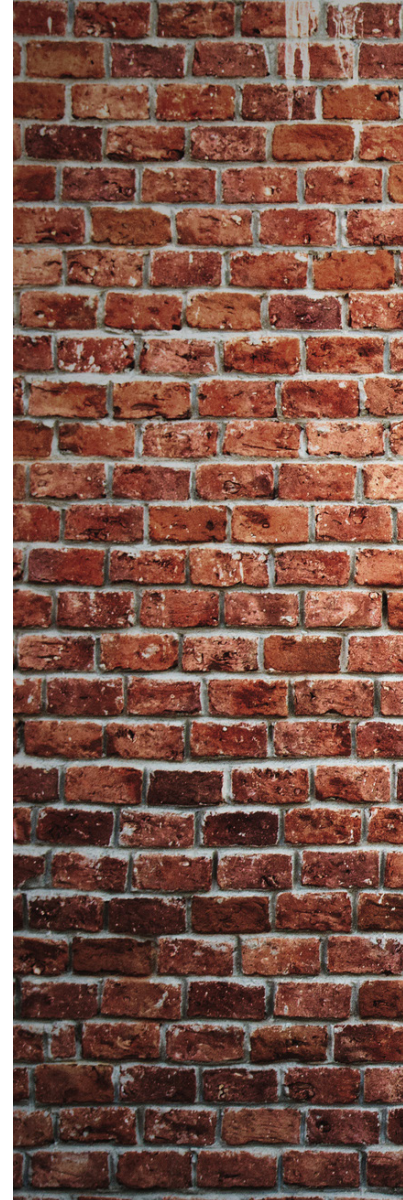
Improving Community Supports

The Board submitted recommendations on the **Commonwealth's Revised Statewide Transition Plan** for compliance with federal regulations regarding home- and community-based settings. Fifteen of the Board's 29 recommendations were adopted. These recommendations were intended to strengthen compliance and monitoring processes, as well as expand the scope to include individuals served in their own homes.

The Board also educated policymakers about proposed bills that would have made it more burdensome for people who are blind or vision-impaired to bring cases against **inaccessible bank or credit union websites**. As a result of the Board's efforts, which were in conjunction with several advocacy partners, the Governor vetoed the bill.



Board staff were also happy to have educated policymakers on a proposed bill that would have prevented the closure of one of the Commonwealth's large **state institutions** for people with developmental disabilities. The closure of this institution is part of the Commonwealth's plans to comply with its Settlement Agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice. The bill did not pass.



The Board educated policymakers about a proposed bill that would have required the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services to refer individuals who are not interested in competitive, integrated employment options to alternative services, including sheltered workshop services. As a result of the Board's efforts, the bill was modified so as not to limit choice among providers.

The Board participated in interagency meetings focused on steps the Commonwealth can take to become a model employer of people with disabilities. The Board proposed Virginia adopt a hiring preference for people with disabilities modeled after the Federal Schedule A hiring preference. The idea was supported by the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and a related bill has been proposed for consideration during the 2020 General Assembly session.

As a member of the Virginia Business Leadership Network, the Board partnered with other organizations to train business leaders on working with people with invisible disabilities, mental health, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. These trainings were well attended.

Fostering Employment Opportunities



Workgroups

**The Board participated in the listed policy workgroups in 2019,
helping to influence policy and services throughout the Commonwealth**

- Coalition for Improvement of School Safety
- Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services No Wrong Door Resource Advisory Council
- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) Business Acumen Advisory Council
- DBHDS Employment First Advisory Group
- Department of Criminal Justice Services School Emergency Response Plan Advisory Committee
- Department of Education Advocacy Stakeholders Group
- Department of Education and Office of Children's Services Private School Outcomes Workgroup
- Department of Education State Special Education Advisory Committee
- Department of Housing and Community Development Interagency Housing Advisory Committee
- Department of Medical Assistance Services Developmental Disabilities Waiver Advisory Council
- Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders Meetings
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities Public Policy Workgroup
- Project Living Well Advisory Council Leadership Team
- State Council of Higher Education for Virginia & Virginia Board for People with Disabilities Advisory Committee for Disability Access to Higher Education
- United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Roundtable
- Virginia Autism Council
- Virginia Business Leadership Network
- Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) Partnership for People with Disabilities Consumer Advisory Council
- VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities I-CAN! Accessibility Project Advisory Board
- VCU Partnership for People with Disabilities Project CHAT Advisory Council
- Virginia Department of Health Advisory Council on Health Disparity and Health Equity





