

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Education and Employment
January 28, 2026

LIAM DOYLE: Good afternoon everyone. It is 4:18 p.m. I now call the meeting to order. Stephanie, can we please take a roll call vote?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Thank you, Jude. Can you turn on your camera? I need to see your face in order to count towards a quorum.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes, ma'am.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Thank you so much. Mr. Doyle.
Mr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: And Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Here.

LIAM DOYLE: Thank you, Stephanie. Before we start here are the meeting rules. For people in the room raise your hand if you wish to speak. Wait until I call on you before talking. Keep side conversations quiet. Stay on the topic we are discussing. For people on Zoom you must be on camera with your full name showing to count for quorum. Keep your microphone off unless I call on you. Click raise hand if you want to speak. Wait until I call on you before unmuting.

For all attendees the Q and A box is only for people who asked for an ADA accommodation. It is not for public comment. Committee members in person or virtual speak first, then in person public members, then public members on Zoom. Please be patient. Hybrid meetings can be hard to manage. If we run short on time comments may be limited. Comments about a person's character will not be allowed. Public members will have one chance to comment on each agenda item. Each person will have two minutes. Public comment will also happen before a vote or at other times

if I allow it. Let's work together to keep this meeting respectful and on track.

The first agenda item I have is the approval of the October meeting summary. I need a vote for that. Everyone should have received a copy. A copy was linked to the agenda sent by email. I need a motion to accept the minutes. Melissa motions to accept it. And I need a second.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Second.

LIAM DOYLE: And because of open meetings law we must vote by roll call. Stephanie, can I have a roll call vote on that motion?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. A vote for yes is to approve the October meeting summary. A vote for no is not to approve that summary. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Bayham, yes. Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Meda, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Washington, yes. Six yeses and the motion passes.

LIAM DOYLE: Thank you. The next agenda item I have is the Louisiana Rehab Services update from Melissa Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Good evening everybody. I am going to give some updates. There's a lot going on at LRS so if there's something that I missed in particular you want me to cover just let me know. I wanted to start with budget. So DOA or the Division of Administration put out the state fiscal year 27 budget, the executive budget out. And in that budget we are levelly funded at 12 million-dollars. So there was some concern at one point they were not going to recur the 4 million that we received last year. But it was recurred if that's a word. All of it was in that budget. The ask that was published in the factsheet that was sent out is accurate at the 6.7-million which would be needed to draw down the rest of our federal funds.

In terms of I know one concern that we continue to have

and continue to talk about is the entry level pay for our rehabilitation counselors. Civil service did publish that they are doing a change to the social service pay scale which is the pay scale that our rehab counselors and most of our staff is in. There will be a slight increase from 17.18 to 17.52. March the second I believe is the date that that pay scale will change. We are still working with our human resources department to officially request a special entrance rate from civil service to increase the starting pay for our rehab counselors. Because you have to have special approval from civil service to hire above the minimum rate of what will be 17.52.

Something I'm very excited about that we're actually starting on February the second we are, I'm developing two focused caseloads. And the one that I want to specifically talk about here is a caseload meaning one counselor, or really it's going to be a counselor and a half because there will be an overflow. But a counselor who will be dedicated to cases for individuals who are attending a comprehensive transition program which we call CTPs. And I'm really excited about that because one of the complaints that we often get, because we have individuals from across the state attending CTPs and because they're all unique and they have some unique circumstances, a lot of students were getting different information from different regions. It was not intentional but because there's some nuances to all these different programs it's hard for all the counselors, especially when we have lot of new counselors, to kind of understand all those nuances for all those different programs. So now these two counselors will specialize in comprehensive transition programs so we will have better services, more consistent services because everybody will be receiving services from these two counselors. So we are working on moving some cases around from the cases that were in their caseloads and we are continuing to hire rehabilitation counselors to fulfill their caseloads.

