

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Self-Determination and Community Inclusion
July 19, 2023

BROOKE STEWART: Good afternoon, everyone. It is 1:02 and I would like to call the meeting to order. Brenton, would you mind doing the roll call.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Sure. Ms. Airhart. Dr. Barovechio.

LANOR ROBINSON: Here.

BRENTON ANDRUS: State your name for the record, please.

LANOR ROBINSON: Lanor Robinson.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And Ms. Robinson is here on behalf of Dr. Barovechio. Ms. Basile. Ms. Crain.

CHERI CRAIN: Here.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Ms. Hagan.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Here.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Ms. Hano.

JILL HANO: Here.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Ms. Harmon.

ANGELA HARMON: Present.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Ms. Hymel. Mr. Rocca. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Here.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Perfect. And that is six members. You have a quorum.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Brenton. Before we get started I want to remind you all of a few rules. For attendees please wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking. To help the meeting run smoothly please keep side conversations kept to a minimum and comments related to the topic we are discussing. Also comments about a person's character will not be tolerated.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I do have one more thing to add. Sorry. All of these microphones that we have on the table, they're constantly live. We have no way of muting individual microphones that might be in front of you. And they pick up literally everything. So keep that in mind especially if you're having any side conversations it will be picked up and broadcast on YouTube. Especially if you're shuffling any papers or

making a lot of noise it can be picked up on the mikes, so please just be considerate of that.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. Everyone should have reviewed the January meeting summary which was attached in the agenda you received via email. There's also a copy in your packet. Just a reminder we did not have an April meeting summary since we did not meet last quarter. If there are no objections to the summary, we can approve the summary by unanimous consent. Are there any objections? Hearing no objections, the January meeting summary is passed by unanimous consent.

So next on the agenda is a discussion about a recent financial audit that was completed on Families Helping Families of New Orleans. You received a copy of the audit that was sent to the council. You also received a copy of the letter our executive director sent to the center's board requesting a corrective action plan for the concerns noted in the audit and their response. Brenton, would you start us off by summarizing the concerns that were noted in the auditor's report.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Sure. So I didn't put it up on the screen because both documents are pretty lengthy, and you have that in your packets so I'm not going to pull it up on the screen because it's not going to go necessarily line by line where you would be able to scroll through and see it anyway. But like Ms. Stewart said, you should have included in your packet is going to be the audit and then it's going to be the corrective action plan. So all of our FHF centers go through annual financial audits and that's through the legislative auditor's office. And so since they are the experts, we rely on their information to kind of paint a financial picture for the centers. We do our own audits each year and that's mostly looking at deliverables, which is what we report out to you every quarter that we have a meeting. And it's those deliverables that we have in our contract are those that are being met. We don't necessarily have the expertise to go into detailed financial statements and things that a legislative auditor is looking for in that particular audit. So we rely on those deliverables being met to kind of paint a picture of performance, if you will, for the center for that year.

So in this particular audit it's a public document and it is on the legislative auditor's website. It details multiple concerns and hopefully you had a chance to review it ahead of time. But some of the concerns that were noted were issues with bank account reconciliations not being completed regularly or accurately. Operating on lines of credit at or near the limit for much of the year. Overdraft fees being charged. Many of those it was due to payroll being drafted from an account with insufficient funds. Lack of supporting documentation on hand for things like invoices, grant documentation. And so that's more of like a bookkeeping issue. Receivables that weren't being tracked which led to invoices going unpaid. Insufficient methods for tracking and recording employee receivables. And that's like loans or employee pay advances, those types of things. There were payroll taxes for one of the employees that went unpaid for the year. And there was a failure to submit the annual financial report to the legislative auditor within six months of years end. And that happened, and some of these I don't have which ones in particular were found in 2021 and 2022, but some of them were for two fiscal years and some of them were just for the 2022 year.

So when we came across the audit, our Executive Director Amy, she reached out to the board president by phone and by email just to say hey, we're aware of this audit and we wanted a corrective action plan of what's being done to address these concerns. And so that is, like I said, in your packet. That was sent to us. And we also had, and I'm going to turn it over to Ms. Aishia Johnson. She is the executive director of FHF NOLA. And so she came out here just to be able to talk to you guys in more detail about what they are doing to address the concerns and answer any questions that you may have. If you want, you can come to the table. I know there's some room on this side.

AISHA JOHNSON: So I have some packets going out for the committee that I put together to show you guys what we have done, what we have prepared to do with the corrective action plan. I've also included our yearend from last fiscal year showing a positive balance of what we had at the end of the fiscal year. I want to

say that how we got here. If I could briefly, I don't want to take up too much of your time, but I want to say how we got here is that in those previous years of these audits I was in the process of trying to put the organization back together from the pandemic. We had, we're actually just getting back to our office July 1, 2022, last year. So we've only been back in our office one year. We did have a lot of issues with paperwork because we were shuffling back and forth setting up home offices and making sure that individuals had all the things that they needed to be successful at home. As the leader I'm not making any excuses and I take full responsibility. I think that during that time there was a lack of oversight because we were trying to not only, well, trying to run the organization. Having a lot of our staff that was out sick. My bookkeeper who has multiple sclerosis was also sick often for the last couple of years. And also trying to figure out how to do the books when the executive director is not supposed to do the books. So we were in the process of trying to figure those things out.

So what we've done, we did not, I did not sugarcoat anything with the auditor. I did not make up any documentation that he was looking for. We sat down and we talked about what needed to happen. The organization is very viable. I am always looking for funding to keep the organization running. In your packet you'll also see the budget of what we use the DDC funds for. And it maps out pretty much all of that. There's also in the yearend you will see that there is a pay advance outstanding, one pay advance for 1,006 something dollars. We do pay advances because our Families Helping Families, we can't give our staff paid vacations, insurance and all those other perks. And we're barely paying living wages. And sometimes our staff needs a pay advance just to get through the week until they can get to their next pay date. We're no longer doing that anymore because the auditor brought to my attention that I'm taking too long to allow them to pay it back. I was allowing them to pay it back a little bit at a time, you know, when they got paid. And so when it came time for the audit, they weren't paid off all the way by the end of the fiscal year. And so what I've decided to do is not offer that

perk anymore to keep that from being an issue.

We maxed out our line of credit because during the pandemic we had three or four funders that did not pay us for months at a time. And so we had to use the line of credit in order to continue to get paid and keep the organization running throughout the pandemic. And so we did, in fact, max out the line of credit. It's no longer maxed out. We have been paying on it and we worked out other arrangements with the bank as well. I've also included in your packet a list of grants that we have written for, grants that we have gotten, grants that are pending that we continue to use to continue the operation of the organization.

I've also included our engagement letter. I did let the bookkeeper go and we're now using an accounting firm so that all of our information and everything could be correct. He's also sitting in to correct any other issues that he may see that he has. We're actually in the process of reviewing all of those things. We are preparing for our upcoming audit from the last fiscal year. So I'm pretty sure that you all will see that this new audit will be a whole lot better. We have, we lost our auditor during the pandemic, so we had to get a new auditor that was also not familiar, but we didn't know this, that was not familiar with nonprofit organizations. The other reason we maxed out our line of credit is because he did not know that if we didn't turn our audit in time, we would be put on a noncompliant list which would in turn stop our funding from coming in. So we had to use, again, that line of credit in order to continue to operate.

We are moving forward making all of these different changes that I have also included in your packet. We also have, I have the other thing was in the pandemic we could not have our yearly fundraiser that usually brings in 30, 35,000-dollars to the organization for general funding. We could not do that. We are finally beginning to put Families Helping Families NOLA back together. We are growing. We have started a new program called Computing for Youth with Autism that has brought in a lot of additional funding for the organization. We are now recognized as LRS vendors. So we are helping individuals who are in our

program to get jobs. And LRS is a funding stream now for the organization as well.

