

Annual Report
2014



State of New Hampshire
Governor's Commission on Disability
121 South Fruit Street Suite 101
Concord, NH 03301
www.nh.gov/disability

Table of Contents

Cover Letter	Page 2 - 4
History	Page 5 - 6
Mission	
People with Disabilities	
From RSA 275:C:	Page 6 - 8
Commission Membership	
Organizational Structure	
Finances	
Affiliated Programs	
Committees of the Commission	
Web Statistics	Page 9
Training and Educational Events	Page 10
Appendix A – Client Assistance Program	Page 11 - 12
Appendix B – Statewide Independent Living Council	Page 13 - 14
Organizational Chart	Page 15

December 29, 2014

Her Excellency Margaret Wood Hassan, Governor
State House
107 North Main St.
Concord, NH 03301

Dear Governor Hassan:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Governor's Commission on Disability (GCD), it is our privilege to submit our annual report on the activities of the Commission and staff from January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014, as required by RSA 275-C:6 VI.

The Commission continued its efforts to help educate and inform New Hampshire residents and visitors on issues important to people with disabilities. Our e-newsletter has reached 1,919 recipients monthly.

With the addition of two Social Media pages, we are changing the monthly newsletter format in 2015 to become a bi-annual newsletter. It is our intent to utilize the GCD's Twitter and Facebook accounts to disseminate news and information in a more real-time fashion. The bi-annual newsletter instead will highlight significant events or accomplishments appropriate to the various disability communities that occur throughout the year. The newsletter will be disseminated in both a pdf format and a plain text format for more complete accessibility. The Beyond the Barriers is a monthly newspaper column published in the Union Leader on the first Sunday of every month and covers conferences, workshops and trainings for people with disabilities, their families and human service professionals.

The NH Governor's Accessibility Awards program has successfully continued. This opportunity to recognize individuals and organizations that have gone over and above in providing accessibility to persons with disabilities is off to a great start. Using partners from other agency staff as the committee members also helps maintain buy-in to further the work of the Commission to assist those with disabilities. It is a great community effort.

Staff responded to numerous calls and emails from citizens, provided many instances of technical assistance, education and outreach and continued the Commission's ongoing efforts to track data related to the important service of technical assistance and support. Data collected allows us to direct our efforts into subject areas and issues where and when it is most needed. It is important to note that in addition to staff activities, commission members participated throughout the year in their local communities by providing numerous instances of outreach and advocacy activities.

Our Accessibility Specialist made several presentations, as well as, reviewed numerous buildings for accessibility. Additionally, the GCD collaborated with the New England Americans with Disabilities Act (NEADA) Center to bring high quality, targeted information on accessibility resources and issues into New Hampshire.

The GCD participated in the New Hampshire Emergency Preparedness initiative in an effort to ensure that the needs of people with disabilities will be supported in times of emergency.

The Governor's Commission continued its work with the NH Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (NHVR), particularly regarding the employment of people with disabilities. The Commission's Executive Director and Client Assistance Program Ombudsman are members of NHVR's State Rehabilitation Council, which has a legislated oversight and policy setting role for the VR program.

In addition, the Commission reviewed numerous bills during this Legislative Session, supporting numerous bills to enhance people with disabilities' full inclusion and access to community, work and recreation in New Hampshire.

The GCD has continued its ongoing effort to insure fiscal responsibility by continuing as stewards of tax dollars. We have downsized our staff and streamlined our efforts whenever possible. Cross-training has been underway at all levels of the GCD.

In FY 2014, the GCD experienced vacancies in three integral positions. The Commission, however, rallied and under the direction of the Executive Director maintained a high level of involvement and success with regard to its programs and interventions towards the disability communities. In November, the Commission had again reached its full staffing capacity and also took on a volunteer from the Senior

Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The Commission is also exploring the possibility of bringing on an intern in the summer of 2015 from the UNH School of Law.

Looking Forward to 2015

The staff and members of the Commission will continue to seek out new partnerships and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders in order to meet the goals of our mission. Additionally, the GCD will continue to explore ways to utilize its social media pages and technological solutions to reach out to a wider audience. The Commission is forward-thinking as it looks at available research and data to develop its policy recommendations. We look forward to the opportunities and challenges of 2015.