We are also combining some regions for the Deaf and the blind populations. Just so that what has happened, because of our turnover, is some of our regions may not have a counselor dedicated to serving the Deaf population or the blind population. And so then those cases get dispersed throughout the region and so they end up with new counselors who don't have a lot of experience in those areas and so this will ensure that they get a counselor who is a

specialist with their disability.

We have, I think in the last meeting I mentioned that we were piloting a streamlined application process and I'm happy to report that the beginning of January we implemented new manual material and forms to streamline the application eligibility and planning process. Basically we are making sure that we're only collecting data that we need at application, that is needed at application and only getting the information for eligibility to shorten that time period. And then once the person is eligible for services then we start the planning process. What has kind of happened before is at that initial interview there's a lot of planning that happens. Which is not a bad thing but it takes up a lot of time and then it slows down the process. And then usually approximately 40 percent of people who are determined eligible don't end up following through with planning. And so eliminating some of the time that you spent for customers who don't want to follow through with services. It should be a time saver at some point.

The other thing I wanted to mention Sara, that is the communication software I mentioned before. We have gone through the whole procurement process and we're now in the implementation phase. So we are meeting every other week with staff from Sara Works and we're in the process of developing a plan to get everything done that needs to get done and all the training that needs to get accomplished. We're in the planning phase of that. So hopefully we will get that done soon.

We are in the process of updating our state plan. We are required to do a modification every two years and once that plan is available for public comment I will let you all know. Those are the highlights but if there's anything-- I have a lot of things in my report if there's something that I didn't cover that y'all would like me to cover I will. If you have any questions I'm happy to answer any questions.

ERICK TAYLOR: I have a question. You said working with two counselors working with somebody?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So basically I'm going to have a counselor and then I'm going to have one counselor that is going to be dedicated to just students attending comprehensive transition programs. And then I'm going to have another counselor who's specifically dedicated to home and vehicle modifications. But that caseload there's

not enough people for a whole caseload so she's going to help with the other caseload because we have over 160 students. They're going to work together as a team. But the theory is if these are the only cases that they're working they'll become specialized in that. Because what ends up overwhelming rehab counselors is we have like 30 something services in VR and so if you only work certain cases not that much when you get those cases you're not as familiar with them. It takes you more time to process those cases if that makes sense.

ERICK TAYLOR: The modification on your vehicle. Say you can buy some vehicles with stuff like that. But if you need something done to the vehicle besides what came?

MELISSA BAYHAM: Possibly. There's a lot of assessments that go with that just to make sure that you're in the correct vehicle and to make sure the modification is going to work for you. But it is possible.

ERICK TAYLOR: One more question. What if you don't drive but you need a modification?

MELISSA BAYHAM: You don't have to drive. You could be the passenger.

LIAM DOYLE: Any other questions before we move on? Any other comments?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I have a question. I believe, and you might have talked about this in your report. I'm not sure. I think in the last meeting you talked about how y'all contracted out with Easterseals and FHF, right. So can you give us an update. If it's in the report we can talk about it tomorrow. I'm just curious.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I'm glad you mentioned that so I can make sure I talk about that tomorrow. So Easterseals-- I'm sorry. Both of those contracts they're through the process. They've been executed. Easterseals they have hit the ground running. They have already hired because I think they hired internally so it made it a little quicker for them. They're up and running in Shreveport. Now Families Helping Families of New Orleans they are in the process of hiring. We hit a little hiccup with the state background checks but they are in the process of hiring. So once they get staff hired then we'll be up and running in New Orleans as well.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: And then I have one other question and it had to do with the Sara Works. I don't remember and I know you told me this. Sorry that I'm asking again. Is

the Sara Works program is that for like providers and stuff to use or is that for individuals to use?

