

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Planning Committee
March 20th, 2026

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Good morning everyone. It is 9:13. I will now call the meeting to order. Stephanie, please take roll call.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. Ayden Blunschi.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Constance Alphonse. I think she's on. She was having issues but she said she was here. I'll skip her for now. Jill Hano.

JILL HANO: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Erick Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Karen Xu.

KAREN XU: Here.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: You have five. You have a quorum. Ms. Constance is here. Perfect timing.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Thank you, Stephanie. Before we start (inaudible) raise your hand if you want to speak. Wait until I call on you before talking. Keep side conversations quiet. Stay on the topic we are discussing. For the people joining by Zoom you must be on camera with your full name showing to count for a quorum. Keep your microphone off unless I call on you. Click raise hand if you want to speak. Wait until I call on you. 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 are not allowed. Public members will have one chance to comment on each agenda. Each person has two minutes. Public comment will also happen before a vote or at other times if I allow it. Let's work together to keep the meeting respectful and on track.

Everyone should have reviewed the concept papers

which are linked in the agenda you received by email. Concept papers were submitted during the five-year planning process for the council to consider. Staff included notes on where each concept can fit in the council's plan and provided additional information. Are there any questions about the concept papers?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sharing the concept papers right now on the screen. This is just kind of like the table of contents. I also included in all of the packets the actual concept papers. Those are the ones that were under the five-year concepts that were submitted. So I made just like a little chart for y'all but it's kind of in the second stack of paper clipped items. So everybody should have that. Those are the actual papers that were submitted. And this page was just like a table of contents overview of them. And Jill has her hand raised, Ayden.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, Jill.

JILL HANO: I think you just answered my question, Stephanie. But these are the five year, these are the same concept papers that we got in the five-year planning committee packet like a while back, right?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes, that's correct.

JILL HANO: Okay. Thank you so much.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: No problem.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I was just curious the expanding paraprofessionals education, why is that one outside of the scope of the council?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: When staff talked about it, when we spoke about it just from reading what was in here it was more of changing like policy and we felt that was more for individual school districts if I remember our conversation correctly.

EBONY HAVEN: Constance, I guess our train of thought was that the Louisiana Department of Education is very specific about what trainings they give their teachers, paraprofessionals. And they've been, I guess it's been communicated to us that they make trainings available to the paras and to the teachers. And they have to go on their own to take those trainings. And so we've just been informed that they make trainings available and that the teachers are able to go and take those trainings when they have time. And so I think we were thinking it's outside of the scope of the council

to try and train paraprofessionals or even teachers outside of LDOE. We would have to get them involved. And I guess it's been our experience that we just haven't been able to work with them on getting para and teachers trained in this type of way.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I would say they just started some online system where (inaudible) that's online. They had the teacher leader summit, that would be like an avenue or something (inaudible) parents aren't typically the audience (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm making a note of that right now. I'll make sure to just contact the LDOE representative to just let her know that we wanted some more information on just like what their training includes or any yearly like CEUs or whatever they need. And then that way we can kind of have those conversations during that meeting. I agree. And if there's anything specific just let me know.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Okay.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: With the training, what specifically they training?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Are we talking about the paraprofessionals at school? I'm not sure what specific training they receive. And I think that's what Constance was asking to kind of talk to the Department of Ed representative that we have on the council and have her talk about it at the education and employment committee so we can get a better idea of what that training looks like for the paraprofessionals. To kind of see if maybe there is something within the scope of the council that we can do. It just may not be this year.

ERICK TAYLOR: I feel like (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I have a feeling they're going to say that's district specific if I had to guess. So it depends on the school. It depends on the district. I think they're going to say that. And that's just my assumption. I may be wrong. Some kind of everybody has to do this but how they do it or what other optional or extra ones certain people have to do I'm not sure if they'll have that information. So I'd like to maybe talk to the LDOE representative so she can give us a better understanding of that. I think that's

not the answer you wanted, Erick. I'm sorry.

ERICK TAYLOR: I just don't want them (inaudible) the training, really have the true training.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Right.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So I think they are very, very important (inaudible) in the classroom to emphasize the students (inaudible), right. Just a couple things. So the school district having a hard time keeping professionals, right. Can this be constructed such a way it doesn't matter if it is me or you that's there and just jump into the job? Because again, I guess go back to training, right. If we have the same training and we do exactly the same thing it doesn't matter if it is me that's there or you because we can continue doing the exact same thing. What I'm trying to say it doesn't matter who is there because the job will be such a way that the person that is in the classroom doesn't matter, right. Just following A, B, C, D to have the students in the classroom. The other thing, what about the cost. Do we have an estimated cost if we were to do this?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: For the paraprofessional?