Project Living Well

The Board completed its second year of collaboration with Virginia Commonwealth University's (VCU) Partnership for People with Disabilities on Project Living Well. Project Living Well (PLW) is a Project of National Significance, funded by the Administration for Community Living. The goals of PLW are to increase the knowledge of people with disabilities and other advocates to generate policy change, and to support monitoring and quality initiatives regarding health and safety of people with disabilities. To support this project, the Board has been developing a series of trend reports that summarize the Commonwealth's performance in serving people with disabilities and other related outcomes. The Board presented a draft of a trend report on early intervention at a Project Living Well leadership team meeting in October 2019. Trend reports on housing, education, employment, and health and community supports are in development. Multiple state agencies have agreed to share data that is not already publicly-available for use in this Project. The Board will publish the trend reports as they are completed on a new PLW section on the Board's website over the coming year.

Disability Services System Assessment Community Living

The Board is required to submit an annual report to the Governor, through the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, that provides an in-depth Assessment of at least two major service areas for people with disabilities in the Commonwealth.

In 2019, the first service area covered Community Living for people with disabilities in Virginia, and made 16 overall recommendations for improvements, as well as endorsesments of four recommendations from the Provider Issues Resolution Workgroup's 2018 report titled *Recommendations to Support a Healthy Developmental Disabilities Provider Network in Virginia*.

[To read the full Assessment, visit the Board's website at
www.vaboard.org/assessment.htm](http://www.vaboard.org/assessment.htm)





Disability Services System Assessment Early Intervention

The second service area assessed by the Board in 2019 covered **Early Intervention** systems for people with disabilities living and working in Virginia. Nineteen major recommendations were made, all aimed at specific agencies and organizations around Virginia. Each recommendation was designed to improve reaching children who require the services, improving access to the services, and improving the performance of those services. Both Assessments were distributed to a large number of stakeholders, including the Governor's office, the entire legislature, Virginia's federal representatives, and others.

To read the full Assessment, visit the Board's website at
www.vaboard.org/assessment.htm



Partners in Policymaking (PIP) is the Board's adult leadership and advocacy training program, open to those with developmental disabilities and the parents of young children with developmental disabilities. Each PIP course consists of seven weekend sessions over eight months. The Partners participate in advocacy training, resource development, and skill building workshops led by state and national experts across a range of topics relevant to the disability community.



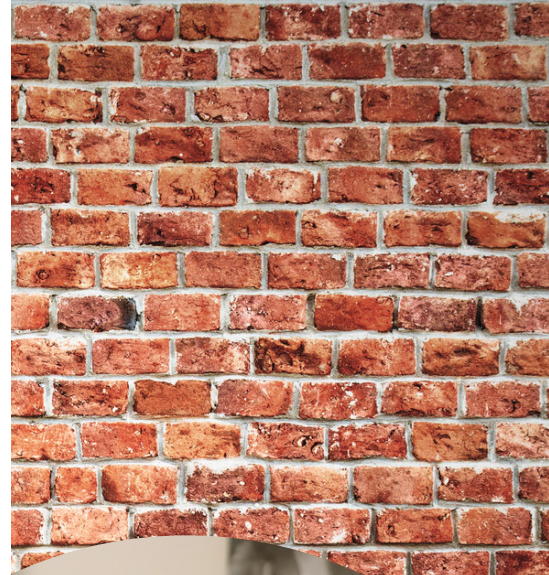
The 2019-2020 session began on September 13, 2019, and included 24 Partners due to graduate in April, 2020. Each partner was tasked with developing a legislative presentation addressing service needs or improvements in Virginia, with work on the presentations beginning in the Fall of 2019 and being delivered the following March.