MELISSA BAYHAM: So Sara is essentially a communication software that is for our customers meaning our clients and our counselors. So it allows a lot of things. I can go into it if you would like me to. It's a lot. But it allows communication between the customer and the counselor, not the provider.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Okay. I just wanted to make sure that like I guess depending on who it was geared towards there is like an accessibility person that's sort of viewing this data to make sure that your people that are reaching out to their counselors or vice versa it's easily accessible to them and things are in plain language, it's easy to navigate.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Some of the technical aspects that you're talking about this Sara is used by many VR agencies so accessibility is not an issue. Now in terms of plain language and things you're talking about, that's part of the implementation process that we literally just started where we're writing the scripts for what's going out. It's a lot but it's good. Like how often are communications going to go out. The scripts like if you're sending out something just to remind somebody of an appointment we have to write the scripts for that and all that good stuff.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I have one more question about it.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I'm excited about Sara.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: It sounds very interesting, which is why I have questions. Will there be training, not necessarily for like the counselors using it, but like clients or customers using this app to know like how-- like is there an app or I don't know how any of it is?

MELISSA BAYHAM: That's a good question. I do not know. I can find out.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Just cause like you can tell me that this exist and if I'm a client I'm like okay, great. But if I don't know how to use it that doesn't really help anything.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right. And I don't know the answer to that and I'll find out. But I will tell you I know there's going to be something that's sent to the customer at the very beginning and they can select how they want to be communicated with. Like email, texts or both. And I do know that some of the text messaging things should be

quite intuitive.

LIAM DOYLE: Thank you, Melissa. Any other questions? Any public comment? Seeing none. The next agenda item I have is an update from a representative from Louisiana Department of Education. Stephanie, do we have someone from LDOE?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: We do not have a representative here today so we are just going to move on to the next item if that's okay with y'all. And there will be one here tomorrow. If you do have questions please save those for tomorrow.

LIAM DOYLE: The next agenda item I have are recommendations for activities for the FY planning committee. That's FY27.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So I can kind of talk about it really quickly. I sent everybody the goal three of the action plan. This committee is responsible for goal three. That is education and employment is what that goal is based on. So under goal three there are, I think, three objectives. I have papers everywhere. Just two. I'm sorry. Two objectives. I can read them if y'all want me to. I found it. If y'all want me to read it I can. If not that's good too. It's in everybody's packet. I just included goal three in your packet just to not overwhelm everyone. But I will read the goal and I can read those two objectives for y'all. The goal says people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be able to learn and grow in schools and programs where they are safe, included and supported. They will also be able to pick jobs they like, get paid fairly and work with people with and without disabilities. Objective one is people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be able to learn in safe, supportive and welcoming places at every stage of life from early childhood through adulthood. And then objective two is people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will get the support they need to find jobs they want where they are paid fairly, included and treated with respect. So the first objective is kind of aimed more towards the education part or like early childhood and education and including post-secondary education. And then the second objective is more geared towards that employment part of this goal.

So if you have any recommendations. And these are recommendations for the activities. These are the

activities that are going to be on here. I will say goal three is always real light in activities. It's the thing that y'all talk about a lot so maybe if you have any ideas or things you were thinking that might fit in here please recommend them.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I have a question about this. What is considered a barrier?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Comparable to peers with the same level of education.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. So it shouldn't matter what your disability is?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Correct. It shouldn't matter if you have or not. (Inaudible) get a fair and living wage.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: So what if it does? What if your disability affects your pay?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Can you repeat the question.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: So I was asking it said something about getting paid fairly and work with people with and without disabilities. So what does being paid fairly, what does that fall under?

LIAM DOYLE: Like how would you define that.

EBONY HAVEN: So of course the goal of the council is for all individuals to have competitive, integrated employment. So it would be competitive to whatever someone else in that same job would be making. Does that make sense?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes. It makes perfect sense. My next question is what if the person with the disability is not getting paid fairly? What if they're getting paid under what they're actually supposed to be getting paid?