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yeah.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So in the paper the estimated cost just says salaries for training and cost for travel and materials. So we don't have like an actual number. I will say if we look at the committee recommendation paper up here at the top there is a range in training, and this is from our last five-year plan. All of our training activities range from 35,000 to 80,000 for each activity. So that just kind of, I know that's a large range, but that was over the five years. So I would say it would probably fall somewhere within there.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I think we said we're going to follow with the LDOE about permission. I think I didn't quite get what kind of permission from them.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. I want to find out what overall training is like required from LDOE for paraprofessionals. Hopefully they can give me that information. I don't know if they will be able to. But that is my hope.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Find out what they do.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes, exactly. What they're required and what kind of like ongoing training. So not just like onboarding, but like what kind of ongoing training every year is required for paraprofessionals. And then even if they have like maybe optional training. Because I know depending-- I don't know, but I would hope that depending on placement of the paraprofessional if they're in a self-contained class verses like the general population class where they're just popping in maybe that training looks a little bit different depending on the person. Just kind of getting more information on what kind of training is required. I think that would help guide what the council would like to do.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: The next document is recommendation from the council and public comments from the five-year plan. The document was also linked in the agenda.

EBONY HAVEN: So chair, Jill has her hand raised.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am, Jill.

JILL HANO: Do y'all have a quorum without me because I need to go move a table to be closer to my charger?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes.

JILL HANO: Okay. Cool. Thank y'all.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So I just want to explain this document really quick. At first the first section I just put the note up here the range in the cost for training, like I said earlier, for any activities is 35,000 to 80,000. And that was for the last five-year plan. So 2022 to 2026. The first little section of this is committee recommendations from the five-year plan. So some of the recommendations were activity recommendations so I did keep all of that. And I included it here with where they can fall under that possible objective. And then some notes on the second page are the committee recommendations from the January council meeting and it has the same information. And then the third, fourth page maybe is the five-year plan public comment recommendations or suggestions. We had a lot of comments for our five-year plan and they gave activity suggestions or recommendations for the council so I wanted to include that also. And it has the same kind of outline with the objective in the notes. So

I'll go ahead and look that over. But if you have any questions please let me know.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, sir, Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: I had a question. Just go back on the training for a minute. Is this training the teachers or overall training?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The concept paper was specifically for the aides, for the paraprofessionals.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am, Ms. Constance.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So the one on the back of the first page, the very last one. So it says (inaudible). I kind of walked out. I think what I was thinking was specifically based on what I see in my work transition planning is not really actively engaged. It's more of a check box. It's starting too late, even when it's supposed to start at 16, but it's not effective. So we're not effectively preparing our students to enter into the workforce or enter into whatever it is they want to do next. So really starting to train at the middle school level of what does effective transition look like. What should we do at these meetings. Who do we need to have at the table. What does person-centered planning look like. What is our role as educators. As community members how do we support the students and not waiting until they're in 12th grade and then oh, what are they doing next. That plan needs to be developed in seventh or eighth grade, starting the conversation (inaudible).

And I don't see it necessarily as an advocacy issue in that we have things (inaudible) and I don't think-- it's that teachers are overworked and then it's also that they don't know. Like I think they might take one course in college on transition. And so they really don't know what to do especially the teachers we have that are not even SPED trained. (Inaudible). I think it's more giving them the tools and showing them (inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: I just wanted to add I think that's one of the notes is further guidance needed. I know you just said giving them the tools and showing them what the process is. I guess who is them and like how would the council, because this is what you guys are here for, how would the council put this into an activity in order to get it accomplished. That's why

we're like we need a little more guidance on what the council can actually do. Because anything that they do it has to be either capacity building. It has to be systems change or advocacy. Which is why we were saying it may be better as advocacy because as you just brought up it's already in writing that they should be doing it. I guess can you give us a little further guidance on what you think the council can do or put into an activity that has to be either capacity building or systems change or advocacy where we can like reach this goal.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So I think it's a training of some sort. One of the concept papers tied to...

EBONY HAVEN: Was it the transition plan?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: It was the transition planning one. That particular one there kind of talks about-- full disclosure, this was an HDC concept paper. Full disclosure there. But it does talk about kind of like a training plan to be able to support families and educators with understanding a range of services that all connect back to transition planning.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Would this fall under systems change? Because I think we need to know what effective transition looks like because we already have it. It's actually just not being effective, right.

EBONY HAVEN: More under capacity building.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: We have rules to tell educators what they're supposed to be doing. But the way it's done is not in a way that's (inaudible).

