



# A GATEWAY TO INCLUSION



## TO ADVANCE INDEPENDENCE, PRODUCTIVITY AND INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL ASPECTS OF SOCIETY.



This is the Governor's Council's mission. How does it become reality? By being strategic, recognizing opportunities and seizing the moment when and wherever they exist.

It did not take long for the Council to understand the dynamics, implications and far-reaching benefits to be gained by embracing the Livable Communities movement.

Elected officials, city planners, business leaders, economists, the aging population, young families, millennials, among others have already come to the conclusion that "livability" is not only an economic boon for communities, but also provides a better quality of life. Endorsing an environment that connects people to places, provides affordable, accessible housing and mass transit, and offers opportunities for civic and social engagement was a natural fit for the Council to advance its mission.

Creating and sustaining lasting partnerships founded on common goals, mutual respect and understanding has moved the conversation from "me" to "we." These new allies are embracing the spirit of the ADA in working toward a community where all may live as valued community members.

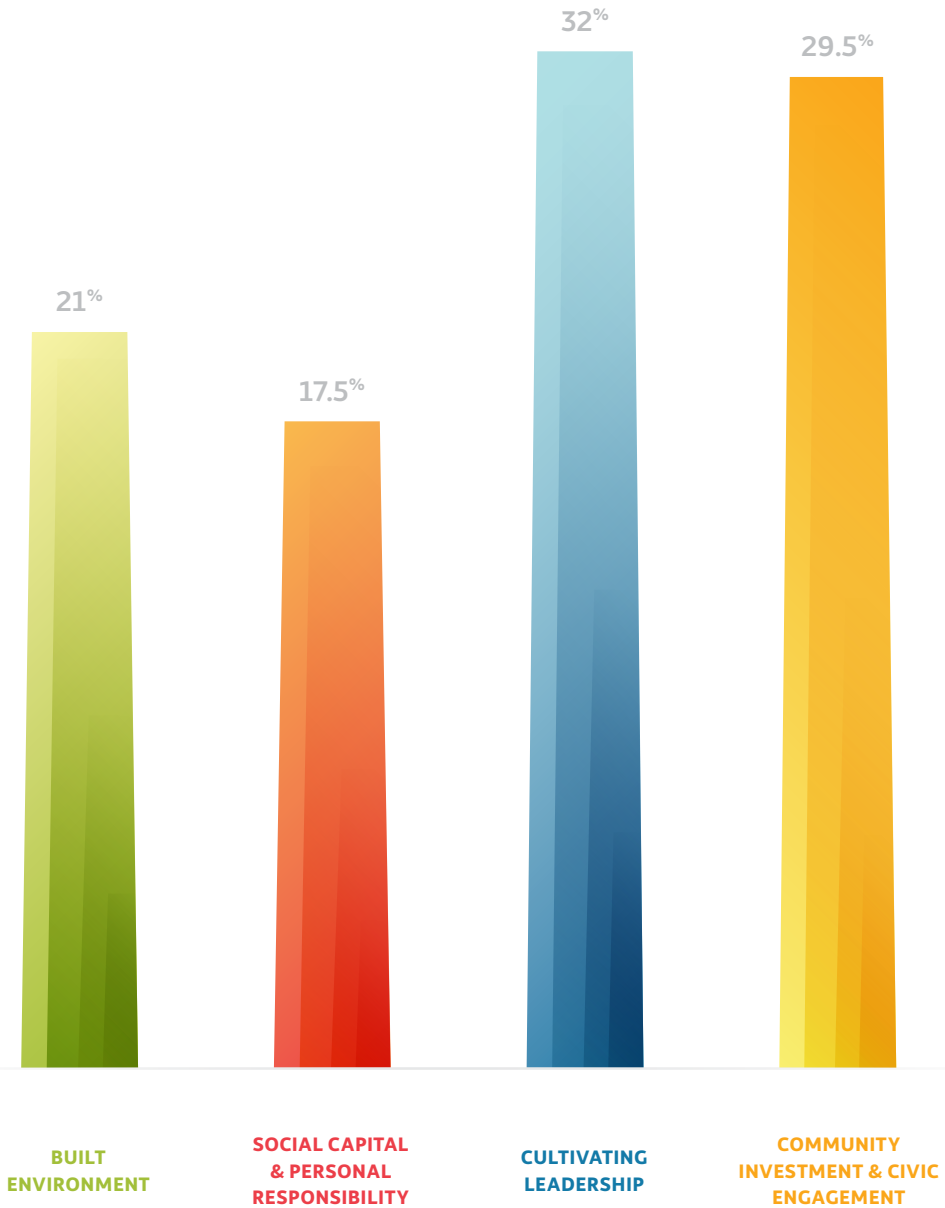
The Council is pleased to share this report, documenting our progress in advancing inclusion through the gateway of livability.