EBONY HAVEN: So that is why you guys have your five-year plan because we want to make sure that if there's advocacy that needs to be done, if there's capacity building or if there's systems change which a lot of times is a little bit of all of those things. So that's why we're trying to come up with ideas. So if you have an idea for advocacy or if you have an idea to build capacity within the disability community so that individuals are paid fairly and not subminimum wage or anything like that. Or if you have an idea on a systems change activity that we could engage in that's why we're trying to get these activities.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Because right now we don't get paid fairly. We are paid under minimum wage and our monthly

income is docked because the few hours we can work plus what we get paid. I understand if we were paid minimum wage and getting docked for our SSI but we're not. So it's like we're getting hit in both places.

LIAM DOYLE: Maybe the answer to that would be we could create some information to kind of explain how social security works in terms of what the requirements are for them. Because I think what you're saying is if you're receiving social security disability you have obviously there's a financial part of that where you're only allowed a certain income, correct. Maybe as a council we can work with the social security office to say how can we create information to make sure the people who receive those benefits can work to their full capacity while still maintaining the services they have and making sure they can earn as much as possible. I think a lot of times people who receive social security, as you said, can't be afraid to work and feel like they're being underpaid. So the next step to that would be to say can we do something as a council to ensure that they number one can work and earn whatever the amount is. Melissa, please chime in.

MELISSA BAYHAM: What you're describing exist already. For example, if you come through LRS we have access to benefits planners. And I actually have one on staff who can explain that information. That information is available. But I think part of your question has to do more of maybe employers being unfair. Is that what you're saying in addition to social security?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Right. Because I am very familiar with what you can do and can't do. A very thin line. I need to know who I need to get with and what we need to do to fix that issue because it is a very big problem.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And I'm not sure how you fix issues with employers.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Are you looking for maybe an activity for someone that can look or call the employer on your behalf? If I remember correctly, is it DRLA?

LIAM DOYLE: Disability Rights Louisiana.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I remember last time he mentioned if there was such an issue we can look at it and see how many cases they can take. We can have like an activity under objective one. And if we send a case that you know about someone that is being mistreated and we can call him and he can look. He said they don't know how many cases they

can look at. Let's say only one case. But they can look at them and see how many cases they can take. That's what you're looking for someone to advocate on behalf of the employee?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Absolutely. To change the minimum wage for us because the last I looked it's still 5.25.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Outside of like a sheltered workshop situation you shouldn't be paid less than minimum wage. If you are then you have an issue with your employer. That's definitely DRLA. Or if not we can help you find someone that can assist in that.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And that's the legal lens but also I know one of the struggles that we have in LRS is our vendors that provide employment services should be out there talking to employers, educating employers and things like that. And I know we have some good vendors but we don't have enough vendors and they probably could be trained better. That's one of the things that we cannot use our funds to train vendors on how to provide employment services. We can provide training on our forms and LRS policies. But I know that's one of our limitations with our funding is that we can't provide training to help them be better service providers.

EBONY HAVEN: I know that the council did engage in an activity maybe a couple years ago where we did employment seminars. And so they were sort of like focused more so on individuals with disabilities rather than the vendors like what Melissa is saying. Of course any professional could have joined those seminars. They were open to the public so anybody can have joined. But it was more so like storytelling from the point of view of an individual with disabilities like their story about how they got employment, how they're not making subminimum wage. If you want to recommend to the planning committee an activity where we actually train the vendors that is something that the council can maybe do because that's a capacity building activity.

LIAM DOYLE: I think that would be a good opportunity as well for Ayden maybe to come in and say this is what I've experienced and how do we make sure that is as isolated as possible.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Also I know it's different for someone that's on SSI verses someone that's on SSDI. Which blows

my mind. But yeah, I do feel that that's something that really is needed.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Does the state keep up with any of this? Like do they have a survey, has the state ever done a survey to see how they treat..

EBONY HAVEN: I can try to provide an answer. I know like the state is a model employer. And this is only for state agencies. This isn't going to go outside of that. So if you have a private business or a nonprofit or anything like that they're not going to research their employment practices. But as far as like state agencies there has been surveys sent out to state agencies to ask whether or not employees have a disability and it goes out to all state employees. And so you can answer the survey and say whether or not you're a person with a disability. There is a survey that kind of goes out and they ask about that. But that's only for state agencies.

