



The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council continues our profile series to help community members get to know the people who represent Arizonans with disabilities. Up this month is Council member Katharine Levandowsky



Kathy Levandowsky is a hard-working and passionate person, which she says comes from her Latin upbringing and the support of her family. Her father was a Spanish and English teacher, her mother was a math teacher. Her grandmother immigrated from Mexico, settling in Miami, Arizona (a classic Western copper boomtown), raising 13 children – all of whom are successful in their chosen professions. Kathy's grandfather was from Spain and helped build the Panama Canal. (That's why Kathy says she's Latina, which is surprising to most people because of her last name. Proof that you can't judge a book by its cover!) Kathy is the mother of four – three sons and a daughter. Two of her sons are firemen while one is an electrician, and her daughter is a pharmacist. Side note: Two of the boys are twins, which is a trait that runs in her family.

Kathy obtained her Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona State University in Communication Disorders and has more than 40 years of experience working in the community with families, stakeholders, and providers to develop services for individuals with disabilities. She has served on the Council in several different capacities. Her first role was as the representative of the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program, where she was the Administrator. As the Administrator, she directed the planning, organization, implementation, and coordination of Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living, and Services for the Blind, Visually Impaired, and Deaf programs.

Subsequent to that, she became Chief of the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs (OCSHCN) and beginning in 2014 she served as ADHS's Council representative.

[Read more](#)

ADDPC Grant Funding at Work



Did you know that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) are seven times more likely to experience sexual violence than the general population?

To address this silent epidemic in Arizona, a statewide network on this topic was created. The Arizona Sexual Violence & Disability Network, funded through a grant from the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council, is a passionate group of people who believe that change is possible when we work together with a clear focus, shared commitment, and measurable goals. The mission of the Network is to identify and respond to the critical needs of individuals with I/DD and other disabilities who face the most significant risk of sexual violence in Arizona. In the past 3 years, the Network focused its efforts on developing publications and easy-to-use resources, providing in-person and online webinars and training, and following key legislation to educate others on policy issues. Publications, including the strategic plan, can be viewed on the [Network's website](#).

The Network is excited to announce that it is holding its first statewide conference on September 14, 2023. This conference will address key issues raised in the Network's strategic plan developed in 2022. The conference is the first of its kind in Arizona to take a deep dive into the intersection of I/DD and sexual violence, while also addressing people with I/DD as victims of violence in marginalized communities. The conference is covering critical and timely issues, such as:

- How to have courageous conversations about sexual violence
- Listening to the lived experiences of people with I/DD about sexual violence
- Research updates and including people with I/DD in research efforts
- Outreach to diverse populations, including Tribal and LGBTQ+ communities
- The power of collaboration and networking
- Outcomes and products from the Network's five workgroups
- Charting a course for the future

Featured keynote speakers include two nationally-recognized leaders in the field: James Meadours (a survivor of sexual violence with I/DD who is devoting his career to ending sexual violence) and Shirley Paceley (a well-known advocate, ally and author who creates safe spaces for courageous conversations on this topic to occur). A visual notetaker will engage all conference participants to share their own hopes and dreams for the future during the final "Charting a Course for the Future" session. A digital image of the artwork from the final session will be placed on the Network's website and used to evaluate the Network's achievements over time.

The in-person conference includes exhibits, lunch and refreshments, and a free book written by keynote speaker Shirley Paceley titled "*Shining A Light: Creating Pathways to Equity, Safety, Healing and Justice with People with Disabilities*".

The Network is looking for new members who have a strong belief in building collaboration and a passion to prevent sexual violence. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people from diverse backgrounds (including BIPOC and Native American communities), and people who work at the intersection of disability and sexual violence are all welcome. If you are interested in joining the movement, contact Leigh Anne McKingsley at mckingsley@thearc.org and [fill out this form](#).

