

### **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

Aging and Developmental Disability Partnerships often emerge naturally between individuals and organizations who share a common vision or concern. However, community collaboration is enhanced when partnerships are established between representatives from a broad array of organizations and networks that are likely to be impacted by aging and developmental disability issues, either positively or negatively.

Think About:

- Who supports your efforts?
- Who opposes your efforts?
- Who can be persuaded to help?

Diverse partnerships ensure that the needs and interests of all aging and developmental disability client groups are represented. Partners should include not only those stakeholders charged with implementing key programs in the community, but also those most affected by the issue including individuals with DD and their caregivers.

Outreach to clergy, business or civic leaders, or people who are highly credible in the community can help in raising awareness among large numbers of others. The participation of local political leaders, state representatives, and those in decision-making positions will also add credibility to activities and increase the chances of influencing public policy.

Each partner will bring unique perspectives and resources to the table. Individuals and organizations may also be selected according to the resources they bring such as services, research and information, political and media contacts, provider networks, and/or equipment and facilities.

Partners should be chosen who not only express a willingness to collaborate, but who can offer the knowledge and expertise needed to increase awareness of issues across aging and developmental disability networks. Invite individual members that are also in positions to make decisions and impact change in their own organization.

**Potential Aging and Developmental Disability Partners Include Representatives From:**

Area Agencies on Aging  
Senior Services  
MHDDAD State/Regional Offices  
Medicaid Providers  
Home and Community Based Service Providers  
Home Health Care Agencies  
Adult Day Health Care Centers  
Community Mental Health Programs  
United Way  
Public Health Departments  
Hospitals  
Health Care Providers  
Geriatric Social Workers  
Case Managers  
State Health Insurance Providers  
Family Protective Services  
Legal Aid and Assistance Representatives  
Universities and Community Colleges  
Private Practitioners  
Faith-based Organizations  
Mayors  
Elected Officials and Legislators  
Senior Advocate Organizations  
Developmental Disability Advocate Organizations  
Self-Advocates  
Older Adults  
Caregivers

**Consider the following questions when establishing aging and developmental disability partnerships in your community:**

- What is your relationship with the regional Area Agency on Aging (AAA)?
- What is your relationship with the regional office of the DHR Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Addictive Disorders (MHDDAD)?
- Who are the key elected officials – state senator and representative, county commissioners, mayor?
- Who is the governing authority?
  - Who is responsible for developing and enforcing the laws, ordinances, and policies of your community?
- Who are the aging service providers?
  - Which entities provide direct services and support to older adults and their families?
  - What is the primary source of funding for these services (e.g., federal, state, local, not-for-profit, for-profit)?
- Who are the aging advocates?
  - Which organizations advocate for the rights, needs, and interests of older adults and their families? (e.g., members of the AAA Citizen's Advisory Committee, Gray Panthers, AARP, or other senior-oriented advocacy groups in the community).
- Who are the developmental disability service providers?
  - Which entities provide direct services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers?
  - What is the primary source of funding for these services (e.g., federal, state, local, not-for-profit, for-profit)?
- Who are the developmental disability advocates?
  - Which organizations advocate for the rights, needs, and interests of individuals with developmental disabilities and their caregivers? (e.g., Parent to Parent, ARC of Georgia, United Cerebral Palsy of Georgia)

- Which corporate, nonprofit, or faith-based organizations have a particular interest in aging and/or developmental disability issues?
  - Are there nonpublic organizations in the community that work with public entities to support individuals who are aging? Their caregivers?
  - What types of partnerships are already in place?
  - Are there local businesses that offer special incentives or volunteer programs to help individuals who are aging with developmental disabilities and their caregivers?
  
- Who are the partners who must be at the table when planning for a future that consists of a growing number who are aging with developmental disabilities?