LIAM DOYLE: Trying to think the last time I did one. It's been a couple years, right?

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah. It hasn't been recent.

LIAM DOYLE: Because I was going to say in three years I don't think I've ever taken that survey.

MELISSA BAYHAM: It's actually in LEO. You can update your disability status.

EBONY HAVEN: Oh, in LEO.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ayden, I just wanted to make sure I captured what you said. I also shared it up here just to make sure that I'm capturing because we kind of gave two different ideas. I just want to make sure I had everything and this is what I understood. To create information and training on how social security works so that people with disabilities can work and be compensated fairly. And then the second one is training for vendors. The one is the training for the people and then the second would be training for vendors on employment and how to support people with developmental disabilities. Is that correct? Okay. I just want to make sure I had it.

LIAM DOYLE: I think to add something to this as well. But I think there should be a pipeline for people who have SSDI, SSI, Medicaid who want to potentially work full time. Because at some point in my career I made the choice to walk away from those services in order to work full time and that's always a hard choice. So if you're interested and willing to do that the big question that keeps people from

making that step is I don't want to lose my services, right. So how do we transition people off those services who do have the opportunity. For me I had a clean break and I moved states so I was going to lose Medicaid anyway when I moved from Louisiana to Florida. So it made it easier. But I'm one of one, right. So how do we say if you want to work full time, if you want to go to college, get a degree, bachelor's degree, whatever it is and eventually your plan is to work full time how do we make it easier to get off those services that you rely on now so that when you do enter the workforce you're able to work full time.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I can't provide y'all details on this yet because I haven't talked to the person yet. But there's something called a Cliff Tool. I'm literally in the middle of scheduling a meeting with them. And it's supposed to provide people with information about that. The Cliff Tool has to do with the benefits cliff. It might do what you're saying.

LIAM DOYLE: I'm so glad to hear Melissa. I think that's something when you have these state and federal services sort of the prevailing wisdom is if you have it you stay on it. So how do we make it to where there is gainful employment out there and everyone is doing what they can. But also makes it to where it is possible to thrive without Medicaid, Medicare. It's a conscious choice that is incredibly difficult to do. Anything we can do as a council, as a committee to provide information to say it is possible.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So what about those that are doing it the right way. Paying people 11-dollars an hour, 12-dollars an hour. For example, this McDonalds on the corner of this street and that street is doing well and treating everybody equally and paying everybody the same wages. On the flip side you think that can be done to make the others, like the shame of not doing?

LIAM DOYLE: I don't know shame but what if we, an idea for that would be like if we highlighted businesses that do really well, right. But not necessarily like LDH approved but something to find a way to highlight the vendors that Melissa has that work really well. And say hey, we love these people. For example, the governor's office has employer of the year award we give every year. You can go back and say these people have worked with the disability community in the past. A place to start. As

part of all of this work to also say how do we highlight, and that's working with vendors, that's working with the DDC to say these are the employers that we know are committed to it and then get them in front of people like Ayden who want to work. That's another way is to highlight that in some capacity. Put that on the list.

BRENTON ANDRUS: You could take that option and incorporate it into your first (inaudible). The more individuals you bring in those vendors that are doing it right. And then the training for vendors you also include those that are doing it right as part of the training to sort of help.

EBONY HAVEN: Melissa, I know at one point you guys were doing job fairs. And so do y'all have any plans to do any job fairs coming up?

MELISSA BAYHAM: We did one job fair a year but Healthy Blue sponsored it and they haven't been able to sponsor it.

RENODA WASHINGTON: I like what you said. What about even if they don't do it but what about other, like when they're doing job fairs maybe connecting with them and getting some of those--

EBONY HAVEN: Again, you guys have money. Seventy percent of your money has to go towards your state plan. So you can put money towards not only doing vendor training but you can also put money towards collaborating with an organization like LRS to put on a job fair since Healthy Blue has not been able to.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Job fairs are kind of interesting meaning the VR federal regulations they're a beast and it's like you have to only provide services to VR participants. But when you have a job fair you're serving the public so it gets really complicated. And that's why we only did it in conjunction with Healthy Blue because we used their sponsorship.

