



CITY OF

PORTLAND, OREGON

OFFICE OF NEIGHBORHOOD INVOLVEMENT

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Promoting a culture of civic engagement

REPORT TO COUNCIL

DATE: May 21, 2018
TO: City Council
FROM: Joanne Johnson, Disability Program Coordinator
SUBJECT: Report of 2018 Disability Power PDX

I am pleased to submit for your consideration and acceptance the 2018 Disability Power PDX report. On February 15, 2018, the City of Portland kicked off Disability Power PDX, a community engagement and leadership program focused on building community relationships, knowledge of community resources, and skills for Portlanders with disabilities to effectively engage in Portland's community and civic life.

Sixteen people with disabilities graduated from Disability Power PDX on April 28th 2018. Members have demonstrated increased engagement in disability issues as well as deepened community and government involvement because of their experiences in Disability Power PDX. This report presents an overview of the 2018 Disability Power PDX structure, accomplishments, issues raised, and future considerations. It concludes with feedback from each member on their experience.

Please see the report attached.

City of Portland
Disability Power PDX



2018 Report



Acknowledgements

Disability Power PDX could not have happened without the generous support of our City of Portland Mayor and Commissioners. By honoring Portlanders' call for equitable cross-disability capacity building, they played an instrumental role in the journey we share here.

We are indebted to our community contributors, Jan Campbell, Cheryl Green, Rupert Kinnard, and Christina Weinholz, who enthusiastically shared their lived experience and skilled expertise. This learning has been essential to diving deeper into disability culture, community engagement, and activism.

Disability Power PDX could not have fostered real-world community and government connections without the enthusiasm of our partners at Disability Arts & Culture Project, Disability Rights Oregon, IRCO Asian Family Center, IRCO, Latino Network, Momentum Alliance, NAYA, Unite Oregon, Urban League, YWCA, Mayor's Wheeler's Office, Commissioner Eudaly's Office, Commissioner Fish's Office, Commissioner Fritz's Office, and Commissioner Saltzman's Office. Through their willingness to meet with our Disability Power PDX members, collaborative relationships began and set the stage for our collective future.

I am deeply grateful for the support of our Office of Neighborhood Involvement staff throughout the process of planning, coordinating, and facilitating Disability Power PDX. Our entire Community and Neighborhood Involvement Center team was beyond generous with their expertise and hands-on support of the many moving parts of this undertaking. To my colleagues Jeri Jimenez and Dianne Riley, heartfelt thanks for your skilled facilitation and wisdom on the integral role each of us plays in government.

Unending thanks to Patrick Philpott for his artful, powerful photography. Without his commitment to capture the essence of our Disability Power PDX, the richness and depth of our story would be lost.

Special thanks to Elexis Moyer for logistics support during each Disability Power PDX session and passionately sharing their knowledge to bring others along on their journeys. Without their dedicated assistance, the community we created would not have been possible.

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What is Disability Power PDX?

Uncovering our Power as People with Disabilities

Members of our 2018 Disability Power PDX were selected through a competitive application process. They brought with them a wide range of disability, cultural, racial, and generational experiences, contributing to rich and complex dialogues and relationship building in sessions and beyond.

Information about applying to Disability Power PDX was shared through a range of channels, including community partners serving a variety of communities, community and Disability Program newsletters and social media, and word of mouth from program alumni.



What We Did

Our Disability Power PDX occurred from included a Kickoff, five Saturday sessions, an offsite meeting with a community organization, and a graduation lunch and ceremony between February 15th and April 28th. Each Saturday session ran from 10am to 3pm and included:

1. **Topic Exploration**
2. **Community Meeting Preparation/Report**

During our **topic exploration**, Disability Power PDX members explored accessing community resources, disability culture and identity, racial and disability justice, and navigating local, state, and national government.

Community and government staff with lived experiences of disability and specialized knowledge of each topic area guided the explorations. Explorations were multimedia and took many forms, including large and small group dialogue, resource sharing.

Members also initiated **community meetings** with a community or government-based entity. Disability Program staff connected with each entity during the planning phase of Disability Power PDX to confirm the organization's willingness to meet with Disability Power PDX Members.



Each session included dedicated, collaborative time to the prepare for community meetings and follow up. This included creating a script to schedule meetings, learning about organizations, identifying barriers to meeting and solutions, preparing to collaboratively facilitate meetings, and following up with gratitude and resources. In pairs, members planned, led, and reported back from the meetings.

Important note: *The community meetings were intended to develop relationships between Disability Power PDX members and organizations. Members were encouraged to choose an organization where they did not have existing relationships.*

The skills and knowledge from this experience will provide members a foundation to effectively engage in local and regional policy, educate their communities about local resources, and maintain a deep belief in the power of community engagement.

Place & Space

Accommodations

Disability Power PDX intentionally focused creating an environment that was welcoming, inclusive, and striving for equity. A variety of transportation and childcare accommodations were offered. Lunch and snacks were provided to support equitable access to food. A quiet space provided disability and religious access and was available to all members throughout every event.

