

Executive Director's Report ***January 17-18, 2023 Council Meeting***

Budget

- The budget report with expenditures through December 2023 is included in the packet.
- The Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Budget Request was submitted to the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) on October 12th.

Program Performance Report (PPR)

- The PPR for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023 was electronically submitted to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AIDD) before the December 30th deadline. The Council will receive feedback on the PPR in the Spring 2024.

Appropriations

- Congress has still not yet passed a budget for FFY24 which began October 1st to provide funding for Councils and the rest of the federal government. The President signed another Continuing Resolution (CR) on November 16th which will keep agencies' budgets at the level they were initially funded in 2023 until January 19, 2024. The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) is in contact with committee staff on program amounts, and the good news is that both the House and Senate support level funding at \$81M in their previously reported language.

Membership Update

- Tangela Womack was appointed on behalf of the Bureau of Health Service Financing (Medicaid) on September 22nd. Cherie Kelly-Aduli, Melinda Perrodin, Charles "Mike" Billings and Pasqueal Nguyen were appointed by the Governor on October 27th. Samantha Singletary was appointed by the Governor on November 10th. An orientation for these members will be held virtually on January 9th.
- Reece Hoyt was selected to replace Christinna Bechtold as the institutional/facility seat member. Her appointment to the Council by the Governor is pending.
- Phil Wilson and Melissa Bayham's names were submitted to the Governor as their terms ended on November 9th and were eligible for reappointment. They were both reappointed on November 28th.
- A 2nd orientation was held virtually for new self-advocate members on December 14th and they will participate in the parliamentarian training with members selected during the October 2023 meeting on January 9th.

Staff Professional Development

- I attended NACDD New Executive Director (ED) training on November 30th. NACDD plans to host a series of trainings for new EDs and will announce dates for upcoming trainings in the near future.

LaCAN

- The LaCAN legislative agenda item "Funding Increase for Direct Support Workers (DSW) Pay Raises" was not possible as written in the motion the Council approved at the October 2023 meeting. Therefore, that agenda item was changed on November 29th by the Executive Committee to "Increase the Waiver Rate for Night Services." LaCAN will collaborate with The Arc of LA on this agenda item during the 2024 Legislative Session.

- Factsheets are being developed for all three agenda items and will be posted on the [Council's website](#) and distributed to Council members, LaCAN Leaders, and FHF Centers/Directors to be used during legislative visits and member meetings prior to the start of the 2024 legislative session.
- Our LaCAN Leaders are in the process of scheduling legislative visits and planning the 2024 Legislative Roundtables. The schedule of Roundtables that will take place in February and March will be posted on the website with registration links once finalized. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information

Community Supports

- Collaborated with the Community Provider Association of Louisiana, The Arc of Louisiana, and the Supported Living Network and sent a [letter to the Louisiana Department of Health](#) (LDH) to consider utilizing unused enhanced Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the development of rate methodologies for the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and the Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) home- and community-based services (HCBS) programs.

Education

- Attended Yellow Shirt Day at the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) to discuss an implementation plan to address the Louisiana Legislative Auditor's Office recommendations found within the audit report released on September 20th.
- A letter was drafted and will be sent to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) before their January 2024 meeting to reconsider the language that is included in [Act 392 of the 2023 Legislative Session](#) which allows convicted felons inside of classrooms with students especially students with disabilities.

General

- Provided information through LaDDC News on the following:
 - [LDOE Complaint Process Performance Audit](#), October 3, 2023
 - [OCDD Roadshows Coming Soon](#), October 17, 2023
 - [OCDD and DCFS Informational Sessions](#), October 25, 2023
 - [OCDD Roadshows Update](#), October 30, 2023
 - [Trainings on Navigating the System for Co-Occurring Disorders](#), November 13, 2023
 - [Disability Voting Rights Training Opportunities](#), November 16, 2023
 - [Public Notice of Executive Committee Meeting](#), November 22, 2023
- Provided information through Facebook and Twitter on various issues of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families.

Meetings Attended by Council Staff

Brenton Andrus:

Time Period: October - December

OCDD Roadshow	November 2, 2023
LaCAN Leader Call	November 2, 2023
Meeting with OCDD Leadership	November 7, 2023
Provider Meeting	November 17, 2023

SEAP Yellow Shirt Day
LaDDC Executive Committee Meeting
LaCAN Leader Call

November 29, 2023
November 29, 2023
December 7, 2023

OCDD Roadshow

Attended the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) virtual roadshow on November 2, 2023. The purpose of this roadshow was to share the department's current and upcoming initiatives and solicit feedback. Initiatives discussed included, but were not limited to:

- 988 – Hotline for those experiencing a mental health crisis
- Trainings for providers and direct support workers
- Initiative with Children and Family Services to engage foster families willing and able to support children, especially teens, with disabilities
- Value Based Payment Model and development of focus groups
- Updating and reengaging the Self-Direction Advisory Group
- University and Community College partnerships to help incentivize students at professional and direct support level
- Vocational Services redesign
- Incontinent Supplies

LaCAN Monthly Leader Call

Participated in the monthly LaCAN Leader call on November 2, 2023 with regional LaCAN Leaders and Families Helping Families directors. This call centered on further development of the Council's advocacy agenda item: increased wages for Direct Support Workers. Guest presenter was Julie Foster Hagan with OCDD who shared background and historical information related to similar advocacy efforts around this issue.