Arizona Sexual Violence & Disability Network 2023 Conference

When: Thursday, September 14th

Time: 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Cost: \$79.99 early bird rate ends on August 15th and then rate will increase to \$99.99

Where: Ability360 Conference Center, 5025 E. Washington St, Phoenix

[Click here to register for the Arizona Sexual Violence & Disability Network conference](#)

The conference is being sponsored or supported by the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC), Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities (AAPPD) and Ability360.



\$25 Amazon Gift Card*

- Are you a youth with an intellectual or developmental disability (I/DD)?
- Have you received services from Arizona's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program within the past 3 years?
- Have you participated in a transition from school to work (TSW) program, job trial, self-advocacy skill building or other activities to help prepare for work?
- Can you answer yes to any of these questions? If so, we want to hear from you during one of our upcoming online focus groups.

Through a grant from ADDPC, the Institute for Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts-Boston (ICI) is conducting a study to identify barriers to integrated employment for transition age youth with I/DD in Arizona. As part of this study, ICI is holding two online focus groups. ***ICI is able to offer a \$25 Amazon gift card for your participation.***

Focus Group 1 - for Parents and Family Members

When: Wednesday, August 9th

Time: 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM MST

Where: Virtual

Focus Group 2 - for youth under age 25 with I/DD, who have received VR services/employment preparation activities within the past 3 years

When: Thursday, August 10th

Time: 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to register for one of the online VR focus groups](#)

If you are not able to attend these groups, but would like to participate in this study, please contact Allison Hall at Allison.hall@umb.edu or 480-677-9677 and she can set up another time to talk.

*Gift cards are not an endorsement by the ADDPC, the Administration on Community Living, or the US Department of Health and Human Services.

New Council Grants Address Vital Needs Within Arizona's I/DD Community



One of the main purposes of the ADDPC is to offer competitive grants targeted at filling in system gaps for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Arizona. We use our grants to help individuals advocate for themselves and create more inclusive communities. The following grants were approved by the Council in June 2023:

Conference & Training Sponsorship Grants

- **Bloom 365: 2024 Safety for All Conference (\$8,850)**
The 2024 Safety for All conference addresses sexual assault services and programs to increase access to and utilization of trauma-informed outreach, case management, advocacy, and therapy services for victims of violence with disabilities. Currently, Safety for All is available on-site at Arcadia High School and Coronado High School in Phoenix, as well as a variety of other disability-centered community organizations.
- **Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona: 2024 Rays of Hope Brain Injury Survivor and Family Conference (\$5,000)**
Rays of Hope provides an opportunity for survivors, their families, and caregivers to share experiences on their respective roads to recovery, learning from professionals and from each other. The conference engages the brain injury community, including individuals with I/DD, in the planning of the conference where they influence speakers, session topics and other details.
- **Care 4 the Caregivers: In-person sexual education training courses (\$9,040)**
Care 4 the Caregivers will conduct 6 in-person sexual education training courses in the communities of Tempe, Anthem, Peoria, Phoenix, Nogales and Flagstaff, for caregivers who are raising children with disabilities and I/DD. The promising practice training on sex education for families/caregivers is titled, "Healthy Foundation: Caregiver Workshop about Sexuality and Disability." As part of this project, Care 4 the Caregivers will seek feedback from self-advocates to identify gaps in knowledge within the curriculum, evaluate resources, and provide input on other strategies to be considered.
- **Northern Arizona University-Institute for Human Development (NAU-IHD): 2024 Evidence for Success Disability Conference (\$10,000)**
Funding will be used to support conference sessions that cover the topic of customized, integrated competitive employment. The NAU-IHD annual conference is designed to educate service providers such as schools, therapists, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, DDD support coordinators and families/caregivers about the trends, research, and evidence-based practices that support the full inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all life activities. The in-person conference will be held in Phoenix, over two days, in June 2024.

