



*Promoting Acceptance & Inclusion*

The premier resource for Down syndrome information, advocacy and networking in Massachusetts

# mdsc

## strategic plan

### years 2016-2020

#### **mdsc mission**

To ensure individuals with Down syndrome in Massachusetts are valued, included, and given the opportunities to pursue fulfilling lives by providing information, networking opportunities, and advocacy for people with Down syndrome and their families, educators, health care professionals, and the community-at-large.

### **mdsc purposes**

- To better educate the public in Massachusetts about the possibilities and potential of all people with Down syndrome.
- To enable networking, social/friendship opportunities and direct supports for all people with Down syndrome and their families throughout Massachusetts.
- To advocate that all individuals with Down syndrome in Massachusetts have high quality education, which includes transition planning and life-long learning.
- To ensure that expectant and new families receive accurate and up-to-date information and desired supports.
- To educate our stakeholders through a clearinghouse of information and resources related to Down syndrome in Massachusetts
- To advocate for improved systemic change and policy in issues such as community inclusion and employment for adults with Down syndrome.
- To empower all people with Down syndrome to become effective self-advocates.
- To advocate for all individuals with Down syndrome to have access to high quality medical services and research.

### **mdsc vision**

The MDSC wants to be recognized by people with Down syndrome and their families, educators, health care professionals, and the community-at-large as the preeminent organization in Massachusetts for information, networking, and advocacy for and about Down syndrome.

**DIRECTIVE: Design and build a program and services model that positions the MDSC as the pivotal organizational resource supporting, in an active lifetime partnership, individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and their support network.**

**VISION:** MDSC becomes the best-known and most useful statewide resource for people with Down syndrome, their families and support network, and helps others understand the issues of disabilities in society. The MDSC shall be a “partner” at every stage of an individual and family’s life, from prenatal to passing.

**DATES:** Measurable progress towards Steps (a) and (b) by June 2018; Step (c) by 2020

**NECESSARY STEPS:**

- a. Design a comprehensive, easily-accessible repository of best practices, resources and information that strengthens the MDSC’s ability to ensure a lifetime of fulfillment for individuals with Down syndrome and their families.
- b. Play a forceful role in advocacy and public awareness that leads to both structural change and improved societal perception. In doing so, identify likely people and organizations whose partnership will optimize efforts in both spheres.
- c. Develop Centers of Excellence to share MDSC’s best practices with others who wish to replicate them.

*This directive continues the MDSC’s goal to offer resources, programs, and advocacy in the fullest possible way. A key element broadens MDSC’s approach to serve throughout an individual’s lifespan.*

*Step (a) recognizes that the world increasingly seeks resources online and 24/7. MDSC must build the most robust online presence possible to anticipate and meet the demand.*

*Step (b) expects growth in MDSC’s already strong role in traditional advocacy. It would fuel that growth, in part, by allying with related groups, often leading the charge.*

*This Step also widens the definition of “advocacy” to include leading or joining public campaigns on key issues.*

*Step (c) identifies MDSC’s responsibilities on two matters: 1) to bring out and share MDSC’s best practices with all who can benefit from them, and 2) the need for MDSC to be more physically represented across Massachusetts.*

**DIRECTIVE: Ensure that programs and services foster and sustain a sense of community and belonging among individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and their support networks. Ensure further that such programs and services are effectively supported, are complemented by new initiatives, and are made available on a broad basis across the Commonwealth.**

**VISION:** As a statewide organization, MDSC is uniquely situated to foster a larger community of everyone touched by Down syndrome. MDSC offers programs, services, and resources to build and sustain that community

**DATES:** Measurable progress toward: Steps (a), (b), and (c) by June 2017; and Step (d) by June 2018.

**NECESSARY STEPS:**

- a. Develop family support opportunities throughout the Commonwealth for people to stay connected and informed, to discover, to share, and to act to improve the lives of individuals with Down syndrome.
- b. Embrace diversity of all kinds by reaching out to communities that have been historically underserved.
- c. Identify common issues arising in the lives of people with Down syndrome and provide assistance, support, solutions, advocacy and resources.
- d. Expand programs and initiatives targeted at supporting the needs of adults with Down syndrome and their families

*This directive states the role of MDSC in building community among the people profoundly involved with Down Syndrome across Massachusetts. This directive expects the Board to approve necessary support for the services to meet appropriate statewide need.*

*Step (a) requires MDSC to build on current efforts to develop and support both statewide and local activities that lead to a Down Syndrome community. Such activities may include, but not be limited to:*

- regional offices
- support to area support groups
- the annual conference

*Step (b) would require outreach to people with Down syndrome, whether underserved minorities, ages, geographical location, diagnosis, or other.*

*In building community, Step (c) would look for those issues that face all individuals to offer an entire range of support, as appropriate.*

*Step (d) would continue the growth of programs and initiatives for adults, in line with the guidelines set elsewhere in the Strategic Plan.*

**DIRECTIVE: Ensure that MDSC has a sustainable financial foundation and the means to support meaningful program and service expansion.**

*This directive addresses the fundamental need for MDSC to have the funds necessary to meet current needs, grow to meet unmet needs, and to dream for the future.*

**VISION:** MDSC always has the capacity to sustain and grow its efforts to serve individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and their support networks in Massachusetts.

**DATES:** Measurable progress toward: Step (a) every year; Step (b) by June 2016; Step (c) as appropriate triggers (needs, income) are identified.

**NECESSARY STEPS:**

- a. Build strategic alliances and collaborative relationships so that MDSC may better serve our communities by leveraging resources.
- b. Develop a diversified model of financial sustainability.
- c. Expand the management team’s capacity to address the growing needs of the organization.

*Step (a) recognizes that, in some cases, key alliances and collaborations will serve our populations better while helping make best use of resources.*

*Step (b) requires MDSC to revisit its income strategy to consider a broader range of possibilities that may now serve as little or no benefit, such as:*

- consulting fees
- contracted services
- sale of products
- increased program and/or admission fees
- grants
- endowment building
- beneficial relationships with businesses, corporations, etc.
- sponsorships.

*Step (c) points out that expanding expectations requires a correlation in internal staff and resources.*