Disability and cultural accommodations created opportunities for every member to fully participate. Four members used Somali and Swahili language & cultural interpreters. Two members used support staff to facilitate communication. Additional accommodations were provided as needed. The facilitator regularly invited group members to request new or additional accommodations, to meet their own needs (for breaks, moving, eating, etc.), and to collaborate to meet access needs in the group.



Attendance

Because of the limited duration of the sessions and nature of the group experience, there was a strong emphasis on attending all Disability Power PDX sessions and on accountability for following through on commitments to each other between sessions. Accommodations were made to attendance requirements as needed.

Location

Our events and sessions occurred in City Hall. This was largely driven by the feedback of our 2017 cohort, who highlighted the logistical challenges that the 2017 cohort experienced meeting in a variety of community spaces, including navigating changing transit routes and parking options, variations in facility accessibility, and the inconsistency of how different buildings were entered/accessed for sessions.

City Hall offered multiple benefits as a location. These included a central location, a large variety of TriMet transit routes nearby, and a nearby parking garage where Disability Program staff could offer immediate parking vouchers, and consistent accessibility to and through the space, including physical accessibility in the surrounding downtown area and reliable access to audio and visual technology for sessions.



Because program staff were located on site, many logistics could be more efficiently managed, including room reservation and setup, access to food storage, and access to additional rooms as needed. This helped ensure overall consistency in session setup and execution and minimized the amount of additional support staff needed to host and facilitate each session and event.

Observations from Within Disability Power PDX and Beyond

Topic Exploration

During topic exploration, Disability Power PDX members learned about accessing community resources, disability culture and identity, racial and disability justice, and navigating local, state, and national government.

Members expressed appreciation for both the content and process of topic exploration. They enjoyed learning from disabled community members and staff and welcomed opportunities to learn more about contributors' life experiences. Members frequently mentioned uncovering new possibilities for their own lives based on what they had learned from contributors. Members often requested contact information for contributors and additional resources.



Spirited and challenging dialogues were a regular part of topic exploration. With members bringing a wide range of understandings around disability, culture, race, age, and other identity experiences, there were many opportunities for individuals to learn from each other, challenge their own assumptions, and come to new understandings about the complexities that are part of any individual or community experience.

Members brought a range of understandings and experiences around community and government engagement and activism. Content that was new for some was familiar to others. A variety of tools and strategies were used to convey foundational and advanced concepts so that individuals could deepen their knowledge and skills in ways that best suited their own goals for their deepening engagement.



Community Engagement Meetings

For the community engagement meetings, members selected a community or government organization to meet with in pairs. The meetings were expressly to learn more about the organization for the group's benefit and to begin building relationships between that organization and community members with disabilities. Adding this component to our 2018 Disability Power PDX is in direct response to feedback from our 2017 cohort, who request more structured support to connect to community and government organizations and contacts.



Members prepared for the meetings during our sessions, and experienced all the joys and challenges of arranging meetings with busy organization staff.

Members were provided with accommodations to ensure that the scheduling and on-site meeting were as accessible as possible. Some members continued to experience accessibility and cultural communication barriers, however, due to the modes of communication used between members and by organizations outside of sessions. This is important learning for future endeavors.

Members sometimes found it challenging to focus on relationship-building instead of individual needs or community advocacy. This speaks to the level of need and the many ways in which Portland and the world beyond remains inaccessible and inequitable to many Portlanders.

Our entire Disability Power PDX cohort demonstrated enthusiasm and persistence in connecting with their chosen community organizations. They shared their knowledge and experiences with each other in small and large group reports. Frequently, they

reported supporting the learning and growth of their partner organization around disability and accessibility issues.

Community and government organization partners universally expressed that they enjoyed meeting with members of our cohort and the beginnings of positive relationships are a clear outcome of this aspect of Disability Power PDX.



What's Next?

Throughout Disability Power PDX, members expressed that the insights, skills, and growth from within the sessions would impact their lives going forward. Members shared a greater understanding of the diversity of Portland's disability experience and resolved to carry that forward in spaces where they have influence. Members committed to sharing knowledge from Disability Power PDX with their families, friends, and communities.

Everyone was enthusiastic about staying connected to each other, including inviting each other to community events, planning to create a shared Facebook page, and brainstorming ways to connect to members who use telephone and email to stay in touch.



Members' Reflections & Feedback

In the pages that follow, you will find a *Final Report* written by each member, reflecting on their experiences in Disability Power PDX and offering their insights on effective local community engagement.

The members were offered the following questions to prompt their thinking about Disability Power PDX as a whole:

1. What were the most valuable parts of Disability Power PDX? Please share why these parts were valuable for you.
2. What parts of Power PDX would you change for next year? How do you think that change would improve the Power PDX?
3. How has your experience in Disability Power PDX prepared you to be more engaged in your community or communities?
4. Please tell us about any city or community rules or ways of doing things that prevent you or members of your communities from being engaged in your communities or in the City of Portland?
5. What ideas or suggestions do you have to change those rules or ways of doing things? They can be suggestions for the City or for communities to implement, or both!
6. How do you plan on becoming or staying engaged in your community or communities following Disability Power PDX?

