

## La DD Council - Status Report of FFY 2021 Action Plan

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- 'On Target: Initiative' indicates progress has been made as expected.
- 'On Target: Expenditures' indicates invoiced amounts are as expected.

Activity	Progress
As applicable, data is presented year-to-date and quarterly (April 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021).	
<b>Goal 1</b> Individuals with development disabilities and their family members will have information, training, support and leadership to effectively advocate and impact system change by educating policy makers.	
<b>Obj. 1.1</b> Louisiana's self-advocacy network will be supported in self-advocacy and in systems change advocacy.	
<b>1.1.1</b> Provide technical assistance and training opportunities designed to strengthen the self-advocacy network and the effectiveness of its systems change activities. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$20,000</b>	No activity this quarter.  <b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> The DD Council paid registration fees for four (4) members of People First to attend the 2021 Disability Policy Seminar that was conducted virtually April 19 <sup>th</sup> – April 21 <sup>st</sup> .  <b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures
<b>Obj. 1.2</b> Individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members will have access to opportunities and support to build skills to be effective leaders in systems change advocacy.	

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**1.2.1** Provide financial support and technical assistance for Partners in Policymaking and its alumni network.

**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$90,000**

There are 14 participants attending this Partners Session with an expected graduation date of October 2021. 8 Partners graduates serve on DD Council.

**Previous Quarter(s):**

The Partners in Policymaking (PIP) Ad-Hoc Committee met January 7, 2021, to receive updates and discuss virtual accommodations for the 2020 class and ITACC disparities in relation to PIP alumni.

Participants of the 2020 PIP class met virtually in March to get reacquainted and be informed of how this program will be implemented for their completion.

The Executive Committee approved the following recommendations from the PIP Ad-Hoc Committee:

- 1) The PIP 2020 class move forward in a virtual format; those absent in the March session are accepted back; the January through February sessions are reviewed; and the March session is repeated for all; and
- 2) A virtual format in 2021 for Partners in Policymaking sessions, open to anyone who would like to join in, recommending using PIP speakers based on their topics and gives participants an entire PIP class for a year in a PIP format, which will also work as recruiting tool for next year's applicant pool.

The Partners in Policymaking (PIP) Class of 2020 resumed participating in sessions in May 2021 utilizing an online workspace through Trello Board. Monthly topics and speakers have been coordinated for participants to have completed by October 2021.

Monthly webinars which will be available statewide are expected to occur from July through October for the FFY 2021 implementation of this program. It is anticipated that recruitment outreach for the PIP Class of 2022 will be increased through conducting these monthly webinars.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures

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<p><b>1.2.3</b> Provide financial support and information, training, technical assistance, and leadership to a grassroots network of individuals with developmental disabilities and family members of individuals with developmental disabilities to effectively educate policy makers on the development/improvement of programs and services for people with developmental disabilities.</p> <p><b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost:</b> <b>\$215,000</b></p>	<p>As of September 2021, LaCAN has over 6,300 members registered to receive information and action alerts related to home and community-based services, employment, education, and early intervention.</p> <p><u>Advocacy Activities</u> Since October 1, 2020:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thirteen (13) HCBS action alerts; 1151 actions taken</li><li>• Five (5) education action alerts, 471 actions taken</li></ul> <p>Before the 2021 Legislative Session began on April 12th, LaCAN Leaders supported 100 members at 61 formal legislative visits, of which 37 were with key committee members. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LaCAN Leaders were unable to coordinate meetings between members and legislators at the Capitol during the 2021 Legislative Session.</p> <p>LaCAN continues to host two LaCAN Leader conference calls per month, which include updates on current concerns/issues and development of strategies to better educate, maintain, support, and lead LaCAN members.</p> <p><u>Update on Leader Positions</u> All leader positions are currently filled.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
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**1.2.4** Facilitate and support advocacy events including but not limited to Legislative Roundtables, a Conference, and advocacy training sessions.

**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost:  
\$50,000**

LaCAN Summer Leader Training was held on August 25, 2021. LaCAN Leaders discussed ideas and strategies for improving advocacy activities and effectiveness. The Leaders also discussed “How-To’s” for social media with the continuation of virtual LaCAN activities. The Leaders also shared the concerns/issues given at the regional community input/membership meetings that were held during the summer.

Since October 1, 2020, 233 LaCAN members participated in 27 virtual regional LaCAN member meetings to discuss the Council’s 2021 Advocacy Agenda, learn how to become a virtually active member, ways of taking action virtually (action alerts, yellow shirt days, public testimony) and how to virtually connect with legislators.

LaCAN leaders and FHF Directors participated in the 2022 Legislative Kickoff on September 23, 2021. Advocacy leaders discussed, prioritized and rated the 93 concerns/issues to generate the top items for their official recommendations toward the Council’s 2022 legislative advocacy agenda.

**Previous Quarter(s):**

LaCAN’s Legislative Debriefing was held on June 24, 2021. LaCAN Leaders, FHF Directors and Council staff discussed the results of advocacy efforts during the 2021 Legislative Session and ideas for improving advocacy activities and effectiveness. Ideas were also discussed for a continuation of virtual LaCAN activities.

