

Council Meeting Summary

January 30, 2025, 8:30 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

4914 Constitution Ave., B.R., LA 70808

LIVE Streamed Via YouTube

You can watch the meeting here: <https://www.youtube.com/@LADDCouncil/streams>

View meeting transcript [here](#).

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cherie Kelly-Aduli
Patti Barovechio,
OPH/CSHS
Melissa Bayham, LRS
Brain Bennett, Medicaid
Cheri Crain, GOEA
Jamar Ennis, GODA
Christi Gonzales
Julie Foster Hagan, OCDD
Jill Hano
Angela Harmon
Meredith Jordan, LDOE
Tory Rocca, DRLA
Robby Smith
Brooke Stewart
Erick Taylor
Renoda Washington
Vivienne Webb
Gearry Williams, OAAS
Karen Xu

MEMBERS ABSENT

Michael Billings

Ayden Blunsch
Pasqueal Nguyen
Tony Piontek
Phil Wilson, LSU-HDC

GUESTS PRESENT

Constance Alphonse, LSU-
HDC
Brenda Bares
Jude Boynton
Adrienne Burns
Cynthia Chesterfield
Brenda Cossé
Dawn Culbreath
Kristie Curtis
Lillian DeJean
Nicole DeJean
Erin Downing
Liam Doyle
Mylanda Elliott
Katie Furtado
Nicole Flores
Marilyn Goodwin
April Hampton

Lynsey Hebert,
Transcriptionist
Roslyn Hymel
Chanel Jackson
Nicole Learson,
Parliamentarian
Christina Martin
Ashley McReynolds
Lamartine Meda
Kelly Monroe
Laura Nata
Bambi Polotzola
Susan Riehn
James Sprinkle
Summer Stevenson
Mimi Webb

STAFF PRESENT

Brenton Andrus
Rekeesha Branch
Lauren Brown
Stephanie Carmona
Ebony Haven

Christi Gonzales called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m. with a quorum present.

The [October 2024 Meeting Summary](#) was approved by unanimous consent.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Christi Gonzales**Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee discussed the Council's Ad Hoc committees list. The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee's purpose was to establish an official Council position on DEI and the committee recommended DEI training for Council members and staff which was accomplished in 2024.

MOTION PASSED: The Executive Committee recommends discharge of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee and offers this recommendation to the full Council for consideration.

Motion passed with 9 yeas, 0 nays and 5 abstentions.

The Grievance Ad Hoc committee however has not met since prior to COVID-19 and never accomplished their purpose which was to establish a Council grievance policy. Therefore, this committee will continue, but membership will be reestablished.

The Committee also received an update on the 2025 legislative advocacy agenda and conducted the 3rd quarterly evaluation for our Executive Director (ED). For more information, please see the [summary](#).

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Ebony Haven

Ms. Haven highlighted items in the Executive Director's Report including:

- Due to a change in reporting software, the submission for the FY24 Program Performance Report (October 2023 – September 2024) has been delayed and will now be due by March 28, 2025.
- We are still awaiting 4 more appointments and anticipate those appointments before the April meeting.
- The Legislative Roundtable schedule has been released and registration is now open for each region.

BUDGET REPORT - Ebony Haven

Ms. Haven highlighted items in the budget report including:

- Operating expenses increased due to our NACDD dues being paid
- IAT/Acquisitions were so expensive during the 1st quarter because the Council paid annual fees upfront for insurance, Human Resources services and other Louisiana Department of Health charges including contract services

COMMITTEE REPORTS

SELF DETERMINATION/COMMUNITY INCLUSION COMMITTEE (SD/CI) – Cherie Kelly-Aduli

The Self Determination and Community Inclusion Committee had two recommendations for the Council's consideration. The committee discussed activities to recommend to the FY26 Planning Ad Hoc Committee for inclusion in the Council's FY2026 Action Plan under Goals 1 and 2.

MOTION PASSED: The Self-Determination and Community Inclusion Committee recommends the planning ad hoc committee consider the following activities for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 26 Action Plan and offers this recommendation to the full Council for consideration:

- Preventative Screenings for women's health to be added to Activity 2.3.1
- For Activity 2.1.2, remove conducting of research on sexual health for high school and middle school students and focus more on training opportunities for those students and their caregivers to cover topics such as puberty, sexual education, and sexual development.