- **United Cerebral Palsy of Southern Arizona: Training sessions on Independent Living (\$3,750)**

UCP of Southern Arizona will offer free training sessions, September through May 2024, on four key topics covering Independent Living. The four-part series will provide resources and tools to self-advocates to enhance their independence, build community, and encourage quality of life. The theme is, "Powering Through Life: by People who have Developmental, Intellectual, and Physical Disabilities." Each session will be facilitated by self-advocates and professionals and is meant for self-advocates who are 18 and older and use mobility devices. The format will allow the participants and speakers to share their stories, exchange information and ideas, and help educate and support one another. Sessions will be in-person and online via Zoom.

Parenting Supports for Persons with Disabilities

- **Arizona State University School of Social Work (\$35,604)**
ASU School of Social Work will carry out a best practice model in three phases, targeting four groups for each phase. The groups are parents with disabilities and their family members; social service organizations; policy advocates and policy makers; and social workers who work with parents with disabilities. The project is designed to develop a user-friendly guide of models of support; an interactive training curriculum for parents with disabilities; and a series of training courses to educate persons with disabilities who are or would like to become parents.
- **Northern Arizona University-Institute for Human Development (\$75,046)**
NAU-IHD proposes to improve access to high-quality parenting support for Arizona parents with I/DD who have infants or young children (focus is 0-5 years of age). As a statewide project, IHD will build capacity within the existing Arizona evidence-based home visiting (EBHV) parenting programs to serve parents with I/DD. Because this focus will improve the capacity of EBHV's programs, there is the potential for future funding to continue researching and enhance implementation.
- **The University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities (\$68,319)**
The University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities, in collaboration with Ability360, Raising Special Kids, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Arizona Spinal Cord Injury Association, and UnitedHealthcare, will build upon the work the collaborative team has done for the past two years. This work includes addressing the needs of parents with disabilities and their capability to communicate their pregnancy and parenting questions. In addition, the team will bring awareness to the medical community of the support needed by parents with disabilities.

Self-Advocacy

- **The Arc of Arizona/The Arc of Tempe (\$60,000)**
Funding will be used to continue establishing and growing a statewide coalition of self-advocates who work together and learn leadership development, speaking skills, peer-to-peer mentoring, partnership with local advocacy groups around the state, and participation with community groups.

Six training sessions will be held, of which five will be in-person. The training sessions will take place in Cottonwood, Kingman, Kearney, Nogales, and Tuba City. The Arc of Arizona will also submit two presentation proposals for self-advocates to speak at upcoming conferences in the Spring of 2024. A select number of self-advocates will share their perspectives on disability advocacy within these cultural contexts.

Supported Decision-Making

- **The Arc of the United States/The Arc of Arizona (\$80,000)**
Supported Decision-Making (SDM) is an alternative to traditional guardianship or substitute decision-making models and is based on autonomy, self-determination, and inclusivity. The Arc of Arizona's project will focus on understanding legal capacity, communication and decision-making skills,

Person-Centered Planning, identifying and managing risks, identifying support networks, legal and ethical considerations, advocacy and empowerment, and the development of practical tools and resources. The Arc of Arizona will partner with the Arizona Center for Disability Law.

[Click here for ADDPC's grants page and register for the newsletter to receive information about future grant opportunities](#)

Upcoming Events!



DDD Town Hall Meeting

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) wants to hear from you. DDD is hosting regularly scheduled Town Hall meetings. DDD will present details about Division initiatives and other news. They would also like to hear from members, families and providers about the issues important to them. Until further notice, all DDD meetings will be held virtually in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Persons with a disability may request a reasonable accommodation, such as a sign language interpreter, by contacting the DDD Customer Service Center at 1-844-770-9500 ext. 1. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow time to arrange the accommodation.

When: Thursday, August 3rd

Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to join DDD Town Hall Meeting](#)



Arizona Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) provides training for professionals on benefits, health coverage and employment supports to reduce the myths that are barriers to employment and financial self-sufficiency for people with disabilities.

During this training, DB101 experts will:

- Describe Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance rules and work incentives, Medicaid and Medicare, and employment impact on state/federal benefits

- Complete and explain Estimator results of the impact of specific earnings on benefits

-Explain motive and support plans for employment and transition to self-sufficiency

When: Thursday, August 10th

Time: 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to register for AZDB101](#)



Introducing the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities at the University of Arizona's new *"What I Want for My Life"* webinar series. This program includes six different webinars, with three still remaining! You will need to register for each separately.

