

Elevator Speech - 4 Easy Steps to Promote Our Organization

One sign of a well-run organization is that board members, staff, and volunteers consistently and personally promote the organization throughout the community. In part, this is accomplished by dozens of informal conversations (elevator speeches) that are delivered by people involved with the organization and help build awareness of the organization's value.

The outline, below, describes each of the four steps in the process and provides some optional statements that can be used to construct an elevator speech. Of course, you can customize these statements or add others with which you are more comfortable. We encourage you to develop your own elevator speech and to build it into everyday conversations with family, friends, community leaders, and business colleagues.

Step 1: Opener - Starts the conversation/States the need

1. Have I mentioned that I'm a member of the Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities?
2. Are you familiar with the DD Council?
3. Have you heard about the DD Council?
4. Did you realize that there are approximately 28,000 people with developmental disabilities in our state?

Step 2: Mission - Explain what the organization does/how it serves the "need"

1. The mission of the Idaho DD Council is to “promote the capacity of people with developmental disabilities and their families to determine, access, and direct the services and supports they need to live the lives they choose, and to build the community’s ability to support their choice.”
2. We focus on addressing the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families through advocacy, systems change, and capacity building in multiple ways across a variety of projects.
3. Currently our major work includes inclusive education, employment, and collaborative Medicaid service system change. We also provide support for the

Idaho Self-Advocate Leadership Network – Idaho’s statewide self-advocacy organization with a network of chapters around the state.

The Council changes lives by advocating for improved services and policies that affect people with developmental disabilities and their families.

4. You may have seen recent newspaper articles about the Disability Mentoring Day projects happening in local Idaho communities. We provide funding for these projects each year in October as part of Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Step 3: Your Personal Involvement - Links you to the organization

1. I've been involved with the DD Council since _____ (year)
2. I enjoy being a part of the Council because.....
3. I am proud of our work because.....
4. I am especially excited about our recent project/accomplishments.....
5. I first got involved with the Council when/because.....

Step 4: Learn More - How can the listener learn more about the organization?

1. We have a great web site www.icdd.idaho.gov where you can learn more about our projects and programs.
2. If you'd be interested in learning more about the DD Council I'd be happy to tell you more about our achievements/accomplishments.
4. Could I drop off a written brochure to you - or send you one in the mail?
5. We are always looking for volunteers to help us with.....
6. Would you be interested in learning more about the DD Council?
7. If you are interested in becoming a Council member, please visit our website for an application and more information.

☛ All Council members and staff are encouraged to develop an elevator speech that they are comfortable delivering throughout the community.

Examples of Things You Can Use

The Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities was established in federal law in 1971 and in state law in 1978 and is a leader in developing new ways to empower individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to lead independent lives.

The Council has successfully demonstrated new ideas, policies and practices that encourage communities to include and support all citizens.

The Council uses its unique position to bring together people with different perspectives, experiences, and knowledge in meaningful partnerships to solve complex issues across systems and programs.

The Council is made up of 23 volunteer members from across the state and 60% of those members are adults with developmental disabilities or family members.

From NACDD booklet:

We promote progress among people with developmental disabilities and their families and the community partners who serve them.

Councils on developmental disabilities have been helping people lead fuller lives by becoming independent, productive and integrated members of the community.

Our decades of knowledge and experience solving complex issues have made us an invaluable resource to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

We understand their challenges and their hopes, and how to navigate the complicated network of agencies, community organizations and institutions to effectively address their needs.

From funding innovative grassroots groups to building powerful statewide coalitions needed to tackle large issues, we play a central role in improving the quality of life of individuals with developmental disabilities across Idaho.

What are Developmental Disabilities?

Developmental disabilities (DD) are severe, chronic disabilities because of mental and/or physical impairment that are present before the age of 22 and are likely to continue throughout life. They result in substantial limitations in three or more areas: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self direction, capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency, as well as the continuous need for individually planned and coordinated services. Nearly 4.5 million Americans live with developmental disabilities.