

A young Black man with short hair is looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and white work gloves with blue palms and fingers. He is working on a metal piece. The background is a workshop with various tools and equipment.

RESPECT DIGNITY INCLUSION

Report to the Community



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT
on
DISABILITY SERVICES

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On the Cover

Kenneth

Laundry Attendant

Embassy Suites Georgetown

Kenneth is a graduate of Project SEARCH, a one-year workplace immersion program designed for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Embassy Suites by Hilton and The Smithsonian Institute have engaged participants in a wide range of training and career exploration activities. Several people supported by the Department on Disability Services have completed the program and have maintained full-time jobs, many like Kenneth, in the hospitality industry, a major growth industry for the District. Working 40 hours per week, Kenneth manages his duties with speed and a smile. He enjoys his colleagues at Embassy Suites and has earned the reputation of being diligent, efficient, punctual, and friendly.



The Pathway Toward Inclusion

Message from the Director

For the last 12 years, the D.C. Department on Disability Services has been on a mission of systems change with a goal of providing the very best in disability services while becoming one of the most progressive disability service organizations in the nation. Since our inception, we have made significant strides in restoring respect and dignity in supporting people with disabilities. We offer a growing continuum of person-centered services to empower people with disabilities to sharpen their unique talents and strengths. The federal Administration on Community Living has called our work to develop a person-centered thinking system of supports across the District “ground-breaking” and a “successful promising practice.” In their 2017 annual Case for Inclusion report, United Cerebral Palsy (UCP) rated DC as one of the best performing states in the country, ranking us 7th “best in the nation” and “one of the most improved” jurisdictions.

The health and strength of our communities, and our City, relies on the full participation of all of its residents. We all benefit when people with disabilities are welcome in our neighborhoods, places of employment, parks and recreation centers, places of worship, and schools. Consistent with the charge of Mayor Bowser, my vision for the work of our agency is to increase collaboration, transparency and accountability with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that people with disabilities have a pathway to the middle class. The surest path toward inclusive prosperity is employment, but having a job results in much more than economic self-sufficiency. Work leads to independence, participation in community activities, and gives people with disabilities confidence to pursue self-directed lives.

I am proud to present our first report to the community that outlines some of the accomplishments we made last year. Your continued partnership is appreciated as we work to dismantle programmatic and attitudinal barriers that hinder people with disabilities from achieving their best lives.

Andrew P. Reese
Director

Want More For Yourself



You have to want to do better for yourself. Be willing to do what is asked of you. Work with your counselors and supervisors so you can get a better life.”



Deborah resided at Forest Haven, the District’s former institution for people with intellectual disabilities, until she was 17 years old. After just one year of living with her grandmother, she emerged as a strong advocate for herself. The native Washingtonian has held a variety of jobs, from cook to housekeeper, to construction demolition assistant. At the urging of her daughter, Deborah came to DDS for support and a fresh start in pursuing a self-directed life. Eventually she landed an internship with the operations unit of the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Her tenacity and initiative resulted in full-time

employment as a clerical assistant. March 2019 marks her four-year anniversary with the agency.

“I have come a long way,” she acknowledges with a smile.

“I have my own money, my own place, and I am learning a lot of stuff.” That “stuff” includes learning how to read and honing her computer skills. Her message to people with disabilities: “You have to want to do better for yourself. Be willing to do what is asked of you. Work with your counselors and supervisors so you can get a better life.”

What We Do Who We Serve

DDS offers:

- Supports and Services for People with Intellectual Disabilities;
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services;
- Independent Living Services; and
- Transition Services

During the period of October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018, DDS provided support services to

7,562

people with disabilities

2,447

received support services through DDA

5,268

received support through RSA

To learn more about our services, visit www.dds.dc.gov and click on the link Services.

The Department on Disability Services (DDS) is comprised of the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Through these administrations DDS coordinates a diverse network of service providers to assist people with disabilities in leading vibrant, self-directed lives. The agency also hosts the federal activity of determining medical eligibility for federal social security disability benefits.

DDS has taken a multifaceted approach to change the culture of disability services and build capacity to ultimately create a sustainable infrastructure that provides data driven, person-centered services and supports self-advocacy by people with disabilities and their families. The agency continues to refine a robust service delivery system that fosters community inclusion and integration for people with disabilities.

