



# NEWSLETTER

Seeking Employment, Equality and Community  
for People with Developmental Disabilities

SEEC E-Newsletter January 2026

---

## From the Desk of Karen Lee, SEEC's CEO

### 2025 Advocacy Highlights and January 2026 Update

As we begin 2026, I want to recognize the **powerful advocacy work our SEEC community accomplished last year and the strong momentum we already have for the new legislative session.** Your dedication continues to protect vital services and expand opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### 2025 Advocacy Highlights

In early 2025, Maryland proposed cuts of 15 to 25 percent to disability services. The SEEC team, families, and people we support took immediate action. We made 13 trips to Annapolis, connected with the full Montgomery County delegation, and sent hundreds of emails. **Together with partners across the state, we helped prevent major reductions and limited the budget impact to about 5 percent.**

Nationwide threats to Medicaid kept us active throughout the year. We met with Maryland's senators and several members of Congress, and a person we support was invited to speak on two national panels about the impact of funding cuts. Nearly 1,000 emails from our community reached elected officials. We also strengthened local and statewide partnerships, participated in rallies and conferences, and contributed to a new plain language advocacy guide. Our Take Your Legislator to Work Week grew to include 24 organizations, and Montgomery County officials remained some of our strongest partners.



## January 2026 and How to Get Involved

**Maryland is entering the legislative session with a projected \$1.4 billion deficit, and the Developmental Disabilities Administration is anticipating cuts to essential services with a proposed 10% funding reduction in three specific areas.** While the people SEEC supports may be minimally impacted in the proposed budget, our advocacy is still needed to ensure these services are sustainable and equitable. We look forward to working with DDA to help shape how these changes are implemented, ensuring they are phased in through the Person-Centered Plan process rather than beginning abruptly on July 1, 2026.

We have a group attending the sold-out **Developmental Disabilities Day (DD Day) at the Legislature** in Annapolis on February 18, 2026. We are also planning a tour with the Montgomery County Council to help people feel more comfortable visiting the building and participating in local government.

**If you are interested in telling your story and advocating to your representatives** in Rockville, Annapolis, or Washington, DC, please make sure to sign up for our Advocacy List [here](#) or reach out to Katrina Emmerson Kugel at [kkugel@seeconline.org](mailto:kkugel@seeconline.org).

## Looking Ahead

Together, we accomplished meaningful change in 2025, and 2026 will be just as important. Thank you for your advocacy, your involvement, and your commitment to creating a community where every person can thrive.

With gratitude,  
Karen Lee, CEO

---

## SEEC's DSP Making a Difference: Satta Lebbie



Satta is a consistently reliable and dedicated support professional for SEEC's service users. It is clear that those supported by Satta have a strong, trusting bond with her, and their positive relationship is evident in their day-to-day interactions. Satta regularly takes on additional shifts, rarely calls out, and can always be depended on. Her commitment and consistency make her an invaluable source of support for those SEEC serves.

Congratulations, **Satta**!

---

## Partnership Highlight: Truist Foundation



We were honored to welcome **Bernita Bailey, Senior Vice President at Truist Bank**, to SEEC this month.

**Thanks to Truist's \$30,000 grant awarded last year, our Self-Employment program continues to support entrepreneurs in building meaningful, sustainable businesses.** Program participant, **Macena Mason**, shared how the program has impacted her journey. The group had a productive conversation about future opportunities for Truist to partner with SEEC and support our growing community of entrepreneurs.

---



## Project | SEARCH **HYBRID** INFORMATION SESSION

### UPCOMING DATES:

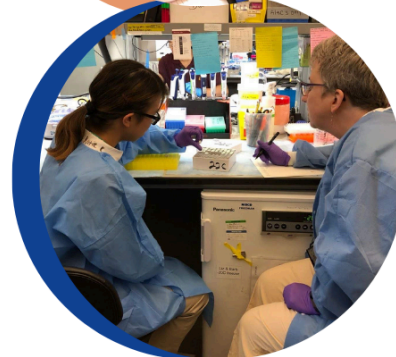
February 18, 2026  
March 18, 2026

### TIME:

4:30 PM - 5:30 PM

### LOCATION:

The Ivymount School  
11614 Seven Locks Rd.  
Rockville, MD 20854



### CAN'T JOIN US IN PERSON?

**ZOOM Link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6514616895>

**Meeting ID:** 651 461 6895

Project SEARCH provides employment readiness training for young adults aged 18 to 30 with intellectual and developmental disabilities through intensive internships and classroom instruction.

Parents, professionals, and applicants who are interested in applying to the Project SEARCH programs should attend.

**The application deadline is March 25, 2026.**

### **RSVP**

**Email:** [psrecruitment@seeonline.org](mailto:psrecruitment@seeonline.org)

RSVP for in person or virtual attendance by one week prior to the information session you plan to attend.



[seeonline.org](http://seeonline.org)



[ivymount.org](http://ivymount.org)

Register here



### **Our Contact Information**

\*{{Organization Name}}\*

\*{{Organization Address}}\*

\*{{Organization Phone}}\*

\*{{Organization Website}}\*

\*{{Unsubscribe}}\*