Nine Legislative Roundtables were held across the state with 297 participants in attendance, including:

- 25 self-advocates
- 115 family members
- 59 professionals
- 73 Other/Unknown
- 25 policymakers (i.e. legislators, legislative aides, and/or BESE members)

The LaCAN Fall Leader Training was conducted on November 12, 2020.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures

**Obj. 1.3** Individuals with developmental disabilities and family members of individuals with developmental disabilities will have support to be effective leaders in systems change through participation on a variety of boards and commissions.

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<p><b>1.3.1</b> Provide information and support for participation of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in cross-disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions and advisory bodies.</p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>
<p><b>1.3.2</b> Support Council members in participation in Council meetings and other functions.</p>	<p>Council members are supported in participation of Council meetings and other functions and have been offered the provision of assistive technology to facilitate participation in virtual Council meetings.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>
<p><b>1.3.3</b> Support Council members' participation in training and educational opportunities. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$3,000</b></p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> LaDDC Orientation for new and current members was conducted on January 13, 2021. Invitations were sent to self-advocate Council members to participate in a Discussion Series for Self-Advocates hosted by National Association for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD). Three (3) Council members have participated in these meetings thus far.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>1.3.4</b> Support the Council leadership's participation in national training, networking events and advocacy opportunities. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$7,000</b></p>	<p>With approval and in lieu of the Chairperson having to attend, another Council member attended the 2021 Disability Policy Seminar that was conducted virtually in April.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>Obj. 1.4</b> Individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and professionals will obtain the information, training, and support they need.</p>	

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**1.4.1** Provide financial support (from the entirety of state general funds) and technical assistance to nine Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers across the state.

Since October 1, 2020, Centers have assisted over 20,600 individuals with disabilities and families with information, referral, peer to peer, and other supports. There have been over 42,100 units of information and referral completed with 429 trainings conducted with over 5,900 individuals in attendance. Centers have also conducted 244 outreach activities to hospitals, pediatricians, and school districts.

Monitoring visits to review Center operations and achievement of deliverables for State Fiscal Year 2021 were intended to be completed on FHF Greater Baton Rouge, FHF at the Crossroads and FHF Region 7. However due to COVID-19, these visits will be scheduled at a later date. All FHF Centers will participate in desk audits at this time.

**Previous Quarter(s):**

The legislature allocated an additional \$500,000 in state general funds to the Council's FY 2022 budget to ensure an increase in funding for the Families Helping Families Centers that contract with the Council.

Shared information about the need for additional funding for the Families Helping Families Resource Center across the state at LaCAN Legislative Roundtables and in individual meetings and communications with legislators.

A [fact sheet](#) about the need for additional funding for the Families Helping Families Resource Centers was developed, posted on the Council's website, and distributed to Council members, LaCAN Leaders, and FHF Centers/Directors to be used in legislative visits and member meetings prior to the start of the 2021 legislative session.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures

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**1.4.2** Produce and provide information important to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families through a variety of electronic and social media (Council website, Facebook, and LaDDC News).

The following 7 LaDDC Newsletters were released via listserv and advertised via Facebook and Twitter:

1. [2021 Legislative Session](#) July 9
2. [GODA Conference](#) July 14
3. [New Opportunity Waiver Renewal Application Out For Public Comment](#) July 21
4. [Upcoming Emergency Preparedness and Disability Awareness Trainings](#) July 26
5. [Upcoming Community Training Event on Interactions with First Responders](#) July 29
6. [LDH Issues Emergency Rules Regarding OCDD Waiver Rate Increase and Direct Support Worker Wage Floor](#) September 22
7. [LA Disability Resources Website Now Available](#) September 29

Displays of LaCAN members in action as well as various issues and news of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families are continuously shared on social media.

- The Council's listserv has 5,458 active subscribers.
- Facebook has 5,664 followers and 5,346 likes.
- Twitter has 448 followers.

**On target:**  Initiative

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**1.4.3** Produce and disseminate videos and other visual materials featuring information important to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families regarding but not limited to the following topics: self-advocacy, obtaining employment, grade promotion/graduation pathways, and accessing home and community-based services, including waivers.  
**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$51,000**

O'Neill Communications has been scheduling and conducting interviews, and producing and finalizing videos. To encourage more community involvement, an intake form was developed to encourage members and stakeholders to get involved with the video series. The form was released twice via listserv and advertised via Facebook and Twitter.

Video production schedule has been updated as follows:

Release of video Honoring April Dunn	August 16, 2021
Schedule Interviews for Employment	Complete
Reach out to Employment contracts	Complete
Interviews for Employment	Complete
Production for Employment	In Progress
Interviews for Waivers	In Progress
Interviews for DSPs	In Progress
FHF Completed	Complete
FHF Final Edits	In Progress
Release of video Honoring April Dunn	August 16, 2021

Videos will be uploaded to the Council's Facebook and YouTube channel with corresponding social media posts on select Fridays as part of #FullyIncludedFriday.

