

Request for Research on Arizona's Response to Sexual Violence/Abuse of Children and Adults with I/DD

Background

The Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) is fully federally funded and charged with advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities that promote inclusion of people with developmental disabilities across the lifespan. Council members are appointed by the Governor and make all funding decisions on which programs to support. A targeted area of interest is sexual violence/abuse of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in our state.

Sexual violence/abuse is a serious issue in systems of services and support for people with disabilities, with decades of research suggesting an ongoing crisis. Studies find that people with I/DD are more likely to experience sexual violence/abuse than the general population. Although there is an alarmingly high rate of sexual victimization among those with I/DD, only a small fraction of these are reported, and an even smaller fraction of perpetrators are convicted. And although there have been targeted efforts to address this persistent issue nationally, Arizona lacks a clear understanding on how the state's legislation, regulations, and the field of services and supports have prevented and responded to sexual violence/abuse towards people with I/DD. National data and local conversations reveal significant gaps that undermine the health and safety of the I/DD population.

In response, the ADDPC seeks an evaluation of the current state system in response to this issue with recommendations on how to advance towards a more coordinated system where sexual violence among this population is prioritized.

Part 2

Total Amount Available

\$100,000

Number of Funded Applicants

Single award

Eligibility

The following entities are eligible to apply for this grant:

- Nonprofit organizations - as described in section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation under section 501 (a) of that Code. All applicants are required to submit a determination letter from the IRS recognizing their tax-exempt status, with their grant application.
- For-profit organizations
- Colleges/Universities

Organizations that demonstrate expertise and experience in sexual violence/abuse research and people with I/DD may receive higher scores during the evaluation phase.

Definitions

Sexual violence/abuse is defined by the Center for Disease Control as a sexual act committed against someone without that person's freely given consent. **Sexual violence/abuse** includes:

- *Completed or attempted forced penetration of a victim*

Includes unwanted vaginal, oral, or anal insertion through use of physical force or threats to bring physical harm toward or against the victim.

- *Completed or attempted alcohol or drug-facilitated penetration of a victim*

Includes unwanted vaginal, oral, or anal insertion when the victim was unable to consent because he or she was too intoxicated (e.g., unconscious, or lack of awareness) through voluntary or involuntary use of alcohol or drugs.

- *Completed or attempted forced acts in which a victim is made to penetrate someone*

Includes situations when the victim was made, or there was an attempt to make the victim, sexually penetrate a perpetrator or someone else without the victim's consent because the victim was physically forced or threatened with physical harm.

- *Completed or attempted alcohol or drug-facilitated acts in which a victim is made to penetrate someone*

Includes situations when the victim was made, or there was an attempt to make the victim, sexually penetrate a perpetrator or someone else without the victim's consent because the victim was too intoxicated (e.g., unconscious, or lack of awareness) through voluntary or involuntary use of alcohol or drugs.

- *Non-physically forced penetration which occurs after a person is pressured to consent or submit to being penetrated*

Includes being worn down by someone who repeatedly asked for sex or showed they were unhappy; having someone threaten to end a relationship or spread rumors; and sexual pressure by misuse of influence or authority.

- *Unwanted sexual contact*

Includes intentional touching, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person without his or her consent, or of a person who is unable to consent. Unwanted sexual contact also includes making a victim touch the perpetrator. Unwanted sexual contact can be referred to as "sexual harassment" in some contexts, such as a school or workplace.

- *Noncontact unwanted sexual experiences*

Includes unwanted sexual attention that does not involve physical contact. Some examples are verbal sexual harassment (e.g., making sexual comments) or unwanted exposure to pornography. This occurs without a person's consent and sometimes, without the victim's knowledge. This type of sexual violence can occur in many different settings, such as school, the workplace, in public, or through technology.

