



Executive Director's Report October 16-17, 2024 Council Meeting

Budget

- Two budget reports are included in the packet and linked on the 2024 Council Meeting webpage:
 - The End-of-Year budget report for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 24
 - The current year budget, SFY25 with expenditures through September

Action Plan for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 (FFY25)

- The Action Plan for FFY25 was submitted August 9th and the Office for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) approved the plan on September 24th.
- The Program Performance Report (PPR) for FY24 (October 2023 – September 2024) will be due in December 2024

Appropriations

- Congress has not yet passed a budget for FFY25 which began October 1st to provide funding for Councils and the rest of the federal government. Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) on September 25th that will keep Councils at FFY24 funding with hopes a budget will pass before the CR expires on December 20, 2024.

Membership Update

- Brain Bennett was appointed to represent the Bureau of Health Services Financing (Medicaid) on August 30th.
- Mike Billings, Tory Rocca and Meredith Jordan were also reappointed on September 6th.
- Reece Hoyt was selected to replace Roslyn Hymel as the institutional/facility seat member. However, she has declined membership at this time. The position will be considered at the Membership Committee on October 11th and recommendations to fill the seat will be voted on at the October meeting.
- Pasqueal Nguyen was appointed on 10/27/2023 to fill a vacancy due to resignation. The term expired on 8/13/2024 and according to the Council's bylaws: "*Vacancies shall be filled as they occur, from nominations obtained from the general public and Council members. Their terms shall be for the unexpired term of membership. If the unexpired term is one year or less, the Council member is eligible to be reappointed for a consecutive term of membership.*" This reappointment by the Governor is still pending.
- The Membership Committee will make a recommendations to the full Council to replace the members that were not Senate confirmed and a vacancy by Nicole Banks.

Staff Changes

- On August 19th, Rekeesha Branch was promoted to the Program Manager position.



- An advertisement to fill her Program Monitor position through Civil Service was issued and over 85 applications were received! Review of the applicants and interviews will begin as soon as possible.

Ad Hoc Committees

- The Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee met on August 28th to make recommendations on changes to the Council's policies and procedures.
- The Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee met on September 27th to make recommendations on the Council and LaCAN's 2025 legislative advocacy agenda.
- The Membership Committee met on October 11th to make recommendations for new Council membership based on the requirements in the DD Act.

Staff Professional Development

- Stephanie and I attended the 2024 National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Conference in Washington, D.C. July 22nd – 25th. The Information and Technical Assistance Center for Council's on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) held technical assistance sessions including: 4 C's and More! Managing Key Aspects throughout a Project Lifecycle, New Executive Director Development and State Plan Development. We also participated in the first State and Territory Showcase where each state DD Council showcased initiatives from their Councils and unique elements from each state.
- A day-long staff retreat was held August 16th where staff discussed the FY25 Action Plan and centered on team building exercises as well as a discussion of current office processes and assignments.
- I attended Region VI CEO Onboarding meeting with the new Executive Director for NACDD, Jill Jacobs, on September 9th in Dallas, TX. During the meeting, each Council invited a Council member in a leadership role/self-advocate to discuss current projects and recent successes of our Councils. The Vice-Chair and Deputy Director joined via Zoom. The group also discussed concerns including current political climates within each state and ideas about how NACDD can best support DD Councils.
- I also attended the NACDD Executive Director Leadership Summit (EDLS) in Phoenix, AZ on September 23rd – 26th. ED's had the opportunity to share thoughts, concerns, opportunities, promising practices and ideas on how to efficiently operate DD Councils within our states. ITACC also shared information on Five Year planning and the ED for NACDD, Jill Jacobs, shared plans for NACDD moving forward "the new ERA of NACDD."

LaCAN

- The annual Legislative Kickoff was held for LaCAN Leaders, Families Helping Families (FHF) Directors and the Partner's Coordinator. These advocacy leaders rated over 100 issues/ideas submitted at LaCAN community input meetings. The four issues the advocacy leaders voted to recommend were sent to the Legislative Advocacy ad hoc committee to consider on September 27th.

Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information

Community Supports

- The Council along with the Community Provider Association of Louisiana, The Arc of Louisiana, and the Supported Living Network met with the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) on July 10th. We also had a meeting August 27th, which included LDH



Secretary, Michael Harrington, on August 27th to discuss the progress of the rate methodology for HCBS programs.

- Attended the House Appropriations Committee meeting during a Yellow Shirt Day on August 30, 2024. Members discussed the Louisiana Department of Health’s budget for Fiscal year 26 (begins July 1, 2025) and impacts the fiscal cliff will have on services for the disability community. During the meeting it was noted LDH would need to reduce its budget by \$100 million in state general funds. When federal dollars are factored in, that would account for over \$300 million. Numerous committee members publicly acknowledged the yellow shirts (LACAN) in the committee room and were committed to finding solutions to protect services.

General

- The Council approved a website overhaul and rebranding for the FY2025 Action Plan. On July 1st Council staff released Phase 1 of the Council’s rebranding. Shout out to Program Monitor, Hannah Jenkins, for doing an amazing job on the logo and colors.