LIAM DOYLE: What about a virtual job fair?

MELISSA BAYHAM: It was.

LIAM DOYLE: Like targeted specific to LRS, to your clientele.

MELISSA BAYHAM: It's a great idea. Just when new things come to me I don't like to give a definite answer.

LIAM DOYLE: Yeah, yeah, yeah. The way around that would be to say cut the public out of it. But you know what I'm saying, cut the general public and target it specific to your clientele if that's allowed. I don't even know.

And it's a question for you and you'll come back to us on that.

LAMARTINE MEDA: (Inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: When we did the employment seminars they talked about all of the incentives that employers receive if they hire individuals with disabilities. So again, those seminars were catered more to individuals with disabilities so that they would know the benefits. But like Melissa is saying, a lot of the vendors I don't know if they know all of the benefits that are available to them because I know there's tax incentives and other things that would entice them to become a vendor or a business that Liam was saying we could highlight that actually does a great job with making things accessible, having an accessible workplace.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And actually the work opportunity tax credit that department is in the Office of Workforce Development where we sit.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So the question is how do we get it to them if they may not know or does the gain outweigh the work that they have to do to hire someone with a disability. So do we feel like most of the employers may not be fully aware of the benefits or?

EBONY HAVEN: I don't think they are. I think that companies just aren't aware of the benefits that they can receive. And that's something that can be included in the training. I think it's a great idea if you guys include an activity like that. And even have businesses to come and train. Businesses that are doing it well to come and train those vendors on how they can do it. How to change the culture at your organization and how to start attracting individuals with disabilities to come and get those jobs.

RENODA WASHINGTON: (Inaudible) cause UL Life they already have established internships with various places around Lafayette. A lot of them already have individuals with disabilities already working with them. Highlighting and just collaborating more with them too. Because they have a lot of different (inaudible) those kids are working at Nichols and UL Life. They're working. They have established rapport. Highlighting those so people can really know what it's all for. Just to have that connection too.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: So the people who are on disability

and on SSDI who is in charge of like if we say okay, we want them to go to work. Who is in charge of our pay? Who says hey, this is what this person gets paid? Who's in control of that?

EBONY HAVEN: That would be disability determination. I think they're within DCF.

LIAM DOYLE: They're LDH now.

EBONY HAVEN: They're under LDH now. They moved because they were under DCFS and now they are under LDH.

LIAM DOYLE: And then so basically, and I think your question is specifically, it's less about the amount of money you make per hour. It's more about the amount of money you can make per month and that is set at the federal level I believe if I'm not mistaken.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Right. So my understanding is disability determination literally that's all they do. And then they determine you eligible. But then you're with social security I think at that point in terms of how much you're actually getting paid.

LIAM DOYLE: To your point no one from social security is going to say you can make 10-dollars an hour verses 50-dollars an hour. What they care about more is the aggregate amount per month as long as it doesn't exceed whatever the preterm is because it changes every couple of years. They'll change it so I don't know what the current rate is per month. But as long as you don't exceed that annual allowance you're allowed to work as much as you'd like.

MELISSA BAYHAM: And the benefits planner I was talking about before they literally can get the information directly from social security. And they're highly trained so they can give you some very good information as to how much you can make a month.

LIAM DOYLE: It sounds like separately we need to get with you Melissa and maybe set you up with a benefits planner and go from there.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. Thank you.

LIAM DOYLE: Unless anyone has anything else for that we're going to move on to contractual.

