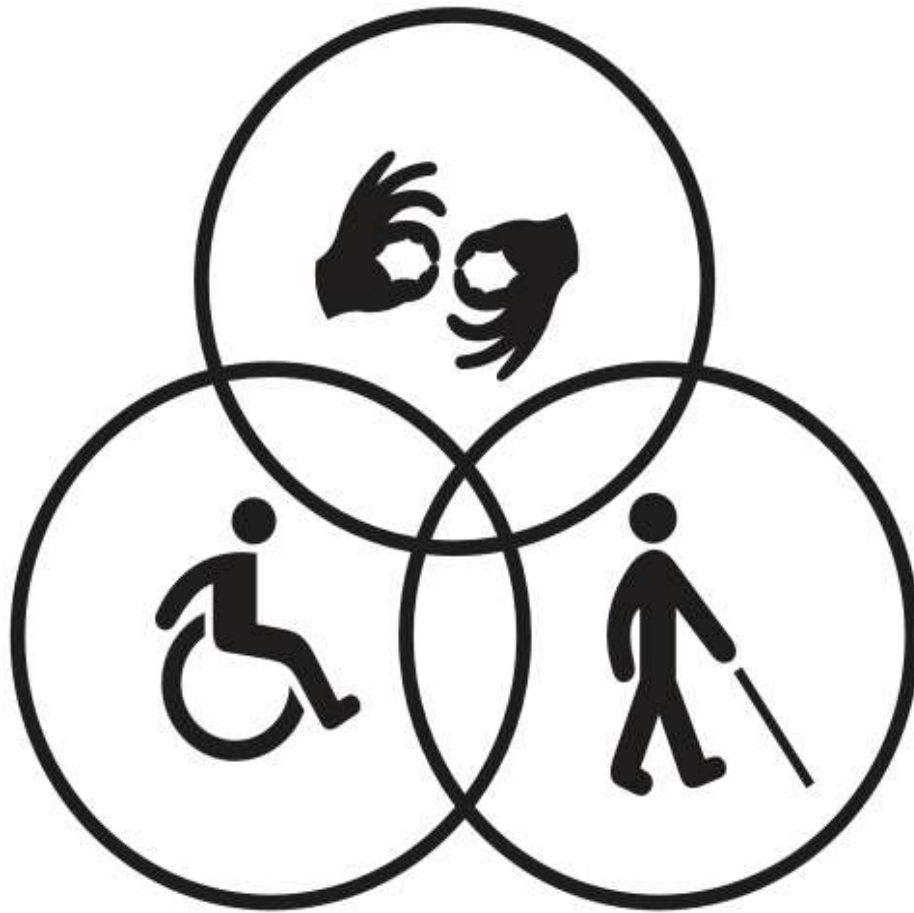


Fairfax Area- Disability Services Board



Member Handbook 2024

A FAIRFAX COUNTY, VA. PUBLICATION —



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services, and activities. This document is available in alternative formats upon request. Reasonable Accommodations are also available for all meetings of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board. Please call 703-324-5426/TTY 711 or send an email to disabilityrights@fairfaxcounty.gov to request accommodations or alternate formats.



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES



Welcome to the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board!

The Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB) is glad to have you as a member. You are joining an exclusive group of dedicated advocates all focused on promoting the full inclusion of people with disabilities into mainstream community life.

We believe that people of all ages with all types of disabilities are entitled to equal access to all of the programs and services that the Fairfax area has to offer. However, we were established by the Commonwealth of Virginia specifically to represent people with physical and sensory disabilities. This includes people with brain and spinal cord injuries, people that use mobility devices like walkers or wheelchairs, people who have physical impairments that significantly impact major life activities, people who are blind or have low vision or people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

As the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board, we serve not only Fairfax County, but we are also pleased to serve the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church.

While the following pages outline your roles and responsibilities as a new FA-DSB member, the most important thing you can do in order to be an effective board member is be actively engaged with the elected official(s) that appointed you. After all, you were appointed to be their representative to the disability community. So, it is essential that you keep them up to date regarding the issues facing people with disabilities in the Fairfax area.

As you'll soon discover, the barriers facing individuals with disabilities are prevalent throughout the region. Being a FA-DSB member means more than showing up at meetings once a month. So, whether it's getting involved in one of the board's strategic planning initiatives, occupying the FA-DSB's seat on another advisory board, or reaching out to government officials on issues addressed by the FA-DSB, your help will greatly improve the lives of people with disabilities in our area.