Enhancing the Efficacy of Our Service Delivery Systems

DDS/DDA annually participates in the National Core Indicators,

a collaborative effort between the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) that collects information directly from service recipients and people within their natural and paid support systems (i.e., family members and direct support professionals). This data helps DDS track performance in service delivery outcomes and set benchmarks for managing service quality. Results also alert DDS and family members to potential risk factors that may lead to a person with disabilities being abused or neglected.

Findings from the most recent NCI Report show that the District ranks above the national average in supporting choice and decision-making, community inclusion, and supporting people to find and maintain community integrated employment.

Embrace Your Disability



Embrace your disability; it's part of who you are. Don't let your disability keep you from getting where you want to be in life."



Aspiring Professionals Program

In late 2017 through 2018, DDS managed the District's **Aspiring Professionals Program**. The six-month paid internship program gave people with disabilities an opportunity to work in professional level jobs at various District Government agencies.

Of the **21** participants selected through a competitive process, **19** people completed the program, **11** are now full-time employees with District agencies such as the Metropolitan Police Department, the State Board of Education, the Department of Behavioral Health, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, and DDS.

Courtney was one of 21 applicants selected for a pilot internship program that gave people with disabilities opportunities to work in professional level positions with various District agencies. Through a competitive application and interview process, Courtney joined the ranks of the **Aspiring Professionals**. She worked with the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), performing various administrative tasks for the agency's vacant building monitoring unit. Having established herself as a hard worker, eager to learn and willing to help others, when the internship was over, DCRA immediately felt a void where Courtney had been. So, the agency hired her as a full-time Support Services Specialist.

The job search process taught Courtney a valuable lesson she shares with others: "Trust the people in your support system and trust the process, even if it's slow. Be patient and stay connected to RSA. Don't give up." She also has a bold message for job seekers with disabilities: "Embrace your disability; it's part of who you are. Don't let your disability keep you from getting where you want to be in life."

Transforming the District into a Model Employer

Last year, DDS helped

610

people with disabilities to enter, retain, regain or advance in employment through supports provided through RSA. More than half were employed in high-demand fields in the District, such as hospitality, healthcare, safety and security.

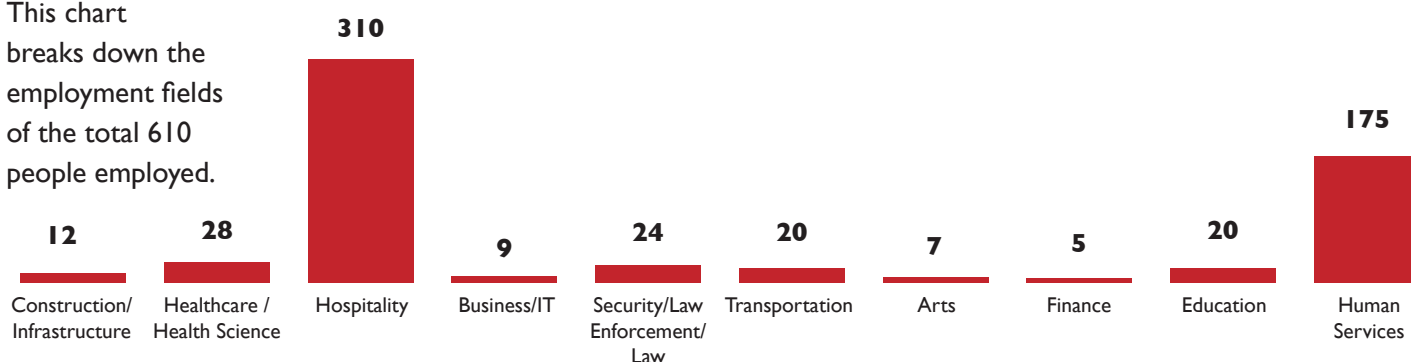
The average wage was

\$15.75

DDS and the DC Department of Human Resources (DCHR) have partnered to honor Mayor Bowser's commitment to make the Government of the District of Columbia a model employer of people with disabilities. The DDS Business Relations Specialist and the DCHR Disability Employment Specialist work together to:

- Develop recruitment strategies to increase hiring and retention of people with disabilities at all levels throughout the District government agencies.
- Establish relationships with local universities, disability support offices, District vocational rehabilitation and American Job Center staff, and other community-based agencies that may be a source of referrals for interested job seekers for available positions within the DC government.
- Assure that DCHR is connected to websites/employment pages with resources for recruiting individuals with disabilities, providing a link to state, federal and local vocational rehabilitation agencies nationwide.
- Develop training materials for DC government staff regarding employment of people with disabilities.
- Provide technical assistance to District managers regarding specific issues related to employment of people with disabilities. Work with supervisors to educate them about the accommodation needs of an individual with disabilities.
- Identify current District employees who may benefit from vocational rehabilitation services, in order to retain or advance in employment, and refer them to DDS/RSA for support.

This chart breaks down the employment fields of the total 610 people employed.



Childhood Hobby Creates a Career Path



**Everybody
has challenges
and everyone
is good at
something.
You just have
to find your
place.”**



After graduating from Friendship Collegiate Academy, Zabbar was frustrated that all of his friends were going off to college, while he was still unsure of his future. Recognizing his interest in cars, a vocational rehabilitation specialist helped him enroll into a vocational training school that prepares students for an array of high-demand fields. After completing the automotive training program, Zabbar landed a job as an express tech with Passport Nissan of Marlow Heights. He's primarily responsible for making sure customers receive their new vehicles in pristine condition. He also performs

minor service on vehicles such as checking the battery, changing oil and air filters and rotating tires. Because safety is paramount, Zabbar is required to take and pass several online training modules to retain and advance his career with Nissan. As he sharpens the skills he learned while tinkering on cars with family members as kid, he has the potential to earn a six-figure salary.

“I always doubted myself. I never thought I would get a driver's license, never thought I would graduate, but I did. Everybody has challenges and everyone is good at something. You just have to find your place.”

Businesses Investing in People with Disabilities



**EMBASSY
SUITES**
by HILTON™



October is annually recognized as **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**. An initiative of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and emphasizes the importance of ensuring that all people with disabilities have access to the services and supports to enable them to work. With the theme *Inclusion Drives Innovation*, DDS recognized **CVS Health, Embassy Suites, Kaiser Permanente, Harris**

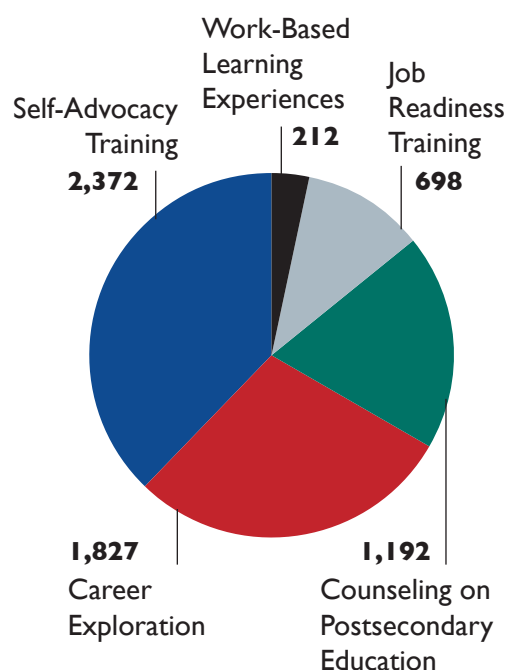
Teeter, and MGM National Harbor as Outstanding Employers of FY 2017. YMCA Calomiris, Street Sense Media, the U.S. Department on Veterans Affairs, Number 1 Beauty Supply, Embassy Suites Chevy Chase, Walgreens, and the DC Public Library were honored for providing work-based learning experiences. Our business partners, WMATA, Pepco, Adventist Health, Amazon, and Hyatt, were recognized for hosting resume writing workshops, conducting mock interviews, and organizing career day events.