We are, like I said, we are moving forward. We are addressing all of these things. These things have already begun with hiring the accounting firm and working with them to correct anything that they see for the next audit which is about to happen. I'm more than happy, of course, the audit is public knowledge. It's, you know, on the legislative auditor's website. However, as soon as the audit is done, I can share that with the council for you all to review. And I can come back and answer any questions that you all may have as well. And to say that the money that we receive from the council is key to keeping our organization up and running. It is a huge portion of how we continue to run the organization. So taking away the contract would be detrimental to the organization and to the families that we serve. I know that Nicole is going to share a report on the Families Helping Families centers and the amount of individuals that we all serve. What's prevalent, what's not prevalent. And how we move forward in all of these endeavors.

I am asking you all to take all of these things in consideration when you're thinking about this new fiscal year contract and to allow me to make this right. We have never ever in the history that I've been here, I've been with Families Helping Families 13 years, I've been the ED for about 8 years. We have never ever, ever had a complaint to come to the DDC. We've never had an issue with our audits until now, baring it's pandemic time, everything was new. We're trying to figure it out. I'm asking that you all give us a chance to correct this and to make this right. And you won't be sorry. Anybody have any questions for me? Yes, ma'am.

JILL HANO: I'm not sure who requested you to come to us?

AISHA JOHNSON: Who sent this request to you guys? So it was an anonymous email that came across that was sent to you all.

AMY DEAVILLE: It was an anonymous email, but the audit is--

AISHA JOHNSON: Public knowledge.

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. And separate from that. So

we would have questioned about the audit anyway. We already knew about it and were looking at it.

BRENTON ANDRUS: The audit should be sent to us as part of contractual obligation whenever it's done. This one wasn't but we found it probably about a month and a half after it came out just cruising through the website. But it is public knowledge. That's usually where we go to the website when we haven't received it to find them.

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes. I didn't know that. I thought it was just sent through the letter.

SPEAKER: I have one question. The letter that you sent in the blue folder that you provided on the second page, number five, just has the responsibility of timely filing of annual reports?

AISHA JOHNSON: Yeah. With the accounting firm that we hired, they're going to be doing all of that stuff.

SPEAKER: And that's the--

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes, ma'am.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I have a couple of questions. One would be I guess for the outstanding lines of credit what is, what's the end date for that? I know you said you worked out a plan. Do you anticipate having that paid off?

AISHA JOHNSON: Yeah. By the end of this year. December.

BRENTON ANDRUS: December. So a few months from now. As far as the legislative auditor's annual reporting requirements you had mentioned something, I don't know if I misunderstood, but the auditor at the time did not know of those requirements so they didn't cue you, I guess, to say hey, this has to be done.

AISHA JOHNSON: Yep.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So from a responsibility standpoint shouldn't you keep track of that?

AISHA JOHNSON: I should.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And (inaudible) the auditor.

AISHA JOHNSON: Absolutely. I should. And I was in constant communication with this auditor, and I actually told the auditor that we need to have this done in a timely manner. He actually filed for an extension. He filed for an extension so we could extend the time that he needed to complete the audit.

The extension was granted and so we continued to move forward. It wasn't until I found that we weren't getting payments that he did not file the actual, like he went past the extension date.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And when did you find out you weren't getting payments?

AISHA JOHNSON: When we weren't getting payments.

BRENTON ANDRUS: When the audit was completed or when?

AISHA JOHNSON: The audit should have been completed at that time, but it wasn't.

BRENTON ANDRUS: No. I guess did you realize prior to the 2022 audit when they came in to do the audit did you realize you weren't getting paid or was it when they came in and they started looking in your books that you realized oh, we didn't have these payments?

AISHA JOHNSON: No. No. Yeah, I knew that we didn't have the payments because I was calling and saying hey, we didn't get paid and that's when I found out we were on the noncompliant list.

BRENTON ANDRUS: The other thing I had a question about, I mean I understood, I understand Covid. It threw everybody into a tailspin. But, you know, we were home for two years. A lot of these other centers were home. I don't understand or how are your responsibilities going to change? Like what have you put in place to do these follow-ups. Because I get it. Everybody's working from home, but like I still had to make sure the person I supervised is getting their work done. I had to make sure they were set up. I kept track of my invoices, and I kept track of things. And just doing with what we do with the other centers they had to do the same thing. And so I'm wondering what makes yours the exception to all the others?

AISHA JOHNSON: I'm not as seasoned as the other FHF directors. I'm not as free as the other directors. When the pandemic hit, I have two children on the autism spectrum with complex health issues. I was sick with Covid a couple of times. Staff was sick. We, you know, I tried my best to supervise. I have an assistant director who also we tried our best to supervise and make sure that things were in place and that things were happening. You know, everybody's not the same. Everybody handles things differently. I'm

totally different from the other executive directors and trying to figure that out was a huge task for me. And it still is a task for me trying to make sure that the organization is consistent in what we're doing and making sure that the organization is viable and making sure that folks are doing what they're supposed to do. I think that my job as the executive director is to ensure that the day-to-day operations and everything is happening so the organization could run smoothly. My assistant director supervises the staff so that we can make those things happen. I now have implemented weekly check-ins with the leadership staff at the center to make sure that things are happening and running smoothly. I am more present now as opposed to the last two years. I am still dealing with the death of my husband and moving through that. I have been present making sure that things are happening within the organization, making sure that deliverables are met. Creating more programming. Making sure that we have more funding. You know, to continue these operations. And yeah.

BRENTON ANDRUS: You said you hired a new bookkeeper?

AISHA JOHNSON: We did. We hired a bookkeeping firm.

JILL HANO: When were they hired?

AISHA JOHNSON: I'm sorry?

JILL HANO: When were they hired?

AISHA JOHNSON: Effective yesterday.

EBONY HAVEN: I have a question. Or Ms. Stewart, can I ask a question?

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: So yeah. I just want to follow up with the accounting firm. Are they going to be monitoring-- so I know you guys are LRS vendors now. Are they going to be monitoring state payments for y'all?

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes. Through the OSARP. I think that's what it's called.

EBONY HAVEN: So if for some reason the DD Council funding doesn't come through.

AISHA JOHNSON: They will know.

EBONY HAVEN: They are going to know.

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes. I'm going to know. It's the

blurred lines with finances and the executive director. And so it's now with that also with these new folks is making sure what it is exactly that I can do dealing with, you know, bookkeeping and finances and all of that because you can't, an executive director can't do all of that. We're monitoring and making sure that those things are happening, but I can't physically go in and cut a check and do all this other stuff. I don't even make deposits.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So I know that part of our contract is the directors would have, I think in the contract we say quarterly calls, if I'm not mistaken. Do y'all do them?

AISHA JOHNSON: Oh, the directors' calls. Yeah.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So I'm just curious, have you used them as a sounding board throughout this entire process?

AISHA JOHNSON: Absolutely. Yep.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Cause I just, I'm going to be honest, because we have to monitor these things, I'm still trying to grasp my head around two years of all this stuff sliding. And I understand things happen. I'm not discrediting that. But it's just really hard to figure out how so much lacking in managerial responsibility is happening. Especially if you have a deputy or assistant as well. And I guess this is probably more of a question for your board in that how is that being addressed. Like I understand you're putting things in place, but who monitors you to make sure that these things are happening as well. Because I get the effort of we're doing X, Y and Z to make sure this happens, but, I mean, we're only a month into the corrective action of two years of problems.

AISHA JOHNSON: Well, actually, some of those things from the first year were actually corrected when we had the meeting with, when my board chair and I had a meeting with the auditor he said this year was better than last year but there needs to be better bookkeeping is what he said to us. My board, I email and call my board all the time even though we only meet quarterly. But I am in constant contact with them, with Dennis who is our treasurer, with Lauren who is our board chair and attorney. Especially when things come up and I need to have that advice on what to do. And so what

they do is when something comes up and I'm calling them they do their sound board. They come, we talk about it, we try to fix it. They are aware of all of the audits. We talk about the audit in the meeting once the audit comes up and we go through the meeting as a group, and we talk about the corrective action and what the plan should look like and what the plan should be. And right now that's where we are, you know, with the two years of, you know, this situation. They are always present. The other EDs have definitely, Nicole and Charley and Chanel, those folks have always offered to help and give some advice on, you know, especially now when all of this started to happen those are folks who reached out and said hey, if you need let's talk about if you need some help.

