

Top Advocacy Issues

1. **Increase HCBS DD Waiver funding and fiscal stewardship** to reduce the Waiver Waitlist, expand service provider capacity, address the workforce crisis, and expand Group Day, Group Employment, and other services that are key to supporting individuals in the community.
2. **Address mistrust and lack of meaningful communication** between DD stakeholders and DBHDS and DMAS through improved Cabinet-level oversight.
3. **Audit DBHDS and DMAS processes** to eliminate duplicative, redundant and unnecessary requirements that undermine DD service provider effectiveness, quality, cost, and efficiency.
4. **Emphasize creativity and innovation** to expand DD residential services, require affordable housing planners to include the DD population's needs, encourage person-centered solutions, such as "Our Stomping Ground" in NOVA, and incentivize service providers and developers to address service gaps.

Adults with Autism

Because the adult years are fraught with challenges, loneliness, and uncertainty, advocacy for the needs of adults with autism and DD is **CRAAG's** highest priority.

Researchers from Drexel University found that more than half of young adults with autism are not successfully transitioning to adulthood in the first two years after high school.

All school-based services end by age 22. Most adults leave high school without DD Waivers, and they and their families are at a loss over how to plan for the rest of their lives. Even young adults with Waivers receive few to no services due to workforce and service provider shortages. Most adults will wait years for DD Waivers. Meanwhile, their family members and caregivers age.

Email craag1@gmail.com:

- **Subscribe to the mailing list**
- **Join a Work Group**
- **Attend CRAAG meetings**
- **Connect with other advocates**


The logo for CRAAG (Charlottesville Region Autism Action Group) features the letters 'CRAAG' in a bold, dark teal font. A horizontal line with three arrowheads pointing to the right is positioned behind the 'A's.

Charlottesville Region Autism Action Group

**An Autism Action Group
in Charlottesville City,
Albemarle, Greene,
Fluvanna, Louisa, and
Nelson Counties**



April 2022

What is CRAAG?

CRAAG is an all volunteer **Autism Action Group** established in 2010 with support from Commonwealth Autism, now **CA Human Services**.

Active **CRAAG** supporters are primarily the family members of adults with autism and DD who range in age from late teens to adulthood.

CRAAG's newsletter mailing list reaches 700+ family members, self-advocates and professionals. Our Facebook page posts timely information from dozens of autism and DD advocacy organizations, action alerts, news from state agencies, events, and meeting notices.

CRAAG's role is to:

Monitor the issues facing service providers and adults with autism and DD and their families.

Collaborate with other like-minded partners to hold state and local governments accountable.

Advocate for **CRAAG's** mission to raise awareness and enhance the quality of life for people with autism and DD and their families in our region.

Housing Supports

CRAAG's 2021 Housing Survey results were reported by our partner, **UVA STAR Initiative**.^{*} The findings are highly consistent with the research literature on the needs and limited opportunities of adults with DD. Our survey initiated a multiyear initiative to expand the number of housing options, supports and services available to meet the needs of adults with autism and DD in our region.

CRAAG created **Work Groups** to address the residential support needs of three distinct DD target populations in our region:

- ◆ **24/7 Supports**
- ◆ **Maximizing Independence**
- ◆ **Preparing for Life After High School**

We are recruiting more members of these Work Groups. Contact **CRAAG** for more information.

***Email craag1@gmail.com for a copy of the report, "State of the Need in Central Virginia"**

CRAAG's Partners

"The importance of collaborating with other like-minded partners around common goals to achieve person-centered outcomes cannot be overstated."

— Bob Kreps, CRAAG Chairperson

CRAAG's partners include families and self-advocates and these organizations in alphabetical order:

- ◆ **The ARC of Virginia and the ARC of the Piedmont**
- ◆ **Autism Sanctuary**
- ◆ **CA Human Services**
- ◆ **Charlottesville Parks & Rec**
- ◆ **Faison Center for Autism**
- ◆ **Hope House**
- ◆ **Moms in Motion**
- ◆ **Our Stomping Ground**
- ◆ **PREP/Parent Resource Centers**
- ◆ **Region Ten CSB**
- ◆ **SEACs (Special Education Advisory Committees)**
- ◆ **UVA STAR Initiative**
- ◆ **Virginia Institute of Autism**
- ◆ **WorkSource Enterprises**