Executive Summary

Common themes of Members' responses to Disability Power PDX

In their feedback, members overwhelmingly referenced the meaningful relationships and cross disability connections they built in Disability Power PDX. Sharing stories and experiences offered members a more nuanced understanding of how disability experiences vary across individuals and cultures.

Many members also felt they gained a lot from the experiences and offerings of the community contributors as well as learning about community resources. Individuals also expressed an increase in advocacy skill and confidence engaging with community organizations and elected officials.

Finally, several in our cohort also shared that Disability Power PDX gave them hope for their lives and their future.



Issues raised and future considerations

Members also shared insights around changes and considerations that would improve the Disability Power PDX experience, as well as everyone's experience engaging in Portland and in the world at large.

Several members noted that the size of the room made it difficult to move around, particularly for individuals using mobility devices. While the room was usable for all, a larger space would provide a more comfortable environment and more freedom for

everyone to move around during the sessions. By necessity, individuals frequently entered and exited the room during sessions, making the room's size an even more significant factor.

Related to this, there was also a lot of background noise during sessions, which is also reflected in member's feedback around sound and the sound system. This was generally for accessibility reasons (interpretation, need to move, requests for clarification, audible technology, etc.) and this created a somewhat distracting environment in the session space. The two wireless microphones provided for speaking during sessions were simply not advanced enough to provide clear, loud sound in a small space given all the other factors. A more advanced sound system would be a wise investment for future endeavors. It is also worth noting that members showed flexibility and consideration in attempting to accommodate each other's needs and preferences around space, sound, and movement.

Members suggestions for changes also include who and how cohort members are selected and supported. Members suggestions include greater involvement of youth, stricter selection criteria to create less variation in skill sets, and greater involvement of volunteers to support the incidental functions in a session. There are important considerations for each of these factors, but overall, they indicate a desire to spend more time focusing on building relationships and advanced skills within the sessions.

Members offered resounding feedback regarding the need for more disability and cultural/language access in city and community spaces. They overwhelmingly expressed a desire for more opportunities and equity, sometimes citing specific groups that need to be invited to, and leading, decision-making processes. Members also offered that in a truly equitable society, disability power would be presumed and would not need to be built through structured leadership opportunities.

Finally, our 2018 Disability Power PDX cohort affirmed their commitment to staying engaged in many ways, including through participating in city and community meetings and events, creating and sharing disability-centered media, and teaching communities about disability resources and disability power.



Abdi Ahmed

The most valuable parts of the Disability Power PDX is that I have learned how to work with different people because we learned how to respect each other. Since I am new to this country, I didn't know how to work with people in different background. I have also learned different organizations that help the disability community. One of the group members and I have visited Disability Rights Oregon, and I have learned that they help and advocate people with disability in the legal issues.

The room we have the training this year is very crowded, and I would like that Disability Power PDX would change the room next year. This will give people who use mobility to move around independently.

Disability Power PDX gave me the hope that I can reach my dream goal. I have learned how to advocate myself and my community, so this this experience will help me to be more engaged in my community than I was before.

My community and I knew to this country and don't know how the rules in the city and other community organizations work. I am jus learning the system, and I am glad that the city provides the interpretation.

My idea is that the city and other communities to make their programs easy for people like me and my community who want to participate their programs.

Many of my community who have the disability sitting at their homes, so I would encourage for them to come out and participate the Disability Power PDX. I would share what I have learned from the Disability Power PDX, and other organizations we have visited. I have the connection with Disability Rights Oregon that I visit, and if there is any problem in my community, I will go there and ask how they can help.



Carolyn Anderson

The most valuable part for me was the guest speakers. I assume that I have a lot of the information, but when the guest speakers come in, they provide a wealth of information that we don't ordinarily get. They can answer questions that you can't find online; they're more in depth. There's so much more to learn when you have guest speakers sharing what they do. And it's more personable, you can tell that they care.

It taught me how to prepare to engage with elected officials. How to set up meetings, prepare in advance, and have a prepared and productive meeting with elected officials.

As a person of color, I feel the City needs to take responsibility into improving the conditions of persons of color and people with disabilities since they have the power to set the policies and revise the policies. The policies should be examined for the benefit of all. For example, housing policy. Where people with disabilities and other marginalized people can have access to blend in the community and function.

I think the City Commissioners and Commissioners' staff and marginalized people with disabilities should have a coffee hour where the City Commissioners listens to what people with disabilities need and have a conversation.

I'm going to go to City Council meetings and actively participate in forums. I'm going to actively participate in my civic responsibilities as a constituent.



Niko Boskovic

I chose to become involved in Disability Power PDX because I wanted to take part in something that is meaningful to me and makes a difference in people's lives. I think the group is important because there are participants who have never spoken publicly about their disability, and haven't drawn a connection between disability and human rights. And now, for the first time, they see it. I believe this is the most valuable aspect of the group.