And so I am not opposed to any help. I think that there's a lot of other people who know things that I don't know and things that work for them that may definitely work for us. So I'm always out looking for additional supports, and I'm always out looking for additional help. I mean, there was times when I contacted the council about when I was trying to get us back to work I called and I said well, what does your schedule look like because I want us to go back into the office. What does your schedule look like. How can I implement that schedule. So I'm always looking for advice and help on certain things because all of this is, well, coming back and trying to deal with things and putting the organization back together it's new as opposed to coming into an organization that's there and things are set up and things are in place. If that answers your question.

EBONY HAVEN: I have one more question. Okay. So I remember you reaching out and asking about what our schedule was looking like. And so that was a while ago. We were in active Covid then. So I guess the question is what does the staff look like now?

AISHA JOHNSON: So we are back in the office full-time, and we've been back for the last year. We started July 1.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Is it everyone full time or y'all have like a rotation?

AISHA JOHNSON: Everyone. And I think the reason for that too was because of the paperwork situation.

And I was like everybody needs to be in one place. We need to be in one place. We did implement a cloud where we can scan paperwork and put it in a cloud where folks can get to it. But it's better now that everyone is in the office, and we have physical papers and receipts so on and so forth that people are turning in.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Were y'all able to get any assistance during Covid like through any of the PPE funds or any of that stuff to help float you?

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes. We did get some PPP money. And actually right now we actually qualified for ERC. And that's supposed to, we're supposed to get that in November, I believe.

BRENTON ANDRUS: What's ERC?

AISHA JOHNSON: Earned retention credit. Something like that.

BRENTON ANDRUS: One thing we did, I think it's included in the corrective action plan that y'all sent was an email that was sent. We haven't really talked about it much, but we're focused more on the audit. But I know your center does, as part of our contract, consumer satisfaction survey that's sent to us. So can you, I guess, address maybe that email and what you get from your auditing that you do for your consumer satisfaction surveys.

AISHA JOHNSON: We haven't had anything like that email come through our satisfaction surveys. This was our first time hearing of 20 concerned parents when we got this letter. Which actually showed up after I fired an employee and then we started getting the complaint letters stating that there was 20 concerned parents and whatever else the complaint was. My board chair and I have been open about addressing these concerns and these complaints, but we don't know who these people are. And so we can't address anonymous people although we've put it out there and we've tried to reach out. When we do, the process when we do get a complaint from a parent they usually call us, we sit down, we talk about it and we resolve it. And then if there's a complaint that can't be resolved then they go to our board and they sit with our board chair and they try to work out to resolve it there. We haven't had that. We haven't had anything like that in a while. So this email that just popped up is just all new. Yeah. And

we do those surveys quarterly when we make the calls to get the satisfaction surveys and ask folks what their experience was like, you know, with the center.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And for that email, I don't have it memorized, but I don't know that there was a phone number. But did y'all reach back out to that email address, try to set up a meeting?

AISHA JOHNSON: We reached out to that email address. That email was also, the first time was sent to Mary Jacob's center and she said that she actually talked to the lady but the lady did not want to give her or for her to give me her name or something to that extent. I don't know. But, you know, I tried then to reach out and, you know, to no avail. No response. Nothing. We've also decided to put the complaint process on our website for folks who may have a complaint this is what you need to do, who you need to reach out to if you can't resolve that here are the next steps.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Just one more question. When are those, when will the next audit be done? When would we expect to get the next audit report?

AISHA JOHNSON: So the audit has to be done by December 31st. And so right now we are engaging an auditor now and it might take him about two months. Once we get the auditor engaged then I can shoot an email saying hey, here's the engagement. We're starting the audit process. And then I can ask him what the timeframe is for you guys to expect it.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: So, and I'm sorry, just another, I'm trying to make sure-- so there's an independent audit that you guys paid for, but then the other audit is the LLA? Are there two audits?

AISHA JOHNSON: No. It's one audit. And I think the one you're talking about is the one that Brenton was talking about where they do more of deliverables audit.

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. There's only one financial audit. The FHF is a nonprofit. The FHF centers engage their own auditor for that process. But that audit has to be turned into legislative auditors.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Got it. Okay.

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: The complaint process you guys

you talked about that y'all were implementing and putting on your website, are y'all going to collect data from that survey?

AISHA JOHNSON: We could.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: And I'm just thinking like okay, so what are our steps. You know, there are some things I think the council will need to see. So just trying to think when we would expect that audit if there's data that potentially we could see related to the complaint process to get a feel for the community.

AISHA JOHNSON: Right. Well, we have those surveys that we do quarterly. And so we turn those into the council with our quarterly reports, our monthly reports. And so that data is there for three months of folks that we've talked to.

BRENTON ANDRUS: What's the process for determining who completes those satisfaction surveys? How do you grab those individuals?

AISHA JOHNSON: So we randomly choose from the three months of contact logs that we have.

SPEAKER: Is it the same amount every time? Like do you have a set amount?

AISHA JOHNSON: It's ten. Yes.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Any questions? If I'm not mistaken, as of this point you have not received a contract from the council, right?

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Or the current fiscal year which would be the FY 24.

AISHA JOHNSON: Yes.

BROOKE STEWART: I believe Mr. Taylor has a question.

ERICK TAYLOR: So our contract, your contract is basically the contract that they-- can you give me a little more information on that? The contract that we giving, is the one that's keeping them afloat?

AISHA JOHNSON: Uh-huh. Yeah. Along with a few other grants and stuff that we write and a few other contractors. We have to have a whole bunch of different funding streams in order to keep it fully operational.

EBONY HAVEN: So the LRS funding that you guys are receiving, do you guys receive funding like per person that you assist?

AISHA JOHNSON: Yeah. And that's pretty new. So we haven't started receiving like major funds from that yet.

SPEAKER: One more question. So Families Helping Families of New Orleans, so knowing that the funding that you get from the council is kind of what is a large chunk of what's keeping you afloat, who is supposed to be familiar with the contractual obligations to keep the money? Like what, like who, I thought you mentioned that they were supposed to like send you the audit report.

AISHA JOHNSON: Right. At the end of the contract period.

SPEAKER: Right. But you got it like-- well, we got it on our own. It wasn't given to the council. So whose responsibility is that to keep up with what is from you all?

AISHA JOHNSON: So that would be me. And then also my assistant director who actually made sure that the deliverables are being done. So yeah, that would be me.

JILL HANO: Okay. Also it's in the transcript and in the notes. Can we go or can you give us a rundown of what deliverables y'all have in the contract?

AISHA JOHNSON: Not offhand. I would have to have the contract in front of me.

BRENTON ANDRUS: For the council?

JILL HANO: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: Do we have the FHF center report in this packet?

SPEAKER: Jill, we have a chart.

SPEAKER: And it's up to date.

JILL HANO: Those are all our contract deliverables?

SPEAKER: Yes. And they met all their deliverables but one.

JILL HANO: Okay.

SPEAKER: The one that they did not meet was the outreach visits. And they were supposed to have 25, but they only had 18.

JILL HANO: Perfect.

SPEAKER: So to randomly choose who is going to be surveyed, is there a way the auditor could do that? So that we know, I'm not accusing anybody, but to know

that they were truly random to me I just think about it statistically.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, I think the auditor that did the financial audit that's not, that's not something that they do.

SPEAKER: What about the other auditor?

BRENTON ANDRUS: We do that.

AISHA JOHNSON: That's what I was about to say. They do that.

BRENTON ANDRUS: We'll randomly call 3, 4, 5 people.

