



## Vanderbilt Kennedy Center Community Advisory Council (CAC)

### What is the Community Advisory Council?

The CAC is a full partner in advising, planning, implementing, and evaluating the activities of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center (VKC) including the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Centers (IDDRC), Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD) and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND). 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 community.

### Who belongs to the CAC?

The CAC is comprised of individuals with disabilities, family members, representatives from state and community agencies, community members, 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 federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act, PL 106-402, (Developmental Disabilities 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 across Tennessee and have 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 faculty, staff, trainees, and other CAC members.

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

Members will:

- Attend quarterly CAC meetings
- Participate as representatives of the VKC 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 with the community
- Advise researchers, trainees and staff on programs and needs

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



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

- 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

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

Most members are 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, who hold permanent positions.

### What is a UCEDD?

Sixty-seven UCEDDs across the country 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.

### What is an IDDRC?

IDDRCs represent the nation’s first and foremost sustained effort to prevent and treat disabilities through biomedical and behavioral research. IDDRCs also contribute to the development and implementation of evidence-based practices by evaluating the effectiveness of biological, biochemical, and behavioral interventions; developing assistive technologies; and advancing prenatal diagnosis and newborn screening.

### What is a LEND?

LEND programs provide long-term, graduate level interdisciplinary training as well as interdisciplinary services and care. The purpose of the LEND training program is to improve the health of infants, children, and adolescents with disabilities. They accomplish this by preparing trainees from diverse professional disciplines to assume leadership roles in their respective fields and by ensuring high levels of interdisciplinary clinical competence.

For more information on the national network of UCEDDs, IDDRCs, and LENDs, visit: [aucd.org](http://aucd.org).

### What is TRIAD?

TRIAD is dedicated to improving assessment and treatment services for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families while advancing knowledge and training.

### Contact

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

Vanderbilt University Medical Center is committed to principles of equal opportunity and affirmative action.