Developmental disabilities (DD): Per the *Developmental Disabilities Act of 2000*, the definition of a developmental disability means a severe, chronic disability of an individual that is 1) attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental or physical impairments; 2) is manifested before the individual attains the age of 22; 3) is likely to continue indefinitely; 4) results in substantial functional limitations in 3 or more of the following areas of major life activity: Self-care; Receptive and expressive language; Learning; Mobility; Self-direction; Capacity for independent living; and Economic self-sufficiency; 5) reflects the individual's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary or generic services, individualized supports, or other forms of assistance that are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated. Examples: cerebral palsy, autism, epilepsy, intellectual disability.

Intellectual disability (ID): According to the National Institutes of Health, intellectual disability is a type of developmental disability. ID starts any time before a child turns 18 and is characterized by problems with:

- Intellectual functioning or intelligence, which include the ability to learn, reason, problem solve, and other skills; and
- Adaptive behavior, which includes everyday social and life skills

An example of an intellectual disability is Down syndrome.

The term **intellectual/developmental disability (I/DD)** refers to an intellectual or other developmental disability.

Part 3

What is the Purpose or Desired Outcome?

The purpose of this research is to better understand the scope of the issue of sexual violence/abuse among children and adults with I/DD in Arizona and how the state is responding. The Council seeks to determine the current status of detection, reporting, data tracking, monitoring, training, and prevention efforts around this issue in order to meet three primary goals:

- to motivate regulatory and legislative changes;
- to determine what types of targeted training are needed and for which audiences to prevent, recognize, and report sexual violence/abuse; and
- to raise awareness of this issue among local, state, and national audiences.

Deliverables of the Contractor:

1. A final report, with an executive summary, will highlight gaps in the current system of detection, reporting, data tracking, monitoring, training and prevention efforts, and to offer recommendations for improvement based on best practices.

2. A condensed report (less than 5 pages) shall be produced in plain language with visual graphics that may be accessed by the general population. Information on plain language is found here: www.plainlanguage.gov/. Upon release of the final report, the contractor shall be invited to present the findings of the report, at a date that will be communicated by the ADDPC.

Methods to collect data for this project to meet research goals shall include:

- 1) A literature review of best practices in state systems to determine how Arizona compares;
- 2) A review of existing legislation/policies/procedures/agency data;
- 3) Conduct surveys, interviews, or focus groups with state agencies, individuals with I/DD and families, and/or Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) home licensees and other DDD provider stakeholders. Input may also be collected from law enforcement, teachers, first responders, etc. to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the issue.

The researchers shall guarantee full confidentiality. The identity of persons interviewed in this research shall not be disclosed, unless permission is explicitly granted. The data that will be used and the outcome will all be used solely for this contract. Any responses shall not be reported outside this research project. In case of surveys and interviews of individuals with I/DD and their families, the whole process shall be restricted, limited and absolutely private. There will also be proper confidentiality and institutional review board consent statements signed by all participants and researchers alike involved.

The following research questions may be addressed in the proposed research. The contractor also may propose other research questions that meet the desired outcome:

1. What is the process for a person with I/DD to report sexual violence/abuse in a DDD-funded or Regional Behavioral Health Authority (RBHA)-funded group home? ICF-DD or Skilled Nursing Facilities? In their family home? At an adult developmental home? At school? How is the person and family made aware of this process? What actions are taken if the perpetrator is the guardian or if it's another resident with I/DD? When are cases substantiated, and how? What are the outcomes of these reports to the people and organization (if applicable) involved?
2. What are current staffing, regulatory or legislative requirements, barriers and successes to detection, reporting, tracking and monitoring, and prevention efforts among state agencies and organizations regarding the I/DD population?
3. How are organizations and state agencies currently working together to address sexual violence/abuse detection, reporting, tracking, monitoring, and prevention among the population with I/DD? What's working in these relationships, and what are the gaps?

4. What are individuals' with I/DD, families', providers', and DDD support coordinator's experiences, knowledge, and perspectives on sexual violence and exploitation identification, reporting, training, and prevention?
5. What are overall recommendations to ensure that Arizona works towards the elimination of sexual violence/abuse of people with I/DD? Share best practices.