SPEAKER: Okay. I just didn't know.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And so I guess the big, not really question, so I had asked if she received the contract. She hasn't because we haven't issued a contract until this discussion was had because there were a lot of concerns especially from folks on this committee that were brought to us when they found the audit which is why it was on here to have discussions and get your questions answered to make a determination of are we issuing a contract. Is it full funding. Like what is your wish of what we're doing here. You make a recommendation that goes to the council. It's kind of up to you guys at this point the direction that you would want to take. With this information we thought it's more appropriate for the committee to discuss rather than staff just to make a determination of what to do.

TORY ROCCA: When does the fiscal year begin?

BRENTON ANDRUS: July 1st. Our Families Helping Families centers run off of our state general funds. So all of our state general funds go to them. So that is the one contract that we have that runs off of the state fiscal year. The rest runs off of federal fiscal year so that would be October 1 through September timeframe.

SPEAKER: Has something like this happened with any other Families Helping Families?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, not fairly recently but do have issues that pop up from time to time with different centers where the council has stepped in. It really just depends. I know most recent history would be our center in region three. We had some management concerns there and so we stepped in there. And that's

the only thing that I could think of the eight years that I have been here. There have been some other issues that were addressed in previous years before I was here of other centers that I know there's been other issues where centers have closed and started up elsewhere, things like that.

SPEAKER: Cause I was reading the letter, it looks like some of the families they said they go to a different facility.

AISHA JOHNSON: The FHF GNO probably. I can tell you that I don't think any center has not received a complaint about another center. You know, we get complaints about a center, and we help them resolve that. Somebody might get a complaint. I mean, you know, it happens. It just hasn't happened to us to this extent of what they're saying in this letter. I know that in the portion of the letter they said that they wish that Mary Jacob would run all the centers and why she couldn't be the executive director of all the centers or something to that extent. I don't know if that was that letter but.

BRENTON ANDRUS: That particular center we do not--

AISHA JOHNSON: Yeah. They do not contract with that center.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Of the ten centers that's the one we don't have a contract with currently.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Why would we not?

BRENTON ANDRUS: It's really up to the center. It's available for all centers. I mean, certainly if we added the tenth center then everyone's funding level would change. Whatever we have we split with all centers that we contract with. But a center does not have to contract with us if they choose not to for various reasons. I'm not going to say why or why not we don't with that one because that's up to that director. But at least since I've been here, we haven't had a contract with them so I'm not exactly sure how long it's been since we haven't had a contract with that particular center.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: So is it possible to renew the contract with some stipulations attached to it?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, I guess depending on what the stipulations are. Yeah, it is.

CHERI CRAIN: Aren't the contracts standard state

contracts? So it's got a standard clause in there for default. So you could terminate it for remedies not being done.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And all of our center contracts are the same. We don't dictate deliverables based on that region or this particular center. One center's not having to do this and the other one doesn't. Everyone has all the same that you're looking at in the chart there that's in your packet. They all have the same thing. Many of them are based on the same deliverables.

SPEAKER: I have a question. So could we possibly, if we decide to give them a contract, not give them full funding?

BRENTON ANDRUS: You could. The way that would work we'd still have to utilize that funding so it would then go to the other centers.

SPEAKER: It would just go to the other centers for one year?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. I mean, well, I guess that depends on what this committee determines. But if you decide hey, we want to fund at X amount I would anticipate that would be for this year to make sure that things are going great and next year you're back. But I guess that would be up to the center, not the center, the committee to determine.

ERICK TAYLOR: Do the other centers have bookkeepers?

SPEAKER: Uh-huh. Think so.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah.

EBONY HAVEN: Susan's center has a bookkeeper. Region 5.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And every center is different that they might have an outside agency that they use. Some have bookkeepers that are a part of their staff internally. It depends.

ERICK TAYLOR: Can that be something that be in the clause that the centers, that y'all put that in the clause where the centers have bookkeepers.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Not specific to bookkeepers. But we have statements in the contract that basically say you have to have a center that is operational and that has to be within good standing. You have to have a staff that is capable of running your center. And so

things like bookkeeping, which is why we brought up this audit because there's things that are addressed in there that kind of fall into that clause. Because as Keesha stated deliverables were met with the exception of one and historically deliverables are met throughout the year. That hasn't been a concern, but we have concerns with the operations aspect of things. So that was put in our contract and is what we're basing this conversation off of the concern (inaudible) operating.

SPEAKER: I guess I have a question. No. Go ahead, Julie.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Well, just back to, that was kind of what I was thinking. That's why I was asking like when the audit was due. I don't know that we can do the contract and wait until the audit's finished and completed. But just in terms of-- cause you had asked about stipulation. Like even if it's something, like there was a corrective action but most of the responses are we agree and we're going to do something. So even if it was something like they got their funding, but then each quarter at the council meeting they needed to come back with a more formal action like step-by-step what are you doing in relation to these responses so that we're not just waiting until we get the next audit but we can then see more formally, you know, how those responses are being implemented. Food for thought.

AISHA JOHNSON: And I think I addressed a couple of them in the front letter where it has the reconciliation policy, the updates to the policy, the procedures, the board oversight, the timely filing of annual reports.

CHERI CRAIN: I have a question. How are the contract payment terms set up? Is it monthly payments that are made to you?

AISHA JOHNSON: Fee for service. Monthly payments.

SPEAKER: I have a question for you. I just want, like what do you think, what recommendations do you think that should be done? Do you have a recommendation? What should be done moving forward?

AMY DEAVILLE: You know, I mean, the funding piece is up to you. What they receive in a contract year each FHF center is \$111,946.33.

JILL HANO: Can you write that in numbers cause I'm not good at that.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And that amount is because we've got the extra 500,000-dollars this year. Normally it's around 56 or so.

JILL HANO: Per FHF?

SPEAKER: For the contract year.

AMY DEAVILLE: My only real thought is if you do not fund the center at all then you cannot make sure that these changes are made. So it's likely in the council's best interest to make sure that there is founding. It may not have to be full funding, but there needs to be some funding so that you can follow through and make sure that the changes are made. You know, Julie's idea about a quarterly report on some of those corrective action items, I think that's a good one as a way to help track, you know, what they said they were going to do verses what is actually happening to make sure that (inaudible). That was the part of the audit that I think was the most alarming was that there were not good fiscal controls. And so when there are no good fiscal controls there are a lot of things that could potentially, not saying that they did, but if you don't know what's coming in and going out then you don't know (inaudible). And I think Brenton said it before but just to reiterate. If you decide to move forward and fund them at a lesser amount than this 111,000 then whatever money is not given to that center will be redistributed out to the other eight FHF centers.

BRENTON ANDRUS: A question or statement?

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So I'm just wondering if there's a way, because I don't want to see that region of the state not have the resources. And so is there a way to give, you know, partial and making sure, then some compliance checks that things are moving in the right direction. And as the fiscal year goes on, they can get the remaining amount of their allocated funds?

CHERI CRAIN: That's kind of why I was asking about the payment terms, how it was written out. I mean, just taking Julie's suggestion. You could write the payment terms where the first three months they get this and then after their quarterly report is submitted then they can get this. I mean, there's so many ways that you can do those payment terms in a contract that would address all of our issues. It would just be

different than any other contract that you have. So that might cause a problem with y'all in tracking and monitoring. I don't know.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: And if there's a fee to doing that, I would say they have the responsibility of it. But I just would not want to see the funds not go to that region of the state. And figure out some way to help them get on track because they're very vital to that region of the state. So how can we help them get on track and if they can't then we would have to move onto another option in a later meeting. I guess that's a question of staff. Is that possible to do something like that?

AMY DEAVILLE: You could change the contract terms, yeah. You could do a lesser amount for the first three months and then you would have to increase the amount. But what you have to do is make sure that all the money is spent by the end of the fiscal year. The only downside to that is let's say we get through the first quarter, it's looking good, we increase, we get to the second quarter so we're six months in and now it's not looking good for whatever reason. And then we have to, at that point, go and try to redistribute everything because the money needs to be spent by the end of the year.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: But I'm not necessarily saying have a lesser amount the first quarter. It would be that they have to meet the objectives. Like they have to show that they've addressed all of these concerns to get the next quarter's funding and you move on to doing something else. I imagine they have to operate at a certain level every quarter, you know. They have to sustain whatever services we expect them that they should have.