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Suellen Jackson-Boner".

Suellen Jackson-Boner,  
Executive Director,  
Indiana Governor's Council  
for People with Disabilities

**WE USE OUR RESOURCES TO ADVOCATE AND EMPOWER ACCESS, SUCCESS AND INDEPENDENCE FOR PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF INDIANA.**





**BUILT  
ENVIRONMENT**



**SOCIAL CAPITAL &  
PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**



**CULTIVATING  
LEADERSHIP**



**COMMUNITY INVESTMENT  
& CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**



The background of the page is a detailed isometric illustration of a city street scene, rendered in a light green color. It shows various buildings, cars, pedestrians, and street furniture like trees and benches, all viewed from an elevated perspective. The text 'BUILT ENVIRONMENT' is centered over this illustration in a bold, white, sans-serif font.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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*The built environment enhances quality of life by influencing health, well-being and social interaction within communities. It is created intentionally to provide for living, working and playing. The Council adheres to the principle that connectivity to public spaces, accessibility to goods and services and accessible, affordable housing must be applied as communities plan and redesign streets, public spaces and structures – both private and public. The Council has invested resources to help shape decisions that will create inclusive communities across Indiana.*



## LIVABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT

Livable Communities are truly the gateway to inclusion. Indiana has invested resources into communities across the state to grow and sustain "livability." The implications and benefits for people with disabilities are phenomenal.

The Council has partnered with the [Indiana Institute on Disability and Community](#) (IIDC), Indiana University and the [University of Indianapolis](#) to train people with disabilities, the aging population and other community and civic representatives in cities designated as "Stellar" [communities](#) by a multi-agency initiative.

Trainees from Shelbyville, Crawfordsville, Bedford and Richmond have participated in in-depth training and then translated their knowledge into action by engaging in community planning and civic events, providing testimony at public hearings and serving on committees.



## ADA INDIANA

The implementation of the ADA remains a top priority of the Council. Having an [ADA Indiana](#) steering committee as the conduit, the Council, in partnership with the [Great Lakes ADA Center](#) and the IIDC, provides funding and resources to:

- 1) Train people with disabilities, businesses and ADA coordinators
- 2) Disseminate materials
- 3) Offer technical assistance
- 4) Sponsor a small community-focused grant program

ADA Indiana also prepares ADA Alerts for email subscribers, which are disseminated by The Fifth Freedom Network.

## BACK HOME IN INDIANA

Improving the availability of accessible and affordable housing for Hoosiers with disabilities is the goal of the Council-funded Back Home in Indiana Alliance. In partnership with the [Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana](#) and the [Indiana Civil Rights Commission](#), the Alliance advocates for all Hoosiers.

Collaborating with other statewide organizations, the Alliance and its six community groups establish programs to modify existing homes to enhance access, increase the availability of accessible, affordable housing, and encourage communities to adopt visitability standards for new housing.

# BUILT ENVIRONMENT

## COMPLETE STREETS

As part of its efforts to create livable, welcoming communities, the Council is supporting the concept of [Complete Streets](#) through the [Alliance for Health Promotion](#), which helps shape transportation dialogue in Indiana's legislature.

Complete Streets are roads that incorporate safety and accessibility by ensuring sidewalks, bike lanes, center turn lanes, transit stops, crosswalks and street foliage are present. Complete Streets positively impact the transportation needs of all ages and abilities because it allows all modes of transportation to use and share the roadways.

Through the Council's support of Alliance for Health Promotion, Complete Streets policies are a significant part of the transportation agenda in many Indiana cities and towns. In 2012, Indianapolis earned the nation's best Complete Streets policy, and the following year, Peru, Indiana, scored the second-best policy. Complete Streets has also been a workshop topic at several of the Council's annual conferences.

## INDIANA CITIZENS' ALLIANCE FOR TRANSIT

A pillar of sustainable communities is a healthy transit system. Without an accessible public transportation system, many individuals are limited in choosing where to live, work and socialize with others.