**Previous Quarter(s):**

O'Neill Communications wrote and developed an outreach plan, including email announcement, social media copy, and press release copy for the announcement of the campaigns. The launch Press Release went out on March 26, 2021 to 521 outlets covering all 10 regions of Louisiana and was picked up by KPLC in Lake Charles.

O'Neill Communications is developing the look and feel, storyboard, and interviewing schedule for the videos and visual materials. O'Neill Communications has also created a presentation of this project to present during the January 2021 Self-Determination/Community Inclusion Committee meeting.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures



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<p><b>1.4.4</b> Provide financial support to develop an emergency response resource in partnership with other organizations to have a clearing house of educational materials, videos, etc. for people with developmental disabilities and their family members. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$7,500</b></p>	<p><a href="http://Ladisabilityresources.com">Ladisabilityresources.com</a> is now live and serves as an information resource for individuals with developmental disabilities and their family members to access during times of both personal emergencies and/or natural disasters. Work continues on developing and updating resources on the website. The website will be maintained and updated by Trach Mommas of La. Those who have recommendations for website content, edits, suggestions, concerns, etc. can email <a href="mailto:trachmommas@gmail.com">trachmommas@gmail.com</a>. <a href="#">LaDDC News</a> was shared on September 29<sup>th</sup> containing information about the website and a <a href="#">survey</a> for user to share their feedback.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> Trach Mommas of LA has created a list of available resources and is working with a web designer to create an accessible website with emergency resource information. The launch date was anticipated for June 2021 but has been delayed. Contract initiated with Trach Mommas of LA to develop and manage an accessible website with emergency resources that can be accessed during times of natural disasters and states of emergencies. Contractor is in the process of researching and compiling a list of all available resources with an anticipated website launch date in the summer of 2021.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>1.4.5</b> Provide financial support to provide information on rights, accessible options and information related to voting. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$7,000</b></p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>Goal 2</b> Individuals with developmental disabilities, including those with the most challenging needs, and their families will have access to individualized, appropriate, and quality supports and services as needed to be fully-participating members of their community.</p>	
<p><b>Obj. 2.4.</b> Funding will be available to provide home and community-based waiver services to people with developmental disabilities.</p>	

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**2.4.1** Advocate for adequate funding for waiver services.

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), Bureau of Health Services Financing (Medicaid) and the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) is promulgating its emergency rule regarding Direct Support Worker (DSW) wages. This rule will be in effect October 1, 2021 and published in the October 20, 2021 [Louisiana Register](#). The rule sets a wage floor of \$9.00 per hour for DSWs with a \$2.50 rate increase applied to all service units provided by DSWs in the Children's Choice, New Opportunities, Residential Options and Supports Waivers. Providers who fail to comply with the emergency rule may face sanctions and/or disenrollment in the Medicaid program. Click [here](#) to view the emergency rules. [LaDDC News](#) announcing the new rules sent on 9/22/21. Meeting with providers and self-direction participants held on September 28<sup>th</sup> to explain the new rules and address questions.

**Previous Quarter(s):**

Funding to increase I/DD waiver rates was included in the Fiscal Year 2022 budget (HB1). Over \$16 million in state general funds were included for "increases for providers of Children's Choice Waiver, New Opportunities Waiver, Supports Waiver, and Residential Options Waiver services to increase the wages of direct support workers (DSW) and personal care attendants pursuant to rulemaking and audit." The department held multiple meetings to discuss implementation with providers and the Council. It is estimated with the additional funding, rates in I/DD waiver programs for services provided by a DSW can increase by \$2.50 per hour. It was proposed to the Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee that a wage floor of \$8.50 be set for DSWs with the rate increase split 50/50 (\$1.25 to the workers and \$1.25 to the provider). Funding was also included to fund comprehensive dental services for adults in I/DD waiver programs.

Information was shared about the need for increased home and community-based service (HCBS) rates for services performed by Direct Service Workers (DSWs) and the need to increase DSW starting pay to at least \$8.65 per hour across the state at LaCAN Legislative Roundtables and in individual meetings and communications with legislators. Funding needed to increase these rates was not included in the governor's executive budget proposal.

During a meeting with the leadership of the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, staff advocated for the need to increase Direct Support Professional pay and discussed the amount funding needed to secure the increase.

**On target:**  Initiative

**Obj. 2.5** Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families will have access to the same level and quality of services administered by the Local Governing Entities (LGE's) across the state.

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**2.5.1** Oversee implementation of the Community and Family Support System Plan and advocate for adequate funding, the expansion of services, and consistent implementation of policy across regions, including, if necessary, changes in law and/or contracts with local governing entities (LGE's).

The Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option was originally designed to be implemented as a Section 115 demonstration waiver. However, the department has decided to include 421 - CMO as an optional eligibility group under the Medicaid State Plan rather than a waiver. The department submitted its notice of intent in the [September 2021 edition of the Louisiana Register](#). LDH has received approval from CMS to include this option in its state plan. LDH has developed a [website](#) for stakeholders to view more information about this program.