While we all come to the board with our own expertise, stories, and interest, keep in mind that we are here representing the disability community as a whole. So, while your experiences are vital to the strength and longevity of the board, remember that the entire disability community is counting on your assistance.

Thank you for serving on the FA-DSB. I look forward to working with you to help make the Fairfax area a better place for everyone – especially people with disabilities!

Sincerely,

David Simon
Chairperson, FA-DSB

Statistical Snapshot About Persons with Disabilities¹

- Approximately 8.2% of the population in Fairfax County has a disability.
- Approximately 2.4% of Fairfax County residents with a disability, have a hearing-related disability.
- Approximately 1.2% of Fairfax County residents with a disability, have a vision-related disability.
- Approximately 3.7% of Fairfax County residents with a disability, have an ambulatory-related disability.

People with Disabilities from the Fairfax Area Say...

- ❖ The greatest barriers to inclusion are transportation, employment, housing, assistive technology, and medical and therapeutic services.
- ❖ Competitive and integrated employment is possible when employers have financial incentives for hiring people with disabilities, and when employers expand their understanding and acceptance of people with disabilities.

To Keep People with Disabilities Contributing to our Community...

- ✓ *Sustain* services and programs for all people with disabilities, regardless of income.
- ✓ *Improve* job readiness, service access, and the economic circumstances for individuals with disabilities living in poverty.
- ✓ *Target* outreach to households that speak a language other than English to increase their awareness of available services and programs.
- ✓ *Expand* opportunities for people with disabilities in housing, employment, and transportation.
- ✓ *Assure* county compliance and adherence to the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act – making jobs, services and facilities welcoming and accessible to people with disabilities.

History of the Fairfax Area- Disability Services Board

In 1992, the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly mandated the development of the Disability Services Boards (DSBs) to assist localities in identifying and addressing the needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities in their communities. Community involvement was a major theme of the DSBs. In studying services for people with physical and sensory disabilities, the Commonwealth found that planning for programs and services had traditionally been developed at the state level and implemented locally. In response to this finding, they created local Disability Services Boards as the infrastructure for locally based assessment and

¹ [S1810: Disability Characteristics - Census Bureau Table](#)

planning. The DSBs provided a bottom-up approach to service planning which is different from the prevalent top-down planning.

In 2009, the General Assembly removed the mandate that required each locality to have a Disability Services Board. Although this was a setback to the disability community in Virginia, the jurisdictions of Northern Virginia recognized the value of DSBs and so they have continued to thrive throughout the region.

The DSBs are a vital part in the development and expansion of services to improve access for Virginia residents. Membership is composed of local government representatives, business representatives, and individuals with physical or sensory disabilities or family members of people with physical or sensory disabilities. A DSB may have up to 15 members. Thirty percent of the membership must represent a physical or sensory disability. The Boards advise local government and agencies to improve service delivery and public awareness.

DSBs are responsible to the governing body or bodies of the county or city or combination thereof, which established the Board. Term limits are set by the local governing body.

The Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board (FA-DSB) was established on November 1, 1992. It is composed of 15 representatives appointed by the elected officials of Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax.

Mission

The mission of the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB) is to include people with disabilities into mainstream community life by identifying, communicating, and advocating their diverse capabilities and needs to state and local governments and the private sector; and to help and provide resources to meet the needs of persons with physical and sensory disabilities.

Purpose

The Fairfax Area Disability Services Board (FA-DSB) represents persons of all ages with physical and sensory disabilities in Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax. Its purpose is to:

- **Inform and educate about issues**, barriers, and options, to ensure that persons with physical and sensory disabilities can participate to the fullest extent possible.
- **Advise the elective bodies** of Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax regarding issues of importance to persons with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- **Assess local service needs** and existing services. Provide input to state and local agencies on service needs and priorities of persons with physical/sensory disabilities.
- **Serve as a catalyst** for the development of public and private funding for needed services.
- **Monitor compliance** with federal, state, and local laws regarding disabilities.

- **Develop and support linkages** between services to improve the coordination and the array of services for persons with disabilities.
- **Advocate** for the rights of persons with disabilities.