To this end, the Council supports [Indiana Citizens' Alliance for Transit \(ICAT\)](#) to conduct activities related to transit advocacy. Council funding began in 2014 and will continue through 2016. Hoosiers can join the Council and the coalition by signing the petition to support expanded funding for transit at [www.IndianaCAT.org/take-action](http://www.IndianaCAT.org/take-action).



The background of the page is a detailed, isometric illustration of a city street scene. It features various buildings with windows and balconies, trees, a car, a person on a bicycle, and several people walking. The entire scene is rendered in a light red color, matching the overall theme of the page. The title text is centered over this background.

# **SOCIAL CAPITAL & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**



# SOCIAL CAPITAL & PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

*Being active, involved and giving back to the community is a shared responsibility of each community member. A number of Council projects promote avenues for people with disabilities to connect with their community by being an asset. These projects build on being well informed, improving social skills and civic and social engagement.*



## BUILDING LEADERSHIP

This joint effort by [IIDC, Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services \(IPAS\)](#) and the Council trains people with developmental disabilities in leadership, self-advocacy and self-determination. Participants attend three two-day workshops on topics such as:

- 1) Relationships, Romance and Intimacy
- 2) Community Membership/Civic Engagement
- 3) Healthy Living/Aging

Success stories highlight participants' personal growth, change and growing involvement in the community, such as forming exercise habits, organizing a social gathering or facilitating a local "walkabout" in their cities.

## RESOURCE GUIDE

The Council maintains a [guide](#) of useful statewide organizations, which answer disability and social service-related questions and provide referrals.

## CONSUMER INVESTMENT FUND

Many policy, procedure and program decisions affecting the lives of people with disabilities are made without their meaningful involvement. Through the [Consumer Investment Fund](#), the Council provides partial funding so people with disabilities and family members may attend conferences, meetings and workshops which equip them with the knowledge they need to successfully address a myriad of issues.

Participants are also expected to share their knowledge and take part in community activities that contribute to the independence, productivity and inclusion of people with disabilities.

## RESOURCE WEB PAGE

Thomas Jefferson once said, "Information is the currency of democracy." Easy access to resources is paramount to the age of information. The Council's free [online resource guide](#), updated regularly, provides people with disabilities and disability advocates the information and resources they need to empower themselves as they build awareness and acceptance of the contributions of people with disabilities.

Topics include universal design, advocacy training, civil rights, arts and culture, technology, education, employment, grants/fundraising, health care, independent living and a wealth of additional information.

The online resource guide connects national and state disability resources, leaders and advocates—enhancing partnerships among organizations, individuals and the business and not-for-profit communities.



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# CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

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*Thinking strategically, being visionary, effectively negotiating, analyzing issues from multiple perspectives and working in concert with others to achieve a common goal are marks of an effective leader. The Council has long recognized the importance of cultivating leadership as a means to create inclusive communities. To prepare the next generation of leaders, Council resources have been committed for training programs, events and projects which are designed to sharpen leadership skills, provide a learning environment with peers and persons beyond the disability community, learn from model and innovative initiatives and become engaged in civic and social events.*



## ANNUAL STATEWIDE CONFERENCE

For 20 years, Hoosiers with disabilities have gathered at the Council's [annual conference](#) to collectively strengthen the advocacy base, refine personal skills and increase knowledge of disability issues. As the disability rights movement forged partnerships outside of the disability community to expand its base, so has the Council in providing conference themes with a wider appeal.

Themes have included "Celebrating Community," "Community Connections: Making Indiana a Livable Community," and "Dream to Dare: Game – Changing Communities." The conference has gained support from the Association of Cities and Towns and has attracted mayors, city planners, health professionals, the aging community, and ignited a conversation about the value of livability for all.

## INDIANA PARTNERS IN POLICYMAKING ACADEMY

With more than 600 graduates, the [Academy](#) has given people with disabilities and their family members the leadership skills needed to create partnerships with elected officials and others who make local and state policy decisions.

Led by Council staff, graduates of this intensive advocate training program have made a difference. They serve as community advocates and leaders by holding public office, educating legislators on policy issues, developing new statewide and local organizations, and serving on local, state, and national boards and committees, which include Family Voices, Fifth Freedom and the President's Committee on Intellectual Disabilities, among many others.