Shared an [LaDDC News](#) requesting public comment on LDH's notice of its intent to seek approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for its New Opportunities Waiver renewal application. Included in the renewal was language that would allow non-legally responsible caregivers reside in the home to serve as paid caregivers.

### **Previous Quarter(s):**

Successfully advocated for the inclusion of funds in the fiscal year 2022 budget ([HB1](#)) to increase home- and community-based provider rates for I/DD waivers with language dedicating the funding to increase direct support worker pay increases and funding to offer comprehensive dental services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities via Medicaid (pending CMS approval).

Successfully advocated for the passage of [HB172](#) which requires the state Medicaid program to provide comprehensive dental coverage for each person of age 21 or older who is enrolled in any Medicaid waiver program for persons with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

The Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option program is still waiting approval from CMS. However, the department is reevaluating its approach in light of additional funding via the American Rescue Plan and other changes to initial estimates on expected participants. Clarity is being sought from CMS to determine if the Act 421 program would qualify for the enhanced home- and community-based funding provided in the American Rescue Plan Act, which could potentially provide additional funding for more services. Should additional federal funding be made available, the department may look at the possibility of State Plan coverage rather than the demonstration waiver currently being sought. LDH has developed a [website](#) for stakeholders to view more information about this program.

The Council's legislative agenda as it relates to home and community-based (HCBS) service rates and Direct Service Worker (DSW) pay was updated to include a base starting pay for DSWs of at least \$8.65 per hour. An [updated fact sheet](#) was developed and shared with stakeholders statewide. The Council's [legislative agenda](#) was also shared across the state at LaCAN Legislative Roundtables and in individual meetings and communications with legislators and other stakeholders. Additional funding for FHF Centers and increased rates was not included in the governor's executive budget proposal.

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A fact sheet about the need for additional funding for the [Families Helping Families Resource Centers](#) and a [two dollar increase in the base pay rate of Direct Support Professionals](#) was developed and shared with stakeholders. The Act 421 Children's Medicaid Option program application was submitted September 1, 2020.

**On target:**  Initiative

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<p><b>Obj. 2.6</b> Louisiana will reduce reliance on institutional services for people with developmental disabilities.</p>	
<p><b>2.6.1</b> Advocate for utilization of the ROW 50 pilot and other opportunities to transition out of institutional settings.</p>	<p>No update this quarter.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b>                      Advocated for continued usage of the ROW 50 pilot at various meetings with the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities leadership.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Initiative</b></p>
<p><b>Obj. 2.7</b> Individuals with developmental disabilities will benefit from changes, consistent with Council positions, in policy and practice in state and local agencies and programs.</p>	
<p><b>2.7.1</b> Advocate for systems change based on emergent community support issues.</p>	<p>No update this quarter.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b>                      Participated in discussion with the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities leadership regarding low reimbursement rates in the Residential Options Waiver after concerns were noted by providers. The department is looking at options for ROW recipients to more easily share services and how federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars may be used to help support rate increases if approved by LDH.</p> <p>Council staff continues to participate in meetings with Emergency Management Disability and Aged Coalition in efforts to respond to COVID-19 and multiple natural disasters.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Initiative</b></p>

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<p><b>2.7.2</b> Provide financial support for promotion, awareness, training and support in implementation of Supported Decision Making. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$50,000</b></p>	<p>As of September 30, 2021, ten (10) trainings have occurred with 134 participants in attendance. Additionally, four (4) self-advocates are being mentored through the Supported Decision Making process. One (1) self-advocate has completed the mentoring process with a signed supported decision-making agreement.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> The Arc of Louisiana continues to offer statewide regional training events for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their family members to increase their understanding of Supported Decision Making (SDM), also known as the Dustin Gary Act of the 2020 Louisiana legislative session, and other legal options available in Louisiana.</p> <p>A training schedule and registration information can be found <a href="#">here</a>. The site will be updated as more trainings are scheduled. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training events will be held via online webinars rather than in-person at this time. Training schedules will be shared with all FHF Centers, People First of LA and Disability Rights LA.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
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**2.7.3** Provide financial support to establish pilot programs in multiple regions across the state on first-responder tactics, approaches and resources in fostering relationships with and dealing with individuals with developmental disabilities and training for people with developmental disabilities on how to interact with first responders.

**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost:**  
**\$50,000**

Shared [LaDDC News](#) on July 29<sup>th</sup> advertising initiative and upcoming trainings. Since July 1, 2021, Interaction Advisory Group (IAG) has conducted 7 training sessions for First Responder Professionals (5 of which were conducted “in-kind” by the contractor and were not at the expense of the Council). There were 143 professionals trained during these sessions this quarter. The total number of professionals trained through this initiative is now at 461. Monthly Community training events are still being conducted and are available to all Louisiana residents. One event was held in July with three attendees in participation.

As additional community events are scheduled, they will be updated on the [Council's website](#).