I would like to see more youth get involved and empowered so they can take that energy back into their schools and help other students with disabilities get active and wanting to join our civil rights movement. I was really happy to connect with other people who are interested in disability activism, but felt like I was the youngest kid in the room. Everyone was so nice, and I felt very welcomed, but still, it would be very really powerful to connect with more youth.

In my work with Disability Power PDX, we each come with our own view of the world, and I never forget that. I have grown a lot in the last few years, but all that time, my worldview has consistently been the same. I like this group because there are so many perspectives and experiences represented, and they come from each person's lived experience. I will take their stories with me into the community, never forgetting what disability can look like all over the world.

There really aren't any ways for a person like me to connect with the City on issues related to disability and youth or non-speaking autistics. I don't feel there is any rule or way of doing things that would increase our representation except to make a point of inviting us to groups like this one.

I plan to stay active by writing a blog on the importance of getting involved with a group like this one. I am also planning on getting involved in a similar group once I start attending PCC. I already went to one of their meetings, and saw someone from Disability Power PDX there. I hope that someday I can be involved in a really active group that advances the rights of people with disabilities across the United States.



Mahad Geedi

For my final report, I want to share what I have learned from Disability power Pdx program.

My most valuable experience during this year of disability power Pdx was meeting with other members of the disability community and hearing their stories. This made me a stronger person, understand more about disability and appreciate life more. During this training I have learned a lot about the disability history and rights. This information has helped to advocate for myself and others. For example, now I'm able to seek more help from my school disability office in order to succeed my goals.

In the future, I plan to stay engaged with disability communities, including Disability power Pdx by staying in touch and support the community however I can.

To conclude this year, disability power pdx was eye opener for me because I met an amazing people which I learned a lot from it and I could relate to their stories. Also, Joanne was amazing, caring facilitator, who made all of us feel important and welcomed. She always feed delicious lunch to make us happy and energizes.

I truly feel this program have united the disability community and helped a lot of the disability members to engage with other disability people and make friends. I sincerely believe we need more programs for the disability community to have opportunities in life and leave their dreams.



Michael Gebreteusae

First of all, thank you for providing this important program for us, and I want to thank the people who were facilitator's and engaged in the program. Also, I really appreciate Joanne and Elexis. They had done a great job to sustain the sessions.

There were so many essential opportunity's which are helpful to people with disabilities. However there was one most important part of the program, and this is the visiting to different organizations. I learned about disabilities wright, and who to ask for any question I have, from the organization I visited. There for, meeting with several organizations was the most valuable part of the sessions.

In my opinion, people who want to represent in the sessions have to come up with something very interesting. Also, they have to cover about current topics. If they tell about their back ground and where they came from, it could be boring for us. Another thing, the sessions have to be a little bit strict Just like an academic schools. I think, if some changes made for these parts of the sessions, disability power PDX will be more ifective in the future.

My experience in the disability power PDX was very important to me because I have learned so many things from it. For example, how to be social, what does community mean, and how to break ableism in a community. Likewise, I met several disable people who have experience in life, and they shared about how to engage in a community with me.

I have not been in any other state outside from Oregon, and I have not seen any rule that prevent me from being in my community or in Portland city, so far. However, there are so many difficulties like finding a job and housing in Portland. These issues are affected people with disabilities. I mentioned these two problems because I have straggled with them. I still worry about getting a job being disable in Portland. If these two issues solved, disable people will have same equality with non-disable people. Also, if job opportunity is available for disable people, they would not feel discriminated.

I am always with disability power PDX because I get enough information about disable people. Moreover, any resource that I need I get it possibly from the community. Shortly, information's come from communities, so I will spend have of my time being with in disability power PDX.



Renée Henriques

When I attended the first session of Disability Power PDX, I really didn't know what to expect. I certainly didn't expect to feel the sense of connection and community that is so immensely valuable to me. Regular engagement with others who experience disability, and sharing our insights and ideas about how to more effectively advocate for change within our local government was a truly unique experience that I am grateful to have been a part of.

One of the most frequent barriers to the learning experience was the lack of reliable audio and visual equipment. It would be helpful to have an easier to manage sound system and display screen for presentations and discussions. This would help cut back on time doing set-up and sound checks. Another simple change that would support organization and cohesion would be to allow for additional volunteers to lend a hand with transcription of group discussions, set-up and clean-up, passing the microphones, and other supportive activities.

My experience in Disability Power PDX has further strengthened my resolve to reduce barriers to health for individuals with disabilities. It is important for me to remain aware of the personal stories of this diverse community to inform my personal and professional activities.

One major barrier that has prevented me from being engaged in the community is the assumptions that many people still hold about people with disabilities. The fear of losing the respect or trust of my community has remained a challenge that I still struggle to overcome.

One of the most important ways our city can work to reduce barriers to engagement for individuals with disability is to increase access across disabilities and to ensure that individuals with disability are included in city government. Making sure there is sufficient funding being allocated to supportive services is critical to reducing barriers to engagement.

