



Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council Annual Report for FFY 2016

[About the Council](#)

[Executive Summary](#)



**Community
Support**



**Education
and Early
Intervention**



Employment



**Quality
Assurance**



**Financial
Report**

A Message from the Chairperson and the Executive Director

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council (the Council) collaborated with partners 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. Changes to important policy and practice the Council was instrumental in affecting in 2016 include averting attempts to block Medicaid expansion, restoring funding to community-based services that were facing massive budget cuts, strengthening requirements regarding reporting of incidents of restraint and seclusion in schools, establishing requirements for reporting student statistics on trends and patterns relevant to students with disabilities, and limiting the liability for parents of some students with a behavior intervention plan. Unfortunately, \$24 million in funding cuts left school systems scrambling to make budget cuts and trying to understand the impact of reductions to the high cost fund that assists school systems in meeting the costs of serving students with disabilities.

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 2016, more than 1,400 individuals across the state were engaged in the Council's advocacy efforts with almost 3,900 confirmed actions including participation in 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.



The Council will continue to strive to capitalize on strong partnerships with stakeholders, other organizations, and policymakers to ensure all Louisianans with developmental disabilities live full lives and are fully included in their communities.

Sandee Winchell, Executive Director,
and Delery Rice, Chairperson

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 33,000 people supported
- 138 outreaches to hospitals and health care providers

The Council demonstrates its commitment to community inclusion by advocating for a variety of policy changes designed to shift state effort from segregated institutions to individual and family supports, and to increase the community's capacity to serve those with the most challenging and complex needs. In 2016, the LA Department of Health agreed to implement a Council proposal to offer waiver services to 50 people in private ICFs/DD to enable them to move into their own homes. The Council, and its grassroots advocacy network, [LaCAN](#), continually advocate for expansion or restoration of funding for community supports.

- 1,450 individuals participated in LaCAN activities
- 326 people engaged with legislators during Disability Rights Day (DRD).
- LaCAN successfully advocated for restoration of funding to DD home and community based waivers, [Families Helping Families](#), the State Personal Assistance Program, Long-Term Personal Care Services, La Rehabilitation Services, and the local human services entities.



LaCAN advocates gather at the State Capitol for 2016 DRD.



Governor John Bel Edwards speaks to a participant prior to his address at DRD.

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

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 560 individuals participated in LaTEACH advocacy resulting in:

- Clarification that the La. Department of Education (LDOE) must report on incidents of restraint and seclusion, modification of the definition of restraint, and creation of the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline.
- Limiting of the liability for parents of some students with a behavior intervention plan when their student is at school.
- Requirement that LDOE report statistics on trends and patterns related to students with disabilities.
- Provision allowing people with disabilities who exited school without a diploma, even though they earned all the necessary credits, to request a high school diploma.
- Prohibition for schools to require medical information to be shared until a student is enrolled.

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).

- 142 children and family members received training.

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Employment

The Council provided financial support for the initial developmental phase of the **Paid Apprenticeship 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 Council has been instrumental in advocating for implementation of policy that encourages competitive integrated individualized employment.

- Information regarding funding for the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services' (LRS) vocational rehabilitation program was provided to legislators. Due to state budget cuts, by the end of FFY 2016, only LRS' Order of Selection 1 was open.
- Council staff advocated throughout the year for the following:
 - Increased collaboration with redevelopment of the workforce development system in Louisiana related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
 - Practices facilitating employment first principles;
 - Transitioning sheltered workshops to competitive inclusive individual employment;
 - Certification of employment support professionals;
 - Implementation of the use of a report card for supported employment providers; and
 - To add third party transition partnerships between LRS and local education agencies throughout the state.

[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Quality Assurance

In 2014, the Council approved a plan to improve the economic efficiency of its Partners' program including imposing a lower threshold of the number of applicants (<20) required to hold the typical six monthly sessions. This scenario occurred in 2016 and a Partners in Policymaking class was not held. In lieu of the Partners class, the Partners Coordinator hosted nine regional advocacy leadership workshops in collaboration with Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers.