**Previous Quarter(s):**

Interaction Advisory Group (IAG) conducts virtual training sessions for First Responder Professionals routinely scheduled for the first Thursday of every month. These trainings began on January 12<sup>th</sup> and will continue through September 2021. IAG has been requested by multiple agencies to provide this training to entire forces, which include law enforcement agencies, Attorney General offices, and EMT agencies. Due to this overwhelming response, IAG conducted an additional training for First Responders in March at no cost to the DD Council. As of March 30<sup>th</sup>, 60 professionals have attended these trainings. IAG also conducted a community training event for Louisiana residents in February with the next public training event occurring on April 19<sup>th</sup>. IAG continues to collaborate with Families Helping Families, Autism Society of LA, and other appropriate entities to help with community participation in the public events, and through those contacts has a self-advocate help with the presentation during the training sessions for both the First Responder Professionals and public community events.

Interaction Advisory Group developed a training plan to begin with the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office and to quickly spread training throughout the state each month. Throughout November and December, IAG contacted “Families Helping Families” as well as multiple autism affiliates across the state of LA and have been in discussion with them about assisting IAG with self-advocate participation within first responder trainings and community trainings.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures

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**2.7.4** Provide financial support to establish a training program on emergency preparedness and response relative to people with developmental disabilities

**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost:**  
**\$20,000**

Shared [LaDDC News](#) on July 26<sup>th</sup> advertising initiative and upcoming trainings. Since July 1<sup>st</sup>, one webinar was conducted on August 10<sup>th</sup> with 42 attendees. Due to extensive impacts across the state from Hurricane Ida, webinars scheduled for August 31<sup>st</sup>, September 21<sup>st</sup> and September 23<sup>rd</sup> were canceled. The contractor will complete these makeup trainings in Fiscal Year '22. As updated trainings are scheduled, the [Council's website](#) will be updated.

### **Previous Quarter(s):**

The additional introductory webinars for this initiative that were conducted on April 29<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup> had 158 attendees. The contractor partnered with Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities to conduct webinars for Support Coordinators, Direct Support Workers, and other professionals in June 2021. These sessions had an overwhelming 485 registered attendees. More sessions for both professionals and the public are scheduled for August and September. Click [here](#) to see the most up-to-date schedule and registration information.

Outreach with appropriate emergency management entities has been marginally more successful since the last quarterly report. An introductory webinar was developed specifically for LA that will highlight the intentions and full program to be delivered. The first of these webinars was conducted on March 30, 2021, which had 55 registrants. Additional introductory webinars have been scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> and May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Niagara University has been identifying key stakeholders and establishing connections with disability organizations and emergency planning/preparedness/response entities statewide. The contractor reports that responses to these outreach attempts have been minimal. Their initial review of processes implemented in LA revealed a lack of representation from the disability community in planning, preparedness, response, and recovery.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures



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<p><b>2.7.5</b> Provide financial support to coordinate rapid response during a natural disaster or state of emergency for individuals with the most severe disabilities and medical conditions. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$10,000</b></p>	<p>Contractor has been working with other groups to advertise the availability of and utilize funds to assist individuals and families impacted by Hurricane Ida. Contract will be extended to June 2022. <a href="#">LaDDC News</a> was shared on September 29<sup>th</sup> advertising this initiative and the availability of funds.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> Contract initiated with Trach Mommas of LA to provide individuals with developmental disabilities and their family equipment and supplies not otherwise covered by their Medicaid or private insurance during natural disasters and states of emergency.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>2.7.6</b> Provide financial support to respond to COVID-19 or other natural disasters. <b>Approx. FFY 2021 Cost: \$2,500</b></p>	<p>The Council received an additional \$53,833 in federal funding that is specifically to be used for assisting individuals to receive COVID-19 vaccinations. Efforts have been made to coordinate with our DD Network sister agencies (LSUHSC – Human Development Center and Disability Rights LA), who also received additional federal funding specifically for this purpose, to create and implement federally approved activities regarding this initiative.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>Obj. 2.8</b> Individuals receiving waiver services through the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) will have access to a full range of quality health care services that result in improved overall health outcomes.</p>	
<p><b>2.8.1</b> Publicize healthcare provider continuing education opportunities.</p>	<p>No update this quarter</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> Healthcare continuing education opportunities were publicized and promoted via the Council's social media pages on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Those interested in participating in the educational trainings can access the webinars via the <a href="#">LSU Human Development Center's website</a>.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>

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**2.8.2** Advocate for waivers to provide access to services listed in the [Freedom of Choice Provider Listing](#), continue exemptions and flexibilities initiated with COVID-19; and consider individualized emergency preparedness considerations for people with severe disabilities and medical issues.

LDH included in its New Opportunities Waiver renewal (currently awaiting approval from CMS) language that would allow non-legally responsible caregivers who reside in the home be paid caregivers. [LaDDC News](#) shared on July 21<sup>st</sup> informing public of the opportunity to submit feedback to the department.

