

# 2010 Annual Report

Fiscal Year June 30, 2009 – July 1, 2010



"The Minnesota State Council on Disability is an agency that advises, provides technical assistance, collaborates and advocates to expand opportunities, improve the quality of life and empower all persons with disabilities."

--Mission

## **Message from the Executive Director**

MSCOD is the only state entity that represents the issues of all people with disabilities while being able to evaluate, critique and make recommendations to state agencies, the legislature and the governor on various policy issues and programs. MSCOD is unique in its legislative mandate because it has the ability to hold administrative proceedings and judicial review to protect and advance the rights of people with disabilities while also being the only state entity to address issues such as building accessibility, disability parking, emergency preparedness, rural transportation, and workers compensation home modifications. Most importantly, MSCOD is able to review and comment on state programs, plans and budgets, and remain an independent body of the people.

Nationally, MSCOD is one of few governors' councils that have a broad focus on a variety of issues facing people with disabilities. As a council, MSCOD remains independent of other state agencies such as the Departments of Human Services or Human Rights. MSCOD has a neutral perspective and is citizen-driven with its 15-member Governor appointed council.

Because MSCOD is a small entity with a broad charge, it strategically works for us to partner with other organizations and coalitions to achieve our goals. We are successful in part to our partners who we thank very much for working with us on these tough issues in the disability community.

Joan Willshire

Executive Director

## **Message from the Council Chair**

The Minnesota State Council on Disability is nearing completion of its 2010 bi-annual strategic plan. We continue to focus on areas of need that are important to people with disabilities statewide. Areas such as, Emergency Preparedness, Rural Transportation, Disability Parking and Building Codes are several of our priority efforts. At the same time, the plan is flexible enough to be responsive to other issues that require attention.

In these challenging times we purposefully collaborate/partner with state agencies and disability groups to achieve our goals.

As I say when I meet with the Governor's Office, Legislators and State Officials, "Think of us as your staff, that's why we are here".

Dave Schwartzkopf

Council Chair

## What We Do

MSCOD coordinates activities of state agencies and stakeholder groups to improve disability-related public policy. MSCOD also monitors compliance with existing federal and state statutes and regulations concerning disability issues and provides a broad array of training and technical assistance.

Examples of this work include:

- Providing consultation and technical assistance on compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act to the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- Advocating to make the new Minnesota Twins stadium the most accessible stadium in the country for people with disabilities.

### Key Activity Goals & Measures

MSCOD's activities support three statewide Minnesota Milestone goals:

1. People will receive support that helps them live as independently as they can.
  2. All people will be welcomed, respected, and able to participate fully in Minnesota's communities and economy.
  3. Transportation is a basic service that allows people with disabilities to participate more fully in community life.
- Customer satisfaction is a key measure of MSCOD's effectiveness. On a FY 2010 web survey, 78% of respondents indicated that the information they received from MSCOD was helpful to them.
  - The training that MSCOD provides to new state supervisors received a participant satisfaction rating of 4.3 out of 5 possible points.



## Budget Trends Section

Although MSCOD operations are supported primarily through general fund appropriations, MSCOD also occasionally participates in special projects with other state agencies and community organizations. An example of this is the federal Pathways to Employment grant. For this grant, three state agencies (Department of Human Services, Department of Employment and Economic Development and MSCOD) partnered to plan and implement the Comprehensive Employment Systems-Medicaid Infrastructure Grant that Minnesota received from the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services. This grant has been in place for the past three biennia and has funded several key program enhancements, but is ending in December 2010.

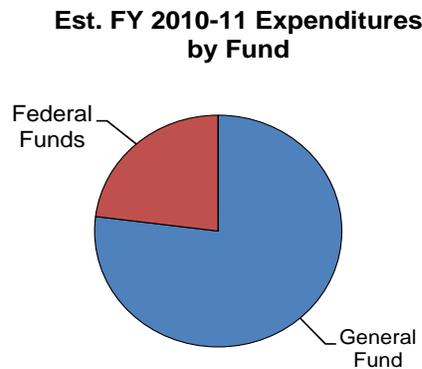


Figure 1: Chart of Estimated FY 2010-11 Expenditures by Fund. See description below. Source: Consolidated Fund Statement.