Under objective 2.2, include an activity that focuses on training for home and community based workers. **Motion passed with 15 yeas, 0 nays and no abstentions.**

The committee also discussed concept ideas and proposals for the Council to consider including in its next Five Year plan which runs through FFY2027-2031.

MOTION PASSED: The Self-Determination and Community Inclusion Committee recommends the five year planning ad hoc committee consider the following items for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2027-2031 Five-Year Plan and offers this recommendation to the full Council for consideration:

- Transportation especially access to public transit systems
- Legislation and training for prevention/ safety measures for individuals with mobility issues or wheelchair bound as it relates to vehicle accidents
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) style leave for parents with children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
- Medicaid to cover electric and standard wheelchairs
- Abuse and Neglect Trainings
- Healthcare coverage for Direct Service Workers

Motion passed with 9 yeas, 0 nays and 6 abstentions.

The committee was unable to discuss the non-contractual and contractual activities under Goals 1 and 2 due to time constraints, but the Status of Planned Activities has updates. For more information, please see the [summary](#).

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT (E/E) COMMITTEE – Renoda Washington

The Education and Employment Committee had one recommendation for the Council to consider. The committee discussed activities to recommend to the Planning Ad-Hoc Committee for inclusion in the Council's FY2026 Action Plan under goal three.

MOTION PASSED: The Education and Employment Committee would like to recommend the planning ad hoc committee consider the following activities for inclusion in the FY2026 action plan and offers this recommendation to the council for consideration:

- Advocate for more services through LRS due to high caseloads, etc.
- Support LDOE responsive actions to the audit report with respect to seclusion and restraint
- Promote inclusion in education

Motion passed with 10 yeas, 0 nays and 5 abstentions.

Unfortunately, due to time constraints the committee was unable to offer concepts ideas and proposals for the Council to consider including in its next Five Year plan. Therefore, recommendations on education and employment were taken from the floor.

MOTION PASSED: The Council recommends the five year planning ad hoc committee consider the following Education/Employment items for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2027-2031 Five-Year Plan:

- Advocate for universal preschool
- Advocate early intervention training for early childhood providers to support students with disabilities
- Advocacy for awareness/training for parents and school staff around in-school strategies concerning educational placement decisions (i.e. rather than homebound)
- Training/awareness of transitional planning to ensure families have a plan in place in case of emergencies (i.e. no other natural supports in place)

- Awareness around post-secondary educational opportunities; advocate for more college/universities to offer opportunities; educating students and families on options/opportunities available on college campuses (disability service department/offices)
- Training for college educators/staff around students with disabilities
- Education/Training for disability services departments on college campuses
- Advocate for job opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (job fairs)

Motion passed with 17 yeas, 0 nays and no abstentions.

The committee was also unable to discuss the non-contractual and contractual activities under Goal 3 due to time constraints, but the Status of Planned Activities has updates. For more information, please see the [summary](#).

ACT 378 SUB-COMMITTEE – Julie Foster Hagan

The Act 378 Sub-committee met Wednesday, January 29th and did not have any recommendations for the Council to consider. The committee reviewed fiscal year 25 second quarter data for programs within the Offices for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) and Behavioral Health, and Aging and Adult Services/Arc of LA. These reports can be found linked in the committee agenda on the Council's meetings [webpage](#). For more information, please see the [summary](#).

STANDING COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:

[Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities](#) – Julie Foster Hagan

[Bureau of Health Services Financing](#) – Brain Bennett

[Disability Rights of Louisiana](#) – Tory Rocca

[Department of Education](#) – Meredith Jordan

[Governor's Office of Disability Affairs](#) – Jamar Ennis

[Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs](#) – Cheri Crain

The Council recessed for lunch at 12:00 p.m. by unanimous consent.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 1:08 p.m.

STANDING COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS CONT'D:

LSU Human Development Center – Constance Alphonse

[Louisiana Rehabilitation Services](#) – Melissa Bayham

[Office of Aging and Adult Services](#) – Gearry Williams

[Office of Public Health: Children's Special Health Services](#) – Patti Barovechio

There was one public comment about the status of a consolidated waiver and transitioning individuals out of nursing homes which Julie Foster Hagan and Gearry Williams addressed.

Ms. Haven asked for volunteers for the FY2026 Planning Ad Hoc Committee and announced the next quarterly meeting dates.

The DD Council January Quarterly meeting adjourned at 1:43 p.m. by unanimous consent.