

CURRICULUM VITAE

Melina Danko, MS

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Department: Center for Excellence in Disabilities
West Virginia University

Address: 959 Hartman Run Road
Morgantown, WV 26505

Phone: 304-293-4265

Current Position: Assistant Director of Communications & Marketing
Project Director, WV Family to Family Health Information Center
Principal Investigator, Paths for Parents program

EDUCATION

SCHOOL	DEGREE	YEAR	AREA
West Virginia University	B.A.	2002	Communication Studies Emphasis: Organizational Communication
West Virginia University	M.S.	2003	Journalism Emphasis: Public Relations
West Virginia University	PGCert	2012	Digital Marketing Communications

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Assistant Director of Communications & Marketing, Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED)

October 2022 – Present

- Serve as a member of the senior leadership team contributing to the strategic planning, operational management and long-term vision of the Center for Excellence in Disabilities, with direct oversight of programs, grants, contracts, and organizational development.
- Lead the CED Communications Team in designing, implementing and evaluating targeted communication and outreach strategies that align with program goals.

- Direct multimedia communication initiatives including the development and dissemination of web content, social media, video, and print materials tailored to reach varied stakeholder groups.
- Oversee media and public relations strategy, including internal communication protocols, crisis communication planning, and external media engagement.
- Drive strategic marketing and communications efforts to increase program visibility and engagement statewide.
- Serve as Principal Investigator (PI) and lead grant writer for multiple federal and state-funded projects, responsible for project design, proposal development and overall execution.
- Develop and manage grant proposals, budgets, progress reports, and compliance documentation in collaboration with institutional partners and funding agencies to ensure timely submission and adherence to funding requirements.
- Oversee the implementation of funded projects, including staff supervision, project management, milestone tracking, and reporting on deliverables to ensure successful completion and impact.

Communications Officer, Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED)

June 2004 – October 2022

- Advanced through progressively senior roles from Information Specialist to Public Relations/Dissemination Coordinator to Manager, demonstrating strong performance, leadership growth and increasing responsibility.
- Served on the Executive Leadership Team, contributing to high-level organizational strategy, communications planning, and administrative decision-making.
- Designed and led implementation of a comprehensive communications strategy aligned with CED's mission and long-term objectives, ensuring consistency across internal and external messaging.
- Directed marketing and communication efforts for 13 statewide programs and clinics, overseeing branding, messaging, and outreach across digital, print, and broadcast platforms.
- Authored and co-authored competitive grant proposals, progress reports, and annual performance reviews supporting successful applications to federal and state funding agencies.
- Partnered with program directors to develop and disseminate educational and promotional materials targeting diverse populations and stakeholder groups.
- Led planning and execution of key outreach initiatives, including statewide conferences, public awareness campaigns, and media events, significantly increasing community engagement and program visibility.

Grant Responsibilities (across roles):

- Authored and secured competitive grant awards from federal and state agencies, contributing to program growth and sustainability.
- Developed, monitored, and managed complex, multi-year budgets ensuring alignment with sponsor guidelines and institutional policies.
- Directed full lifecycle grant management including project staffing, timeline coordination, performance tracking and deliverable fulfillment.
- Prepared and submitted detailed narrative and financial reports in compliance with funder requirements.

- Facilitated cross-functional coordination with internal finance offices, subcontractors, and external partners to support effective grant execution.
- Provided strategic leadership and evaluation planning for grant-funded projects, aligning program goals with measurable outcomes and long-term impact.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Communications Instructor, Faculty, WVU Country Roads Program

- Teach Interpersonal Communications and Introduction to Public Speaking to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Mentor students on academic and career pathways
- Member of admissions selection committee and curriculum development committee

Adjunct Instructor, Pierpont Community and Technical College at Fairmont State University

- Taught Introduction to Speech Communication (Fall 2007, Fall 2011, and Spring 2013).
-