Webinars will be moderated by self advocates and will provide participants with opportunities to hear from self advocates and supporters about the importance of having the early expectation of an integrated community employment goal. They will share what worked and didn't in staying true to that goal when barriers arose, as well as advocacy strategies, such as peer or family supports or finding a mentor, as powerful barrier busters. The panel will offer tips on what they wished others had shared when they first expressed their employment goals and considerations for participants in their own journey.

1. When: Thursday, August 10th "Finding Community and Social Networks"

Time: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to register for Finding Community and Social Networks](#)

2. When: Thursday, September 7th "Becoming a Leader in Your Community: Joining Boards and Advocacy Groups"

Time: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to register for Becoming a Leader in Your Community: Joining Boards and Advocacy Groups](#)

3. When: Thursday, October 12th "The Journey to Finding a Voice That Is Needed: Told by a Young Adult"

Time: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to register for The Journey to Finding a Voice That Is Needed: Told by a Young Adult](#)

ADVANCING EMPLOYMENT WEBINAR SERIES

Advancing Employment webinar series - Braided Funding

The University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities' monthly Advancing Employment Webinar Series provides insight into a variety of disability employment topics while increasing awareness of employment organizations and supports. The content covered in this series is beneficial for a wide range of people with connection to the disability community, including families, self-advocates, educators, state agency staff, and other professionals.

Representatives from state Vocational Rehabilitation, Baboquivari High School, the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities, and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation will share how they made this happen and the benefits to their organizations.

When: Thursday, August 24th

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM MST

Where: Virtual

[Click here to register for Advancing Employment](#)



Celebrate progress and advocate for change!

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System's (AHCCCS) Office of Individual and Family Affairs (OIFA) promotes recovery, resiliency, and wellness for individuals with mental health and substance use challenges. Join the OIFA leaders as we come together to celebrate OIFA accomplishments and plan for the future.

When: Friday, August 25th

Time: 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM MST

Where: Spectrum Healthcare 8 E. Cottonwood St., Cottonwood

[Click here to register for OIFA 3.0 Celebrate Progress and Advocate for Change](#)

Monday Mindset Chat

**Presented by the Sonoran Center for Excellence in
Disabilities at the University of Arizona**



Join us for monthly chats focused on addressing the challenges and successes of implementing Employment First in Arizona.

This is an opportunity for YOU to bring your questions, comments, and concerns to an informal meeting with Sonoran Center professionals and practitioners.

WHO IS THIS FOR?

Open to Supported Employment Professionals, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, DDD Support Coordinators, Educators, Providers, Job Coaches, and Job Developers.

[Click here to register for Monday Mindset Chats](#)

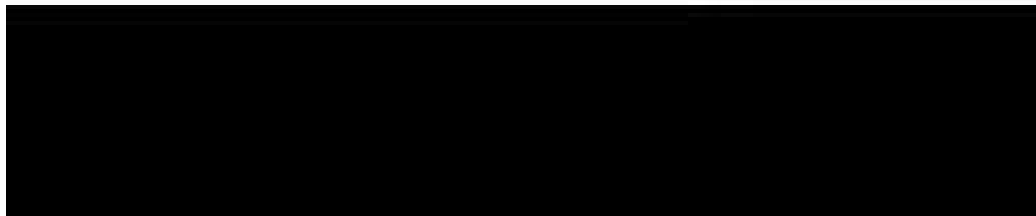
[See ADDPC website for more events. Click here.](#)

Disability Data for Arizona

ADDPC's Data Hub allows you to explore data on individuals with disabilities living in the state of Arizona. We believe free and easy access to data on individuals with disabilities is important to develop and support capacity building and systemic change. We update our data dashboards regularly, as governmental agencies make their public releases.

Watch our brief video on how to use the Disability Data Hub for Arizona:





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