I am completing my degree in public health management and policy, and I plan on using my degree to improve health outcomes for individuals with disabilities and the aging community.



Abdoukader Jamaa

The most valuable part of the Disability Power PDX for me was listening people's stories. One of the stories that I really like was in the last session when Jeri Jimenez from the city of Portland visit us and talk to her story. She talked about her background and the struggle she had, the discrimination in the work places, and the movements she has involved for many years.

One thing that I would like to change for next year is the time of the training. It would be better if the time is 12:00pm to 4:00pm. People like me who don't drive and take Trimet Lift would be difficult. Now, I have to wake up early in the morning and Trimet takes long time to bring me here at the City Hall.

I would like to practice what I have learned from the Disability Power PDX. I would like to join some of the disability activist groups that already exist and start working how to change systemic barriers that are exist.

As a member of immigrant and refugee community, one of our challenges is language barriers. I am learning English now, but it is still difficult for me to access the resource in the city.

I would suggest that the city give more opportunity for the people with disability, specially the immigrants and refugee with disability.

I will like to connect the members of the 2018 Disability Power PDX. If there is an event, I will come and participate. I will also start advocating my community and immigrants and refugee with disabilities.



Ibrahim Jeylani

For me, coming here and be part of this training is most valuable part of the Disability Power PDX because I would never have thought I could have this opportunity. This training restored my hope that I can be anything I want.

I like everything that Disability Power PDX does now, and I don't have anything that can be improved for next year. I would say just continue the way it's now.

First, I was a shy person when I started Disability Power PDX, and I couldn't speak in front of many people. Disability Power PDX gave me the courage to speak in front of the people and share my ideas. Since I can speak now, I can participate community activities, and I can also talk and advocate myself.

I don't know anything that prevents me and my community what the city of Portland doing is doing. One thing I can tell is that I have a language barrier since I don't speak English, so I don't know all the resources that are available in the city of Portland.

I would suggest that they have to increase helping people like me who don't speak English and make the resources available for their language.

I will stay active and participate more training like this.



Dean McCrea

There was no single most valuable part of this experience to me. As highlights, I would list the quality and variety of guest speakers. I would highlight the opportunity to have worked in such an intimate setting with so many people from different backgrounds, cultures, races and disabilities as I was provided here. I learned a lot that will help me as I move forward.

I appreciated how well the meetings were run. Joanne is an expert meeting facilitator and she managed to keep this horde of cats marching in the same direction.

Towards the end of our sessions the tables were rearranged and it better facilitated moving the microphone around to individual speakers. If I would arrange it myself I might go back to the old table arrangement where there was space in the middle surrounded by tables. I would ask someone to sit in that open area with the microphone and get up and move to deliver it to each speaker. I sometimes felt the time between someone indicating they wanted to speak and then actually being able to speak was longer than it should've been. It stifled conversation and encouraged speaking in "bullet Points".

I am motivated to continue on with my activism. My experience with Disability Power PDX prepared me in a number of different ways. I not only now understand what kind of homework is necessary for a presentation to the City Council, but I now know how to actually get myself in front of the city Council.

Bigger than that though was being introduced to Cheryl Green. Cheryl is a nationally recognized documentary filmmaker who concentrates on themes related to disability issues. Cheryl was a guest speaker at one of the sessions. I introduced myself after the session and she agreed to meet with me at a later date to discuss our mutual interests.

As an interesting side note I will be attending her film premiere this Sunday at the Portland Art Museum. And she will be attending my film premiere tonight at the Mission Theater. I see good things coming from the two of us possibly working together.

I'm not sure I am interpreting this question properly. However, as I think of us and the community rules that make it more difficult for me to do things I am mostly concerned with accessibility issues. My neighborhood (Northeast Portland) has very few cutouts in our sidewalks. Now that I am disabled and essentially wheelchair-bound I am much more conscious of businesses that for one reason or another cannot accommodate myself and my chair.

Conversely, I've identified a handful of businesses that in my opinion bend over backwards to make me and others in my situation happy and comfortable at their establishments. Of course, these are the establishments that I will frequent.

I have none [no suggestions for city or community changes] at this time. I require more research and a better understanding of what's realistic and practical in this current political climate.

I believe that I answered this question above with question #3. In addition, I am looking at ways to help defeat HR-620. It's not getting much press, but I think the consequences could be grave for our disabled citizens.



Chantal Mukamana

[Most valuable parts] Being together and sharing with each other. I was really to share with the group.

[Changes for next year] To advise and encourage anyone with the disabilities to school and learn more. I believe with more education I will share in a greater way with disability people.

[Prepared to engage] Disability Power PDX prepared me to not give up with life. I have more hopes to share with my community and to feel more normal people; it also helped me to start thinking about my future.

[City or community barriers to engagement] Language barrier, barrier of transportation, lack of Education

[Ideas for removing barriers] Going to school to learn more and learning how to speak English so that it will be easy to communicate with my community. To join different groups in my community.