EBONY HAVEN: Just one more suggestion. Since we are talking about benefits planning I just asked Brenton because he has more historical knowledge about some of the activities that the council has engaged in. But I don't think they've had a recent activity where there's been

training on benefits planning on the things that Melissa and Liam are talking about. You can work this many hours before it affects your SSI or SSDI. And so I think that could be another activity that the council engages in. Like Stephanie already mentioned goal three is one of the goals that has very light activity. I was just suggesting to the committee, and this is for y'all, I mean (inaudible) send this to the planning committee, but also just doing the training to build capacity for individuals with disabilities on benefits planning. Like who to contact and what agencies are out there. Because I know there's Lighthouse, right, Melissa?

MELISSA BAYHAM: I'm not a counselor anymore so I don't keep up with that stuff. LSUHDC used to be one. I don't remember if they still are. They had certain territories.

LIAM DOYLE: I'll link you with people in the disability determination office.

MELISSA BAYHAM: I can find out. My counselors know.

LIAM DOYLE: Okay. By all means. I got enough going on. Melissa, you go ahead. Constance, go ahead.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So HDC does do benefit planning.

MELISSA BAYHAM: They have separate territories. I know they have one territory and Lighthouse has a different territory.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I have one more suggestion if y'all want to take it. And it's only because-- these are great but they all fall under only one of the objectives though which is employment. And one of the things that we spoke about, I believe it was at the executive committee today, was that FBAs, the functional behavioral analysis was going to be taken off of the advocacy agenda. So I was just, to give you an idea I know it will be something that the education and employment committee will be talking about because it falls under this but I didn't know if y'all wanted an activity about it. An activity for funding I guess. Because it could always just be written as we get an update from the Department of Education but I didn't know if there was anything else that you would like to see with that in regards to funding an activity if that makes sense. Or anything in education really. Constance has her hand raised.

LIAM DOYLE: Go ahead Constance.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So I know one of the areas like in education in the early childhood realm is really like

providing support in trainings for daycare providers and that younger age on how to support behaviors and helping provide resources for them. And what is happening is they end up kicking younger children out with challenging behaviors instead of providing that support. There's that lack of support there. If there's some way to provide support and training for early childhood. I think I had something related to what Stephanie was saying but that one has went away.

LIAM DOYLE: Do any other committee members have anything to add? Stephanie, can we review these?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. I will go ahead and just read all of them kind of quickly but if I go too fast please let me know. And if you want me to change anything on here. Just as a reminder if you weren't here for our last meeting for SDCI these are just ideas that will be given to the planning committee and then once we kind of have these ideas and the activities the real fine tuning of it comes from when we get the proposals. So it doesn't have to be super specific because that's going to be the planning committee doing that and it doesn't have to have like an outline of what you want to see done. But I did take notes on things that y'all were interested in to make sure that when we do send out the proposal we include that information as like it needs to include this or your proposal should include that. So these are just concepts, just some ideas to throw out. But if there's something that I left out please let me know and I'll go ahead and edit it or if I didn't capture it correctly.

The first one is create information or training on how social security works so that people with disabilities can work and be compensated fairly. Mentioning like highlighting businesses and vendors and employers that are doing a great job. Trainings or seminars for vendors on employment and how to support people with developmental disabilities. And the same, including that highlight of vendors and employers that are doing a great job. And also making sure to include it has the benefits of hiring people with disabilities. A pipeline for SSDI or SSI. That pipeline for recipients of SSDI or SSI that want to work full time to transition away from those services. A job fair sponsorship or funding opportunity. Training on benefits planning such as like who to contact and things like that. And then providing support and trainings for

early childhood for children with disabilities.

LIAM DOYLE: Constance, go ahead.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I thought of another one just kind of related to transition in that K12 space and really helping to support and making sure that schools are starting transition in middle school and really building in those supports for our students with more significant disabilities and needs. That moderate to significant disability range.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: How does that look, Constance? Is that kind of what you were looking for or is there something I need to change?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: No. I think that covers it.

LIAM DOYLE: So can I get a motion to send these to the planning committee.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: To the full council.

LIAM DOYLE: Sorry. I need a motion to send these suggestions to the full council meeting which will happen tomorrow. Erick, did you want to motion?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Erick motioned.