Additional Meetings Attended by Council Staff

Time Period: July – September 2024

Brenton Andrus:

Self-Direction Quarterly Meeting	July 24, 2024
Youth Leadership Forum Debriefing	August 12, 2024
Plain Language Contractor Meeting	August 15, 2024
LaDDC Staff Retreat	August 16, 2024
2024 GODA Conference	August 23, 2024
LaDDC Bylaws Ad Hoc Committee Meeting	August 28, 2024
Meeting with FHF NOLA Board President	August 29, 2024
House Appropriations Committee Meeting	August 30, 2024
Meeting with OCDD Regarding Abuse Initiative	September 13, 2024
Legislative Kickoff	September 17, 2024
Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee Meeting	September 27, 2024

Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) Self-Direction Quarterly Meeting

OCDD shared updates on the Self-Direction Advisory Group’s proposed changes to the Self-Direction Handbook, as well as other informative topics.

Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) Debriefing

Council program staff and YLF contractors reviewed the recent forum held to discuss successes and how to improve in the upcoming year.

2024 Governor’s Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) Conference

This year’s conference focused on multiple topics including independence, emergency preparedness and estate planning in addition to information about the Youth Leadership Forum and legislation impacting students with disabilities.

Meeting with Families Helping Families of New Orleans (FHF NOLA)

Staff discussed concerns with FHF NOLA Board President and FHF NOLA Interim Executive Director. Information was shared about the probable misuse of funds by the previous



Executive Director, the Center's inability to pay staff for previous and future work and the false information that was provided to the Council over the past year. Council staff informed the Center we would not be pursuing a contract this fiscal year as the Center has demonstrated its inability to be good stewards of state dollars and ensure services are provided to families in their service area.

Meeting with OCDD about Abuse/Neglect Initiative

Staff met with OCDD to discuss the Council's collaboration on its FY25 abuse and neglect initiative. Concerns regarding abuse and neglect in intermediate care facilities and home and community based services were addressed. OCDD shared their responsibilities regarding monitoring and it was discussed possibly involving other state agencies or an outside contractor that can train on abuse and neglect issues.

Stephanie Carmona:

Annual Work Planning for FFY 2025 and 2026	July 11, 2024
4 Cs and More! Managing Key Aspects throughout a Project Lifecycle	July 22, 2024
State and Territory Plan Development Briefing	July 23, 2024
Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)	July 31, 2024
Plain Language Meeting	August 15, 2024
Peer-2-Peer Knowledge Exchange: Self-Advocacy	August 22, 2024
Team Dynamics Meeting	September 13, 2024
Buddies Project	September 19, 2024

Annual Work Planning for FFY 2025 and 2026

Attended a webinar on the overview of the requirements for developing the FFY 2026 Annual Work Plan, and updating the FFY 2025 Work Plan. ITACC reviewed upcoming changes and updates to the Verity system and required aspects of the work plan.

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

Discussion was centered around alternate assessment participation, bulletin updates in response to the 2024 Regular Legislative Session and the response plan to the Louisiana Legislative Auditor Report on Risk-Based Monitoring.

Plain Language Meeting

Staff met with Brian Cox, former Maryland DD Council Executive Director on what documents the Council would need updated, assisting with updates to the website and possible timeframes for documents to be written in plain language

Peer-2-Peer Knowledge Exchange: Self-Advocacy

The Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) shared information on meeting the self-advocacy requirements.

Team Dynamics Orientation Meeting

Reviewed the scope of work and new policies/procedures staff has put in place for grants. Answered questions about the contract and provided information regarding trainings.

Buddies Project

The focus was on different types of data collection, such as surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The discussions were about different methods of data collection, best times to use



each, and various options and considerations across the approaches. There was also a section on how to revamp some of traditional data collection methods and collect impactful and important data.

Additional Meetings Attended by Executive Director

- Meeting with Julie F. Hagan (OCDD) July 3, 2024
- Council Committee Meetings July 17, 2024
- Full Council Meeting July 17, 2024
- LA DCW Strategies Center PLC Call August 6, 2024
- Youth Leadership Forum Debriefing August 12, 2024
- NACDD State of the States Webinar August 20, 2024
- Governor's Office on Disability Affairs Conference August 23, 2024
- Technology Support Focus Group: Phase 1 Update August 29, 2024
- EMDAC Call – TS Francine September 13, 2024
- LA DCW Strategies Center PLC Call September 19, 2024

Louisiana Direct Care Worker (DCW) Strategies Center – Peer Learning Collaborative

Louisiana was selected to participate in the first cohort of the DCW Strategies Center State Peer-Learning Collaborative. Medicaid, OCDD, OAAS and the Council are participating in the collaborative to gather information from subject matter experts on how to recruit and retain DCWs based on work done in other states. This is a continuous collaborative effort.

NACDD State of the States Webinar

Data training for Council staff to discuss data sources and resources available for the Comprehensive Review Analysis (CRA) needed for the 5 year plan.