SPEAKER: We could do that.

EBONY HAVEN: I'm just thinking about the logistics of the contracts. Most of our contracts are cost reimbursement where they have to provide the service and then they're getting reimbursed. The FHF centers aren't like that. We provide them a monthly payment every month and then by the end of it we're tracking it constantly, but we're trying to make sure by the end of the fourth quarter they have met all the deliverables that are on this performance data sheet that's in

y'all's packet. So what I just asked Amy was could we change it to a cost reimbursement where we're seeing like okay, are they meeting these things and then they'll get the payment for what they've met. If that makes sense. They're getting reimbursed.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Yeah. I think it's more than that because y'all have been monitoring to see that they're meeting the contract goals, obviously. They've been doing that, and they've been getting the funding. The issue is some other things that you're not, you haven't been monitoring. So maybe adding those as part of their contract and now the staff has to monitor that, and they have to be addressing these issues that was found in their audit. Not only the deliverables but they have to do these other things that were found in the audit in order to get their payment. Does that make sense or?

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. So your thought is keep it fee for service so they have the standard monthly amount as they normally do. But we are, in essence, adding some additional deliverables for this contract to include making sure that the corrective action items are being met.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Fee for service and then each quarter when things are met or we have that quarterly report that identifies we make these progresses here then for that next quarter is what you're talking about, we would increase. There's a lot of stuff out there--

AMY DEAVILLE: What Bambi's saying is it stays at the standard amount. So fee for service at the 111,000 plus the monthly payments are 9,300.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Okay.

EBONY HAVEN: Add additional deliverables for the things that are listed in the audit.

JILL HANO: Y'all, I'm so sorry. I've never been this unprepared. What are some examples of the audit?

AMY DEAVILLE: So like just one example just at the top of my head. One of the things that came up in the audit was not having a policy for something. I think it was probably about cash advances, but you just did away with. If something in the corrective action, something in the audit said they needed a policy for this then that would be one of the deliverables. They

need to create policy and we need to see it.

JILL HANO: And so this one is?

AMY DEAVILLE: The board chair.

JILL HANO: But this is the corrective action plan, right?

SPEAKER: Yeah. That one from the auditor.
Uh-huh.

JILL HANO: What does the-- no, y'all. That's the audit. Thank you.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So a couple of things I have just for the committee's entertainment. (Inaudible) y'all do anything with it. I still like the idea that someone mentioned, the quarterly report that addresses these particular actions that should be taken. But I would, I still, at least from my satisfaction as someone that's responsible for monitoring, I haven't got a clear picture of management responsibilities and why there was this lapse. And again, I understand family problems. I could name some other directors that have had issues with their health, their children, their spouses but we're not here. So what I would like, if the committee would like, this is just a recommendation, I would like to see some sort of, I don't want to say management, but more of a leadership assessment. So this would go for you, this would go for your deputy, this would go for anyone that has a leadership role and supervisors. What this assessment is going to do is determine all of your knowledge, your skills, your abilities. Where are all of your deficiencies. And almost kind of like an organizational assessment if you will as far as leadership goes. And it identifies where you have these struggles and what actions are going to be taken to address those things. Like you just told us you're being more present. Great. But we're still in this situation. What does more present mean. How is that happening. Something very detailed that we can--

AISHA JOHNSON: I think with that is my number two is not, I guess she's not well versed on all of the things that I do. So if I'm not around and something doesn't get done, it doesn't happen until I'm back to make sure that those things have happened. And so I think actually what we started do was I actually started just working on different things like secession

plans. Here's what happens, this is supposed to happen here. This is what needs to happen there. So that she can have a visual of what needs to happen when I'm not around or, you know, if this issue comes up this is where you go, this is how you handle it. I think that was one of the issues that we identified. I've actually just started working with an organizational coach person who's a former HR person who actually just did some things for us at the center. And who was also going to help with those organizational struggles that we see. Like I said, two years prior I didn't have any of these struggles or these issues. It only came until after the world was in disarray with Covid. Other than that I haven't had any issues or any struggles with leadership at the center.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I can appreciate that, but I would still-- it's up to the committee, but I would still like to see a written assessment identifying those deficiencies and how they would be better. And it sounds like you're already doing some of that. Fixing things, the additional deliverables, that would be added.

AISHA JOHNSON: That's what I was about to say. How do you want me to report that? Do you want me to have the person or who the person that's doing this write a report or is that something that, you know, how do you want to know that that has happened and is happening consistently or ongoing?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Are you talking about the quarterly report when addressing the corrective action items?

AISHA JOHNSON: The leadership assessment.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So, I mean, it does sound like you have someone, the organizational person we're talking about. I don't necessarily think that they have to be the ones that would present the information. I think it would be a benefit for them to do the assessment to identify, cause I would hope that they would be an unbiased party just through conversations and assessments with you and Shay and any other leadership. Cause again, I don't have it as a targeting you specifically. Leadership as a whole within the center.

AISHA JOHNSON: I understand.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And it can even include whatever

your board president or chair as well. But figure out as a whole what you have to do to be a viable center. What areas do we struggle. Like, for instance, bookkeeping may be one. Maybe you decided that you and Shay are sitting with your bookkeeping agency to understand how they're doing things. If something happens there it turns out that you can pick it up from there. But be very specific. And one thing that we noticed in this corrective action plan, the corrective action plan that was included with the audit, it's not detailed. Like we need the specific details. Who's responsible for what. Because that's how we get the question answered. And if we have additional concerns we know (inaudible). You talked about setting up a succession plan. I think that would be great to know that plan. Like those specific things. Just so we get an idea of what we can expect moving forward. But again, that's up to the committee if they would want you to do that quarterly report, if they would want that management assessment to do the initial deliverables for the contract amount.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: So do you need a motion?

BRENTON ANDRUS: We would. Yes.

ERICK TAYLOR: I motion.

ERICK TAYLOR: I don't think you're on this committee, Erick. You're on education and employment. I'm sorry.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: I will take a shot at it. I make a motion to continue the contract with the funding as currently in the contract with a stipulation of additional deliverables to include a formal leadership assessment and formal quarterly reporting on actions and data related to the corrective action plan. Anybody want to second it?

CHERI CRAIN: I'll second it.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. So is there any discussion or any public comment? So we need a motion to recommend..

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. I'm still trying to write it. I'm sorry.

BROOKE STEWART: We can motion to recommend continuing the contract with Families Helping Families New Orleans at current funding level but require the following. A quarterly report addressing concerns

noted in FY22 audit, detailed action taken and data to support changes, leadership assessment to address the current needs and actions that will be taken to address the current identified needs.

BRENTON ANDRUS: So it seems like-- yes. It's really just two things. We want to continue the contract with current funding level. Include a quarterly-- include increased deliverables. A quarterly report addressing concerns noted in the FY 22 audit and detailed actions taken of data to support the changes made. And then leadership assessment to address current needs and actions that will be taken to address current (inaudible). Does that sound about right? I'll try to get it on the screen.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Yeah. And what I mean by that is like the example you give like a policy and procedure. It might not just be, cause I think there was something in here about okay, we're going to do that, have a policy. But then what are you finding. Because it says you need to do a management analysis. So not just that you got a policy and procedure, but then through your analysis what are you now finding on a quarterly basis. Or what are you looking-- is there data that you're looking at looking for trends or patterns and things like that.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Any discussion? Did we cover that part? Any public comment?

