

Engaging Arizonans to Make a Meaningful Impact



Introduction

Arizona is a state with much diversity, and our multiculturalism is maximized when people who have diverse lived expertise contribute their valuable insights and perspectives to impact the communities to which they identify, both as self and systems advocates.

Being engaged in work throughout the state has helped Diverse Ability Incorporated gain insight into the disparities and challenges within rural Arizona, and to create opportunities for leadership and engagement of youth and families where it matters most to them.

Addressing Health Equity

Diverse Ability Incorporated addresses health equity by managing collaborative programs, providing education and training, and by placing trained Arizona Youth Leaders in leadership positions where they can affect change.

Today we will share **Three Strategies** implemented by Diverse Ability Incorporated to achieve meaningful impact:

- Managing the **Engaging Families and Young Adults Program (EFYAP)**, which facilitates connections to ensure that diverse communities are represented where choices and decisions are made
- Addressing Health Equity by providing **Education and Training**
- Training and placing **Arizona Youth Leaders**, who are making their mark in their communities and beyond

1. Engaging Families and Young Adults Program



Funding for this program is provided by the ADHS/Bureau of Women's and Children's Health through the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant.



Engaging Families and Young Adults Program

Promotional Video



https://youtu.be/dveHbQYZk_A

Engaging Families and Young Adults Program

Based on a collaborative history, expertise, and shared values, Diverse Ability Incorporated and Raising Special Kids each demonstrate an enduring commitment to youth and families by providing meaningful opportunities for them to acquire leadership and self-advocacy skills.

We also support their efforts to contribute their valuable wisdom and experience within the design, delivery, and evaluation of programs and policies impacting systems of care in Arizona.

EFYAP

Collaboratively, Diverse Ability Incorporated and Raising Special Kids implement the Engaging Families and Young Adults Program, with Diverse Ability Incorporated acting as Lead Agency, managing the grant and coordinating the Young Adult Engagement component, and Raising Special Kids subcontracting to coordinate the Family Engagement component.

A bit more about Diverse Ability Incorporated and Raising Special Kids...

Diverse Ability Incorporated is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit public charity whose mission is to promote access, equity, inclusion, and the celebration of diversity,

through

- peer-based experiential learning,
- person-centered practices,
- and maximized collaboration efforts

designed to

- heighten knowledge,
- enhance skills,
- and foster individual life path planning and growth.



AZYLI

Diverse Ability Incorporated's Arizona Youth Leadership and Engagement Initiatives (AZYLEI) are a combination of peer-based training, navigation, and support services provided throughout Arizona, by and for youth who have disabilities and other diversities.

Many Young Adult Advisors through the Engaging Families and Young Adults Program are graduates of AZYLI, and all Young Adult Advisors receive project-specific training to prepare them to maximize their opportunity to serve.



Raising
Special
Kids

OUR MISSION

Strengthening families and systems of care
to improve outcomes for children with
disabilities and special health care needs

Founded in 1979 – Families Helping Families

Arizona's Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center for Special
Education

Parent to Parent USA (founding member)

Arizona's Family to Family Health Information Center

Arizona Chapter of Family Voices



Individuals with diverse lived experience powerfully impact the communities they represent by contributing their valuable insights and perspectives.

The Engaging Families and Young Adults Program (EFYAP) facilitates connections to ensure that diverse communities are represented where choices and decisions are made.



THE ENGAGING FAMILIES AND YOUNG ADULTS PROGRAM IS

An opportunity for young adults and family members - who have diverse backgrounds and life experiences - to inform the policies and practices of the organizations and systems which impact the communities they represent.



ADVISORS ARE

A diverse group of family members and young adults ages 18-26, including those who have disabilities and a variety of diversities, who wish to represent the communities to which they identify. Advisors are recruited, trained, and placed by Diverse Ability Incorporated and/or Raising Special Kids.



POTENTIAL ADVISORS

While some potential Advisors may already be connected with Diverse Ability Incorporated and/or Raising Special Kids, this is not a requirement to participate in the program.



ADVISOR TRAINING

Family and Young Adult Advisors receive training before being matched with organizations and systems that want to involve these experts within their frameworks.

Those organizations and systems are known as **Placement Agencies**.



REQUIRED TRAININGS

Serving on Groups:

A useful tool for anyone who is currently serving, or wants to serve, on a decision-making body. The focus is on developing specific skill sets for serving on groups and understanding group functions for more effective and robust decision making.

Health Equity:

Participants learn about the concepts of health equity, health disparities, and social determinants of health, and explore their roles as Advisors within communities and organizations striving to achieve health equity.



ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Placement Agencies may have a specific focus or a broad initiative that they are striving to achieve. Each Placement Agency defines how it will incorporate Advisors into its work and recognizes the importance of having expert Advisors committed to influencing the Agency's direction, processes, and goals.



PLACEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

Young Adults and Family Advisors are placed within organizations and systems where their lived experience is applied in a variety of ways, leading to more equitable outcomes.

The level of engagement is customizable and can be adapted over time. The hope is that organizations and systems will recognize the contributions of Advisors as integral to their success.



PLACEMENT AGENCIES

Placement Agencies enter into an agreement with the Engaging Families and Young Adults Program, and together, they design a framework for Advisor engagement.

Placement Agencies must compensate Advisors for their time and expertise. EFYAP coordinates and provides support for each placement on an ongoing basis.

COMMON QUESTIONS



May Placement Agencies
recruit and recommend their own
potential Advisors to the EFYAP?

What are examples of Advisor
engagement, or what might it look like?

How do potential Placement Agencies get
started?

Other Questions?

