One Vision – One Voice, Supporting Advocacy, Independence and Choice

**Our Mission**
The Hawai‘i Self-Advocacy Advisory Council’s mission is to raise awareness and the quality of life for all self-advocates through leadership, education, and full participation in the community.

**Our Self-Advocacy Work**
We “lead by example” and teach advocacy so people can have the life they want.

**Our Self-Advocacy Network**
We are leaders creating change in ourselves, our homes, and our community through independence, choice, decision-making, and speaking up for ourselves. We network with agencies, families, professionals, and other advocates.

**Our Advocacy in Action**
Here are some of our Advocacy in Action Activities:

- We have certified Feeling Safe Being Safe trainers. We can come to your agency, home, your classroom to provide Emergency Preparedness Training.
- We provide advocacy training using the strategy THINK, PLAN, DO; a three-step process of how to make life changing decisions.
- We train educators and families using our personal stories on the importance of transition planning and why it is important to attend and have a voice at your own meetings.

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History of the Hawaii Self-Advocacy Advisory Council (SAAC)

A small group of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) began meeting in August 2006 to establish a self-advocacy advisory council; increase their knowledge, understanding, and awareness of their rights; develop leadership skills; empower themselves to take control of their lives; and make their own decisions. The group worked on a mission statement, by-laws, and policies and procedures. In January 2007, the Hawaii State Council on DD (DD Council) initiated legislation to appropriate funds to support a statewide self-advocacy network of individuals with I/DD to provide education and training, opportunities to develop leadership skills, and to network with other self-advocacy organizations across the country. The 2007 State legislature appropriated funds for a coordinator and operating expenses to support SAAC and establish a statewide self-advocacy network. The funds are appropriated to and administered by the DD Council. The legislature has remained committed through its continued appropriation to support efforts of self-advocates to become active partners in the design and enhancement of the service delivery system, contribute to their communities, and establish a statewide self-advocacy network.
Self-Advocacy Network

The Hawaii Self-Advocacy Advisory Council (SAAC) is a group of self-advocate leaders with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The members are actively engaged in their community to address the concerns and needs of their peers throughout the state. SAAC activities include:

- Establishing leadership skills and activities to transition SAAC to a non-profit.
- Connecting to local communities to provide education, training and community service.
- Producing field tested advocacy tools, publications, webinars and videos.
- Increasing self-advocate membership on the neighbor islands.
- Securing guest speakers and trainers to address topics such as personal rights, employment, health, self-determination, leadership and housing.
- Networking nationally and internationally with agencies.