## INDIANA YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

Training future generations of youth with disabilities to become effective leaders is crucial to building Indiana's economy and sustaining the health and well-being of Hoosier communities. [INYL](#) selects about 25 youth with disabilities to attend a leadership educational forum. Topics include careers, state government, assistive technology and principles of leadership. Youth also interact with role models from the disability community and create Personal Leadership Plans to guide future education and vocational goals.

The Council has seen a return on investment with the selection of two INYL trainees chosen for the Youth Action Council on Transition, a U.S. Department of Labor initiative.



# CULTIVATING LEADERSHIP

## INDIANA DISABILITY HISTORY PROJECT

In 2013, the Council, IPAS and IIDC began a collaborative effort to collect, document and share information on the evolution of the disability rights movement in Indiana. Using audio, video and transcription tools, the initiative archives the memories and artifacts of activists and leaders who shaped Indiana's disability movement. The goal of the project is to help Hoosiers understand the historical changes and cultural attitudes toward people with disabilities.

To date, the [Indiana Disability History Project](#) has collected more than 500 minutes of video interviews of people with disabilities and disability advocates sharing their personal and historic stories. Perspectives include discussions on public schooling, access to services, community involvement, employment and family matters.

## COMMUNITY SPIRIT AWARDS

The Council's [Community Spirit Awards](#) recognize advocates who make a difference for people with disabilities in their own communities. The annual awards, established by the Council in 2006, features two award categories: the Distinguished Leadership Awards and the Disability Awareness Campaign Awards.

Distinguished Leadership Awards recognize a person with a disability and a parent of a child with a disability for outstanding advocacy that has achieved independence, productivity and inclusion of people with disabilities in society. The Disability Awareness Campaign Awards recognize one or more exemplary March Disability Awareness Month campaigns that have directly changed attitudes and highlighted the contributions of people with disabilities.

Award winners are recognized at an awards ceremony at the Council's annual conference and publicized through the news media, the Council website and in the conference program.

## COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Part of the Council's responsibility to advance the message of inclusion is to regularly communicate with its key audiences – people with disabilities, family members, city planners, community leaders and many others who are part of the disability conversation in Indiana. Using a variety of communication tools, the Council educates stakeholders about disability-related issues, discusses emerging trends affecting the disability community, shines a spotlight on game-changing ideas and recognizes noteworthy people, places and events.

### **Spark**

Spark is a 16-page newsletter mailed to more than 4,700 Hoosiers. The newsletter provides in-depth coverage on topics of interest to the disability community, including feature stories and links to resources around Indiana. To join the Council mailing list, email [gpcpd@gpcpd.org](mailto:gpcpd@gpcpd.org).

### ***Voting in Indiana: A guide to voting for Hoosiers with disabilities***

This 52-page booklet provides information on voting in Indiana, including access requirements for polling places and voting machines, important how-to instructions on voter registration and knowing who's on your ballot, and a glossary of election terms.

### ***The Power of Words: A guide to interacting with people with disabilities***

This brochure enhances understanding and communication in interactions with people with disabilities.

### **Public Policy Platform**

These white papers provide an overview of the Council's stance on citizen participation, leadership, education, legal justice issues, employment, health care, long-term care and transportation.

### **Facebook**

The Council manages its own social media site to share updates and partner news.

The background of the page is a solid orange color with a faint, isometric illustration of a city street scene. The illustration shows buildings, trees, and people in a perspective view, creating a sense of depth and community. The text is centered in the upper half of the page.

# **COMMUNITY INVESTMENT & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

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*We amplify our advocacy efforts at strategic times of the year and commit ongoing support to grassroots organizations, keeping our message fresh to the community at-large. By reinvigorating those with disabilities, their families and care providers, we are propelling the conversations around inclusion and building on the past achievements of communities around the state.*



## MARCH DISABILITY AWARENESS MONTH

Thanks to local advocates, [Disability Awareness Month](#) – a yearly initiative sponsored by the Council – is a cornerstone of disability outreach. March in Indiana is filled with activities suggested by the Council’s toolkit, which comes complete with posters, bookmarks and stickers. Local events, powerful newspaper stories recognizing the contributions of people with disabilities, themed displays in public places and school-sponsored activities are just a few examples.

Popular themes from the past include “Cultivate Inclusion,” and “Love Where you Live.” The themed “Community Connections” poster also has been adapted as a teaching tool in several professional seminars and training events to illustrate access and inclusion, including this report.