BROOKE STEWART: Any objection? Any abstentions?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I'll have to wordsmith this a little bit, but I just wanted to get it up there. Continue contract with FHF NOLA at current funding level but require the following. Quarterly report addressing concerns noted in the audit. Detail actions taken and data to support changes and I listed kind of some of the things y'all had talked about. Policies and procedures, findings, recommended analysis, trends that are identified and the leadership assessment to address current needs and actions that will be taken to address those needs that are found. Am I missing anything? Does that sound about what you were looking for, Julie?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Uh-huh.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And this information will be added into the contract that we currently have. Or that we

will have. We'll update it to include that information. So since there were no objections or abstentions.

BROOKE STEWART: So first on the agenda is update on contractual activities. We have Julie Hagan with OCDD who will share with us updates from the department. Julie, would you like to get us started?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Sure. So in the interest of time I'll try to keep it high level but be able to answer questions. I know we have a hard stop at 3:00. So the first item, and this is a report that you guys had asked me to include for the self-determination and community inclusion committee, and some of the highlights of things that we've been asked to report on before. So first up is an update on Act 421 or TEFRA. So since the program started in January of 2022, we've received 2,665 applications. And as of the end of May we have 1,146 children who are part of our TEFRA program. Gives you guys some breakdowns. Of the applications 43 percent approved and 38 percent denied. And then in there that 17 percent are still under review which is why it doesn't equal the 100 percent. We have had folks to withdraw applications as well. So that is information on our TEFRA program.

In terms of some of the major activity updates. I know we're in veto session. We're not anticipating major changes with the LDH budget. Who knows. So as of today there were no major reductions to our OCDD budget or any of our home and community-based waiver budgets. We did have two increases. One in our Early Steps Program. We did receive, we have renegotiated some contracts. And so there are some increases to adjust the contracts. And then we are continuing to see a steady increase. During Covid there was a steady decrease in the number of children supported and the number of services through Early Steps and now we are seeing that number come back up. So we are, we received some increase, again, for those contracts and because we're anticipating an increase in children served and services. And then there was some acquisition and major repair for our two facilities, Pine Crest Supports and Services Center and Central Louisiana Supports and Services Center.

I won't go into all of these. I did list for the

legislative update the legislation that OCDD is in any way potentially involved in. Again, if people have questions, I'm happy to answer them more directly. The ones that OCDD-- well, OCDD is only lead on one of these and that is House Resolution 209 which ask the department to form a study group to study the uncompensated work of support coordination agencies. So basically when somebody gets a home and community-based waiver offer the first thing they have to do is choose a support coordination agency. And so at that point a support coronation agency has work to do. They don't get paid until the person actually begins receiving waiver services. So what they're asking us to do is study what happens in between. There are some federal regulations about what we can or can't do there that we'll have to consider. But that's what they are asking for that report to be on.

We'll also be actively engaged-- this came up in Joint Medicaid Oversight Committee. There's been some discussion around abuse and neglect and things that happen. So House Resolution 173 asks the department to report on statistics on abuse and neglect and certain Medicaid programs. So we'll be working jointly with Health Standards Section, Office of Aging and Adult Protective Services and OBH on reporting some of those. Or providing a report related to that. There may be some other agencies that we pull in as we continue to work on that report. Again, I think the others, OCDD may be a part of those bills or studies or resolutions.

But the next update is Covid. So we are now, you know, we had done the roadshow to talk about what would happen when we get to November 11th which is 6 months after the end of the PHE and our exceptions and a lot of our exceptions and flexibilities will change. And so where we are now is I think starting next week we have a training for support coordination, support coordinators on the details of all those changes that will be followed by a training for all of the providers. And then that will be followed by a training for people in self-direction. We're offering multiple trainings for each of those. And again, it's just getting into the details especially around family as paid caregiver. I will say I'm not sure why but there stills seems to be an understanding that when we

get to November family members living in the same home won't be able to continue as paid caregivers and that is not accurate. There just will be additional safeguards and guardrails that we had to put in place. But there still seems to be information out there that it absolutely has to stop. And it doesn't. But again, there's just additional steps and additional processes that will need to happen. So again, we're going to do all we can to make sure we have that as clear for folks as we can. And then again, we will also have a training for those family members that are serving as paid caregivers to make sure that they do understand some of the requirements around what you must do cause if you're living in the same home sometimes it's not always as apparent and we haven't really been monitoring or checking that during Covid. Things like using EVV and documentation and progress notes. So we want to make sure people have all the information they need to be successful.

And then we are planning to do another regional stakeholder meeting in the fall so that-- we got a lot of really good reception from the one that we did a few months ago. So we're going to try twice a year to do kind of regional town hall meetings. And one of the topics will be post-PHE and we're trying to strategically make sure we can do it before we get to that mid-November timeframe. But we'll also have some other things that we're talking about there.

And then finally, and I'll just get through and then stop and take questions. But the American Rescue Plan Act, the start team, we have begun engagement with the start team. The start team, they work with other states. They're recognized nationally as a group who can set up models in states to help support people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and co-occurring behavioral health issues. And what they do is they come into your state and do an assessment and try to get a feel for what's working and what's not working. They've done some meetings with our internal folks and now they're starting to meet with stakeholders and advocates. So you may be seeing some opportunities coming up really quickly. In terms of giving them your feedback, you know, from the provider prospective, or from the family prospective, or

individual prospective if you do have, you know, a behavioral health condition and intellectual and developmental disabilities what are you needing that you're not able to access so we can do a true gap analysis and then identify-- we do know that what they do in a lot of other states is they try to do everything they can to help people stay living in the community. So there's a lot of times, most of the time when people end up having to leave their home, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, now it's because they have complex medical needs or complex behavioral needs that they're not really getting the support for. And so what this team does is try to help identify what can we do to help make sure you have what you need to prevent having to go into more institutional type settings. But we still know sometimes there is need for something that's crisis. You just can't. You might need some short-term. And for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities it's not often to go to a seven day stay at inpatient psychiatric where they give you some medication and then say congratulations, now you can go back home. And we know that doesn't work.

So what they do is set up these models where it might be it's more treatment, it's longer term, it is geared for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, but it is still acute so we don't have people who are stuck sitting in an emergency room for two or three weeks waiting to find a place for them to go. So it's quickly responsive. And again, the goal is to get you what you need very quickly so you can get back home so you don't have to be stuck somewhere. So we are really excited. They have some really great outcomes from other states that they have been able to show so we're excited that that's moving.

And then some of the others we're still kind of working to move those forward. I will say we finally on Friday received notice that we were able to make bonus payments for our direct support workers and support coordinators. It's only been a year and a half in the making. And we had yesterday we had a webinar for our personal care attendant provider agencies and our support coordination agencies so we could explain to them what they needed to do when they get this

money. The money will begin to be paid out next Tuesday, July 25th. There is also going to be a webinar on Monday, July 24th for people who are employers in self-direction. If you're listening to this, if you didn't get it, please call Acumen or Morning Sun because they were supposed to make sure everybody got notice of the webinar.

Each of the webinar's focus is kind of on what do you need to know, what do the providers need to know, what the support coordinators need to know. So what the meeting on Monday will focus on this is what if you use self-direction you need to know how are your workers going to be paid and how is that going to happen. So we will have information there on Monday. All of the trainings are being recorded and we're working right now to get those cause we've had a lot of questions will the webinars be posted online. And they will be. We're working right now to get them converted and get them online now so that if you have questions then you can go back and review that. But I'm really excited that we were able to do that. That's really been probably one of the single most areas of concern that we've been getting a lot of calls on. I only wish we would have been able to do that sooner.

And then we just got approval on some new initiatives. We had some extra American Rescue Plan Act dollars that we weren't spending. And so we are looking at using them to have some additional models for people with the co-occurring intellectual and developmental disabilities and behavioral needs. We've learned some from other states that there are some things like shared living options or other services in lieu of, again, institutions that have been really successful for people. And so we're wanting to use some money there to pilot that.

