



Executive Director's Report July 2025 Council Meeting

Budget

- The budget report with expenditures through June 2025 is included in the packet. A final fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget report will be given at the October meeting along with the FY2026 1st quarter report which will include expenditures through September 2025.

2024 Annual Report, FFY2026 Action Plan, and 5-Year Planning

- The [Annual Report](#) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024 was completed and is available on our website.
- Public input was [solicited](#) on the FFY2026 Action Plan the Council approved at the May 1st meeting. Comments received will be considered by the Council at the July meeting.
- Updates to the Council's 2022-2026 State Plan and the Action Plan for FFY2026 will be submitted to the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (OIDD) by the August 15th deadline.
- 5-Year Public Input Forums were held to gather stakeholder feedback for the Council's next 5-Year plan (2027-2031) in Monroe on May 7th and in Baton Rouge on May 14th.
- Council staff also presented and gathered feedback for the 5-Year Plan from LSU HDC's Constituent Advisory Committee (CAC) on May 13th.
- A [Public Input Survey](#) was shared for the 5-Year Plan on June 2nd to collect more stakeholder feedback. The deadline to provide input is July 18th.

Appropriations

- The Council received the final Notice of Award for FFY2025 on May 14, 2025. The total award for FFY2025 (\$1,376,896) was \$3290 less than the FFY2024 (\$1,380,186) award.
- Funding for the State DD Councils and Protection & Advocacy Agencies (P&A: DRLA) are included in the FY2026 Health & Human Services (HHS) Budget in Brief (President's Budget), but funding for the University Centers of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD: LSU/HDC) was not included.

Membership Update

- Orientation sessions were held as 1-hour "Lunch and Learn" sessions for Council members on June 18th and 25th. Topics included: What DD Councils Are & What You'll Do as a Member and How the Louisiana DD Council Works (Committees, State Agencies, etc.)
- The Council has several Council member whose terms expire at the end of 2025 (most in November 2025). Therefore, the Council will advertise for recruitment of new members after the July quarterly meeting, and the Membership Committee will meet prior to the October 2025 meeting.



Staff Update

- The Program Monitor position left vacant after Rekeesha Branch was promoted to the Program Manager remains vacant. Governor Landry issued an [Executive Order](#) on April 2nd to implement a hiring freeze from April 11th to June 30th.

Ad Hoc Committees

- The FY2026 Planning Committee met on April 1st to develop recommendations for the Council's FY26 Action Plan. These recommendations for plan initiatives/activities were approved by the full Council at the April quarterly meeting. A [Solicitation of Proposals](#) for new activities included in the FY26 Action Plan was sent on May 14th. The Executive Committee will be reviewing proposals and recommending contractors for full Council consideration at the July quarterly meeting.
- The Nominating Committee is scheduled to meet July 2nd to develop recommendations for the Council's new Executive Committee. The recommendations for the new members will be considered by the full Council at the July meeting and the committee report is linked on the agenda.

Staff Professional Development

- Staff attended and presented at the OIDD 2025 DD Council Training and Technical Assistance Institute themed: "Shaping the Future" in partnership with the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Administration on Disabilities (AoD) and the Information on and Technical Assistance Center for Council on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC).

Louisiana Legislative Update

- The Council's advocacy efforts prior to and during the 2024 legislative session resulted in outcomes that will benefit thousands of people with developmental disabilities and their families. Read the recap of the session: [2025 Legislative Session Impacts](#)
- All bills the Council tracked throughout the session: [Legislative Bill Tracking](#)

LaCAN

- The annual Legislative Debriefing was held June 26th for LaCAN Leaders and Families Helping Families (FHF) Directors to review the legislative session and 2025 advocacy achievements. LaCAN activities were also discussed to determine what aspects of each event are working, what needs to change, and how to improve current practices.

Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information

Community Supports

- [Action Alerts](#) were shared throughout the 2025 Legislative Session that ended on June 12th encouraging advocates to contact the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees and attend Yellow Shirt Days (YSDs) regarding [HB1](#) (Act1) and share the impact of funding for Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers and protecting disability services.
- Council staff emailed the House Health & Welfare committee regarding [HB559](#) (Act 381) and expressed concerns about potential changes including local governing entities (LGEs) focusing on Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) initiatives rather than local needs, the lack of appointing authority by the local LGE board and lack of disability representation on the proposed Louisiana Population Health Coordinating Council.