[Plan for staying engaged] To be strong without thinking of giving up on my self and to engage with my community.

I also feel like I want this program to continue and our group to see each other often. Thanks so much Joanne for bringing this program for disabled people I appreciate it a lot. God bless you.



Alyson Osborn

Of the many things I gained and learned from being a part of Disability PDX, one of the most valuable was the opportunity to work closely with such a diverse group of people. I've made friends now with people who I may otherwise never even have met. For an introvert with serious depression, talking with others is literally one of the most taxing and dreaded activities I have to negotiate, but feeling so comfortable and cared for in this group made coming here a pleasure that I greatly looked

forward to each time.

That was valuable to me because it gave me a new perspective. *I had almost never before experienced excited anticipation in terms of being with a group - it was just a sense of obligation or responsibility that drove me to participate.*

Another valuable aspect was the reminder and practice to continually work toward equity so that all can contribute meaningfully. It takes patience and commitment to follow through on creating a space where all can truly be heard; DP PDX worked to make this happen. It was not always easy, yet with perseverance and Joanne's guidance we managed quite well.

This was valuable not only for what we learned from everyone by what they shared, but for the obvious benefits to incorporating this mindset into the daily practice of how to be present in the world.

Lastly, two tenets in particular were very helpful to me: "Don't freeze people in time" and "Assume positive intent, but be aware of impact."

I'm not sure this would work, but it might be interesting to try to set an additional specific goal to have people and/or pairs report back on a specific "road-block" they experience in the community (ie: trouble with circuitous phone menus, being told to quiet down for minor vocalizations at a theatre, difficulties with Tri-Met, problems with medical care, etc.)

We could then brainstorm how to address these issues, starting with whom to contact to explain issue, and go from there. This could be a great jumping off place when DP PDX ends, giving folks a clear focus on something to engage in next. (This could be something to try after meeting with our community agency and/or given as an option for people who couldn't meet with an agency.)

Additionally, it would be useful - and just as important - for people to report back on specific businesses or services that are working well. By gleaning from their success, we could try to educate and help businesses that were struggling with how to be inclusive.

Disability PDX has been instrumental in helping me fine-tune my goals and motivate me to work toward achieving them. Being part of this group inspired and empowered me.

I want the arts to be made more available to all in terms of both audience and participation; I now have additional contacts and ideas for who to reach out to.

I'd also like to help people in general and the police in particular understand how to communicate and navigate effectively and compassionately with those with mental health issues.

If one is mentally ill or a person of color, you are especially vulnerable. Having an invisible disability has caused me several problems with police, and I'm very nervous around them. Since I'm not always in control of my emotions, being around them is dangerous for me, so I avoid going places where they might be. (The security guards [police(?)] at City Hall have all been very nice, though, so thank you so much for that!)

On another positive note: As a PPR employee, I was once told I needed to be more "professional" when dealing with supervisors. (I needed a quiet space in order to pull myself together and this was deemed "unprofessional.") This was initially extremely humiliating and frustrating, but when I explained what was going on, they were very understanding and accommodating. I encourage the kind of understanding and support I receive at MAC to be given to all.

I'd also like to see PPR even more widely utilize and advertise the availability of ASL interpretation, captioning, translating, audio description, inclusion specialists, etc. for events and classes. (Could the city have its own AD equipment???)

I'd like to see ongoing, in depth training for the police in how to navigate situations with "marginalized" people in a calm, compassionate, helpful, respectful, efficient and non-condescending manner.

I'd also like to see the city completely fund the mural project planned in honor of James Chasse.

Working in conjunction with local theatre companies that focus on social justice, and a licensed psychologist, I plan to help develop additional training curriculum for the PPD.

I will continue to focus on making the arts accessible by providing creative outlets to individuals and underserved communities - either to make art connected to social justice issues, or just for the joy of playing and creative self-expression.



Angel Ray

The most valuable parts of Disability Power PDX for me was the connection through sharing experiences and ideas from a diverse community. I enjoyed learning through the strengths of others and have a better understanding of how others face challenges with accessing community resources. I learned how my privilege could be a barrier in helping

others if not kept in check.

During the meetings I had a hard time with the background noise. It was overwhelming when trying to focus on what was happening in the room and effectively participating. I know a lot of it was because the interpreter was trying to get what was being verbalized in the room to 3 other individuals. Maybe one solution for this in the future would be to use an FM system where the interpreter can speak into a small mic, and the individuals have a receiver with ear bud. Also, for the community outreach assignment: maybe having more time to report back could be helpful for some individuals.

I feel I now have a framework to approach community resources with a more collaborative manner to promote empowerment for communities who don't traditionally have a voice at the table.

I found when visiting with my community resource, the Urban League, that it will take more than just inviting people to the table. Some communities have more urgent needs like child-care, transportation, income, food and shelter which could be a barrier to participating in city advisory or commissions where they could make a difference. It could help if we could bring awareness to communities, so they can understand the value in how being involved could have a positive impact for their community. I am still researching how we can bridge this gap to make City events more accessible.