Embassy Suites by Hilton was one of several business partners recognized by DDS in FY 2017 as an Outstanding Employer. In the photo, Dajana Marinic, Director of Human Resources, and Charles Hill, General Manager for Embassy Suites Hilton-DC Convention Center.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted in 2014 to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system. WIOA's goals, in part, are to get people with disabilities into high-quality jobs and careers, and help employers hire and retained skilled workers. As a result of WIOA, youth transition services were expanded to include a new category called Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). These services equip youth and young adults with the soft skills and job-readiness tools that will help them prepare for post-secondary success and thrive in competitive, integrated employment. Because of our partnership with District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), DC Public Charter Schools, and the DC Department of Employment Services (DOES), DDS/ RSA successfully reached **2,608** students during last year.

Number of Students Reached



Some students participated in multiple Pre-ETS activities

Community Inclusion: Just Like Riding a Bike



I wouldn't have been able to lift and support Ron on a bike, but I trust the staff and I knew they would make sure he was safe."

Washington, DC is filled with bicyclists and numerous trails and riding paths. One local business wants to make sure people with disabilities have an opportunity to join the fun. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) hosted a week-long Bike Camp to teach people with disabilities how to balance, steer, start and stop a bike. Partnering with PSI, the training also included maneuvering through obstacles, learning traffic signs, and bike safety guidelines. According to Jonathan Oliver, Education Coordinator for WABA, in addition to health benefits, cycling is a great socialization activity for people with or without disabilities. "It's empowering and a fun way develop a new skill."

PSI wanted to introduce cycling to people it supports because it is an inclusive community activity. Program Manager William Howard commented, "Some of our participants have never been on a bike before and never thought they would get on one." PSI purchased helmets and four bicycles equipped with adult training wheels after consulting with a local bike



shop regarding ease of mounting and dismounting, stability, and flexibility to be adapted for different physical needs.

Doris Fuller was pleased that the bike camp was opened to any person supported by PSI. With the help of staff, her son Ron was able to get on a bike for the first time. "I wouldn't have been able to lift and support Ron on a bike, but I trust the staff and I knew they would make sure he was safe."

More Achievements

For the period of October 2017 through September 2018

On March 20, 2018, Mayor Muriel Bowser joined disability services leaders and advocates in recognizing March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. Mayor Bowser also participated in a ceremonial signing of new legislation, which was passed unanimously by the Council of the District of Columbia in February 2018.



Disability Services Reform Amendment Act

The Council of the District of Columbia unanimously approved the **Disability Services Reform Amendment Act** of 2018. The Act ends involuntary civil commitment for people with intellectual disabilities as a condition to receiving certain residential services. People who are currently committed can choose whether they want to remain committed or not, and ending commitment will not change any supports a person receives. This creates a formal supported decision-

making process, which is less restrictive than a guardianship and allows people with disabilities to identify a supporter to assist them with decision-making.

The Act also establishes a new formal DDA complaint process for people to use to address concerns with their supports or service providers. Building on a successful customer service system, when the agency is not able to resolve a complaint in the manner most preferred by a person, the person can request review and recommendations by an external party who is independent of DDS.

Partners in Success:

Tamara Moore of the
DC Department of
Aging and Community
Living with DDS Program
Development Specialist
Donald Clark.



DC Support Link

The District is changing the front door to long term services and supports (LTSS) so that residents experience a system that is person and family centered, linguistically and culturally competent, and that links them to government and community-based supports, no matter what agency they go to for assistance. In collaboration with the Department of Aging and Community Living, the Department of Behavioral Health, Department of Human Services, Department of Health Care Finance, and the Mayor's Office on Veterans Affairs, DDS led the effort to create DC Support Link, a centralized information hub of services and supports available through various District agencies.


D.C. was one of five jurisdictions to receive a \$2.2 million federal

implementation grant funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid, and the Veteran's Health Administration to implement a No Wrong Door System. In a No Wrong Door System, multiple agencies retain responsibility for their respective services while coordinating with each other to integrate access to those services through a single, standardized entry process.¹ The District's system, DC Support Link, launched in September 2018. Learn more at www.dcsupportlink.com.

World Café

In July 2018, DDS brought together family members, self-advocates, providers, advocates, and representatives from several District agencies for a targeted discussion to identify ways to improve employment outcomes for people with Intellectual or

1. Administration for Community Living: Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers, No Wrong Door System. Allison Armor-Garb, Point of Entry Systems for Long-Term Care: State Case Studies, prepared for the New York City Department of Aging, 2004.