### **Previous Quarter(s):**

Advocated for the continuation of some COVID-19 waiver exceptions including allowing a direct support worker (DSW) to exceed 16 hours per day, allow for DSWs to reside in the same home as the person receiving services, and allow providers and support coordinators to conduct virtual check ins and electronic signatures. Proposed legislation ([House Bill 204](#)) by Representative Turner, if passed, would have permanently continued these exceptions. However, HB204 failed to complete the legislative process. The department released the [following letter](#) indicating their efforts and ongoing work to continue some of the exceptions.

Shared information via [LaDDC News](#) on April 19, 2021 regarding the Office of Community Partnerships and Health Equity's webinar surrounding COVID-19, its impact on persons with disabilities and providers, and the vaccine.

The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) will host listening sessions on April 5<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup> to share plans for Home and Community Based Waiver Services after the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ends, and to solicit feedback on those plans. OCDD will provide information on recent federal legislation and funding opportunities and solicited feedback on how the funds should be used from stakeholders. ([LaDDC News](#))

Proposed legislation ([House Bill 204](#)) by Representative Turner, if passed, would permanently continue some COVID exceptions including allowing a DSW to exceed 16 hours per day, allow for DSWs to reside in the same home as the person receiving services, and allow providers and support coordinators to conduct virtual check-ins and electronic signatures.

The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) held a stakeholders' meeting on October 14, 2020 to discuss the ending of the home and community-based waiver exceptions (Appendix K) implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These exceptions were set to expire in January 2021, but the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved extensions until at least July 2021. More information can be found in the [LaDDC News](#) sent on December 23, 2020.

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	On target: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative
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**Obj. 2.9** Individuals with developmental disabilities and their families will have information and training on sexuality, sexual abuse and exploitation.

**2.9.1** Provide financial support for training on sexuality and relationships and to build awareness and skills with recognizing and handling sexual abuse and exploitation of people with developmental disabilities and publicize available webinars on these topics.

**Approximate FFY 2021 Cost:**  
**\$55,000**

Unfortunately, due to ongoing impacts from Hurricane Ida, days two and three of the 6 topic had to be rescheduled for September 29<sup>th</sup> and October 5<sup>th</sup>. Participants that were unable to participate in the rescheduled dates will be offered to participate in the final retreat training scheduled for Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>.

Team Dynamics presented on this initiative and discussed its partnership with the Council at the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs annual conference in July and will be presenting at the American Public Health Association Conference in October.

**Previous Quarter(s):**

As of June 2021, six training events have occurred with 116 individuals participating (17 self-advocates and 99 family members/caregivers).

As of March 2020, three training events have occurred with 14 self-advocates and 46 family members/caregivers in attendance.

Contract initiated with Team Dynamics, LLC. to offer training events statewide to increase adult self-advocates and their family members' understanding of healthy and unhealthy relationships and issues that lead to and ways to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of individuals with disabilities. [LaDDC News](#) sent on December 21, 2020 to advertise upcoming initiative and scheduled trainings.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures

**Goal 3** Students with disabilities will have access to quality, individualized educational programs that address their unique skills, interests, and goals in inclusive environments.

**Obj. 3.1** Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team members will have increased levels of information and support to demonstrate effective individualized programming consistent with best practice and to enable each member to participate fully as members of the IEP team.

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<p><b>3.1.1</b> Advocate for increased focus and capacity within LDOE to address Special Education, including specific areas/issues (i.e., disability/topical/etc.)</p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> After collaborating with State Senator Franklin Foil, <a href="#">SB86</a> was introduced during the 2021 Legislative Session. This bill addresses the Council's Advocacy Agenda item of requiring cameras be installed in special education classrooms upon request of parents/teachers/administrators. With support from stakeholders (including the Louisiana School Board Association) and other legislators, this bill was passed with amendments and signed into law by Governor Jon Bel Edwards as <a href="#">Act 456</a>.</p> <p>Council Chair and staff participated in a meeting with the Louisiana School Board Association to discuss cameras in special education classrooms upon request. LSBA indicated that they could not fully support this advocacy agenda without statistical data demonstrating the need for this item.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Initiative</b></p>
<p><b>3.1.2</b> Advocate for support structure in school systems that assures adequate understanding and skill to develop and implement IEP's and increased infrastructure of training and technical assistance provided to parents and schools simultaneously.</p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Initiative</b></p>
<p><b>Obj. 3.3</b> Students with developmental disabilities will benefit from changes, consistent with Council positions, in policy and practice in educational agencies and programs.</p>	

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<p><b>3.3.1</b> Advocate for educational systems change based on emergent education issues.</p>	<p><b>Previous Quarter(s):</b> The Council's Interim Executive Director participated in a workgroup of the Advisory Council on Student Behavior and Discipline, which led to creation of <a href="#">HB411</a> that was introduced by Representative Jason Hughes into the 2021 Legislative Session. This bill makes comprehensive revisions to school discipline laws and requires the La. Department of Education to publish data regarding disciplinary removals. HB411 was passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Jon Bel Edwards as <a href="#">Act 473</a>.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>
<p><b>Obj. 3.4</b> An increased number of students with disabilities are included in school culture.</p>	
<p><b>3.4.1</b> Provide information and promote inclusion and acceptance of effective models of school culture.</p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>

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**3.4.2** Provide financial support to establish a Post-Secondary Inclusive Education Alliance to provide mentoring and technical assistance, host training events and develop resources designed to build the capacity of Louisiana postsecondary institutions in providing inclusive postsecondary education opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout Louisiana.

