



**OHIO DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL
EMPOWERMENT FUND
FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND FAMILIES
POLICIES**

It is the mission of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council to create change that improves independence, productivity and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities and their families in community life.

1. Priorities for recipients of support will be:
 - a. Individuals with developmental disabilities
 - b. Family members

2. Priorities for use of funds will be:
 - a. Individuals with developmental disabilities to participate in a local, state or national policymaking committee or board
 - b. Individuals with developmental disabilities to attend a conference
 - c. Individuals with developmental disabilities to provide testimony at public policy hearings
 - d. Family members to participate in a state or national policymaking committee or board
 - e. Family members to attend a conference
 - f. Family members to provide testimony at public policy hearings

3. Applicants must reside in Ohio and be a person with a developmental disability or a family member.

4. The Empowerment Fund is not available for use by members or staff of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council even if they would otherwise qualify (i.e., because of disability or family with a disability). It is also not available for former members or staff for a period of one year after their membership or employment with Council has ended.

5. The Empowerment Fund Subcommittee shall consist of three ODDC members, and the Chair of Leadership Development Committee who will serve as an alternate. The alternate will participate only when a subcommittee member is deemed unable to vote. The Empowerment Fund Subcommittee members, with staff assistance, will make all decisions related to approval or denial of requests. The Subcommittee shall meet in person, to vote (approval/denial) on each application received following the prior meeting. The meetings will be held within the context of the regularly scheduled DD Council meetings. Additional meetings will be scheduled as necessary, based upon the number and urgency of pending applications.
6. Those requesting support from the fund will be asked if they can contribute some money to pay the costs, or obtain some money from other sources, such as the Family Resource Program, or other organizations.
7. Participants will be expected to pay the cost of their own meals. However, participants who are eligible for advanced funding (see #16 below) may receive advance funding or reimbursement for their meals if there is an overnight stay involved. In such case, assistance for the meal expenses according to the state rate of \$6.00 for breakfast, \$9.00 for lunch and \$12 for dinner, per person.
8. State travel rules pertaining to all costs will be followed with the exception that the Empowerment Fund will not pay the cost to rent a vehicle.
9. Each person who receives support from the Fund will be required to turn in appropriate receipts for the use of the money, or return the money to the Empowerment Fund. Receipts and surplus funds shall be submitted to the DD Council Office within 30 days following the conference or other event where the expense was incurred.
10. Each person who receives support to attend a seminar or conference will be required to submit a report summarizing the event. This may be done in writing or an alternate format and must be submitted to the DD Council Office within 45 days following the event. If said person does not turn in a report or receipts, he or she will not be able to use the Empowerment Fund again until they do so.
11. No more than \$1,500, plus the cost of personal assistance, will be provided per request.
12. Council may approve no more than two people to attend the same event
13. Requests will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. Requests must be made 40 days prior to the event, by submitting the Empowerment Fund Application and conference agenda.
14. Added consideration will be given to people who have some money to contribute.
15. Advance funding may be made available only to those applicants receiving SSI, SSDI, or TANF as their primary source of income. All other approved applicants will receive funds on a reimbursement basis. Individuals who qualify for advance funding will be given added consideration.

16. Requests for conferences in exotic locations (outside the continental United States) will not be approved.
17. Individuals shall make all their own arrangements related to transportation, lodging, registration, personal assistance service, and so forth.
18. Individuals may not receive funds to attend more than one conference per calendar year, and may not receive funds to attend the same conference in consecutive years.
19. Reimbursements must be requested within 45 days after the end of the conference. Any individuals who have not claimed their reimbursements within the specified period will lose the ability to do so and the accounts will be closed.
20. The Ohio DD Council reserves the right to deny any request, revise policies, or suspend funding as it deems necessary.

Waiver Clause: The Subcommittee shall consider each application on a case-by-case basis; any rule or rules may be waived, but only in a situation of extreme hardship when the Subcommittee agrees by a unanimous vote of at least three members. The motion and vote shall be recorded in the Minutes of the Subcommittee and reported to the Leadership Development Committee. Such waivers shall be rarely granted.