



Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, October 16, 2025
10:00 AM - 3:30 PM

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

View [meeting transcript](#).

Members Present: Karen Artus, Alaina Chachere, Ali Kowitz, Kristen Reed, Tory Rocca, Erick Taylor

Members Absent: Ayden Blunschi, Jill Hano, Lamar Meda, Tony Pinontek

Staff: Brenton Andrus, Rekeesha Branch, Lauren Brown, Stephanie Carmona, Ebony Haven

Others Present: Brenda Bares, Melissa Bayham, Brian Bennett, Adrienne Burns, Brenda Cosse, Kristie Curtis, Amanda Daigre, Erin Downing, Mylinda Elliott, Jamar Ennis, Nicole Flores, April Hampton, Lynsey Hebert, Danielle Ledet, Angel Magee, Christina Martin, Sarah Mulhearn, Davelyn Patrick, Jacki Pierce, Susan Riehn

Alaina Chachere opened the meeting and established a quorum 10:11 AM.

Meeting protocols and purpose of the committee were reviewed. Members discussed and reviewed two key documents to help develop a recommendation to the Council for its 2026 Legislative Advocacy Agenda:

- [Guidelines for Advocacy Agenda](#)
- [Community Input Received](#)

The committee reviewed many community input ideas and narrowed them down to focus on the following priorities:

- Universal changing tables in public facilities
- Increasing waiver rates and Direct Support Worker (DSW) wages
- Creating or improving an emergency alert system for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD)
- Creating a statewide Transportation Task Force to study transportation issues for individuals with I/DD
- Requiring school districts to conduct Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) when needed to ensure a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) is in place before continued student removal
- Providing additional funding for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to draw down all available federal matching funds

Members agreed that no more than four issues should be included in the Council's 2026 Legislative Advocacy Agenda.

Motion 1:

To recommend the following four issues to the full Council for inclusion in the 2026 Legislative Advocacy Agenda:

1. Increase waiver rates and pay for Direct Support Workers
2. Create or improve an emergency alert system for individuals with I/DD
3. Require school districts to conduct Functional Behavior Assessments and develop Behavioral Intervention Plans before continued removals
4. Provide additional funding for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) to ensure full federal fund match

Motion made by: Tory Rocca

Seconded by: Ali Kowitz

Vote: Passed 6–0 (no abstentions)

Motion 2:

To allow Council staff to adjust the wording of the recommended issues, if needed, to ensure plain language and reflect the committee's intent.

Motion made by: Erick Taylor

Seconded by: Tory Rocca

Vote: Passed 5–0 (no abstentions)

Members agreed that transportation should be included in the Council's Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Action Plan. They recommended funding a comprehensive statewide transportation study, with the potential to establish a Transportation Task Force based on the study's findings. This information will be shared with the FY27 Planning Committee.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:33 PM.