



Louisiana Development Disabilities Council
Annual Report for FFY 2015

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A Message from the Chairperson and the Executive Director

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (the Council), with its partners, worked to fulfill its mandate of advocacy, capacity building and systems change through activities that result in self-determination and inclusion for people with developmental disabilities. The Council was influential in several key policy and practice changes in 2015 including the allocation of additional state general funds to the home and community-based waiver program, the shift in funding to ensure appropriate funding to school systems, the accurate and consistent interpretation of Act 833 of 2014 which created an alternative pathway to earning a high school diploma, the allocation of additional funding to help school districts serve students with the most significant support needs, and the furthered implementation of Employment First.

The Council's grassroots advocacy networks, [Louisiana Citizens for Action NOW \(LaCAN\)](#) and [Louisiana Together Educating ALL Children \(LaTEACH\)](#), were instrumental in advocating for these changes. In 2015, over 1,300 individuals across the state were engaged in Council advocacy efforts with over 3,400 confirmed actions including participation in LaCAN/LaTEACH Legislative Roundtables, formal legislative visits, calls or emails to legislators, attendance at key legislative committee or educational board meetings, and Disability Rights Day at the Capitol.

More change in Louisiana can happen through the continuation of effective relationships between the Council, individuals with disabilities, their families, advocacy organizations, community providers, policy makers, and state agencies. As advocates, we can look back and see how far we have come, but the work is far from complete. The Council is committed to remain focused on inclusion where people live, learn, work and play.



Delery Rice
Chairperson



Sandee Winchell
Executive Director

Community Support

The Council provided information on community supports through [LaDDC News](#) and its Facebook® page and supported nine [Families Helping Families \(FHF\) Regional Resource Centers](#) in providing support and information to self-advocates, families, and professionals.

- More than 36,000 people supported
- 174 outreaches to hospitals and health care providers

The Council demonstrates its commitment to community inclusion by advocating for a shift in state effort from segregated institutions to individual and family support in the community. In 2015, the Council, and its grassroots advocacy network, [LaCAN](#), advocated for a variety of policy shifts to provide quality services in the community.

- 1,200 individuals participated in LaCAN activities
- 400 people met at the state capitol to engage with legislators during Disability Rights Day.
- LaCAN successfully advocated for \$3.5 Million in state general funds to fill frozen waiver slots, restore funding to [Families Helping Families](#), and provide an additional \$500,000 for Individual and Family Support.



LaCAN advocates gather on the State Capitol steps during the 2015 Disability Rights Day.

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Education and Early Intervention

The Council and its education grassroots advocacy network, LaTEACH, advocated for improvements in the state's education system in accountability, funding method, and student progression and graduation.

- More than 370 individuals participated in LaTEACH advocacy.
- Passage of Act 467 of 2015 corrected state funding inequities across charter and traditional school systems. This shift in funding is to ensure schools actually enrolling students with disabilities receive the appropriate amount of funding based on the funding formula to school systems.
- Convened Act 833 of 2014 Leadership Steering Committee meetings and advocated for accurate and consistent interpretation of Act 833 creating an alternative pathway to a diploma.
- Advocated for an additional \$5,400,000 to the High Risk Pool to help districts serve students with the most significant support needs, increasing the percentage of needs met from 38% to 66%.



Council Vice-Chairperson, April Dunn, named Educator of the Year by the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs because of her advocacy in the area of inclusive education, pictured here with her mom at the Louisiana State Capitol.

The Early Intervention Primary Service Provider (PSP) Model program provided training to families and childcare providers in the transdisciplinary service model through the Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP).

- 158 children and family members received training.

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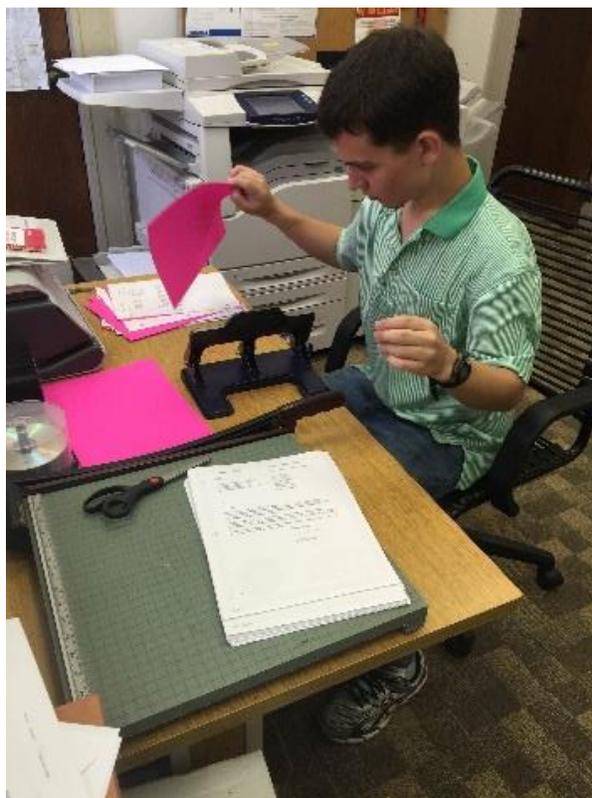
Employment

The Council provided financial support for the **Employment Mentoring** program with its Developmental Disability Network partner, the [LSU Health Sciences Center Human Development Center](#), the state's University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). The program provided a competency-based training and mentoring program for employment support providers.

