



Community Living Mini-Grants

Start date: January 1, 2024

System Gap Addressed

In 2023, NCCDD awarded seven Community Living Mini-Grants initiatives to organizations that proposed doing activities to advance NCCDD's Community Living goal and support systems change activities or build capacity to enable individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) to live full and meaningful lives in the community. These seven initiatives started around January 1, 2024 and will continue until September 30, 2024.

List of Initiatives and Contractors

Autism Grown Up: The purpose of this initiative is to create three courses to establish the Life Course Library through which individuals with I/DD, and particularly autistic individuals across life stage, will have access to more tools in transition and lifespan planning. Activities achieved include:

- Course 1: Foundation to Transition Planning has been launched online. It is listed on the website homepage (www.AutismGrownUp.com).
- Wrapping up Course 2 to send to reviewers.

Best Buddies International, Inc.: The purpose of this initiative is to provide opportunities for training, experiential learning, and corporate mentorships to transition-aged youth with I/DD to build their capacity to live more successfully in the community. Activities achieved include:

- Recruited and hired a Transitions Program Manager who has started building relationships with schools.
- Completed self-advocacy and mentoring with 6 students with I/DD and completed job exploration and counseling with 10 students with I/DD.
- Started summer programming with the Next Steps Clubhouse.

Bloom Fitness Corporation: The purpose of this initiative is to increase personal health and wellness for adults with I/DD in the building of a highly accessible fitness app specifically designed for and by adults with I/DD. Activities achieved include:

- The fitness app is near completion. It has entered the pilot phase for testing with athletes who have I/DD and their caregivers.
- Bloom Fitness expects a summer 2024 roll-out for the app.
- Bloom Fitness is close to completing the script for a step-by-step video tutorial on how to use the app. The Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst is supporting the creation to allow Bloom Fitness address as many behavioral and communication needs as possible.

Chapters Ahead Inc.: The purpose of this initiative is to develop a systematic approach for establishing Next Chapter Book Clubs in North Carolina to provide opportunities for people with I/DD to read together in a community setting and develop peer support/friendships. Activities achieved include:

- Established a Next Chapter Book Club at Wingate University.
- Initiating conversations about establishing a Book Club at a university with an Inclusive Post-Secondary Education program.

East Carolina University The purpose of this initiative is to create a checklist to address the transportation needs of individuals with I/DD to support and increase successful community living in the community of their choice. The checklist will be used by people with I/DD, occupational therapists, other healthcare providers, family members of people with I/DD, and others who can use the tool to identify skills, abilities, and challenges that are enhancers or barriers to effective community mobility. Activities achieved include:

- Drafted three separate checklists (one each for these three conditions: Autism Spectrum Disorder, Intellectual Developmental Disorder, Physically Impaired Developmental Disorders) that are currently under review by occupational therapy experts and members of the I/DD community.
- Each of the checklist will be available electronically and will be available in Spanish.
- Once completed on the electronic version, results categorized as “strengths” and “challenges” and can be used for setting intervention goals.

The National Leadership Consortium, an Affiliate of CQL | The Council on Quality and Leadership: The purpose of this initiative is to conduct a review of organizations fully or predominantly providing community living services in order to understand the strategies, structures, and practices that advance community living opportunities for people with I/DD, with the overarching goal of increasing community living for people with I/DD through enhancing access to essential elements of community living, including community housing, transportation, and healthcare, and by building the knowledge of professionals, people with I/DD, and families about the characteristics and strategies of organizations that provide fully inclusive supports. Activities achieved include:

- The National Leadership Consortium has completed in-depth interviews and focus groups with five organizations providing services across the state to learn about the practices, structures, service models, and innovations that promote and enable community living supports for people with I/DD.
- In the process of analyzing all of the data collected (including survey data, interview and focus group data, and organizational documents such as mission, vision, and values statements; policies; employee handbooks and more). The contractor will use the results of this analysis to provide information about what works for community living in North Carolina.

ZABS Place: The purpose of this initiative is to enhance the development and implementation of ZABS Place’s Dream Link Skill Development Tracker and Job Placement Portal to help more individuals with I/DD participate in transition and lifespan planning by offering them the training and resources to gain and improve transferrable employment skills, connect with inclusive employers, and increase the likelihood of them being hired and retained for a job that fits with their career goals. Activities achieved include:

- Rolled out the Dream Link Skill Development Tracker in its Beta phase.
- Onboarded 29 trainees with I/DD to use the Dream Link Skill Builder. Each trainee has mastered at least one skill, and two trainees have already mastered at least four skills.
- The visual elements (pictures and videos) within the portal have proved to be helpful for non-verbal trainees. Coaches have utilized these features effectively to create clear to-do lists, aiding trainees in building their skills.
- Seven successful job placements, including one placement resulting from the Beta version of a visual resume.