



CAC

VANDERBILT KENNEDY CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

**What is the Community Advisory Council?**

The Community Advisory Council (CAC) is a full partner in advising, planning, implementing, and evaluating the activities of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (VKC UCEDD). The CAC provides a forum for members to voice interests and views on issues related to disability services, training, research, and dissemination. Members serve as liaisons to the disability community.

**In what UCEDD areas do CAC members offer input?**

The CAC advises the VKC UCEDD on activities in the following areas:

- Education and early intervention
- Employment
- Health and mental health
- Quality of Life

**Who belongs to the CAC?**

The CAC is comprised of individuals with disabilities, family members, representatives from state and community agencies, educators, and policymakers. Individuals with disabilities and/or family members make up over 50 percent of the CAC.

**Why is a CAC necessary and important?**

Consumer (Community) Advisory Councils are mandated by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, PL 106-402, (DD Act). CACs are set in place to “advise the system on policies and priorities to be carried out in protecting and advocating the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities.”

Because CAC members come from a variety of backgrounds and have an array of experiences with disabilities and disability-related issues, invaluable and wide-ranging perspectives and knowledge become available to VKC UCEDD staff and faculty, and other CAC members.

**What are the responsibilities of a CAC Member?**

Members will:

- Attend quarterly CAC meetings
- Participate as representatives of the VKC UCEDD in local and regional activities
- Act as a resource in the community
- Facilitate collaboration with community programs and report back on research needs
- Link the VKC UCEDD with the community
- Advise researchers and staff on programs

One or more members of the CAC attend the annual meeting of the Association of University Centers on Developmental Disabilities (AUCD) and take part in the national Council on Community Advocacy (COCA), which is made up of individuals with disabilities and family members from each University Center in the national network.

**How does the VKC UCEDD support CAC members?**

The VKC UCEDD supports CAC members by:

- Reimbursing travel expenses incurred by meeting attendance
- Providing accessible meeting space and individual accommodation to support full participation of all members
- Providing an environment that encourages an opportunity for enhancing leadership skills
- Providing an opportunity to learn about the activities of network partners

*Please see reverse*





### How can I be a member of the CAC?

Most people become members after being nominated by a current member of the CAC. Interested parties can email (see contact information) to be considered for membership. Elections for new members are held at the last meeting of the fiscal year with terms beginning July 1. Each term is 3 years. Each member may serve a maximum of 2 consecutive terms, excluding agency representatives, which are permanent positions.

### What is the AUCD? (From the AUCD website)

The Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) supports and promotes a national network of university-based interdisciplinary programs. Network members consist of:

- 67 University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD)
- 43 Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Programs, funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB)
- 15 *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* Intellectual and Developmental Disability Research Centers (IDDRRC), are funded by the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute for Child Health and Development (NICHD)

These programs serve and are located in every U.S. state and territory and are all part of universities or medical centers. They serve as a bridge between the university and the community, bringing together the resources of both to achieve meaningful change. The VKC is among only a few Universities nationally to have all three programs. For more information on AUCD visit: [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)

### What is a UCEDD? (From the AUCD website)

Sixty-seven UCEDDs—in every state—are in a unique position to facilitate the flow of disability-related information between community and university. Centers provide training, technical assistance, service, research, and information sharing, with a focus on building the capacity of communities to sustain all their citizens.

UCEDDs have played key roles in every major disability initiative over the past five decades. Many issues, such as early intervention, health care, community-based services, inclusive and meaningful education, transition from school to work, employment, housing, assistive technology, and transportation have been directly benefited by the services, research, and training provided by UCEDDs. For more information on UCEDDs visit: [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)

### What is COCA? (From the AUCD website)

The Council on Community Advocacy (COCA) is made up of individuals with disabilities and family members from each UCEDD across the AUCD network. COCA's mission is to assist AUCD to advance policy and practice for and with people with disabilities, their families and communities. For more information on COCA visit: [www.aucd.org](http://www.aucd.org)

### Contact

For more information on the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Excellence Community Advisory Council contact: (615) 936-8852 or [ucedd@vumc.org](mailto:ucedd@vumc.org)

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“As a person with a disability and a professional in the disability field, I was pleased to join the CAC for personal and professional reasons. Personally, I wanted to learn more about the concerns facing individuals with disabilities, and work with others to address them. Professionally, I welcomed the chance to collaborate with others in an effort to meet the comprehensive needs of individuals with disabilities. It has been encouraging to be part of a dedicated group of people striving to make a difference.” ~CAC Member

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“I joined the CAC in hopes that I would be an active partner with a well-recognized Council in developing and improving services, training, and supports for individuals with disabilities and their families.” ~CAC Member

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