Education

- [Action Alerts](#) were shared throughout session encouraging advocates to contact House and Senate Education committees and attend YSDs regarding HB684 to share how the bill would affect students with disabilities.
- Council staff emailed the House Education committee regarding [HB243](#) and advocated for the need for increased accountability and monitoring of Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) in Louisiana. Unfortunately, the bill did not complete the legislative process.

General

- The Council and LaCAN participated in **Disability Awareness Day** hosted by Split Second Foundation and the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) which brought numerous disability organizations together to share resources about services offered and to educate legislators on the importance of ensuring services and supports for the disability community are prioritized and protected.
- Provided information through the [Council's LaDDC Newsletters](#), Facebook and Twitter on various issues of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families including information on the 2025 regular session.
 - **Most Notable** - The Council is running a campaign that started in April for stakeholders to share stories about how the Council's activities have improved their life or the life of someone they know. These stories can still be shared by taking this [survey](#) and will be shared with NACDD to help with advocacy efforts.

Collaborative Efforts

Disability & Aging Advocacy Coalition

- The Disability and Aging Advocacy Coalition created joint factsheets on potential cuts to Medicaid and Louisiana Medicaid. All factsheets can be found on the [Council's website](#).
- Members of the Disability & Aging Advocacy Coalition (LaDDC, Community Provider Association, DRLA, LSU HDC, and National Federation of the Blind of Louisiana) met with Congressman Cleo Fields to discuss ongoing concerns including proposed cuts to Medicaid, the P&A programs and proposed cuts, and the proposed elimination of the UCEDDs.

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD)

- In conjunction with the NACDD and other State DD Councils, the Council continued to share information and [Action Alerts](#) on potential cuts to Medicaid once the Reconciliation Bill (One Big Beautiful Bill) moved to the U.S. Senate.

Seclusion and Restraint Legislation Collaboration

- Council staff had numerous meetings with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the Arc of Louisiana, DRLA, the Louisiana Association of Public Charter School, the Louisiana School Board Association and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to address improvements to seclusion and restraint practices in Louisiana. After substantial changes, [HB237](#) by Representative Shane Mack was replaced with [HB684](#).
- Council staff and Council member Vivienne Webb, and her brother Kaiden, who provided powerful testimony during session, participated in the signing of HB684 (Seclusion & Restraint Bill) by Governor Landry on June 27th. A summary of what the new law includes can be found in the [Legislative Session Impacts](#) Newsletter.



Additional Meetings Attended by Council Staff

Time Period: April – June 2025

Brenton Andrus:

Planning Ad Hoc	April 1, 2025
LaCAN Leader Call	April 3, 2025
Disability Coalition Meeting	April 4, 2025
House Appropriations YSD	April 8, 2025
Region 2 Legislative Roundtable	April 10, 2025
House Appropriations Public Testimony	April 15, 2025
Seclusion & Restraint Legislation Meeting	April 17, 2025
Disability Coalition Meeting	April 25, 2025
Seclusion & Restraint Legislation Meeting	April 29, 2025
Seclusion & Restraint Legislation Meeting	May 2, 2025
Five Year Plan Public Forum Monroe	May 7, 2025
Seclusion & Restraint Legislation Meeting	May 9, 2025
House Appropriations Yellow Shirt Day	May 12, 2025
Five Year Plan Public Forum Baton Rouge	May 14, 2025
Disability Coalition Meeting	May 16, 2025
Senate Finance Public Testimony	May 22, 2025
Disability Awareness Day	June 2, 2025
Self-Direction Quarterly Meeting	June 11, 2025
Disability Coalition Meeting	June 13, 2025
PAR Legislative Session Recap Webinar	June 17, 2025
Special Education Advisory Panel	June 18, 2025
Disability Coalition Meeting	June 20, 2025
GACDA Quarterly Meeting	June 25, 2025
LaCAN Debriefing	June 26, 2025
HB684 (Seclusion & Restraint) Bill Signing	June 27, 2025
SDIC Meeting with LSU	June 30, 2025

Planning Ad Hoc Committee Meeting

Committee met to discuss and make a recommendation for the Council's Fiscal year 2026 action plan.

LaCAN Monthly Leader Call

This call focused on reviewing the Council's advocacy agenda and legislation filed during the 2025 Regular Legislative Session.

Disability Coalition Meetings

These meetings are typically held bi-monthly or as needed. Various disability stakeholder groups and organizations gather to discuss the need for advocacy regarding federal and state changes especially as it relates to Medicaid cuts.