Developmental Disabilities (I/DD). The World Café: Breaking Barriers to Employment for People with I/DD provided DDS an opportunity to listen to this diverse group of stakeholders and together craft a strategic plan to improve employment outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The discussion focused on five areas:

1. Working within Systems

2. Employer Engagement

3. Workforce

4. Unleashing the Power of Families

5. Individual Planning

Fifth in the Nation

In January 2014, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) published the home and community-based services (HCBS) final rule, aimed at supporting people to live fully integrated lives in the community. CMS required all states to develop a Statewide Transition Plan to outline how they would come into compliance with the Community Rule. In October 2017, the District of Columbia became the fifth state in the country to have an approved Statewide Transition Plan for HCBS services. With the approved transition plan and new waiver, we are making changes to our day services to promote opportunities for employment and community integration.

- We have limited the number of hours per week that people can spend in a

traditional day habilitation program and who can attend those programs.

- We have also limited the size of day programs that support people primarily within a facility, aimed at improving opportunities for individualized supports.
- And, we have limited the time a person can participate in an employment readiness program.
- We will continue to offer wrap around employment services and flexible community-based options, so that nobody should be left without supports based upon these changes.

Employment Readiness

To support a strong provider network and build capacity for best practices, we are working with our employment readiness providers to become vocational rehabilitation providers and offering a nationally recognized ACRE competency-based train-the trainer course that covers the knowledge and skills needed to work effectively in the field of employment for people with disabilities, including Customized Employment. We are pleased to have received technical assistance from the Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, through the Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program to support this effort. Twenty-nine staff from 20 provider agencies, DDS, DOES and DCPS completed all of the requirements to become trainers.

Amplifying the Voices of Self-Advocates



I love learning new things and sharing what I have learned.”



You can check out Steven’s Tool Kit for Serving on Human Rights Committees at <http://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/951/>

Steven is passionate about making sure that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to earn a good living, continue their education, and lead the lives they desire. No stranger to Council hearings and public forums highlighting disability services, he has served on the District’s Developmental Disabilities Fatality Review Committee; the Consumer Advisory Council of the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at Georgetown University, and the DC Supporting Families Community of Practice. “I love learning new things and sharing what I have learned.”

The Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC)

selected Steven as a 2017 Self-Advocate Fellow. The year-long opportunity helps self-advocates sharpen their leadership skills through the development and implementation of a policy-related project. Steven’s project was entitled **A Place at the Table: Preparing Self-Advocates to Serve on Human Rights Committees, Boards and Workgroups.** Working with the agency’s State Office of Policy, Planning, and Innovation (SOPPI), he developed a toolkit to teach people with intellectual disabilities about human rights and how to advocate and work with groups that make decisions that affect their lives.

Providers

The Department on Disability Services is able to support people with disabilities in achieving their best lives through the work and support of the following provider agencies.