The Commission and staff are appreciative of the support provided by you and your staff in our work with and for our residents and visitors with disabilities. This was very challenging given budget reductions and reduced staffing. Nonetheless, the GCD is cognizant of its successes, and we look forward to the upcoming challenges to working for the betterment and inclusion of our New Hampshire communities.

On-going Initiatives to Improve Efficiency

- Efforts to get more involvement at the GCD by Commission Members through committee work
- Re-focus committees to be more in line with statutes that govern the GCD core functions
- Bring the GCD staff to its full compliment
- Provide staff training in relevant areas to maximize their efficiency
- Plans to monetize certain GCD functions to bring monies into the GCD
 - Fees for services such as guidance inspections to assist the public and private sectors to be in compliance with ADA building requirements
 - Provide educational workshops for fees, perhaps with the granting of authorized continuing education units

Sincerely,

Charles J. Saia
Executive Director

History

In 1978, RSA 275:C established the Governor's Commission on Disability, with the purpose of becoming a voice for the more than 190,000 New Hampshire citizens with disabilities, in all facets of life, including state government.

During 2011, the Commission engaged in a strategic planning process over the course of several meetings and struggled with a variety of challenging questions.

Mission

To remove the barriers, [be they] architectural or attitudinal, which bar persons with disabilities from participating in the mainstream of society.

In 2014, the GCD implemented an additional logo for its activities (as delineated on this letterhead), which encompasses the updated mission statement of "Access for All".

People with Disabilities

The University of NH Institute on Disability reports that "according to the most recent data (2008) from the U.S. Census Bureau, there are approximately 1.3 million people in New Hampshire, with about 141,000 reporting a disability. In other words, people with disabilities comprise 10.9 percent of New Hampshire's population."

As such in New Hampshire this means that disability crosses into issues of employment, housing, education, transportation and just daily living. In other words it affects all aspects of living and what most people take for granted.

The Commission strives to assist all New Hampshire people with disabilities either directly when possible or indirectly through GDC partnerships or referral.

From RSA 275:C:

"There is hereby established the Governor's Commission on Disability which shall consist of 30 members appointed by the governor. At least 15 Commission Members shall be persons with a disability or parents or guardians of persons with a disability. There shall be 20 members appointed from the general public and 10 shall be appointed from organizations which provide services for persons with disabilities. Each member of the commission shall serve, without compensation, for a 6 year term and until his successor is appointed and qualified, provided that of the initial members appointed hereunder, 10 shall serve for 2 years, 10 for 4 years and 10 for 6 years, as designated by the governor."

The current members of the Governor's Commission are as follows:

- Paul Van Blarigan, Chair
- Clyde Terry, Commission Member
- Tom Manning, Commission Member

- Carl Cooley, Commission Member
- Ann Dillon, Commission Member
- Barry Conway, Commission Member
- Katherine (Trinka) Russell, Commission Member
- Sandy Teti, Commission Member
- H. Dee Clanton, Commission Member
- Ed Meskys, Commission Member
- Lisa DiMartino, Commission Member
- John Richards, Commission Member
- Nancy Druke, Commission Member
- Patrick Shannon, Commission Member
- Mariellen MacKay, Commission Member
- Irene Lover, Commission Member
- Mary Morin, Commission Member
- Carol Holmes, Commission Member
- Karen Prive, Commission Member
- Jim Hinson, Commission Member
- Ellen Keith, Commission Member
- Fred Roberge, Commission Member
- Don Shumway, Commission Member

Ex-Officios:

RSA 275-C:3 Ex Officio Members. –The following, or their designees, shall serve as ex officio members without a vote on the commission: (1) the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, (2) the Administrator of the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, (3) the Supervisor of Blind and Visual Services, Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Education, (4) the Commissioner of Labor, (5) the Commissioner of the Department of Employment Security, and (6) a member of the State Board of Education designated by the governor.

The Governor's Commission on Disability is governed by the Commission itself, which is comprised of 30 gubernatorial appointees who represent a broad range of individuals and organizations. The commission has an executive committee of four persons who are actively involved with oversight of activities. Day-to-day operations of the commission are managed by the Executive Director, Charles J. Saia Esquire.

