

Executive Director's Report

January 2021 Council Meeting

New Office Location

During the week following the Thanksgiving holidays, staff moved the Council office to a new location. The new office's physical address is:

5615 Corporate Blvd, Suite 500B
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

Our mailing address has not changed and remains:

P.O. Box 3455
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Federal Reporting

On November 25, 2020, the Administration for Community Living extended annual reporting of Council's State Plan updates, Program Performance Reports, and Five-Year Planning (FFY 2022 - 2026) from January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021. This extension is due to ACL still not having an operational data collection system for all Councils to submit this information.

OIDD Regional Engagement Call

Office on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and ACL conducted a virtual meeting with Executive Directors from Councils located in regions 4 and 6 (nationally) on October 21, 2020. Discussions were held regarding the sharing of stories with OIDD and increasing their impact, and emerging trends in addressing emergency preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Annual NACDD Executive Director's Summit

Typically conducted in-person over multiple days, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities hosted a virtual event on December 7, 2020, for all Council Executive Directors titled "Filling Your Cup: Leading in Difficult Times". Topics of discussion included: prioritization, setting boundaries and expectations, increasing Council member engagement with one another, and reporting of Council pursuits and accomplishments.

Collaborative Efforts

Directors and staff of the Developmental Disabilities Network (Council, Disability Rights LA, LSUHSC-Human Development Center) have corresponded and held multiple discussions regarding LDH's response to COVID-19 with specific regard to individuals with developmental disabilities. A meeting with LDH Deputy Secretary Mark Thomas, other LDH staff, and the DD Network was conducted during the end of the Council's October quarterly meeting regarding data collection and dissemination on COVID testing, and a correlation of these statistics with the opening of Adult Day Habilitation Centers/Programs.

On December 9, 2020, Senator Franklin Foil met with staff, and LaCAN Leader Kristie Curtis, to discuss the Council's legislative advocacy agenda items;

specifically, the cameras in special education classrooms (upon request of parents). Senator Foil was enthusiastic and motivated to continue his previous efforts on introducing a bill during the next legislative session on the cameras item. Staff agreed to assist Senator by securing personal testimonies and contacting the LA School Board Association for possible collaboration in this matter. After multiple contact attempts, on January 8, 2021, the Executive Director of the SBA requested a meeting with the Council Chairperson and staff.

EMDAC

The Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition provides status updates on hurricane evacuations and recovery, resources for FEMA assistance, preparations for COVID-19 vaccinations, and the development of a Crisis Counseling program for individuals affected either by one of the many hurricanes that impacted Louisiana, or by the Coronavirus.

Meetings attended by Council members:

Lillian DeJean, and Steven Nguyen - November 19, 2020

NACDD Self-Advocacy Discussion Series: Programs, Resources and Information to Support Self-Advocacy and the Advocacy Movement

Lillian DeJean and Jill Egle - December 17, 2020

NACDD Self-Advocacy Discussion Series: Policy (What policies are important to you)

Meetings attended by Council staff:

Marilee Andrews

- Served as DD Council representative on the Louisiana State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) during meetings on October 8, and December 2, 2020. The Council met to discuss a family's EarlySteps journey and Blue Bridge ASL Academy, EarlySteps Lead Agency Report (no budget cuts to EarlySteps, decreased referrals), LDOE Early Childhood Developmental Screenings Guidebook (shared on social media), and nominating members for open seats.
- Served as DD Council representative on the OCDD Services Visual Workgroup during meetings on November 2, and December 3, 2020. The workgroup reviewed OCDD's Flowchart of Process from Requesting DD Services to Obtaining Waiver Services; actions for the workgroup and timelines; and all input received from the public on which OCDD services and programs should be prioritized (see related [LaDDC News](#)).
- Served as DD Council representative on the Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Account Advisory Council during a meeting on December 1, 2020. The Council reviewed active ABLE accounts (319) and balances (\$1,613,009.81; and discussed the need for improvement in awareness of ABLE accounts.

Brenton Andrus

- On October 14, 2020, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) hosted a call for stakeholders to address the ending of Appendix K exemptions that were initiated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advocated for extension of rule exemptions for home and community-based waivers and for OCDD to create a publicly available document detailing the end of the exemptions and other services within the waiver individuals may qualify for once the exemptions end.

- Participated in a meeting on November 9, 2020, with Julie Foster Hagan and Charles Ayles centered on the successes and failures associated with previous wage pass through and recommendations on how to proceed this session were provided including the need to increase DSP base pay by \$2 in statute.
- Met with Senator Franklin Foil on December 9, 2020, to discuss issues as it relates to the Council's advocacy agenda. Specifically, advocacy focused on the need for cameras in special education classrooms upon request. Senator Foil brought forth a bill on this issue in the 2020 Regular Session and intends to bring forth the bill again during the 2021 Regular Session. Other issues on the Council's advocacy agenda were also shared and advocated for.
- Attended the Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs Legislative Committee meeting on December 15, 2020. The committee developed position statements on eight key areas to submit to GACDA to help guide advocacy and policy work. Key areas included Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation; Self-Determination; Criminal Justice; Disaster and Emergency Preparedness; Education; Housing and Transportation; Economic Empowerment; Healthcare. Also discussed the advocacy issues the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs will be following and advocating for throughout the upcoming legislative session.

Meetings attended by Interim Executive Director (October 1st - December 31, 2020)

- October 1 – Five-Year Planning Committee
- October 2 – Meeting with Dr. Fernando Lopez and OAAS staff
- October 2 – Meeting with LDH Budget/Fiscal
- October 5 – Meeting with Parliamentarian Nicole Learson
- October 12 – EMDAC meeting
- October 17 – Meeting with Council Chair and Parliamentarian Nicole Learson
- October 20 – Self Determination/Community Inclusion quarterly meeting
- October 20 – Executive Committee quarterly meeting
- October 20 – DD Network meeting
- October 21 – Act 378 Subcommittee quarterly meeting
- October 21 – OIDD Engagement meeting
- October 22 – Council quarterly meeting
- October 23 – DD Network meeting
- October 30 – DD Network meeting with LDH
- November 4 – LA Rehabilitation Council (Executive Committee and quarterly meetings)
- November 9 – Meeting with Julie Foster Hagan and Charles Ayles of LDH
- November 9 – Meeting with Niagara University
- November 13 – Meeting with LDH Budget/Fiscal
- November 13 – Meeting with OCDD and stakeholders (RE: concerns from A. Luczak)
- November 19 – Meeting with LDH Budget/Fiscal
- December 2 – Executive Committee meeting

- December 3 – LRC Strategic Planning meeting
- December 3 – NACDD meeting on Public Policy
- December 7 – NACDD Executive Director Virtual Summit
- December 8 – EMDAC meeting
- December 9 – Meeting with Senator Franklin Foil
- December 9 – ED Search Committee meeting
- December 10 – LaCAN virtual meeting
- December 10 – Meeting with O’Neill Communications
- December 16 – Meeting with LDH Budget/Fiscal
- December 17 – Meeting with LDH Budget/Fiscal
- December 21 – Meeting with LDH Budget/Fiscal