Estimated FY 2010-11 expenditures by fund are as follows:

General Fund:	77%
Federal Funds:	23%
Other Funds:	0%

**Est. FY 2010-11 Expenditures  
by Program**

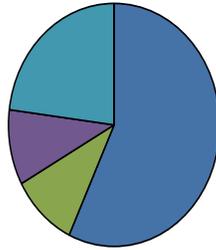


Figure 2: Chart of Estimated FY 2010-11 Expenditures by Program. See description below. Source: Minnesota Accounting and Procurement System.

Estimated FY 2010-11 Expenditures by Program are as follows:

Salaries:	57%
Community Outreach and Support:	23%
Professional/Technical Services:	10%
Communications/Printing:	10%

## **MSCOD Policy Issues, 2011-2013**

### **Employment**

Minnesotans with disabilities have an average employment rate that is higher than the national average for people with disabilities, from 52.4% in the state to 39.5% nationally; however, Minnesota also has a higher percentage of people with disabilities looking for work than the national average, with 12% in the state to 8.7% nationally. In support of reasonable accommodation, MSCOD has developed its most recent publication, *The Inclusive Workplace*, through MSCOD's partnership with the Pathways to Employment grant program.

MSCOD supports the GWDC's recommendations regarding strengthening the Minnesota State as a Model Employer Initiative and creating an interagency resource accommodations pool to cover the costs of reasonable accommodations and to ensure equal opportunity of employment for persons with disabilities. To improve employment for people with disabilities, it is critical to understand that transportation improvements and a closer look at the Federal Affordable Care Act are necessary components to ensure economic growth in Minnesota.

### **Transportation**

MSCOD endorses MNDOT's focus on preserving existing accessible public transit services, as such services are particularly critical in difficult economic times. MSCOD also strongly supports the additional appropriation of funds to meet MNDOT's goals of expanding accessible transit services to meet at least 80% of determined accessible transit need in outstate Minnesota.

### **Disability Parking**

As disability parking remains limited and Minnesota's population ages, MSCOD continues to advocate for the protection and increase of disability parking spaces for Minnesotans with disabilities.

### **Disability Rights**

Some of the laws affecting Minnesotans with disabilities include: the Americans with Disabilities Act; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Minnesota Human Rights Act; and Minnesota's Accessible Technology Law (Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 16E.03, subdivision 9, which incorporates Web Content Accessibility Guidelines [WCAG] 2.0 into accessibility standards for the state). MSCOD believes that further education and advocacy and refinement/strict enforcement of these laws are necessary to ensure the equal opportunity and access of persons with disabilities.

Specifically, MSCOD anticipates assisting state agencies in implementing Minnesota's Accessible Technology Law on WCAG 2.0 and Section 508 compliance. Currently MSCOD sits on two WCAG/508 advisory task forces to address implementation of this law. Some state agencies have deeply entrenched information technology practices that

are not accessible. It will be a major initiative at the state level to bring the state into compliance with this law. MSCOD needs to be at the ready to partner with state agencies to assist the state with training, advocacy or technical assistance to accomplish this mandate.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

MSCOD, in response to a statewide concern of the disability community, launched an emergency preparedness initiative in 2005 to address county emergency preparedness plans, personal preparedness and employer emergency plans.

## 2010 Accomplishments

### Legislative Events, Conferences & Trainings

- First outstate Annual Awards Luncheon held in Duluth with keynote speaker, Kathleen Martinez, Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy at the U.S Department of Labor. 140 people attended.
- Collaborated with the American Association of People with Disabilities to host a Town Hall meeting in Duluth focusing on green jobs. Over 100 people attended.
- Co-sponsored Options Too conference with Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL) regarding mental illness.
- Held Advocacy Day in conjunction with the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living & the Minnesota Association for Centers for Independent Living at the Capitol with over 150 participants
- Town Hall meeting on transportation was video conferenced, web streamed and closed captioned on Transportation. MN Department of Transportation Commissioner Sorrel addressed concerns with the ADA Transition Plan, pedestrian walkways and the ADA regarding the inaccessibility of persons with disabilities.
- Annual Legislative Forum via video conference was closed-captioned and web streamed statewide with over 150 participants. Representatives Hosch and Huntley spoke at this event.
- Conducted 23 trainings on issues ranging from emergency preparedness to employers, ADA trainings to supervisors at the State of Minnesota, housing focus groups, disability awareness, transportation
- Annual Customer Satisfaction survey

Every year, MSCOD conducts a Customer Satisfaction Survey to gather the most important issues facing the disability community. The survey also helps MSCOD determine ways to better achieve its mission. MSCOD consistently, year after year, has had an overall satisfaction rate of 98%.