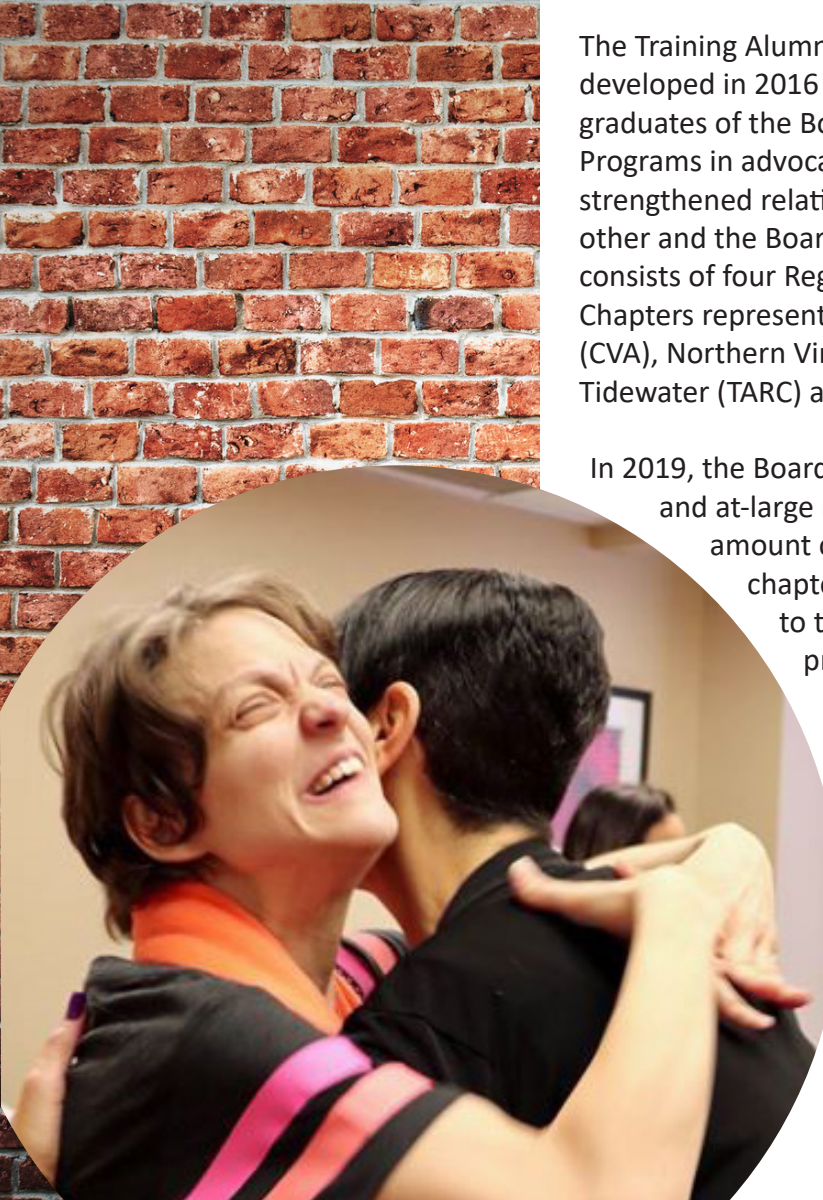


2020 will host the next installment of the Youth Leadership Academy. Formerly known as the *Youth Leadership Forum*, the program was redesigned for the 2018 session to allow younger students to attend, improve marketing and recruitment, and allow more direct engagement of youth in the development of the program. The 2020 recruitment will be underway through March, with the selection committee convening shortly thereafter.

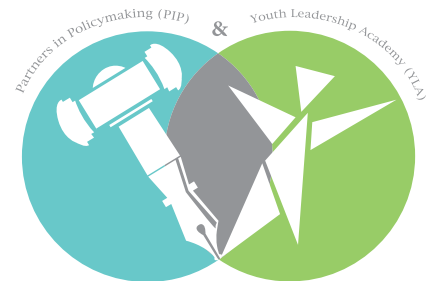


This year's session will take place on the campus of Virginia State University from July 13-16. Delegates will take part in a fast-paced and aggressive training, featuring dynamic motivational speakers who will address a variety of topics including personal development, career development, and advocacy.





The Training Alumni Association was developed in 2016 to better engage graduates of the Board's Training Programs in advocacy through strengthened relationships with each other and the Board. The program consists of four Regional Advocacy Chapters representing Central Virginia (CVA), Northern Virginia (NoVA), Tidewater (TARC) and Southwest (SWA).



Training Alumni Association

Sponsored by the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

In 2019, the Board hosted a two day retreat with regional chapter liaisons and at-large members to restructure the program by reducing the amount of activities and events required to be coordinated by chapter officers. As a result of the retreat, Board staff agreed to take on the coordinating responsibilities for all programming activities, relieving Alumni of all logistical responsibilities so that they could focus their attention on the advocacy engagement.

In January and February 2019, the Alumni partnered with the Arc of Virginia Development Disabilities (DD) Day for the third year in a row. Nineteen attendees representing all four Regions participated in this year's DD Day. This was a major increase from the two previous years due to providing an increased number of days for each region to select to participate.



Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

1100 Bank Street, 7th Floor | Richmond, VA 23219
800-846-4464 | info@vbpd.virginia.gov | www.vaboard.org