What You Can Do as a FA-DSB Member

Below are some ideas that will assist you in becoming active participants in the FA-DSB:

- Educate yourself and others about issues affecting persons with physical and sensory disabilities in your jurisdiction and bring them to the attention of our local elected officials.
- Learn about the policy and budgeting process of your local government.
- Provide regular updates on local issues relating to persons with physical and sensory disabilities and FA-DSB activities to your local government representatives.
- Select issues, develop recommendations for state and local actions, and oversee the implementation of your recommendations.
- Develop linkages between the FA-DSB and other organizations of which you are familiar and look for opportunities for partnerships.
- Seek opportunities to increase participation of persons with disabilities in the Fairfax area and involve the FA-DSB in your community.
- Be an advocate for problem solving issues for people with disabilities in your area.
- Be an active participant during board meetings and other community meetings discussing issues relating to disabilities.
- Take one of the FA-DSB's seats on another advisory board.
- Invite local community resources to your meeting to present their services and to talk about ways of partnering to address the needs in the community.
- Oversee your region's implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Your Staff Liaison

Staff liaison for the FA-DSB is administered by the Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Adult and Aging Division's Disability Rights and Resources (DRR) unit. DRR promotes the inclusion and independence of people with disabilities through education, training, and referral assistance, so that persons of all abilities can fully participate in our community.

The unit provides training, as well as education and outreach to county residents, local non-profits, and county staff. DRR creates and publishes toolkits, articles, and educational materials to inform the public on their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Federal Fair Housing Act, and other disability-related laws. It also manages three contracts that serve people with disabilities: Brain Injury Services of Northern Virginia, Legal

Services of Northern Virginia, and the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons.

Staff & Web Contacts

Staff Liaison:

- **Claudia Vila, Manager, Disability Rights and Resources**
Claudia.Vila@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-324-5426 TTY: 711
- **Ann Kim, Disability Rights and Resources Specialist**
Ann.Kim@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-324-7486 TTY: 711
- **Alma Hernandez, Disability Rights and Resources Specialist**
Alma.HernandezAlvarez@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-324-4948 TTY: 711
- **Ashley-Ann Waaldijk, Disability Rights and Resources Administrative Assistant**
Ashley-Ann.Waaldijk@fairfaxcounty.gov 703-246-6514 TTY: 711

Webpages:

Fairfax-Area Disability Services Board

www.FairfaxCounty.Gov- Search “Disability Services Board

Disability Rights and Resources

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/disabilities

FA-DSB Meeting Attendance

Attendance at regular meetings is required of FA-DSB members. According to the bylaws, FA-DSB members are responsible for attending all of the meetings of the full FA-DSB and the meetings of the FA-DSB Ad Hoc committees of which the member is a representative. Absences from a regular meeting must be excused by a member of the Executive Committee. Three or more unexcused absences during a twelve-month period will constitute resignation from the FA-DSB.

FA-DSB Leadership

The leadership, or Executive Committee, of the FA-DSB consists of a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary. The role of FA-DSB chair is to conduct meetings. The chair is the catalyst in ensuring that meetings are run in an effective and efficient manner. Executive Committee members are selected on an annual basis by a “Nominations Committee” that is established each spring. The Nominations Committee creates a “slate” of nominees which it presents to the FA-DSB during the May meeting. The board has the opportunity to consider the slate for a month, and it is

voted on during the June meeting. Nominations are also made from the floor at that time. Then the new positions take effect in July of each year.

FA-DSB Committees

In 2021 the FA-DSB revised its bylaws to do away with committees and moved toward a two-member advocacy model. No more than two FA-DSB members will work on any one initiative at any point in time.

While the FA-DSB has what it calls “Ad Hoc Committees” that are established throughout the year (ex. Nominations, Awards, and Legislative Committee), they are nevertheless comprised of no more than two FA-DSB members, in keeping with its two-member advocacy model approach.

See the FA-DSB Roster Sheet for a full description of the Ad Hoc Committees and their function.

Martha Glennan Inclusion and Equality Awards

Every fall, the FA-DSB establishes an Ad Hoc “Awards Committee” to solicit nominations for the annual Martha Glennan Inclusion and Equality Awards. Named after the founder of the FA-DSB, the Martha Glennan awards recognize people, businesses, nonprofits, government agencies and other organizations that promote full inclusion and equality for people with disabilities in the Fairfax area. The Awards Committee is responsible for reviewing all of the nominations that are received and selecting a distinguished few that embody the spirit of the awards to be recognized. The Martha Glennan Inclusion and Equality Awards are presented each year at an awards ceremony that takes place during the December meeting of the FA-DSB.

