



GMSA Board Meeting held on April 26, 2021

GMSA Officers (3): Randy Lizotte (president), Chad Cleverly (treasurer), Danielle Viau (Vice President)

GMSA Board Members (10): Erik Johnson (Vermont Choices), Marjorie Burns (BSAC), Taylor Terry (Capitol Advocates Together), Hasan Ko (Champlain Voices), Antoine Polgar (Speak Up Addison County), Jon Fitzgerald (Next Step Self-Advocates), Caroline Gillen (Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered of Rutland) Jennifer Rainville (Brattleboro Region Advocacy Group), Chris Dubois (COPS Connections of Peer Support), Linda Monette (Winds of Change)

Self-Advocates (9): Rebekah Thompson, Amanda Daniels, Jill Collingswood, Christopher Michael Bernier, Shae Martin, George Tanner, Lacy Allen, Marshall Denutt, Kris Medina sent written comments

Allies (6): Lee Reilly, Jacob Weber, Katie White, Chris Herron, Catherine Clauss, Sarah Duprey

GMSA Staff (3): Karen Topper, Max Barrows, Karen Noone



New Projects



GMSA has a **new contract for \$40,000** for 1 year. We were hired by a national group called AUCD (Association of Universities of Centers on Disability). The project is to get more people with disabilities to get a Covid vaccine. Our work is to put the information in plain language.



GMSA is working with the University of Massachusetts to get money to do a **5-year project about loneliness**. Self-advocates in Vermont would be interviewing each other about loneliness.



Covid – 19 Update



Any questions about getting the vaccine?

GMSA wants everyone to get the vaccine.

To sign up all you do is call **855-722-7878**

2 new Booklets coming out soon. 1 is about different kinds of Covid-19. 1 is about what you can do after you get the vaccine.



Money Ideas



48 million dollars

Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act. It included an increase of funding to State Medicaid Programs by 10% for one year. Vermont will receive about \$48 million to improve Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). **Here are our priorities.**

- 1) Hire people with IDD to support people who get Developmental Services to get ready for their Person-Centered Planning meetings. These peer mentors will also attend Person Centered Planning meetings.

- 2) Give a one-time bonus to direct support staff. We want to pay staff more. We are worried about using one time funding to raise wages. When this funding ends on March 31, 2022, we do NOT want to lose services to cover raises for staff.
- 3) Pay for internet bills for people with disabilities.
- 4) Buy tablets and laptops for people with disabilities.
- 5) More training for staff by self-advocates with a focus on how we want to be treated and the quality of our services.
- 6) Better training for job specialists. Use sources outside of the VT provider system. Teach how to create employment opportunities by “carving out” pieces of a job to better match the skills and desires of workers with IDD.
- 7) Across the country in response to the "awakening" about racial justice after George Floyd's murder, we have an opportunity to really reshape the direction of our disability system. Provide resources for education and strategic planning to address racial justice.
- 8) Provide training to self-advocates:
 - a) to be sexuality educators and pay them to do training.
 - b) to recognize and deal with abuse and bullying.
 - c) To recognize and respond to racism and ableism
 - d) to be shared living providers.
 - e) on home ownership.
 - f) to work with elders like shopping for elders who can't get out
- 9) Recruit and train a number of people to be independent case managers so we can have self-management be a real option.
- 10) Money for people with disabilities to go to conferences and take classes. For example, Voices and Choices Conference.

11) Provide some basic services to people who do not meet a funding criterion for developmental services.

12) Reform who decides who is hired to work with us. People with disabilities need to be at the interview. We need training in how to be actively involved in hiring and supervising our staff.

Other Policy Issues Raised:

1) There are a lot of problems because they are short on workers. They have 1 staff working with 2 or 3 people. It is not planned. Sometimes the people have conflicts, (what they want to do conflicts) and the staff don't know how to deal with it. The whole situation is not fair for everyone.

2) Better training for job specialists. Reconsider the rule that says your staff and case manager cannot help you find a job. Some of us wait more than 7 months and are still waiting. Job specialists just go with whatever company wants to hire a large amount of people fast. There is NO job carving – that is carving out the pieces of the job that are a good match for the person. DS job people are not making new connections.

3) Meals on Wheels for people with disabilities (training to eat healthier)

4) Talk to people with disabilities and find out how they coped with the pandemic



New Peer Mentoring Training

Person Centered Planning Training for Self-Advocates in Vermont

This project will train self-advocates about person centered planning.

Person centered planning started 30 years ago. It helps people talk about their dreams and goals. Sometimes service plans people only talk about people's problems and how to fix them. Person centered planning helps you think about what a good life means for you.

In 2014, the government made a new rule. It said everyone who gets services must have a person-centered plan. Very few states are training people with disabilities about person centered planning. Many people are not ready to talk about what a good life means to them at their meeting. It's hard to talk about your dreams when you aren't ready!

This training will help self-advocates:

1. Get ready for their person-centered planning meeting
2. Think about what a good life means for them
3. Invite more people to come to their meeting
4. Get ready to lead their own meeting
5. Be a mentor for other self-advocates who want help at their meetings.

What Will This Training Be About?

This person-centered planning training will be done in three parts:

Part 1: What is Person Centered Planning?

June 2: What is Person Centered Planning?

June 9: How to Build a Lasting Support Circle

June 16: Getting Involved in Your Community

June 23: Reaching Your Dreams and Vision

Part 2: Self-Advocates Training: How to Lead Your Own Meeting

June 30: How to Use Your One Page Profile

July 7: Making the Invitations

July 14: Planning the Agenda

July 21: Leading the Meeting

Part 3: How to Be a Peer Mentor for Other Self-Advocates

August 4: What is a Peer Mentor?

August 19: Helping People Talk About Their Dreams

August 25: Helping People Get Ready for Their Meeting

September 1: Helping People at Their Meeting

Other Information:

1. Each training session will last for two hours.
2. Trainings will happen on Wednesdays.
3. Trainings will be in the morning 10 to Noon and at 5 to 7.
4. The training will happen using Zoom.
5. People who come to the training will have a short, easy homework assignment to do after each session. People can get help with the homework if they need it. GMSA will run a homework session to get help with your homework. And to go over what was taught.
6. People who want to be a peer mentor have to come to all of the training sessions.

What Will the Training Cost?

Budget	
Item	Cost
Consultant Trainer for 24 training sessions	\$12,000
Co-Trainers for 24 training sessions	\$1,500
Administrative Costs for GMSA	\$1,500
Total	Paid for by DD Council -----\$15,000