I would need to do more research on what is currently being done to bridge the awareness and resource gap in accessing City events. Maybe it could be getting community resources the information on disability educational information, so they can support the intersectional needs of community members. Maybe its having a member of the City to go out to these communities and build connection and awareness of disability rights, disability justice and movements, legislation pertaining to disability communities...I am still searching for solutions.

As time allows, I will continue to ask questions with in the City, to get a better understanding of how outreach is conducted. I will try to find solutions to bridge the gap with in my own circles including as a Commissioner on PCOD. I will try to be involved in

to other areas of the City to promote the voice of intersecting communities with disability. I will continue to be an activist for the liberation of individuals experiencing disability in Portland.



Adrian Rekdahl

[Most valuable parts] The most valuable thing is I understand is my city and my community doesn't understand me. The most valuable thing I learned is that society, in general, does not appreciate or understand me.

[Changes for next year] The experience would be improved by not having Disability Power PDX. The reason why it exists is because we

have a society that is stupid.

[Prepared to engage] I'm frustrated and angered.

[City or community barriers to engagement] There is no funding. There is none. How can you ask me that question? Let me put this another way. If there is no food, how can you ask me how I like the taste of food. I'll ask the question back. If there is nothing there, how are you going ask me if there is something. I cannot believe that this happened to me.

[Ideas for removing barriers] We could have a society that never needed Disabilities PDX. We could have a society where you don't torture people with disabilities.

[Plan for staying engaged] I don't. I tried planning trying to not be dead. My plans are to not be dead. They don't understand that.



Waddah Sofan

I am very happy to have taken part in the Disability PowerPdx training program. It was an opportunity to learn and have first-hand experience in civic and community engagement with local services and policy-making organizations in town.

The most valuable parts of the disability PowerPdx program were the coordinator staff and the speakers invited to each session. The speakers connected us “individuals with disabilities” with our community and assisted us in achieving goals and learning new skills to engage and stay active in our community. Disabled PowerPdx also provides support and awareness to local community and official organizations to enhance their ability and capacity to include people with disabilities in every aspect of life.

The PowerPdx program brought me to a higher level of understanding strategies to build productive working relationships with community partners, local and official organizations in the community. Disability PowerPdx provided me with information, resources and referrals on disability related issues such as benefits, social services, housing, advocacy, equity and human rights laws, power dynamic, disability empowerment tools to help me engage with local organizations.

City officials or local organization leaders, who lack knowledge, experience or awareness on how to engage disabled persons in the decision making process, could bring negative attitudes toward disability at large and that attitude could limit disabled people from getting involved, and result in being denied access to programs, services, benefits or opportunities to participate in the community. The policies and rules of engagement with disabled members of our community are either nonexistent or need improvement. The disabled PowerPdx program helped me brainstorm ideas and learn the process of how to engage with the community in our city and bring suggestions and ideas to officials on how to change or improve upon policies that impact me and other individuals with disabilities in the larger community.

Disability PowerPdx is very important program that provides us (disabled people) the tools we need to achieve independence and self-determination. But those goals can't be attained without knowledge of disability topics, and advocacy and communication experience and skills. I believe the selection process of those applicants has to have a higher standard and a filter or evaluation process for motivational reasons for participating.

Disability PowerPdx is a needed program to train local individuals with disabilities on how to connect with local and state agencies and stay active and aware of disability related issues that affect his/her daily life. It is very rewarding and encourages civic engagement and participation in community life.



Mohammed Usrof

The most valuable part of Disability Power PDX was meeting people from different backgrounds, disabilities, and ethnicities. I enjoyed learning these stories as well as learning from these individuals. It is not often I get an excellent chance to engage and share ideas with people in the disability community. These meetings were very important to me.

Some parts of Disability Power PDX I would change are

- Two facilitators, instead of one
- Decrease the number of members to focus on quality
- Add a better sound system
- Have the interpreters be on time and ensure they are engaging the limited English speaker with the conversation
- Make time for more breaks
- Change the process of selecting members to meet with community organizations. I suggest to add a section in the application where applicants can select which organizations they are interested in. Then have the selection process be done over two sessions instead of one to make sure that everyone is going to the organization they are interested in, therefore making the selection process less overwhelming
- Include a staff member to take care of the whiteboard and taking notes for the meeting
- Prioritizing the wheel chair users when introducing the food
- Making the lunch time outside the room so everyone can engage with each other
- Make the goals of meeting with organizations beyond learning what services they offer
- Adding an extra session focusing on the city council presentation that will include all the members

With these changes I think Disability Power PDX will thrive.

I think that Disability Power PDX helped me to understand more aspects about hidden disabilities and how it is perceived in my community and other communities I engage with.

One of the things that prevents people with disabilities from engaging with their communities as well as the City of Portland is not creating spaces that are accessible for all body types and abilities as well as a lack of enforced rules and regulations around accessibility starting from the work place to the employee entrance of city hall.