We also, we mentioned at the last meeting I think we know what a serious issue the direct support workforce crisis is and not having staff to provide the services. And so we know that there are things like pay that are impactful. But we also want to do what we can to just help look for other ways to build up that workforce. And it's not even just with our direct support staff. We know that there are children and adults living at home who need skilled nursing and we

can't find nurses. The adequate number of nurses to provide that skilled nursing. We know that there's a lack of having behavioral health professionals who have experience working with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. So what we're wanting to do is go in and start working in the universities and colleges. We have an agreement from Southern and BRCC for sure. We're working with a couple of others to do partnerships where we go in and help them build curriculum. So while you're a student in nursing school, in social work school and psychology that you have an opportunity to have some curriculum around supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In the social work we're hoping to influence our support coordinators or case managers so that we have more trained, more folks with that training. And then through like BRCC we're hoping to have folks come out and be interested in being direct support professionals. But also all of those people while students can be direct support professionals. So can we build on that too and help people know hey, this might be something that you could do even part time while you're going to school. So we're trying to build that through our university partnerships and curriculum development.

And then finally, the final new thing that we got is to look at we've been talking about doing an electronic assessment and plan of care for oh, I don't know, 20 years now. And so we are asking for extra money to finalize our assessment. And not only will we use that assessment that will then inform the plan of care, but our stakeholders have been asking us to go to a consolidated waiver also for a long time. One of the things we haven't been able to do to get us to a consolidated waiver is we have to have a way of you can call it resource allocation, but it's also like we need an assessment that based on this assessment it tells us you need this level of service, right. Or you can call it a tier. You can call it a cap. You can call it an allocation. Right now you kind of either get supports waiver, ROW or NOW. Ideally, we want to just have an assessment and it says this is the type of services and the (inaudible).

So what we want to do with this money is we have

to do a fairly large sample size with the assessment. Like over 3,000 people to be able to say do we have the right algorithm and statistics and all of that to show that we, that this tool gets folks in the tier that they need to be in. And so we want to use money to try to finally push that across the line. Again, we've been trying do it for at least 10 years. We've had the tool itself developed for at least three. But the IT and getting the sample done has been our downfall. So we are hoping that we can finally, finally get that across the finish line too. Again, we have until March of 2025 to spend these funds so it seems like that's far away, but that will be before we know it. So we are going to be having-- when we talk about our major activities for our office, usually I try to get ideas from folks but really what we're focusing on are these activities. It's going to take all of our bandwidth and all of our resources to bring these across the lines by March of 2025. All righty. I almost did 2:35. I talked really fast and said a whole lot and so I'm also happy to take questions.

SPEAKER: Julie, do you know where we can find out about the virtual meetings, when will that change?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: The Senate Bill 201, that open meetings law?

SPEAKER: Yeah. Because I wanted to go to several meetings that weren't just for developmental, weren't just for disabilities and I had trouble in the past where they said you don't need access or accommodations. So I just want to say it politely when I'm asking them to do it and I would rather just say where, you know. Do you know where it would be on the attorney general site yet or?

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: So it's Act 393 and if you look at legis.la.gov and you search for Act 393, that's the bill, that's the act right there.

SPEAKER: Okay. Awesome. Thank you.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Any other questions?

AMY DEAVILLE: Yeah. As Ebony's whispering to me. It's technically effective August 1st but every state body is going to have to promulgate a rule and as of right now I haven't seen any rules yet. So I don't think it will truly be in a workable position August 1st. But hopefully shortly thereafter rules will start

coming out. And the general assumption is that each agency that sort of has these types of bodies will have to create their own rules.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: But that doesn't mean that if a body just decides we're not going to promulgate rules, we just won't follow this law. They don't have an unlimited amount of time to do that.

AMY DEAVILLE: Right.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: So what is the timeframe?

SPEAKER: I wanted to do it in a polite way.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Well, they don't have to do it now until August 1st.

SPEAKER: Yeah. I just wanted to put the bill (inaudible).

SPEAKER: (Inaudible) timeframe that says promulgate a rule by this date. I don't think there's..

BRENTON ANDRUS: It says effective August 1 so I'm wondering if they're thinking starting August 1 then we got to start developing promulgation. How they interpret it.

SPEAKER: Technically the attorney general for open meeting law.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, they would get involved, I guess, if you have a department that's not doing what they need to do. But yeah, I don't think there was a whole lot of guidance. They left it broad. I know there was a conversation in general leave it broad, so you don't tie anybody's hands. But yeah, that was one thing. I don't recall a specific timeframe for promulgation.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: Can't hurt to ask. I know they do trainings on open meetings laws at the attorney general's office too.

JILL HANO: Is there a chance that chairpersons can end up being virtual?

AMY DEAVILLE: The way that it's written, I don't think so.

JILL HANO: All right.

BRENTON ANDRUS: The way it's written we would still have to have an anchor location and the person that facilitates the meeting would still need to be in person. Which means if you're the chair of a committee or the full council you would have to be here at this meeting.

JILL HANO: Okay.

JULIE FOSTER HAGAN: All right. That concludes my report.

BROOKE STEWART: Okay. Thank you, Julie. Please keep it brief with your updates. You can find this information in the status report in your blue council meeting packet. So now we will move onto our contractual activities. Stephanie (inaudible) updates on the Partners in Policymaking videos.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah. So I will be very brief. So first I'll start with Partners in Policymaking. We had 13 participants. Twelve of them graduated. They completed the final three sessions. They graduated in June. On all of those sessions and the graduation were held in person at the Baton Rouge Marriott. And the applications for next year's class are going to be going live soon. That information is going to be shared on our website through Constant Contact. So if you're signed up there. And also on our social media. So that should be going out very soon.

For the activity 1.1.-- do you want me to just roll through? Okay. For activity 1.1.5 that is the videos. We have been meeting with 23 East Group, which is formerly O'Neill Communications. They are developing their fully included video plan. They've begun editing, filming, developing graphics and how to videos. Some of the topics that we have talked about were supported decision-making, specifically the Dustin Gary Act, Early Steps, waivers and TEFRA, IEPs and LRS.

For 1.1.9 which is the Youth Leadership Forum. It was just held this past weekend. We'll have a full update in the next status report. But just to kind of give an overview, all of the speakers were finalized, and participants confirmed. They had all of the paperwork for the staff turned in. We had 11 delegates. There were 12 but one person did not turn in paperwork in time. I think y'all have that. That's also in the status report. It was pending. It was due the 31st. They didn't turn it in in time. But just to give a little update on YLF. On the 13th, so July 13th they had their staff introduction and training. So that was just staff. On the 14th, so that was Friday, they had a full day. I kind of just wrote it as an introduction day, team building because throughout the

whole weekend they had different panels for the delegates to go to. But the main focus on that Friday was really for all of the delegates to get comfortable with the setting and with each other. On July 15th, that was Saturday, was the capitol day. So they took a bus to the capitol. They met with a couple LaCAN leaders. Had a tour of the capitol. Learned about advocacy. And then on the 16th, which was Sunday the main thing was Y Life and the delegates kind of did like a game of life. They met with different representatives. They had a little board game. They played a real-world game of life. Right now we are waiting on the survey results from the delegates and from the staff. And once we get that information it will be on that next status report.

BROOKE STEWART: Thank you, Stephanie. Any questions? Great. Now Rekeesha will you give us an update on LaCAN, Families Helping Families and supported decision making.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes, ma'am. All right. With LaCAN, LaCAN currently has over 6,759 individuals registered to receive information and action alerts as it relates to home and community-based services, education and early intervention. We've had 16 action alerts with 2,266 actions taken. We had 9 yellow shirt days with 134 individuals being in attendance and 24 testimonies being provided. The leaders have supported their members in a total of 84 formal legislative visits and 49 of those visits were key committee members. We've had 238 LaCAN members participate in a total of 28 virtual or in-person regional LaCAN member meetings. During that, during those meetings they discussed topics such as the agenda and outcomes of 2023 legislative session, legislative process and how to become an active member and also ways to take action and connect with legislators.