- 1st Axiom, LLC
- ABC Technical Solutions
- Abundant Life
- Academy of Hope
- Agape Healthcare Services
- Alight Supports
- Amazing Grace Supports, Inc.
- Amazing Love Health Services
- American Healthcare
- America Works of Washington DC
- Anchor Mental Health
- Angel Loving Care
- Anna Healthcare
- Apex Healthcare
- ARC of DC
- Art and Soul Solutions, Inc.
- Art Enables
- ASM Educational Center
- Associate Community Services (ACS)
- Azure, LLC
- Bee Homes South, Inc.
- Behavioral Research Associates (BRA)
- Benedictine School
- Best Buddies International, Inc.
- Bethlehem House
- Bladensburg Barber School
- Blossom Services Bredd Health Services, LLC
- Bridges Center
- Bridgeway Community Services
- Brookland Senior Day
- C.G. Dixon & Associates, Inc.
- Capital Care, Inc.
- Capitol Discovery Services
- Capitol Hill Supportive Services
- Care Speech Language Pathology Services
- Career Technical Institute
- Catholic Charities
- Circle of Care Quality Services, LLC
- Club Z!
- Columbia Lighthouse for the Blind
- Community Connection
- Community Multi-Services (CMS)
- Community Residences, Inc.
- Community Support Network of Greater DC
- Community Support Systems, Inc.
- Community Wellness Venture, LLC
- Comprehensive Care II
- Contemporary Family Services
- Crystal Springs
- DC Cares
- DC Healthcare
- DC Residential
- Deaf Reach
- Diana J. Wall, Psy. D
- Digi Docs Inc. Document Managers
- Divine Connect Care
- Dupont Computers
- Eckington House
- Elites Care, LLC
- EPIC Life Inc.
- Excellent Community Services
- Family Matters
- Fescum Inc.
- Finsby Care
- First Metropolitan
- Frontline
- Full Circle
- Galaxy Healthcare Services
- Gentle Touch
- GWU Speech & Hearing Center
- Gina Outreach Services, Inc.
- Global Resources and Supports, LLC
- Grace and Mercy Health Services
- Grafton School
- Hands on Educational Services, Inc.
- Harper Career Services, LLC
- Head Start to Life
- Health & Joy
- Health Resources Services Intake Center
- Health Tech
- Hellams Fitness, Inc.
- Helping Hands
- Hi-Tech Solutions, Inc.
- Hope Care
- Hope Found
- Husband Therapeutics
- I.A.M. (Aspire to be Me)
- IMA Professional Services of DC
- Immaculate Healthcare Services
- Individual Advocacy Group (IAG)
- Innovative Concepts
- Innovative Day, LLC
- Innovative Life Solution (ILS)
- Interdynamics
- Iona House for Seniors
- JA Community Services
- JM Davis Consulting Group, LLC
- Joyful Healthcare
- KAHAK, Inc.
- L'Arche
- Life Bridges Health Services
- Life Line
- Lighting, Inc.
- Living Water Health & Wellness
- Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Institute
- Marjul Homes
- MBA Non-Profit Solutions
- MBI Health Services, LLC
- MedStaff Associates, LLC
- Merakey Allos
- Metro Day
- Metro Homes
- Model Cities
- MT & G Enterprise, LLC
- Multi-Therapeutic Services (MTS)
- MVP 123 Fitness & Massage
- My Own Place
- National Children's Center (NCC)
- Newman's Body Shop Personal Training, Inc.
- Outstanding Possibilities Revealed
- Pathways to Housing DC
- Pendergrast Alston Consulting
- Person Center Services
- Phase II Academy
- Premier Health Services
- Premier Integrated Care, LLC
- Project Redirect, Inc.
- Providence Care
- PSI Family Services
- Psychiatric Center
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (PRS)
- RCM of Washington, Inc.
- ResCare
- Roberta's Developmental Disability Center
- School Talk DC
- SDM-1 Stop Primary & Urgent Care
- SEEC (Seeking Equality Employment and Community)
- Simky Healthcare
- St. Coletta of Greater Washington
- St. John's Community Services
- StarLite Care Services
- Stratford College
- Superior Hands
- Supreme Healthcare
- S.W.A.T. Fitness (Students With Aspiring Talents)
- Symbal Foundation
- TCS Associates, LLC
- The Arc of Tampa Bay
- The VanMar, Inc.
- Toni Thomas Associates, Inc.
- Total Care Services
- Total Quality Residential Services
- Triumph Therapeutics
- United Cerebral Palsy (UCP)
- United Family Care, Inc.
- United Planning Organization (UPO)
- University Legal Services
- Valentine Community Services
- VCare
- Verigreen Incorporated
- Vested Optimum
- Virginia Cares, Inc.
- Vivid Age, LLC
- Volunteers of America
- Ward & Ward
- Wholistic Services
- Winner's World
- Wood Services
- Westlink Career Institution
- Work Opportunities Unlimited

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Dreams Love **Confident**
DIVERSITY
EMPOWERED JOY
RELATIONSHIPS Kindness
INCLUSION Work Service
Compassion CHOICE
HOPE INSPIRE Freedom
Courage Friendships



Office Hours

Monday - Friday,
8:30 am - 5 pm



Nearest Metro

Federal Center SW



Parking

Limited street parking,
several parking garages nearby



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GOVERNMENT OF THE
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