Meeting with OCDD Leadership

Attended a meeting with Julie Foster Hagan and others in OCDD leadership on November 7, 2023. Purpose of this meeting was to discuss the Council's advocacy agenda as it relates to a wage increase for Direct Support Workers. Interim ED Haven and I discussed what the Council and LaCAN would like to accomplish and discussed with the department opportunities to make this happen. The department agreed to assist the Council with data and figures needed related to this agenda item.

Provider Meeting

Attended a provider meeting on November 17, 2023 for the purposes of discussing the Council's agenda as it relates to Direct Support Worker wage increases. Present included representatives from the Arc of La, Lafouche Arc, Families Helping Families, LaCAN, Supported Living, Community Provider Association, Arc of Baton Rouge and Council staff. Providers expressed concerns about the Council's agenda item if it did not include funding needed for providers to cover costs for wage increases for other staff and administrative matters that will inevitably need to increase should DSWs receive a wage increase. Also discussed partnering to encourage the department to establish a rate methodology to address funding concerns in a more proactive manner.

SEAP Yellow Shirt Day

Attended a LaCAN Yellow Shirt Day at the Special Education Advisory Panel meeting on November 29, 2023. The panel considered and endorsed the Louisiana Department of Education's implementation plan and policy regarding LDOE's complaint and dispute resolution process. Advocates provided testimony before the panel regarding their experiences with the process and ways to better improve.

LaDDC Executive Committee Meeting

Attended the Council's Executive Committee Meeting on November 29, 2023. The committee met to discuss multiple items including the selection of a new Council member to be recommended to the full Council and the advocacy agenda item related to increasing direct support worker (DSW) wages. The Executive Committee opted to forego the advocacy agenda item related to increasing DSW wages and committed to working with providers and the department to develop a waiver rate methodology. This will assist with future advocacy efforts for increased rates and DSW pay. They also committed to partnering with the providers to increase the waiver rate for nighttime services this legislative session.

LaCAN Monthly Leader Call

Participated in the monthly LaCAN Leader call on December 7, 2023 with regional LaCAN Leaders and Families Helping Families directors. This call centered on discussing the Council's advocacy agenda. An update was provided on the Executive Committee's decision to remove "increasing DSW wages" from the advocacy agenda and replacing it with advocating for an increase in the waiver night rate service. Also provided an update on the other two advocacy agenda items, planning for legislative roundtables and legislative visits.

Stephanie Carmona:

- Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) December 12, 2023

BESE Meeting

At the December BESE meeting, Louisiana State Superintendent, Dr. Cade Brumley, gave an update of the positions at LDOE that are paid by IDEA funds. Dr. Brumley stated that he has included a request in the Executive budget for six additional positions that will be specifically housed with the monitoring team in the Division of Diverse Learners to assist with monitoring Special Education. A legislative audit specific to monitoring is upcoming. There was also discussion and a vote about a graduation dispute process for students. It was noted during the meeting that Louisiana was the only State that did not currently have a graduation dispute process. There was also updated information on the legislative audit report on the Special Education dispute process, including the response plan and timeline from LDOE. Lastly, LDOE presented the updated complaint management procedures.

Meetings Attended by Interim Executive Director (October 1 – December 31, 2023)

- New Council Officer Training October 4, 2023
- Meeting with Julie F. Hagan (OCDD) October 5, 2023
- Council Membership Committee October 6, 2023
- New Council Member Orientation October 10, 2023
- Council Committee and Full Council Meetings October 18 - 19, 2023
- Postsecondary Inclusive Education Advisory Council October 30, 2023
- Meeting with OCDD Leadership November 7, 2023
- Presentation for LDH Local Governing Entity Meeting November 9, 2023
- Provider Legislative Session Meeting November 17, 2023
- Meeting with Ed Holen (Former Washington ED) November 28, 2023
- SEAP Yellow Shirt Day November 29, 2023
- LaDDC Executive Committee Meeting November 29, 2023
- NACDD New ED Training November 30, 2023
- LaDDC Legislative Fiscal Office Visit December 11, 2023
- Meeting with LaDDC Chair December 13, 2023
- Meeting with Julie F. Hagan (OCDD) December 14, 2023

- Meeting with LaDDC Chair
- Executive Committee Training

December 20, 2023

December 29, 2023