

Council Meeting Summary

July 31, 2025, 10:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

9200 Bluebonnet Blvd., Rm #2 B.R., LA 70810

LIVE Streamed Via YouTubeYou 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
Brian Bennett, Medicaid
Michael Billings
Ayden Blunski
Jude Boynton
Alaina Chachere
Cheri Crain, GOEA
Christi Gonzales
Jill Hano
Angela Harmon
Meredith Jordan, LDOE
Frank Macaluso
Dr. Lamar Meda
Pasqueal Nguyen
Tony Piontek
Tory Rocca, DRLA
Robby Smith
Brooke Stewart
Erick Taylor
Renoda Washington
Vivienne Webb
Gearry Williams, OAAS
Phil Wilson, LSU-HDC

Karen Xu

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jamar Ennis, GODA
Julie Foster Hagan, OCDD

GUESTS PRESENT

Ann Marie Bihm
Bernard Brown, OCDD
Adrienne Burns
Brenda Cossé
Kristie Curtis
Lillian DeJean
Erin Downing
Liam Doyle
Erin Durocher
Kathy Dwyer
Myllinda Elliott
Nicole Flores
Julie Folse
Rebecca Frugé
April Hampton
Tina Haines
Elaina Hansen
Lynsey Hebert,
Transcriptionist
Chanel Jackson

Nicole Learson,
Parliamentarian
Christina Martin
Ashley McReynolds
Kelly Monroe
Laura Nata
Jacki Pierce
Bambi Polotzola
Kristen Reed
Susan Riehn
Susan Roblow
James Sprinkle
Summer Stevenson
Marilyn Thornton
Mimi Webb
Mandie Zaunbrecher

STAFF PRESENT

Brenton Andrus
Lauren Brown
Stephanie Carmona
Ebony Haven
Hannah Jenkins
Bridgette Talley

Christi Gonzales called the meeting to order at 10:12 a.m. with a quorum present.

The [April 2025 Meeting Summary](#) was approved by unanimous consent with corrections.**CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT – Christi Gonzales****Executive Committee** – For more information, please see the [summary](#).

The Executive Committee had two recommendations for the Council's consideration. The committee reviewed and discussed proposals submitted for Activity 2.1.2 and 2.3.1 for the new FY 2026 Action Plan. The Council received three proposals for Activity 2.1.2 – Accessible Sexual Education to Middle & High School Aged Students and allocated \$53,000 for this activity.

MOTION PASSED: To approve the recommended vendor of LSU: HEART Initiative for Activity 2.1.2 made by Erick Taylor, seconded by Frank Macaluso. **Motion passed with 17 yeas, 0 nays and 6 abstentions.**

The Council received four proposals to consider for Activity 2.3.1 – Accessible Educational Materials on Women's Preventative Health and allocated \$40,000 for this activity.

MOTION WITHDRAWN: To approve the proposal from Team Dynamics in place of LSU: HER Health Initiative for Activity 2.3.1 made by Jill Hano, seconded by Frank Macaluso.

The Council was provided information that Team Dynamics would be a statewide initiative compared to LSU which would only be conducted in St. Tammany, East Baton Rouge, West Baton Rouge, and Ascension Parishes. However, after careful consideration, LSU had other appealing options including the use of augmentative or alternative communication devices (AAC).

MOTION PASSED: To approve the proposal from LSU: HER Health Initiative for Activity 2.3.1 made by Mike Billings, seconded by Alaina Chachere. **Motion passed with 18 yeas, 0 nays and 6 abstentions.**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT - Ebony Haven

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

- The Council's 2024 Annual report was included in the Council's packet, but the 2024 Program Performance Report (PPR) has not been approved yet due to all the changes within the Administration for Community Living (ACL).
- The FY2026 Action Plan will be submitted by the August 15th deadline and the Council should have approval by October 2025.
- The Council was successful with all three of the Council's legislative advocacy agenda items for the 2025 legislative session. LaCAN leaders are hosting community input meetings and encouraged Council members to attend to have input in their 2026 legislative advocacy agenda.
- Changes in Medicaid included in the Reconciliation Bill that will affect Louisiana recipients; The President's budget included funding for the State DD Councils, but funding for the DD network partners was reduced and eliminated. Advocacy is still needed.