The staff of the commission is as follows:

- Michael Coe: Accessibility Specialist
- Lorrie Ripley: Ombudsman for the Client Assistance Program
- Gayle Baird: Accountant and Payroll
- Michael A. Racette: (Part-time) Information and Referral Specialist
- Paula Ninivaggi: (Part-time) Statewide Independent Living Coordinator
- Rosanne Cilley: SCSEP --- Volunteer
- Joyce Lanier: Clerk Interviewer/Secretary II

Finances

The Governor's Commission on Disability, as with other State Agencies, operated under difficult conditions due to the continued distressed economy. Staff rose to the challenge of covering the tasks and duties of personnel lost during this process. They were able to join forces and resources to comply with Federal and State Statutes, as well as, grant mandates to get the jobs done.

Budget Summary:

January 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014 2nd ½ FY 14

Approved Budget \$333,962.00.00
Operating Costs: \$43,694
Program Costs: \$133,133.50
Personnel Costs: \$222,154

July 1, 2014 to December 31, 2014 1st ½ FY 15

Approved Budget: \$347,389.00
Operating Costs: \$42,740.50
Program Costs: \$137,813.50
Personnel Costs: \$228,835

Affiliated Programs

CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)
CAP Executive Summary Appendix A

NEW HAMPSHIRE STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)
SILC Executive Summary Appendix B

Committees of the Commission

Pursuant to RSA 275-C:10, the Committee on Architectural Barrier Free Design Committee was created under the purview of the GCD as a permanent committee of the GCD. Some of its purposes are:

- I. Establish, publish, and enforce a code for barrier-free design ...
- II. Adopt such rules under RSA 541-A as may be necessary to enforce the provisions of this subdivision and the code for barrier-free design.
- III. Hold public hearings prior to the adoption of any rules by the committee in accordance with RSA 541-A.

Additionally, pursuant to RSA 275-C:5, the Commission has organized itself in various committees to address issues which affect people with disabilities, such as:

- Legislative Committee - follows and studies activities of the legislature as they pertain to people with disabilities in New Hampshire. The committee may advise or inform elected officials in matters pertaining to people with disabilities.
- Parking Committee - focuses on issues related to availability of accessible parking and the enforcement of accessible parking rules and laws.
- Nominations Committee - recruits and screens prospective candidates for membership on the Governor's Commission on Disability. This is an internal committee for Commission Members only.
- Telecommunications Committee - provides oversight and acts in an advisory capacity to the Telecommunications Equipment Assistance/Distribution Grant (currently with NDHHS) and Newline for the Blind (funds flow through GCD from PUC). Contact the office for further details.
- The GCD also participates on other committees, statutory and the like, some of which are:
 - Committee on Deafness and Hearing Loss (CDHL)
 - Medical Care Advisory Committee (MCAC)
 - State Coordinating Council on Community Transportation (SCC)

Web Statistics

In 2014, the GCD web pages saw significant traffic as follows:

Month	Unique Visitors	Number of visits
Jan 2014	6,886	7,928
Feb 2014	6,059	6,995
Mar 2014	6,056	7,120
Apr 2014	4,774	5,832
May 2014	4,125	5,124
Jun 2014	3,705	4,474
Jul 2014	3,922	4,797
Aug 2014	3,612	4,372
Sep 2014	4,159	5,068
Oct 2014	4,321	5,245
Nov 2014	3,614	4,449
Dec 2014	2,870	3,562
Total	54,103	64,966

Training and Educational Events

The GCD provides training and educational events as a means to meet the legislated mandate to serve as a source of information to the public regarding all services to individuals with disabilities. Some of these programs are listed below.

- Disability Etiquette
- Workplace Fragrance
- Plan Reading Workshop Collaboration
- Legislative Training
- NEADA Field Based Training
- Fostering Connections with People Living with Disabilities
- Mini-Seminars

Appendix A
Client Assistance Program (CAP)
Executive Summary

Congress authorized and funded a nationwide network of Client Assistance Programs in the 1984 Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The mission of the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is to inform and advise applicants and clients of programs funded by the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, and of all benefits under the Act. When requested and appropriate, the CAP provides individual advocacy for clients in their relationships with projects, programs and facilities, including the pursuit of legal, administrative or other appropriate remedies, to ensure the protection of their rights under the Act.