House Appropriations Committee Meetings

Hosted Yellow Shirt Days multiple times this quarter in House Appropriations for the presentation of the LDH's budget for FY2026, share testimony to restore funding for FHF Centers and protect disability services. No cuts to services were recommended and \$250,000 were restored to FHF.



Senate Finance Public Testimony

Hosted a Yellow Shirt Day for public testimony in Senate Finance. Senate Finance included the additional \$250,000 needed to restore FHF funding.

OCDD Self-Direction Quarterly Meeting

Partnered with OCDD to host this meeting to educate participants on Critical Incidence Reporting.

PAR Legislative Session Recap Webinar

Public Affairs Research Council of Louisiana hosted a virtual meeting to discuss the outcome of the 2025 legislative session. Perspectives and recaps were shared by Sen. Cameron Henry, Rep. Jack McFarland and Rep. Vanessa LaFleur.

Special Education Advisory Panel

Participated in SEAP quarterly meeting as a proxy, and shared information about the restraint and seclusion legislation (HB684). Also advocated for accountability as it relates to school districts who are not submitting annual Special education Advisory Council reports to the Department of Education as required by law.

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs

Shared an update on the Council's advocacy agenda and achievements made during session as well as other activities and events the Council is working on.

SDIC Study Meeting

Meeting with Drs. Helena Fietz and Nick Fears with LSU to discuss their study on "The Impact of Social Determinants of Health and Infrastructures of Care for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in Louisiana (SDIC)".

Stephanie Carmona:

FFY26 Planning Committee Meeting	April 1, 2025
Transition to Adulthood Training	April 24, 2025
Monroe Public Forum	May 7, 2025
Constituent Advisory Council (CAC) Meeting	May 13, 2025
Baton Rouge Public Forum	May 14, 2025
TAI Session 1	May 29, 2025
TAI Session 2	May 29, 2025
TAI Session 3	June 3, 2025
TAI Session 4	June 3, 2025
TAI Session 5	June 5, 2025
Overview of Accessible Formats	June 23, 2025
LSU Collaboration Meeting	June 30, 2025

Transition to Adulthood Training

Attended Team Dynamics interactive training event on managing money and health and wellness.

Constituent Advisory Council (CAC) Meeting

Participants provided input for the Developmental Disabilities Council's next five-year plan and discussed potential content collaborations with The Ohio State University Nisonger Center to educate policymakers.



TAI Session 1: Administration of Community Living (ACL) Updates

Attended a webinar hosted by ITACC giving information on programmatic updates for federal reporting.

TAI Session 2: Supporting Health Communities: Positive Impacts and Approaches

Attended a webinar hosted by ITACC about approaches for outreach and the impacts it has on councils.

TAI Session 3: Adopting Innovative Practices for Recruiting Prospective Members

Attended a webinar hosted by ITACC about recruiting, a panel of speakers, including EDs and self-advocates spoke about what they do to recruit.

TAI Session 4: Positive Practices When Using Social Media

Attended a webinar hosted by ITACC giving information on social media, including social media policies for members and staff.

TAI Session 5: 5-Year Plan Dev. - Positive Practices for Facilitating Strategic Planning Meeting(s) with the Council

Attended a webinar hosted by ITACC about facilitating strategic planning with council members.

Overview of Accessible Formats

Attended a webinar hosted by Self-Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center (SARTAC) on different accessible formats, including principles for creating accessible resources.

Additional Meetings Attended by Executive Director

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| • Meeting with Julie F. Hagan (OCDD) | April 7, 2025 |
| • ITACC: Contingency Planning | April 23, 2025 |
| • ITACC Meeting | April 25, 2025 |
| • NACDD: State/Medicaid Task Force | April 29, 2025 |
| • Meeting with AoD/OIDD | May 1, 2025 |
| • Meeting with Ranie Thompson (DRLA) | May 8, 2025 |
| • Meeting LDH Budget | May 20, 2025 |
| • NACDD: State/Medicaid Task Force | May 27, 2025 |
| • Senate Finance Yellow Shirt Day | June 1, 2025 |
| • NACDD Public Policy Meeting | June 5, 2025 |
| • 2025 Partners in Policymaking Graduation | June 7, 2025 |
| • NACDD: State/Medicaid Task Force | June 24, 2025 |
| • ITACC Program Performance Report (PPR) Webinar | January 21, 2025 |
| • ITACC Peer 2 Peer: 5 Year Plan Public Input | January 23, 2025 |

