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Subject: UCEDDs and DD Councils: Advancing the ADA's Promise

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UCEDDs and DD Councils: Advancing the ADA's Promise

As the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) approaches, ACL is featuring guest blogs from leaders in the disability community and highlighting how ACL programs continue to advance the ADA's promise of inclusion and civil rights for people with disabilities.

DD Councils and the Four Pillars of Integration

By Donna Meltzer, CEO, National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)

The ADA is built upon four pillars: full participation, independent living, equality of opportunity, and economic self-sufficiency. The DD Councils, as they are called, have been highly focused on creating communities in which the four pillars of the ADA can stand tall and strong. DD Councils ensure that all people are fully included by investing in partnerships with others in their state or territory to increase equal opportunity for education, employment, recreation, housing, and more in order for everyone to live a self-determined life.

The [Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities](#) has done seminal work in creating inclusive communities and has inspired many other DD Councils to work similarly in their states or territories. Georgia's Real Communities initiative has served as an inspiration for our collective work in civic and community engagement and many DD Councils are now partnering with others in their home state or territory to bring people together around projects like community gardens, building houses for those in need, and ensuring all have the access and support needed to vote in elections.

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UCEDDs and the DD Network: Working Toward Full Integration

By Andrew Imparato, Executive Director, Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)

It all started in October 1962 with an idea proposed to President Kennedy by a presidential panel convened to seek solutions to support community living of

individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, rather than the institutions so many were placed in. The idea: Build the capacity of the community by tapping into the resources and expertise of universities to train a new generation of physicians and other professionals who can support community living of children with developmental disabilities. In 1963, President Kennedy signed a law that created university centers to support community living of individuals with developmental disabilities.

This law laid the foundation for what has become a unique national resource to individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and the community. Today, [University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities \(UCEDDs\)](#) continue to act as a bridge between the research and teaching and the communities of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

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