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

2024 – Present	Principal Investigator	WV Paths for Parents Program [\$500,000]
2023 – 2023	Principal Investigator	WV Person Centered Training Video Project [\$10,000]
2022 – 2023	Principal Investigator	Learning from others: Using experiences navigating medical transitions to inform and educate [\$65,283]
2021 – Present	Principal Investigator	Family to Family Health Information Center [\$96,700] [\$483,500]
2019 – 2020	Interim, Principal Investigator	Positive Behavior Support Grant [\$295,000] [\$590,000]
2017 – 2018	Co- Investigator	UCEDD National Training Initiative Grant [\$ 40,018]
2016 – 2017	Co- Investigator	UCEDD National Training Initiative Grant [\$ 38,377]
2015 – 2016	Co- Investigator	UCEDD National Training Initiative Grant [\$ 25,473]

RESEARCH

2023	Principal Investigator	Navigating Medical Transitions into Adulthood
2021	Research Staff	Family Experience/Project DOCC Delivery of Chronic Care

2020	Research Staff	Tai Chi for Traumatic Brain Injury: Virtual Focus Group
2020	Co-Investigator	Providing supplemental resources to providers and at-risk families
2020	Research Staff	Assessing burnout in Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS) service providers in rural West Virginia to increase accessibility and impact of high quality, evidence-based services to the mothers enrolled in IMPACT and their babies.
2020	Research Staff	Assessing WV IMPACT Partnerships Through Quantity, Type and Strength Over Time
2019	Principal Investigator	Voices of Disability: Photo Voice Project
2019	Research Staff	Assessing provider and family perceptions of care coordination in the first three years after childbirth

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Workman CS, Cottrell L, Bashatah M, Hashmi A, Richard K, Murthy P, Harrison S, McKinsey A, Bott A, Leary S, Smith C, Danko M. IMPACT WV: adapting patient navigation models of care to improve services to caregivers of infants exposed to substances in utero. J Appalach Health 2025;7(1):128-133. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/jah.0701.09>

Workman, C., Danko, M, Johnson, V, Harrison, S, McKinsey, A, Cottrell, L. (2024) *Exploring best practices for retaining women who are using, or have used, substances and their families in programs designed to coordinate care in rural settings*. [Poster presentation] American Public Health Association Annual Meeting & Expo.

Cottrell, L, Workman, C, Danko, M, Walker, E, Dmytrijuk, A, Harrison, S, Lee, M, McKinsey, A, Smith, M. *Rural Service Coordination Programming for Women Using Substances and Their Families*. Women's Health. 2024.

Workman, C., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2023). *IMPACT WV: Training service providers to increase capacity as emerging leaders harnessing a 2-gen approach against substance use disorder* [Poster presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Association of University Centers for Disability.

Cottrell, L., Richard, K., Danko, M., Murphy, E., Burt, A., & Miller, C. (2023). *Annual outcome evaluation of disability micro-credentials for faculty, staff, and students* [Poster presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Association of University Centers for Disability.

Cottrell, L., Dutton, J., Slack, S., Lanham, C., Filippelli, A., & Danko, M. (2022). *Promoting student advocacy and access to health services within a transition higher education curriculum for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities* [Presentation]. APHA Annual Meeting and Expo.

Workman, C., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2021). *Connecting to WV home visiting programs* [Presentation]. Annual Meeting for the HRSA Home Visiting Program. Virtual.

Workman, C., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2021). *IMPACT WV services and long-term outcomes for women and families experiencing substance use* [Presentation]. Substance Use Research Symposium. Virtual.

Cottrell L, Desmond G, Danko M, Slack S, Larson N. *Updating first responder materials and trainings to prevent escalation events*. Poster accepted for the annual meeting for the Association of University Centers for Disability. Virtual. 2021.

Cottrell, L., Desmond, G., Danko, M., Slack, S., & Larson, N. (2021). *Updating first responder materials and trainings to prevent escalation events* [Poster presentation]. Annual Meeting for the Association of University Centers for Disability. Virtual.