FA-DSB Seats on Other Advisory Boards

The FA-DSB has ongoing established seats reserved on the Fairfax Area Long Term Care Coordinating Council, the Trails and Sidewalks Committee, the Transportation Advisory Committee, Advisory Committee for Students with Disabilities, and the Consolidated Community Funding Pool Advisory Committee.

Disability Employment Awareness Month

Every October is designated as Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) in Fairfax County. This involves a proclamation during a Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting in late September or early October. Other DEAM initiatives include Mentoring Day where high school students with disabilities come to the Fairfax County Government Center to be mentored by county employees, and celebration of the completion of the John Hudson Internship Program (JHIP). Named after the former Director of DRR, the JHIP is a paid internship program for college students with disabilities to work for Fairfax County.

Fairfax County’ Budget Process

A function of the FA-DSB is to provide input into the Fairfax County budget process. Fairfax County operates on a Fiscal Year (FY), from July 1 to June 30. Each February, the Fairfax County Executive releases a proposed budget to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (BOS). Then there is an opportunity for public comment. Comment is especially beneficial from advisory boards like the FA-DSB because of your specialized knowledge of issues impacting people with disabilities in the Fairfax area. Staff will provide you with a summary of the budget impact on

people with disabilities and it will be up to you to prioritize which issues you want to bring before the Board of Supervisors. Once the full board votes on the budget priorities, FA-DSB leadership will provide testimony to the BOS during their annual hearing before the final budget is adopted.

Lobbying Rules

The FA-DSB is a body of Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. To that end, there are strict lobbying rules about what the FA-DSB is able to do when interacting with state elected officials. Each summer, the Fairfax County Executive's Legislative Affairs Office solicits input from boards like the FA-DSB to establish legislative priorities for the Commonwealth of Virginia's General Assembly. The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors must adopt the FA-DSB's legislative priorities as part of their annual Human Services Issue Paper before the FA-DSB can take any action on them.

Additional clarification about the county's lobbying rules is below, but please consult FA-DSB support staff if you have any questions or concerns about the policy before taking any legislative action.

Role	Citizen	FA-DSB Member
Restrictions	You must not represent yourself as speaking on behalf of Fairfax County or any Board, Commission or Authority of Fairfax County, including the FA-DSB.	FA-DSB members cannot speak to any group as a FA-DSB member unless the FA-DSB has adopted the position or designated them as spokesperson. FA-DSB members can only speak to legislators or agencies in support of positions adopted by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors (or cities). New legislative proposals must come through Fairfax County legislative agenda process.
Required Disclosures	None.	Actions of FA-DSB must be taken at meetings which are open to the public. Public notice must be given (posted in public place for three days) prior to the meeting.
There are No Restrictions Against	Voting, signing petitions, writing personal letters, speaking as a person with an interest in or experience with disability issues. Speaking as a representative of other organizations. Proposing legislation as an individual or member of another organization.	Discussions with the elected official(s) who appointed you. Discussions concerning routine business such as contacts with state agencies. FA-DSB members and staff can respond to requests for factual information from public officials. The information provided is a matter of public record. This is often called technical assistance.

Public Testimony	Must not represent self as lobbyist or speaking for Fairfax County or FA-DSB.	Members designated as FA-DSB spokespersons may express positions adopted by FA-DSB. Spokespersons generally receive 5 minutes to comment at public hearings or meetings.
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Conflict of Interest

The Disability Services Boards are governed by Virginia’s *Comprehensive Conflict of Interest Act*, which prohibits Board members who have a personal interest in a transaction before the Board from participating in the transaction. For the purposes of the Act, a “personal interest” means a financial benefit accruing to the member or someone in his/her immediate family. Knowingly violating the Act is a criminal offense.

Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

The Fairfax Area Disability Services Board falls under the scrutiny of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). While the nuances of this law are plentiful, and your staff support will help ensure that the FA-DSB is conducting business in compliance with FOIA, some general guidelines are:

- FOIA defines a meeting as occurring when more than two board members are present discussing FA-DSB business. When a meeting is held, it must be announced three days in advance, accessible and open to the public.
- All meetings MUST be open to the public, but the public is NOT required to participate in the meetings.
- The FA-DSB is allowed to hold remote meetings of the full board twice a year. These meetings take place in November and February.
- FA-DSB members are allowed to participate remotely in certain circumstances, provided that proper written notice is submitted to the Chairperson in advance of the meeting. A quorum of the board must be physically present at a designated meeting location.