## THE FIFTH FREEDOM NETWORK

This connected community of cross-disability advocates is dedicated to removing the barriers that often hold people with disabilities hostage to poverty, isolation and underachievement. Members of the [network](#) help get out the vote, participate on local advisory councils, host legislative forums to inform candidates on disability issues and advocate for improved accessibility in their neighborhoods and towns.

Network members are informed through email alerts and updates, social media and a robust website featuring a current legislative tracker, event calendar and advocacy opportunities.

## SELF-ADVOCATES OF INDIANA

People with intellectual/developmental disabilities lead both day-to-day operations and statewide outreach for [Self-Advocates of Indiana](#) (SAI). SAI has grown to be a strong statewide organization with more than 40 local chapters. SAI members have the knowledge and confidence to serve as leaders who work for equal rights, respect and inclusion for all in the community.

Self-advocate leaders serve on policy-related boards and build relationships with key government and civic stakeholders. SAI chapters also work to improve their communities through volunteer and service activities, such as fundraising, volunteering, and presenting to schools.

## COUNT US IN: PUBLIC POLICY SEMINAR

The Council leads a biennial five-hour training seminar to encourage the involvement of disability advocates in public policy and legislative issues that are important to them. Participants, comprised of people with and without disabilities, spend time engaged in advocacy education where they learn how to apply specific strategies to their current advocacy efforts and practice preparing and delivering mock legislative testimony.

Following each seminar, participants use their newly refined skills and report their advocacy efforts to the Council. After the most recent seminar, state legislators were contacted 198 times, and federal legislators were contacted 45 times. Policy issues discussed with legislators included employment, health care, independent living services, mental health, among others.



# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT & CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## INDIANA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COALITION

Increased employment for people with disabilities is the goal of a higher education collaboration between the Council and the [IIDC – the Indiana Postsecondary Education Coalition](#).

Funded through a Council grant, the Indiana Postsecondary Education Coalition is a statewide effort of nine advocacy organizations, Indiana colleges and universities, vocational rehabilitation professionals, educators, parents and self-advocates. The Coalition offers college options for students with developmental/intellectual disabilities at universities throughout Indiana, helping them gain valuable higher education, work experience, employment and leadership opportunities within their campuses and communities.

As of the 2014–2015 academic year, six self-sustaining university programs were established: [Indiana University–Purdue University at Indianapolis](#), [Franklin College](#), [Indiana Wesleyan University](#), [Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne](#), [Huntington University](#) and [Vincennes University Jasper campus](#).

As participants, university program staff collaborate on program structure and share information with one another. They also attend trainings on job coaching, peer mentoring and person-centered planning.

Over the five-year program, more than 100 students with intellectual/developmental disabilities have participated in these collegiate programs, and 40 of the students achieved employment.

Huntington University established a partnership with its local school corporation called ABLE – Achieving Balance in Life through Education. Through ABLE, six Huntington North High School students with intellectual disabilities were admitted to the university in fall 2014.

“One of the hallmarks of a residential college is that students learn from each other,” said Del Doughty, Ph.D., interim vice president for academic affairs. “By adding ABLE students to our campus, we will fulfill that expectation in a new way and at a deeper level, perhaps, than we ever have before.”

“This program allows us to better serve students with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 18 and 22 in a setting geared toward preparation for adulthood,” said Tracey Shafer, former superintendent of Huntington County Community School Corporation. “Allowing our students to participate in day-to-day activities in a college campus setting will open their eyes to a new world of options as they transition to the world of work.”

## “LIVABLE COMES TO LIFE”

Creating vibrant, sustainable and welcoming communities in Indiana was the theme of [Livable Comes to Life](#), a 31-page booklet produced by the Council. The publication featured prime examples of Indiana cities and towns that are moving closer to achieving livability – applying universal design, ensuring accessible transportation and necessary community supports, incorporating strong arts and cultural outlets, and supporting economic development and positive community engagement. The Council felt it was an important message to share with disability advocates, as livability is a broad concept that reaches everyone – people with varied abilities, ages, ethnicities and backgrounds.

To date, the publication has been distributed to almost 8,000 individuals, including elected officials, community groups, universities, churches, members of the media, Council partners and at various national conferences. To view the booklet, or to order a copy of the booklet and an accompanying poster, visit the Council’s [website](#).