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2. Education and Training

Diverse Ability Incorporated designs and delivers curriculum and workshops addressing Health Equity through our conferences and programs, as well as through sessions provided to the public, including youth and their families.

The two examples we are sharing today, the **Family Emergency Preparedness** curriculum and **Self-Advocacy in Accessing Healthcare** curriculum, are available to all five Centers for Independent Living in Arizona (CILs), representing education and training for a much larger network of people who have disabilities throughout our state.

Diverse Ability Incorporated routinely conducts focus groups to help determine what people need and feel is important to include within any of our programs and curriculum. We strive to include elders and youth/young adults in the research and design of any curriculum we create.



Family Emergency Preparedness

The Family Emergency Preparedness curriculum was designed for young adults and their families. While it is for everyone, it contains information specific to people who have disabilities.

Developed in partnership between Diverse Ability Incorporated and Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council

The Workshop

Family Emergency Preparedness is a 24-hour workshop covering many emergency and disaster preparedness topics.

This course is designed for young adults and their families to attend or view together, discuss, and practice.

Families have the opportunity to create tools to help prepare or deal with an emergency or disaster, such as creating a Family Communication Plan and building an Emergency Kit and Go-Bags.

Families explore and gain a variety of emergency planning resources.

Workshop Sessions

- 1) Culture of Preparedness
- 2) Make a Plan
- 3) Build a Kit
- 4) Stay Informed
- 5) Identify Risks and Hazards
- 6) Arizona Hazards
- 7) Preparedness Outside of the Home
- 8) Exercises (Practice Activities) & Resources

Workshop topics are divided into Sessions. They are easily followed in order but may be experienced out of order or even repeated if needed or beneficial.

Self-Advocacy in Accessing Healthcare

We recognize that health equity includes not only having access to health and medical resources and services, but feeling comfortable and confident in advocating for yourself and/or family members when accessing these services and resources.

Diverse Ability Incorporated, in conjunction with Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council, designed a workshop curriculum by and for people who have disabilities, specifically related to Self-Advocacy in Accessing Healthcare.

Focus groups were conducted with families (elders and youth), and young adults assisted in the research and writing of the curriculum. The curriculum is available to all 5 Centers for Independent Living in Arizona.

Self-Advocacy in Accessing Healthcare



Goals:

Provide a space for individuals, as part of a group, to learn and share beneficial information regarding self-advocacy in the healthcare setting.

Educate and inform through a variety of interactive, participatory learning sessions, including:

- discussion
- scenarios and activities
- opportunities to practice self-advocacy techniques

Sessions: Self-Advocacy in Accessing Healthcare

- 1 Overview of Healthcare
- 2 Your Healthcare Rights
- 3 Successful Access to Healthcare
- 4 Navigating Barriers
- 5 Preparing for Your Healthcare Visit
- 6 Self-Advocacy on Appointment Day
- 7 Managing Your Healthcare
- 8 Healthcare is in Your Hands

More on Education and Training

Diverse Ability Incorporated designs and delivers curriculum and workshops on a wide variety of topics. The two we just shared are some examples of education and training designed to advance and promote health equity for families and young adults who have disabilities and a variety of diversities.

Hundreds of young adults have participated in one of our most recognized initiatives – the Arizona Youth Leadership Forum – which is one of the avenues through which education and training are offered. Several workshops and sessions are delivered through conferences, events, and collaborations.

Let's explore our **Arizona Youth Leaders**, the third strategy employed by Diverse Ability Incorporated to achieve impact through the engagement of Arizonans.

3. Arizona Youth/Young Adult Leaders

Under its Arizona Youth Leadership and Engagement Initiatives (AZYLEI), Diverse Ability Incorporated provides leadership and engagement opportunities for youth and young adults ages 14-29.

- Youth or young adults first attend [Arizona Youth Leadership Forum](#) (AZYLF), which focuses on self-discovery, leadership development, career exploration, effective advocacy, and empowerment.
- The next step is [Arizona Youth Engagement Academy](#) (AZYEA), where youth further develop these skills and participate in hands-on activities to enhance presentation and facilitation skills.

These youth serve as Peer Facilitators at future AZYLF and AZYEA events, and deliver community presentations and workshops, including the two you heard about today!

Ongoing Engagement Opportunities

Diverse Ability Incorporated offers ongoing connection and engagement opportunities for all Arizona Youth Leadership and Engagement Initiatives (AZYLEI) Alumni following graduation, through an active Alumni Association.

- Graduates participate in the Engaging Families and Young Adults Program
- 51% of Diverse Ability Incorporated's Board of Directors must be young adults under the age of 30 (All have been graduates of AZYLEI)
- Trained Peer Facilitators provide Peer-Based, Person-Centered Planning services
- Peer Leaders also assist other youth in navigating a variety of topics through our Peer Navigation services

Youth and Young Adult alumni serve on various community boards and councils, both within and outside of the Independent Living Network (Centers for Independent Living and Statewide Independent Living Council) and local, state, and national Communities of Practice.

Examples of Engagement Opportunities:

- Board members/council members of local nonprofit agencies, governmental agencies, and Communities of Practice
- Speaking Engagements/Presentations (just a few)

African American Conference on Disabilities

American Indian Disability Summit

Arizona's IDEA Conference

YES Youth Employment Summit

Self-Care for Caregivers Conference

Wrap Up

Diverse Ability Incorporated aims to advance health equity and the impact of Arizona advocates in their own communities through initiatives such as the Engaging Families and Young Adults Program, Education and Training, and by training and placing Arizona Youth and Young Adult Leaders in positions of influence.

The diverse, lived experience of community members is a priceless asset. Their collective insights and perspectives greatly impact communities and have the potential to cause real, lasting change. We strive to provide engagement opportunities that amplify these voices.



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