Over the next couple of months the leaders will be scheduling and hosting at least two community input meetings. These meetings will give each region an opportunity to share issues they feel the council should include in the next legislative advocacy agenda. They do continue to have two leader conference calls each month and they discuss updates, concerns and issues and also develop strategies to maintain and

support the LaCAN leaders. Recently we had a debriefing meeting that was held on June the 29th and during that meeting we recapped the 2023 legislative session and discussed strategies to improve the advocacy efforts for next year. Well, for the 2024 legislative session. And we do have an upcoming summer leader training and it will be scheduled-- well, it is scheduled for August of 24 and that's to provide continuous education for the leaders. And some good news. We do have a leader hired for region 9. She is projected to start on August 1st. So that's something good. So that's it for LaCAN.

Y'all want me to move on to FHF real quick or you want questions? Okay. As far as FHF, Families Helping Families centers have assisted over 18,072 individuals with developmental disabilities and their families with providing information, referrals, peer-to-peer and other supports needed. More than 28,684 units of information and referrals have been provided. Three-hundred-sixty trainings have been conducted with more than 7,237 individuals being in attendance. The centers have conducted over 334 outreach activities within hospitals, pediatrician offices, school districts, ABA and physical therapy clinics.

If you guys notice in your packet you do have the fourth quarter performance data. We kind of looked at it a little bit earlier. But if you look at the data the last time it was updated for you guys was July the 12th but since then we had a couple updates. For the first update is for New Orleans which is region 1. Section 504 instead of one meeting being completed they have two meetings that was completed. And for region 3 instead of-- well, in the area of individuals identified for legislative visits, instead of them having zero they have six that have been identified.

And I do want to bring you guys' attention to the information and referral units for region 3 Bayouland. During this fiscal year they changed database reporting companies. So with that being said, we had some information that wasn't being, I guess, reported accurately. And once Bayouland, once it was brought to their attention, they worked very closely with the company to rectify it. It has since been rectified, but it's not reflected on here because unfortunately

that particular company cannot go back and fix numbers. They can only make sure it's accurate moving forward. But I did want to let you guys know that they have a total amount of contacts whether it's been in person or by phone of 500-- I'm sorry. 5,360 for this fiscal year. And with the total contacts basically what that means is anytime they have a contact whether it's in person or over the phone, you're basically getting some type of information to them or referring them to an outside entity that can, you know, help them or whatever need they came there for. So with that being said, they definitely met that deliverable a long time ago. So the good thing is, well the great thing is, all of our centers met their deliverables for this year but one which is New Orleans. But we already discussed that earlier. They only missed it by one particular deliverable that was unmet which is the outreach visits. They had 18 instead of the 25.

And the last thing that I did want to let you guys know we do have, we kind of discussed that earlier too, we will be doing some audits with all of the centers in the next upcoming months. So hopefully by the next quarterly meeting that we have with the council we'll be able to kind of let you guys know how those audits went.

And for the last one, which is supported decision making, this is real quick. The trainings, they completed seven out of their ten trainings with 157 participants being in attendance. They do have the last three scheduled and that's scheduled for the month of July. And I should have those updated numbers for the next council meeting as well. And for membership, they have eight self-advocates that are currently being moved for the supported decision-making process. And four of those self-advocates have completed the process but they're still being monitored. Any questions, comments or concerns? I know I went really, really quick. I'm out of breath.

BROOKE STEWART: Any questions before we move forward? All right.

JILL HANO: I have a question because-- so are these numbers on this chart going to match Mr. John's numbers on his report tomorrow?

EBONY HAVEN: She has that information right there.

NICOLE FLORES: The report that we have that we kind of came up with, these are just fourth quarter to give an idea of what it looks like with our contacts from (inaudible). This is six months, but it would be the fourth quarter of this fiscal year 23. So it's going to be a little different. What you have in your DD Council is the whole year.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And just to kind of add to that real quick. Remind you that chart that we just looked at is specific to our contract. What they discuss is their intent of adding that report to the agency reports is to give you more information about FHF in general. Everything they do, not just what they do based on our contract. So that information may not always match up because they do a ton more just than what we're asking.

JILL HANO: Okay. That makes sense. Thank y'all.

BROOKE STEWART: Any other questions? Brenton will give us an update on the remaining initiative.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Sure. So super fast. Activity 2.2.1, that's our first responder pilot. And so this is where we contracted with Interaction Advisory Group and so they're training first responders on basically their approach to individuals with developmental disabilities and hoping that that could reduce arrests and escalations in their work. And so the majority of all the information you need is included in your status report which is in the blue folder that you'll get. If you haven't got it yet it's in your main council meeting folder.

But in May there was a three-day training in Terrebonne Parish and then the community engagement event as well where you bring in the first responders. We had really great feedback from that one. I included that in your packet. It's from one of the participants from the Houma Police Department. In June there were three trainings that were done in St. Tammany Parish. And those are with a new cadet class. So these were folks that were just getting post certified to start working there. And there was also a training in St. Charles Parish. And so there was some feedback from the St. Charles Parish Sheriff there, very positive feedback that was included in your packet as well. So to date we've had 415 first responders trained this

fiscal year. We had 51 individuals that attended a community event.

Another training that was done, and this was more based off of what Allen Parish School System had heard about the trainings that IAG has been doing with some of the law enforcement agencies and first responders agencies. That school district actually asked the trainer to come in and provide a training for their school district. And so included there were over 90 school administrators, teachers, councils, paraprofessionals, special educators. I think there were also six school resource officers involved in that. So that was something, you know, that's really cool. It's not a part of our contract for him to do that but he wanted to include it just to show that word is getting out about this training so other people are reaching out to him to start bringing that training to them. I think at the last meeting we had mentioned that some law enforcement agencies in Mississippi heard about the training he was doing here and asked him to prepare a training for them as well. So there is a reaching affect. And so hopefully maybe some more school districts will start catching on to some of these trainings and bring them in. But we do have some school resource officers as well that are a part of these law enforcement agencies and first responders agencies that attend these trainings just as part of their annual trainings.

Our emergency preparedness and response training, activity 2.2.2. We've contracted with Niagara University for that one. This past quarter we had a training May 1st through 2nd in Monroe. And there was another one in Shreveport. That was May 3rd through 4th. We actually had a really good turnout in Monroe. There were 32 people that attended that training. Shreveport, not so much. There were only four that were in attendance for that training. I'm not sure what the issue was there as far as turnout. I know we had some struggles trying to get a training scheduled in Shreveport, so I don't know specifically if there was a buy-in problem there from the community or from the emergency manager in that area. Or with the close proximity between Shreveport and Monroe we had folks that attended one more so than the other.

They are bringing the training to South Louisiana again in September. In the Houma, Thibodaux area in Gray specifically there's going to be a training September 25th through 26th. That information was shared via LADDC news earlier this week. I want to say Monday or Tuesday. It's also on our website. So if you're interested in attending from that area you have the option of a full day, full two-day training or a half day training. And we are working or trying to get something scheduled in Lake Charles for around that timeframe as well. That's been one of the areas that we really like to go to and so we're working to try to get something in there around that time. So I don't have the dates for that set but that's kind of the targeted area. But with the registration only being live for a couple days for the Houma, Thibodaux area there's already 13 registered for the two day and six for the half day. And so this contract y'all did renew it when you voted on your new plan. So hopefully we'll hit some more areas starting October 1. I know there's been more interest in going back into the New Orleans area. Hammond has showed interest. Lafayette, I don't know that we have anyone specifically that has shown interest, but that's an area that we would like to hit as well because we haven't been there yet. But I think that's it for those trainings. Or that update. Any questions there?

BROOKE STEWART: So I'm hearing no additional questions. We will move onto announcements. Please note tomorrow's the full council meeting which will start at 8:30 a.m. You also have a meeting evaluation in your packet. Please complete that for us. Does anyone on the committee have any announcements to make? Hearing none. If there are no objections, we can adjourn by unanimous consent. Any objection? I hereby adjourn the meeting at 3:01.