Workman, C., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2021). *IMPACT WV: Researching neonatal abstinence syndrome using a two-generational approach* [Poster presentation]. Symposium on Substance Use Research. Virtual.

Workman, C., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2021). *Using IMPACT WV's coordination of services to increase vaccine confidence in families with substance use exposure* [Poster presentation]. Annual Meeting for the Association of University Centers for Disability. Virtual.

Danko, M. (2020). *Using data to better reach disability audiences through electronic methods* [Poster presentation]. Annual Meeting for the Association of University Centers for Disability. Virtual.

Workman, C, Cottrell, L, Danko, M, Campbell, R, Newson, Smith, M, Romano, J, Taylor, A. *Developing and Disseminating Tools to Address Substance Use Within Vulnerable Populations*. Poster accepted for the annual meeting for the Association of University Centers for Disability. Virtual. 2020.

Campbell, R., Workman, C., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2020). *Assessing burnout in neonatal abstinence syndrome service providers in rural West Virginia to increase accessibility and impact of high-quality, evidence-based services* [Poster presentation]. Mountain State Conference on Disabilities, Davis, WV. Virtual.

Workman, S., Campbell, R., Danko, M., & Cottrell, L. (2020). *Impacting service infrastructure to combat negative consequences of neonatal abstinence syndrome* [Poster presentation]. Mountain State Conference on Disabilities, Davis, WV. Virtual.

Cottrell, L., Danko, M., Skidmore, S., Newsome, J., Smith, C., Kiefer, A., Romano, J., & Taylor, A. (2019, November). *Responding to two-generational approaches for children diagnosed with neonatal abstinence syndrome and their families in rural settings* [Poster presentation]. Association of University Centers on Disabilities Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.

Cottrell, L., Workman, C., Danko, M., O'Hara Tompkins, N., Northrup, K., Ramsey, Z., & Skidmore, S. (2019). *Effectiveness of a physical activity intervention on West Virginia student participants with reported special health care needs* [Poster presentation]. Association of University Centers on Disabilities Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.

Danko, M., & Brunson, L. (2016, December). *Building West Virginia's Diversity & Disability Fellowship Program: Creating a successful partnership with the WV LEND Project* [Poster presentation]. Association of University Centers on Disabilities Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.

Danko, M. (2011). *Death to snail mail: Integrating new technology to serve rural populations* [Presentation]. Association of University Centers on Disabilities Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.

Hayhurst Marshall, J., & Danko, M. (2009). *Fostering excellence in serving persons with disabilities – I&R/A skills and resources* [Presentation]. Alliance of Information and Referral Specialists, Reno, NV.

Danko, M. (2007). Assessing the barriers to community living: Accessible housing in a rural state. *Housing and Society*, 34(1), 31–44.

Sissum, Melina, "A longitudinal content analysis of violence, sex, and drugs in rap music." (2003). *Graduate Theses, Dissertations, and Problem Reports*. 10782.
<https://researchrepository.wvu.edu/etd/10782>

SERVICE

Member & Leadership	Association of University Centers on Disabilities – Community Education & Dissemination Council (2006 – present)
Member	Association of University Centers on Disabilities – Communications Special Interest Group
Member	WVU Key Communicators
Member	Health Sciences Communicators
Editorial Board	Chair of CED Editorial Committee

AWARDS AND HONORS

2017	AUCD Leadership Institute Graduate
2002	Don Marsh Scholar, Public Relations Graduate Assistant West Virginia University Hospital

Center for Excellence in Disabilities Graduate Student Site Supervisor

2021	Megan Hardy (Integrated Marketing Communications)
2020	Lily Hicks (Journalism)
2019	Sarah Skidmore (Integrated Marketing Communications)
2016	Louma Sebaihi (Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner)
2016	Nicoletta Ciampa (Education)
2016	Magda Rivera-Dillon (Licensed Professional Nurse)