LIAM DOYLE: And a second.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I second.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Second.

LIAM DOYLE: We have multiple people seconding. Now we're going to move on to--

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. I'm going to do a roll call vote. A vote yes is that you would like to recommend this list of recommendations to the full council. A vote no is that you do not want to recommend it to the full council. And I'll go ahead and take that roll call vote if y'all are ready. Ms. Bayham.

MELISSA BAYHAM: Abstain.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Abstain. Ms. Bayham, abstain. Mr. Boynton.

JUDE BOYNTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Boynton, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda, yes. Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Mr. Taylor, yes. Ms. Stewart.

BROOKE STEWART: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Stewart, yes. And Ms. Washington.

RENODA WASHINGTON: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Ms. Washington, yes. You have five yeases so the motion passes.

LIAM DOYLE: Now we're going to the contractual updates. Stephanie, will you please provide an update on that.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah. There is one activity, this is activity 3.1.4 on your plan which is-- maybe it is. Maybe 3.1.5. It's one or the other. The transition to the adulthood one. The DD Council has partnered with Team Dynamics to expand that training. They were doing it last year. They are still doing it this year. They sent out a voluntary anonymous survey to get input from individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and caretakers. The survey was to identify those skills, information and resources needed for successful transition to adult life. So the survey had topics and based on the topics for each region are the trainings that they're going to do. Each training is tailored to the survey.

So they're taking the survey results and they are like separating them out. So all of the people that answered, and I actually just got the results yesterday for the survey, like it just closed, so I can talk more about that at the next meeting. I'm just going to use region one for an example. They're going to take all of the people who said that they live in region one through ten and look at what they chose. What things did they want to get in training. So it could have been on voting rights or health and wellbeing or financial information like banking and stuff because they did one on that. And then they take the two that have the highest amount of votes of importance, those are the two that they do their training for that region specifically. But each region had different needs so they are trailering each training to the needs of what the survey said.

The other thing that they included this time on the survey, which came directly from the feedback from their last set of trainings, is preferred dates and times. So they specifically asked people when could you come. Is this like you can only come on weekends. What month is best. What times are best for you. What days of the week are best for you in order to maximize the amount of people that can come to their trainings. So we sent out an LADDC on November 17th with that survey just to send it out if

anybody is interested in it. Like I said, I think it just closed maybe over the weekend because they just sent me the results and I haven't been able to look at them yet. They are doing some different kind of workshops for their speakers at other workshops. In October they held a workshop in Ponchatoula at SOAR. And sorry. I don't know what it stands for but S-O-A-R. There was one other one. Maybe I'm getting confused with the other training. Sorry. But anyway, that's that information.

The final dates, the topics that are selected and the locations once I have all of that information we will be sharing that with an LADDC news so that everybody can schedule if they would like to go. And that is all I have for my update unless you have a question.

LIAM DOYLE: Any council member have a question? Any public questions? Seeing none. We'll move on. Now I will move on to announcements. Tomorrow is the full council meeting at 10 a.m. in this room. Please note the new schedule because of this location. Do any committee members have any announcements?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I made the same announcement at the SDCI meeting so I am going to make it at this meeting also. I know we just went through the recommendations for the planning committee that will go to the planning committee as long as the council approves them. And that does mean that the planning committee will be meeting probably at the end of March or April. We try to get the meeting before the April meeting, the April council meeting but that is when we need to vote on the plan so that we can have it ready for October. So all that to say please volunteer or think about it for the planning committee. If you have good ideas and you would really like to help us and help the council with writing these activities and making our annual work plan benefit everybody and really work towards that. It is a lot of work. It is a full day meeting but they're usually pretty good. And I'll be there so. But yeah, just consider joining it and volunteering when they ask for volunteers tomorrow. That's my only announcement.

LIAM DOYLE: Are there any other announcements from council members, committee members? Any public comment? Seeing none. I will go ahead and adjourn this meeting at 5:22 p.m. Thank y'all.