- Workshops featured national speakers on a variety of topics including Legislative Process, Community Building, Organizing for Change, Inclusive Education, and Competitive Employment. Each workshop also included how to get involved in systems change advocacy.
- 221 people across the state attended the workshops.
- Partners' graduates of prior years serve in a variety of advocacy leadership roles including as Council grassroots advocacy 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.



Al Condeluci shares with participants at a regional advocacy leadership workshop.

The Council's 2015 Advocacy Leadership Conference: "Creating a Meaningful Life" was hosted Thursday, November 19, 2015. The event was attended by 105 people including seventeen self-advocates and 57 family members. Attendees heard from two national speakers, Al Condeluci and Deborah Whitfield, about the importance of advocacy, social capital, and building natural supports to create a meaningful life for themselves and those they know with developmental disabilities. The conference also featured a panel of state legislators who praised the Council's grassroots advocacy efforts and gave tips for continued success.

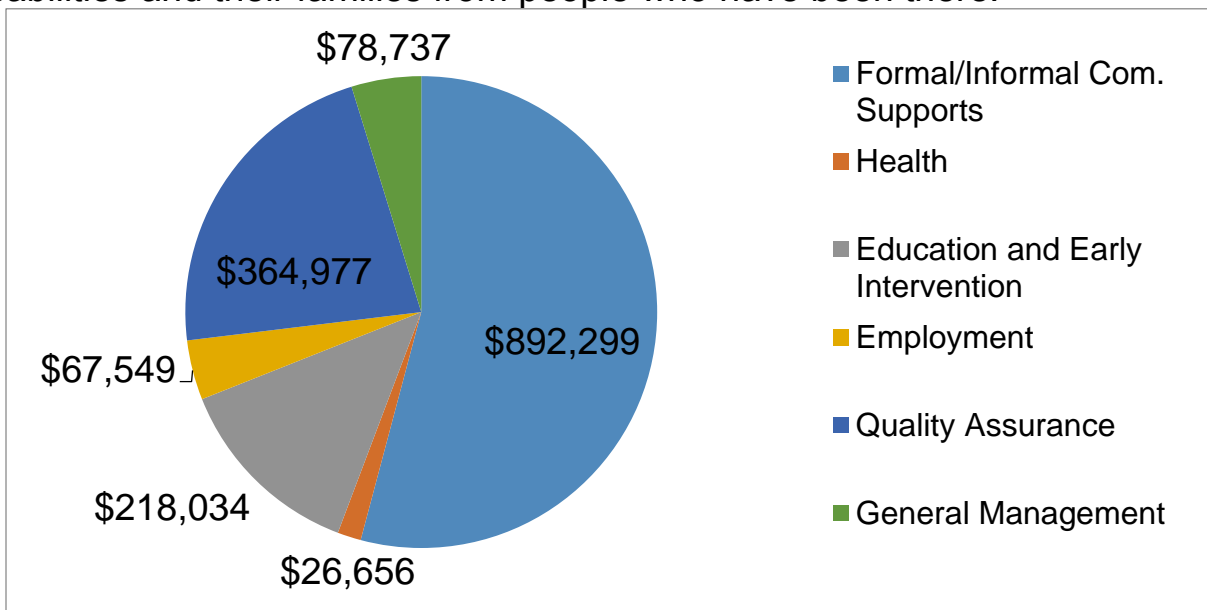
[\[Back to Top\]](#)

Financial Report

The Council received \$1.2 million in federal funds through the [Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act](#). Each [Developmental Disabilities Council](#) is required to spend a minimum of 70% of its funds on advocacy, systems change and capacity building activities that promote the independence, self-determination, productivity, integration and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities.

- 94.7% of the Council's funds went to programmatic activities in 2016.
- 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.



[\[Back to Top\]](#)