**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost:**  
**\$40,000**

No updates received at time of report – due to after-effects of Hurricane Ida.

### **Previous Quarter(s):**

Alliance members with established Post-Secondary Inclusive Education programs were requested to participate in the production of a promotional video to showcase participants in their programs. That video is expected to be released in July 2021.

Two (2) Alliance members attended the Multiple Perspective Think College Virtual Conference, and ten (10) members attended the Southeastern Post-Secondary Education Alliance Conference.

University of Louisiana at Monroe made contact with the Alliance and has begun the process to establish an inclusive program to be offered on their campus. McNeese State University has made also made initial contact with the Alliance to express interest, discuss these various programs, and the necessary process for establishment. Grambling State University is still attempting to get the appropriate approvals for an inclusive program to be offered on their campus.

The Alliance has been strategically planning for Spring and Summer 2021 projects to include the following:

1. A monthly newsletter will be developed focusing on a variety of topics throughout Spring/Summer 2021:
  - Interviews with established Post-Secondary Programs in Louisiana
  - Updates on how Alliance is dealing with COVID-19 restrictions
  - Day-to-day challenges in running a Post-Secondary Inclusive Transition Program
  - Updated FAQs section
  - Featured state programs
  - Resources
2. Southeastern University of LA will spearhead a Zoom meeting schedule across the state to recruit for the Alliance and provide guidance for established programs, new programs, and for those interested in developing a program.
3. Set up training webinars for the Alliance.

Louisiana State University at Alexandria has successfully conducted fundraising and is on track to begin a pilot Post-secondary Inclusive Education program the Fall 2021 semester. Grambling State University is still in the process of submitting appropriate documents for grants to begin the development of an inclusive program on their campus.

**On target:**  Initiative  Expenditures

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**Goal 4** Students with disabilities are considered from the initial phases to the completion of planning and program development of educational policies and initiatives.

**Obj. 4.2** All schools (charter/magnet) accepting public dollars will accept and serve all students with disabilities appropriately.

**4.2.1** Advocate for Type 2 and Type 5 charter schools to be required to meet 85% rule of enrolling students with disabilities at rates similar to those found in traditional public schools and advocate for and monitor equitable funding based on Minimum Foundation Program (MFP).

No activity this quarter.

**On target:**  **Initiative**

**Obj. 4.3** Stakeholders will have increased opportunities to provide authentic input that will impact decisions on policies effecting students with disabilities.

**4.3.1** Advocate for increased meaningful opportunities for stakeholder input, improved practices to facilitate stakeholder input, and consideration of stakeholder recommendations.

No activity this quarter.

**On target:**  **Initiative**

**Goal 5** Individuals with developmental disabilities including those with the most substantial employment support needs will have access to quality individualized services and funding that support competitive integrated individualized employment, and career and financial goals.



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**Obj. 5.1** An increased number of individuals with developmental disabilities will have access to qualified providers who offer a stable workforce of supported employment professionals with recognized skills sets demonstrated to be effective in supporting people with disabilities getting and maintaining employment.

**5.1.1** Advocate for employment support professionals to complete high-quality professional development for the improvement of service provisions and employment outcomes.

No activity this quarter.

**On target:**  **Initiative**

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**5.1.3** Provide funding to build the capacity of employment providers in customized employment in a manner which will lead to certification through a competency-based certification program.

**Approx. FFY 2020 Cost:**  
**\$50,000**

Two (2) participants are completing the Job Development Certification class. We are hoping to follow up this class with a Systematic Instruction class for full certification in all three areas.

The Discovery Certification class started in July 2021 with 8 participants. Participants are working toward certification but are waiting for a learning partner. The Arc will be reaching out to LRS to help with this.

The Discovery Gateway should have been completed in September; however, Hurricane Ida pushed two of the classes to October 7 & 8. In this class, they will discuss and cover follow-up negotiations, responding to employer objectives, the job analysis, and customized job descriptions. The Arc will follow up this class with a certification class starting in November.

### **Previous Quarter(s):**

Marc Gold & Associates conducted a virtual Discovery Gateway training event in April 2021. Twenty-five (25) Employment Support Professionals (ESPs) registered to attend, and 14 attended all of the required 6 days for this Gateway. Only 8 ESPs have chosen to pursue Certification Mentoring in Discovery and began that 16 week course on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Louisiana Rehabilitation Services has assisted in locating learning partners for the ESPs to participate in Certification Mentoring and subsequent training for Customized Employment. A Job Development Gateway training event will be conducted virtually by Marc Gold & Associates for 6 days in August 2021.