An annual memo is sent from the Fairfax County Executive to all advisory boards like the FA-DSB explaining FOIA in greater detail. If you have questions about FOIA compliance, just ask your support staff for assistance.

Advocating as a Member of the FA-DSB

While you are encouraged to advocate for people with disabilities in your district and have regular communications with the elected official(s) that appointed you to the board, the FA-DSB must take a position (via majority vote) on a given policy, perspective, regulation or issue before you can represent yourself as advocating on behalf of it as a member of the FA-DSB.

Once the FA-DSB has adopted a position on a given issue, letters, testimonies, position papers etc. are signed by the Chairperson of the FA-DSB as the official designated representative of the board. That doesn’t prevent you from advocating on behalf of an issue that has been adopted by the board, just make sure that your efforts are well aligned with the position of the full FA-

DSB, and that the executive committee is aware of your advocacy work to eliminate any confusion or repetition.

Access Fairfax: News & Events for Persons with Disabilities

“Access Fairfax”, the Disability Services E-Newsletter, keeps the public informed about resources, events and issues that affect people with disabilities. To subscribe to Access Fairfax, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/disabilities/subscribe-to-access-fairfax-eneews, enter your e-mail address and check the box to “subscribe”. You will receive an email asking if you wish to subscribe. You must reply to the email with the word OK as the body of the message.

Overview of State Agencies Services Persons with Disabilities

Agency	Mission
Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provides quality customer services at the state and local level designed to encourage, educate, enable and empower Virginians who are deaf and hard of hearing to become and remain independent and productive citizens of the commonwealth. The agency further promotes effective communication between persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and those who are hearing.
Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services	The mission of the DBHDS is to improve the quality of life for people with mental disabilities and substance abuse problems by providing the very best service possible.
Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services	<p>In partnership with people with disabilities and their families, the Virginia Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services collaborates with the public and private sectors to provide and advocate for the highest quality services that empower individuals with disabilities to maximize their employment independence and full inclusion into society.</p> <p>The mission of the Virginia Department for the Aging is to help older Virginians live as independently as possible, with the appropriate services in place to maintain their dignity and security. These programs include a full range of health, education, nutrition and supportive services to improve the quality of life of older Virginians.</p>
Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired	The mission of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired is to enable blind or visually impaired individuals to achieve their maximum level of employment, education, and personal independence.

Disability Law Center of Virginia	Protects and advances the legal, human, and civil rights of persons with disabilities; combat and prevent abuse, neglect, and discrimination; and promote independence, choice, and self-determination by persons with disabilities in the Commonwealth.
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Fairfax County Services for Persons with Disabilities

1. Department of Family Services:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/
 The Adult and Aging Division provides case management, caregiver support/respice, in-home care, Meals on Wheels, health insurance counseling, and volunteer services to adults with disabilities who qualify for services.
2. Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/humanrights/
 Responds to concerns about access to Fairfax County programs, services, and employment.
3. Human Rights Commission:
[Office of Human Rights and Equity Programs | Human Rights and Equity Programs \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/humanrights/)
 Responds to concerns about access to programs, services, housing, and employment in private businesses in Fairfax County.
4. Library Access Service:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/access-services
 The Access Services branch removes barriers to library services for people with disabilities.
5. Therapeutic Recreation:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/therapeutic-recreation
 Provides opportunities for children and adults with disabilities so they may acquire the skills that enable them to participate in the recreation and leisure programs of their choice.
6. Park Authority:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/accessible
 Provides adaptive leisure and classes for people with disabilities.
7. Department of Emergency Management and Security:
[Department of Emergency Management and Security | Emergency Management \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency-management/)
 Manages the Functional Needs Registry, which allows residents with medical needs an opportunity to provide information to Fairfax County so that agencies can communicate emergency preparedness, response and recovery resources to our vulnerable, at risk and hard-to-reach residents.
8. Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board:
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/
 Serves Fairfax-Falls Church residents with, or at risk of, severe and persistent mental

health issues; intellectual and developmental disabilities; or alcohol or drug abuse or dependency.

9. Department of Housing and Community Development:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/

The Home Repair Program is designed to provide minor home repairs as well as accessibility modifications for homeowners with disabilities. Fairfax County will provide a crew to do up to one week's labor and provide up to \$500 in materials to complete necessary repairs.

10. Department of Tax Administration:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/taxes/

Offers real estate tax relief and car tax relief to citizens who are either 65 or older, or have a permanent disability, and meet the income and asset eligibility requirements.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices

Phone: 703-324-7948, TTY 711

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