In New Hampshire, programs funded by the Act include the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR), Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) and various community rehabilitation programs. In New Hampshire, the CAP is external to the BVR. The Executive Department of the State of New Hampshire houses the CAP within the Governor's Commission on Disability. The CAP continues to provide its Guide to Vocational Rehabilitation Services, information and referral to facilitate access to services and benefits available in New Hampshire and to educate the public on Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Federal Authority for the Client Assistance Program is 29 United States Code, Sections 20 and 112 of the Act, and 34CFR370.

The CAP Ombudsman and the Executive Director (ED) of the GCD both hold seats on the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). CAP is involved with the policy committee and contributes to discussions regarding development of VR policy and procedure. The SRC holds public forums soliciting input when proposing changes to policy and the CAP attend those sessions to address questions about the CAP, employment issues under Title 1 of the ADA, and challenges faces by individuals with disabilities who are seeking

employment or independent living services. By virtue of holding a seat on the SRC, the CAP is able to provide input to VR's State Plan and advise on matters under Title 1 of the ADA.

The full report can be seen here: <https://rsa.ed.gov/view.cfm?rsaform=RSA-227&fy=2011,2012,2013,2014>

Appendix B

Executive Summary

New Hampshire Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

“Working Together for Independent Living In New Hampshire”

www.silcnh.org

The New Hampshire Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is created in Title VII, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The SILC’s mission is to provide leadership and advocacy in support of the independent living philosophy for persons with significant disabilities. The philosophy of independent living includes: individual control, peer support, self-help, and self-determination to maximize the independence, inclusion and productivity of people with disabilities. The SILC is a cross-disability, statewide, volunteer council; representing the independent living needs of people with significant disabilities in New Hampshire. SILC members are appointed by the Governor. The majority of SILC volunteer members have firsthand knowledge of disabilities and services. This gives the SILC a broad knowledge base of independent living services and gaps statewide. The SILC is housed at the Governor’s Commission on Disability (GCD). The SILC is fully funded by Federal resources from Title VII, by the NH Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation.

SILC and the GCD

The housing of the SILC at the GCD results in stronger productive collaboration. Information and resources are shared, legislation impacting people with disabilities is discussed, gaps in services identified, audiences for outreach and dissemination provided. New Hampshire citizens with disabilities were served through efficient stewardship of funding, staff, time, and strategic use limited resources during a fiscally challenging time.

2014 Highlights

- Significant state-wide dissemination, outreach, and publicizing information addressing the issues and needs of specific disability populations at little expenditure of resources.
- SILC established as a critical distribution hub for activities, information, and resources.
- Collaboration with the Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) on an online Resource Guide.
- Decreased duplication of efforts with increased program efficiencies, plus new partners and new collaborations.
- Newsletter subscribers increased by over 700 with total number of subscribers at 2500.
- Increased forwarding and/or inclusion of the SILC newsletter in other newsletters increased, enabling information to reach an additional 3,000 plus.
- Copies of the Newsletter are available in unemployment offices town and city offices, libraries, welfare offices, schools, community groups, and more.
- The SILC and the GCD hosted educational seminars to help people learn about disability resources and services. The 2014 the seminars focused on: disaster preparedness, Medicaid Managed Care, and Vocational Rehabilitation.
- The SILC joined the Governor’s Commission on Disability and the New England ADA Center in presenting and exhibiting at the New Hampshire Emergency Preparedness Conference.

Information and Resource Newsletter:

The SILC develops and disseminates a monthly electronic Information and Resource Newsletter. Each issue has all new information and resources covering a variety of topics like: employment, education, Developmental Disabilities, community resources, diversity, caregiving, children, families, Veterans, Autism, and more.

State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL)

The work of the SILC is guided by a State Plan for Independent Living developed every three years. The FY 2014-2016 goal is "in partnership with the State of New Hampshire, the Department of Education, and Granite State Independent Living identify barriers to employment for people with disabilities and begin to collaboratively address ways to overcome them so individuals can live independently in their communities." Taskforces focused on benefits, education/outreach, and transition have begun the following:

- Resource lists on: employment, transition, and work incentives.
- Resources on age appropriate independent developmental skills that foster independent living.
- Tip sheets and resources for employers on the benefits of hiring people with disabilities, and reasonable accommodations.
- Identification of organizations helping individuals with disabilities find and maintain employment.
- Compiling information and resources to educate individuals with disabilities seeking employment about employee readiness to work and adapting to workplace culture.



New Hampshire

Governor's Commission on Disability

"Removing Barriers to Equality"