BUDGET REPORT - Ebony Haven

Ms. Haven highlighted information in the 4th quarter (FY25) Budget Report including:

- The budget report does not include all June invoices, so in October, the Council will receive a final FY25 budget report in addition to the FY26 1st quarter expenditures.
- Travel expenses again have been down with the exception of the 3rd quarter due to the Council Retreat. Council staff have located a new office space that will provide a permanent meeting space (i.e. more square footage) for about the same amount of money as the current office. The

lease at the current building will be ending on November 30th, so more information will be provided in October.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FY2026 PLANNING COMMITTEE – Jill Hano

The [FFY 2026 Action Plan](#) was shared with the public for comments starting on May 9th. It was available for 45 days. During that time, the Council did not receive any public comment. There was also no comments made at the meeting, so the plan will go into effect on October 1, 2025.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE – Alaina Chachere

The Nominating Committee met on July 2nd and recommended the following Council members for the Executive Committee beginning October 1, 2025 and ending September 30, 2027:

- Chairperson – Renoda Washington
- Vice-Chairperson – Angela Harmon
- Self-Determination/Community Inclusion (SD/CI) Chair – Jill Hano
- Education/Employment (E/E) Chair – Brooke Stewart
- Member-At-Large – Vivienne Webb

Nominations from the floor included:

- Brooke Stewart nominated Erick Taylor as Member-At-Large; Erick Taylor accepted

Since there were no objections, the election voting method was by unanimous consent if there was only one candidate for the position. Therefore:

CHAIRPERSON ELECTION – Renoda Washington elected without objection.

VICE-CHAIRPERSON ELECTION – Angela Harmon elected without objection.

SD/CI CHAIR ELECTION – Jill Hano elected without objection.

E/E CHAIR ELECTION – Brooke Stewart elected without objection

MEMBER-AT-LARGE ELECTION – Erick Taylor elected with a vote of 10 (Erick Taylor) to 8 (Vivienne Webb) and 6 abstentions.

SELF DETERMINATION/COMMUNITY INCLUSION COMMITTEE (SD/CI) – Brooke Stewart

The SD/CI Committee did not have any recommendations for the Councils consideration. However, the committee received a lot of great updates from the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), Medicaid, the Office for Adult and Aging Services (OAAS) and staff. The committee also discussed updates on the non-contractual and contractual activities under Goals 1 and 2 which can be found in the [Status of Planned Activities](#). For more information, please see the [summary](#). Bernard Brown clarified OCDD **did not** receive additional funding in HB1 to cover support coordination work done prior to an individual being certified to receive services.

ACT 378 SUB-COMMITTEE – Bambi Polotzola

The Act 378 Sub-committee did not have any recommendations for the Council to consider. The committee reviewed fiscal year 25 fourth quarter data for programs within the Offices for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities 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](#).

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

The Education and Employment Committee did not have any recommendations for the Councils consideration. However, the committee received a lot of great updates from Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and staff. The committee received updates on the non-contractual and contractual activities under Goal 3 which can be found in the [Status of Planned Activities](#). For more information, please see the [summary](#).

The Council recessed for lunch at 11:45 a.m. by unanimous consent.

The Council reconvened the meeting at 1:00 p.m. A quorum was established.

STANDING COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS:

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

[Department of Education](#) – Meredith Jordan

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

[Governor's Office of Disability Affairs](#) – Liam Doyle

The Council recessed for a 10 minute break at 2:31 p.m. by unanimous consent and returned at 2:41 p.m.

STANDING COUNCIL MEMBER REPORTS CONT'D:

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

[LSU Human Development Center](#) – Phil Wilson

[Louisiana Rehabilitation Services](#) – Melissa Bayham

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

[Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities](#) – Bernard Brown

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

A public comment was provided after Ms. Crain completed her report, but the comment has been redacted from the transcript and the recording due to inappropriate derogatory language. Vivienne Webb made a public comment about the plain language version of the Conflict of Interest policy. Ms. Haven responded and stated more information could be given outside of the Council meeting. Brooke Stewart made a public comment about the derogatory comment made by a member of the public, and Council staff guaranteed an investigation would be launched and authorities would be alerted to hopefully trace an IP address.

Ms. Gonzales announced needing volunteers for the Membership and Legislative Ad Hoc committees, but asked Ms. Haven to email members. Ms. Haven thanked Phil Wilson for his service on the Council and extended best wishes on his retirement. Members were also asked to complete their surveys and submit their signed conflict of interest policy acknowledgement form.

The DD Council July Quarterly meeting adjourned at 4:28 p.m. by unanimous consent.