### MSCOD PTE Activity Report

MSCOD is currently a partner in the Pathways to Employment Grant. This is a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. This is a comprehensive Strategy to increase the competitive employment of Minnesotans with disabilities and meet Minnesota's workforce needs. The Pathways to Employment

initiative is a partnership between the Department of Human Services, Department of Employment & Economic Development and the Minnesota State Council on Disability.

### **Graduate Level Interns**

MSCOD hired three graduate level student interns to work on Pathways to Employment initiatives. Two work at MSCOD and one works at Dept. of Human Services.

### **The Inclusive Workplace**

NEW Employer Guide for Employers was developed to help employers understand Reasonable Accommodations using Assistive Technologies for Employees with Disabilities. It was created for our web site, and it is also available in booklet form.

### **Transportation Dialogues**

In October 2009 MSCOD partnered with three Centers for Independent Living Centers, Options, SMIL and SWCIL to hold Employment and Transportation Dialogues. They were held in Mankato, Hibbing, Brainerd and Marshall. The purpose of the dialogues was to bring together individuals with disabilities, transit providers and major area employers to discuss the challenges and solutions of transportation and employment for people with disabilities.

### **Outcomes**

- 158 total attendees.
- Great results: collaboration on a video in Marshall on transit, a new group is forming in Mankato to work on transit issues and Hibbing made a commitment to work as a community on these issues.
- Collaborated with the disability community as well as Aging (Area Agencies on Aging) in all 4 communities too.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency Preparedness Employer Guides were developed in 2007 and printed in 2008 for the emergency preparedness toolkits. This year 200 employer guides were distributed through trainings to employers to address disability issues in workplace emergency planning. They contain useful information for both employers and employees.

### **Disability Rights**

The publication "Understanding your Rights and Responsibilities" has been updated and includes Federal and State Disability laws covering the American's with Disabilities Act and the Human Rights Act. This is also available now in a Spanish version.

### **Minnesota State Fair**

MSCOD created a poster on employment called "*I want to work, I can work, I will work,*" which was distributed along with 5 other posters for PTE. Other materials from

organizations distributed from: Department of Human Services, Disability Services Division, Dept. of Employment and Economic Security, Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and many more disability related nonprofit organizations. The most requested information at the State Fair was in the area of employment. Over 4,500 people came to our booth for information.

## **Year-at-a-Glance**

### **Top 5 Information & Referral Issues for 2010**

1. Disability parking
2. Laws & regulations
3. Building code, Technical information
4. Disability information
5. ADA

### **Critical Issues for 2011**

- Healthcare
- Rights & ADA
- Transportation
- Employment
- Accessibility
- Disability Awareness
- Disability Parking
- Emergency Preparedness

### **Most Requested MSCOD Publications**

- Emergency Preparedness
- Legislative Summary
- Disability Parking
- Understanding Your Rights
- Building Access Survey
- Question of Attitude

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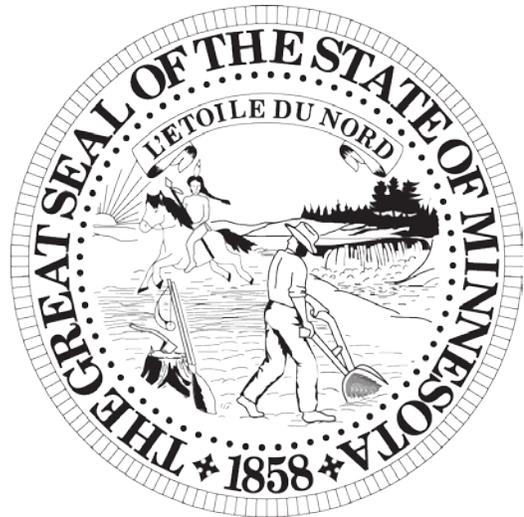
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