

# NCCDD Initiative 2025



## Self-Advocate Discussion Series

10/1/2024 – 9/30/2025

### System Gap Addresses

NCCDD has the need to attract, prepare, organize and mobilize NC self-advocates for influencing social and systems change. More NC self-advocates interested in advocating the value of people with disabilities are needed to actively build and maintain relationships with NC legislators and decision-makers. In addition, self-advocates will be supported to develop working relationships and a network among themselves.

### Initiative Goals and Timeline

The NCCDD sponsors a monthly NC self-advocate discussion series facilitated by the NCCDD Policy Education Coordinator, NCCDD self-advocate executive committee members, and additional coordinated participation by other NCCDD self-advocate members and staff. One- hour discussion sessions occur monthly. The discussion series is coordinated by NCCDD Advocacy Development Committee staff and by the NCCDD Policy Education Coordinator with support from NCCDD administrative staff, and the Hispanic Advocate initiative staff.

Each session is dedicated to addressing one IDD advocacy topic. Facilitators provide background on the topic and support attendees to share personal stories related to the topic. Sessions aim to be practice forums for using personal stories to build relationships with NC decision-makers and legislators. Experts, trainers, and decision-makers are invited to designated sessions to offer approaches for accessing, conversing, and following up with legislators and policymakers.

### Description of Activities

#### **Sessions share and hear stories of lived experience and meet NC Self-Advocate leaders and topic experts.**

Sessions are dedicated to sharing topic oriented personal stories, NC self-advocate network relationship building, NCCDD awareness, and just being with others who have common interests. Expect sharing and hearing personal stories of lived experience about topics important to IDD advocacy. Join the conversation, spend time with others who have common interests, and become part of the NCCDD community. Sessions balance training, knowledge sharing, and attendee participation to convey the best ways to use our personal stories to discuss topics important to I/DD advocacy.

### Achievements and Outcomes to Date

Since Nov. 2021 start through February 2025:

- 38 # of Self-Advocate Discussion Series sessions held
- 697 # of People Registered in FFY 2022 to attend sessions (includes duplicates and staff)
- 1,059 # of People Registered in FFY 2023 to attend sessions (includes duplicates and staff)
- 966 # of People Registered in FFY 2024 to attend sessions (includes duplicates and staff)
- 926 # of People Registered in FFY 2025 to attend sessions (includes duplicates and staff)
- 673 # of People Registered to date self-identified as person with IDD (includes duplicates)
- 23# of Topics discussed at series sessions (e.g., Valuable Principle, Voting, How to Talk to Legislators, Employment, Anniversaries: ADA, DD Act, NDEAM, Transportation, DSP Crisis/Waiting List, Emergency Preparedness, Relationships, Planning for the Future, Engaging Safely with Law Enforcement, and more.)

Updated March 2025 • (984) 920-8207 • [Melissa.Swartz@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Melissa.Swartz@dhhs.nc.gov) • [www.nccdd.org](http://www.nccdd.org)