First and foremost, making city hall accessible for their employees. Secondly, having an accessible public space provided by the city for people with disabilities to come together and brainstorm what is the best way to tackle these issues and start working towards possible solutions. It is very hard for all people with disabilities due to the wide range of accessibility needs.

[Plan for staying engaged] By staying connected with my peers and advocating for other people to speak their minds and get the services that they need to the best of my abilities.



Luam Yohannes

The most valuable part for me were guest speakers. I learned about services that are available and ways of getting involved. I learned a lot. I also found it valuable when we did popcorn sharing around the class. From learning about people's personal experiences, I learned about how much needs to be done and formed relationships. I also really enjoyed working with Joanne. It

was just awesome.

I wanted to give back to the Portland community more directly and make a difference for people with disabilities. We were in the room talking to each other, instead of being in the community. It would be better because we could teach the community more about people with disabilities and we can make a difference. I would also make the program longer or have another level of the program for people that want to organize after doing this training.

I learned how powerful it is to share our personal experiences, and I got to learn from people that have different disabilities from me. I learned about the things that other people were doing, like being on committees in the city, working with other organizations, being involved in the art community, and much more. This showed me a different path in life. It showed the good that we already do in the community. It showed me that I have a voice and I have opinions, and now I know how to be heard.

It can be hard to get a job, communicate and be heard from people providing services like case managers, and deal with discrimination and bullying. Another thing is that the police are scary for me as a black person with a disability.

Some of my ideas are involving people with disabilities in addressing police brutality, easier access to jobs like giving employers incentives to hire workers with disabilities, prioritizing finding housing for people with disabilities and who have mental illnesses. stop judging people for what you think is wrong with them. Another ideas is more access to peer support for people, especially young people, that have been diagnosed with a mental illness. In my experience, it is harder to process and think about how your life will change. Now that I am an adult, I would like to offer support to people going through this for the first time. Our journeys are all different but we can learn a lot from each other. Protect people with disabilities from discrimination on Trimet. People with mental illnesses are treated badly on busses, even though we are not a threat to other people.

I plan on working in the community and I am looking for volunteer opportunities working with kids in hospitals and kids in foster care. I want to keep learning more about what needs to be done. I will also stay in touch with people in my cohort and keep going to more community events. I want to be a part of a movement to organize for more changes.

Thank you for journeying into our 2018 Disability Power PDX.



2018 Disability Power PDX Graduates

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Abdi Ahmed</i> | <i>Dean McCrea</i> |
| <i>Carolyn Anderson</i> | <i>Chantal Mukamana</i> |
| <i>Niko Boskovic</i> | <i>Alyson Osborn</i> |
| <i>Mahad Geedi</i> | <i>Angel Ray</i> |
| <i>Michael Gebreteusae</i> | <i>Adrian Rekdahl</i> |
| <i>Renée Henriques</i> | <i>Waddah Sofan</i> |
| <i>Abdoulkader Jamaa</i> | <i>Mohammed Usrof</i> |
| <i>Ibrahim Jeylani</i> | <i>Luam Yohannes</i> |

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Agenda No.
REPORT
Title

Accept report of the ~~2018~~ Disability Power PDX 2018 Report (Report)

<p>INTRODUCED BY Commissioner/Auditor: Chloe Eudaly</p>	<p>CLERK USE: DATE FILED <u>JUN 12 2018</u></p>
<p>COMMISSIONER APPROVAL</p> <p>Mayor—Finance & Administration - Wheeler</p> <p>Position 1/Utilities - Fritz</p> <p>Position 2/Works - Fish</p> <p>Position 3/Affairs - Saltzman</p> <p>Position 4/Safety - Eudaly <i>CPE</i></p>	<p>Mary Hull Caballero Auditor of the City of Portland</p> <p>By: <u><i>Mary Hull Caballero</i></u> Deputy</p>
<p>BUREAU APPROVAL</p> <p>Bureau: Office of Neighborhood Involvement Bureau Head: Suk Rhee</p>	<p>ACTION TAKEN:</p> <p>JUN 20 2018 ACCEPTED</p>
<p>Prepared by: Joanne Johnson Date Prepared: 5/24/18</p>	
<p>Impact Statement</p> <p>Completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Amends Budget <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
<p>City Auditor Office Approval: required for Code Ordinances</p>	
<p>City Attorney Approval: required for contract, code, easement, franchise, charter, Comp Plan</p>	
<p>Council Meeting Date 6/20/18</p>	

AGENDA
<p>TIME CERTAIN <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Start time: <u>10:00 AM</u></p> <p>Total amount of time needed: 30 minutes (for presentation, testimony and discussion)</p>
<p>CONSENT <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>REGULAR <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Total amount of time needed: (for presentation, testimony and discussion)</p>

FOUR-FIFTHS AGENDA	COMMISSIONERS VOTED AS FOLLOWS:	
	YEAS	NAYS
1. Fritz	✓	
2. Fish	_____	
3. Saltzman	✓	
4. Eudaly	✓	
Wheeler	✓	