From a previous class of five (5), there are 2 Employment Support Professionals (ESP's) still on track to complete Job Development Certification Mentoring through Marc Gold & Associates (MG&A). Due to COVID-19, MG&A will be conducting a virtual Discovery Gateway training for ESP's over the course of 6 half days during the month of April with subsequent virtual Certification Mentoring being offered by the Council for those interested after attending the Discovery Gateway. A virtual Job Development Gateway training is also intended to be scheduled in the same manner during late summer.

Due to COVID-19, Marc Gold & Associates will not be able to offer certification for the Systematic Instruction component of Customized Employment. LSU-HDC has also encountered delays in their efforts to become training and certification providers in Customized Employment due to the pandemic. However, the contract with Arc of LA was renewed for this activity so that more Employment Support Professionals (ESPs) may participate in Discovery and Job Development Gateways and Certification mentoring. This will allow multiple ESPs to be ready to pursue

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	<p>certification in Systematic Instruction either once MG&amp;A can provide certification again, or by LSU-HDC once they have completed their requirements to offer training and certification.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>Obj. 5.2</b> An increased number of individuals with developmental disabilities will have information and access to an integrated workforce development system that is fully-funded.</p>	
<p><b>5.2.1</b> Advocate for employment providers to have access to financial incentives to support unserved and underserved populations including people with the most substantial employment support needs in competitive integrated individualized employment.</p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>
<p><b>Obj. 5.3</b> Individuals with developmental disabilities, their families, and professionals in the various service systems will have increased expectations that people with developmental disabilities can have successful competitive, integrated, individualized employment.</p>	
<p><b>5.3.1</b> Share the benefits planning services to a variety of agencies and stakeholders.</p>	<p>Information on this topic can be found on the Council’s website under <a href="#">Employment Initiatives</a>.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>
<p><b>5.3.2</b> Share DD Council employment videos featuring individuals with developmental disabilities on their jobs.</p>	<p>O’Neill Communications is in the process of creating a video of this nature which is associated with Activity 1.4.3.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>

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**5.3.3** Provide financial support to conduct seminars with Chambers of Commerce throughout the state on the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities.

**Approx. FFY 2021 Cost:**  
**\$32,000**

O'Neill Communications concluded the sending of 4 promotional emails for regions 4, 1 and 10. Digital LaDDC brochure and curriculum booklet was included in email #4

A combined webinar was presented to Regions 1 & 10, on July 27, and an individual webinar for Region 4 on July 13, which included researching local employment and placement organizations in the region and updating the PowerPoint and curriculum with appropriate information.

Email and registration results were analyzed to date on July 20. PowerPoint developed as an interim report on employment initiative performance. Findings and recommendations were presented to LaDDC's Education/Employment Committee.

### **Previous Quarter(s):**

The Council's listserv and social media accounts are utilized to advertise the inclusive employment webinars. Per recommendations from the Education/ Employment Committee, the route to the [inclusive employment webinars' site](#) was streamlined and placed in the banner of the [LaDDC homepage](#). Webinars were customized for all 10 regions throughout the state. Region 4 and Region 1/10 are scheduled to occur in July 2021. Completed webinars may still be accessed as they are recorded webinars and available on the inclusive employment webinars' [site](#).

O'Neill Communications finalized *Working Together*, Louisiana's campaign to create inclusive employment opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and to provide businesses and employers "how to" strategies for recruiting, hiring, and retaining these employees in an inclusive work environment. Ten, 60-minute webinars are planned in partnership with local chambers of commerce, Society for Human Resource Managers chapters, Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, and the LA Workforce Commission.

Webinars will be presented with the assistance of Jeff Arseneaux (Inclusive Employment Consultant, Entrepreneur with 30 years of management and distribution experience and recipient of Governor Jon Bel Edwards' 2019 Ken Vince Memorial Award).

Regions 2, 3, 7, and 8 are finalized and being held in April and May with registration taking place now. The remaining regions (1/10, 4, 5, 6, 9) are still being scheduled as O'Neill Communications continues to communicate with those Chambers of Commerce. O'Neill Communications created a [site](#) for employers interested in registering for a webinar or anyone wanting to learn more about the *Working Together* campaign.

O'Neill Communications has conducted research and created the following documents:

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	<p>1) Curriculum content for the employment seminars;</p> <p>2) Initial outreach email/memo to potential partners at LDH, LRS, Governor’s Office for Disability Affairs, Department of Labor/Workforce Commission, Disability Rights Louisiana and Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network; and</p> <p>3) Proposed Brand strategy with logo options, campaign description and background materials for distribution to partners and Council Members</p> <p>O’Neill Communications intends to host two (2) seminars each month from March through July 2021 with all 10 regions of the state being covered.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Expenditures</p>
<p><b>Obj. 5.4</b> Individuals with DD will benefit from changes, consistent with Council positions, in policy and practice in employment agencies/programs.</p>	
<p><b>5.4.1</b> Advocate for systems change based on emergent employment issues.</p>	<p>No activity this quarter.</p> <p><b>On target:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Initiative</p>