- 508 mentoring hours
- 27 employment support professionals mentored
- 113 job seekers with a developmental disability participated

The Council has been instrumental in advocating for implementation of policy that encourages competitive integrated individualized employment.

- Pushed forward implementation of Employment First within the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities.
- With its partners, maintained the previous year's state appropriation for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services while other programs were cut.



Nate, who works as an office assistant, got his job through the mentoring program.

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Health

The Council provided financial support for the [Curricula for Developmental Disabilities for Clinicians](#) with the [Human Development Center \(HDC\)](#).

- Developed modules for dental/dental hygiene students and continuing education modules for dental clinicians and nurses.
- In previous years, the Council partnered with HDC in developing [modules for nursing students and continuing education modules for physicians](#).

The Council provided feedback to the [Secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals \(DHH\)](#) on the need for adequate health services for people with developmental disabilities.

- Currently, populations excluded from [Louisiana's Medicaid managed care health system, Bayou Health](#), may voluntarily opt-in. Those who opt-in may opt-out and return to the Medicaid fee-for-service system if they were not satisfied with Bayou Health.
- The Louisiana Health Insurance Premium Payment program was eliminated due to budget cuts and lack of cost-effectiveness impacting about 1,500 Louisiana households. With advocacy from the Council, DHH delayed the discontinuation of the program to give families more time to consider their options.

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Quality Assurance

The Council's **Partners in Policymaking** program for people with developmental disabilities and parents of young children with developmental disabilities had another successful year.

- Graduated nineteen, including six self-advocates, two dads, and eleven moms.
- Participants were active in systems change at Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meetings, Legislative roundtables, Act 833 of 2014 Leadership Steering Committee, Council grassroots advocacy actions through **Louisiana Citizens for Action NOW (LaCAN)** and **Louisiana Together Educating ALL Children (LaTEACH)**, **Disability Rights Day**, and testimony to legislative committees.
- Partners' graduates of prior years serve in a variety of advocacy leadership roles including as Council grassroots Leaders, Directors of **Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers**, members of the DD Council and other policy and advisory bodies, and testifying before critical legislative committees.



2015 Louisiana Partners in Policymaking Graduates

The Council provided information and technical assistance to self-advocates and their families.

- 120 individuals with disabilities and family members participated in conferences/workshops through Council-funded stipends provided through **Families Helping Families**.
- The Council supported the state's self-advocacy organization by providing information on training and leadership opportunities.

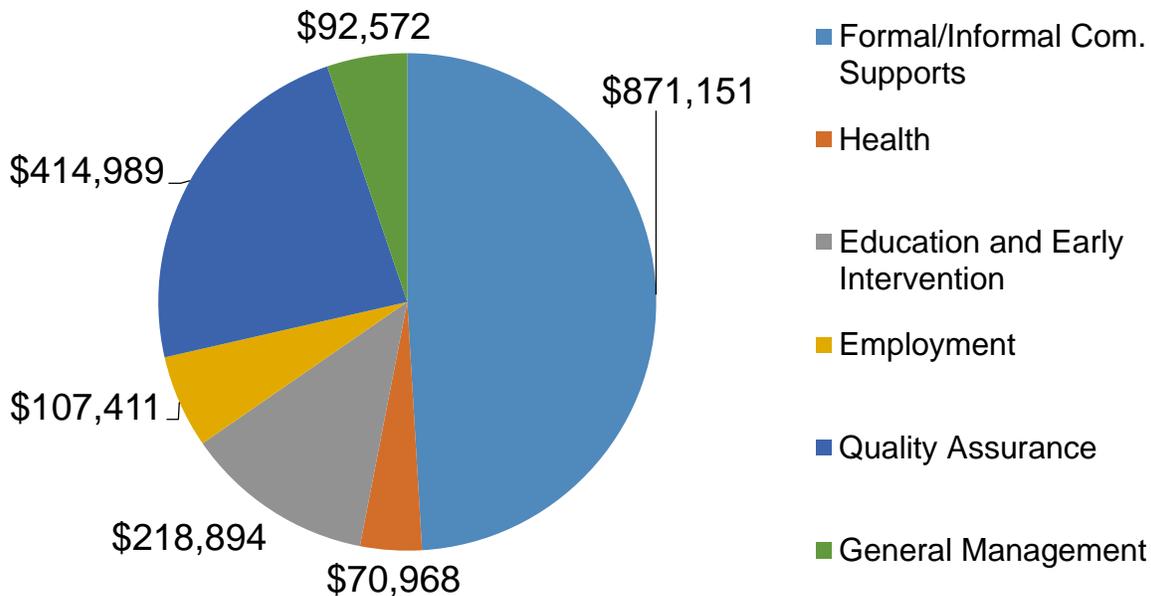
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Financial Report

The Council received \$1.3 million in federal funds through the [Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act](#). [Developmental Disabilities Councils](#) are required to spend a minimum of 70% of its funds on advocacy, systems change and capacity building activities that promote the independence, self-determination, integration, inclusion and productivity of individuals with developmental disabilities.

- 94.7% of the Council's funds went to programmatic activities in 2015.
- Program funds were expended in the areas of [Community Support](#), [Health](#), [Education and Early Intervention](#), [Quality Assurance](#), and [Employment](#).
- Because the lack of individualized supports and services is an underlying cause of other barriers faced by people with disabilities, the largest portion of the Council's initiatives are in Community Support.

In addition to federal funds, the Council also receives state funds for the operation and administration of a network of nine [Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers](#) that provide information and referral, education and training, and peer support to individuals with disabilities and their families from people who have been there.



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