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I do have a different question. And you may have answered this already and just my brain was going 90 to nothing. Why do we feel like it's not getting, the training is not getting done? Those things are not going the way that they're supposed to go.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Based on just observation and opinion, like I have no data to support this, just my work in the field, is that teachers they just don't know. No one's told them. And so you hear oh, they turned 16 and you happen to be that eighth-grade teacher. Let me make sure. Okay, I need to send a letter to LRS. And it's like a check box but no one understands really what does this mean. They don't understand. And this is I would say education in

general that transition. But what happens at a lower grade when that child is in sixth grade, seventh grade, eighth grade how it impacts high school. And so what happens I feel like children just get pushed through and then magically they're about to graduate and then it's like oh, what are we supposed to do. But if we would have done the steps in seventh grade and eighth grade and said okay, this is the path this child is going to be on. We need to talk to the family, talk to the student and see what those needs are and where they want to go. Develop a roadmap to get there. It's a roadmap that's not being developed. Just happen stance check boxes.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So it's there. It's me that is not doing my job, right, is that what you're saying? Because I am just a 16, 17-year old that's going through the check box. I didn't do A, B, C, D when they were 15 just getting to high school and 16, 17 all of a sudden--

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I would say it's more-- that's why Ebony is saying capacity building. It's more they just don't know. I don't think anybody's intentionally making it a check box. That's how they've been trained. Oh, well, they're about to turn 16. We need to do a transition plan. Okay, what are we going to put in this transition plan. They're going to pass a class or they're going to take generic.

LAMARTINE MEDA: The other thing, whose job was it to make sure when they were 15, 16 who were checking okay, now I'm 17 and so now I'm about to graduate so everything is done. So I think maybe responsibility, right. Whose job is it to make sure I was doing my job. I'm just saying. Anyway. It seems like if it is already there someone is not doing their job. That's all I have to say. Someone is not doing their job to make sure I'm doing my job in the classroom. Or the paraprofessional is doing their job. The rules are there whatever they're supposed to follow. And someone is just not connecting the dots.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: That was my question as well. Who is responsible for making sure this is all connected.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I honestly don't know. Districts appoint a transition coordinator. The state gets the IEPs where these documents are supposed to be

developed. (Inaudible). It doesn't mean there's not one just because I don't know about it.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Correct. Yes, sir, Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: My thing is to piggyback off of her and what she's saying. What she's asking and this is what I'm asking is we want to make sure the kids is prepared for whatever they need to get to the levels they need to be at so when they get to 18 or 21 or whatever age they're at they is prepared for it. And then saying okay, we're going to put them at this high grade level and then we'll get ready to leave them out the door. Okay, we don't have the time to get them ready because they already at that level. It should be started at the bottom first and then work the way up so when they get to the part where they on their way they already set for society. They set for a job. They set for everything that they need. And not just in the system saying okay, let's check this box. And okay, they not ready for a job. They not ready for independent living. And it should be done at the bottom.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The status report? It's in your packet.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I put the wrong number. I'm so sorry. It's 2.13. I'm sorry. I had the numbers mixed up. I will talk about that one for a moment. This specific concept paper is the part that the council cannot afford. If you look at the amount that they said the cost estimate was it's over 1 million-dollars. Which we don't even get that amount for the activities so we cannot afford that. But we did a similar training, the council worked on the dual diagnosis for three years and that is activity 2.1.3. So I'm sorry. I had the wrong number. 2.1.3. And if you look at that it gives the information over on the past three years and just some background information on the activity.

LAMARTINE MEDA: What page is that on?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: It's on page six. Sorry.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. Can you repeat the

question.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So what we did, the activity that the council did cost 30,000-dollars.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The 1 million is coming from this concept paper. And that was an outside organization that sent in their concept. That if they were to complete this it would cost 1 million-dollars. So we as the council staff said well, we can't afford 1 million-dollars. We did a similar activity and we spent 30,000-dollars.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The actual concept paper it's in your packet. It's from Merakey.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: So those were trainings. The one that we did, activity 2.1.3. Those were trainings. I don't know if they were virtual or in person. They might have been both. But they did trainings on how they can navigate those systems. How they can navigate the developmental disability system, behavioral health system and managed care organizations. So how do you navigate all of those when you have a dual diagnosis. If you have two diagnosis, behavioral health and developmental disability how do you navigate those systems to make them work for you. So they did trainings. So I think this particular, the concept paper that you're talking about I think they want to do something a little different but the cost is a lot.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: It's a different approach.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So that's not the vendor for this activity. This is a different organization that sent in this concept. So the council allocated the 30,000-dollars and we sent that out for proposal. We solicited the proposals and then the council selected who they wanted to complete that. This company is Merakey. I'm not sure if I'm saying that correctly. They sent this in separately. So they didn't apply for the solicitation of proposals for this activity. They said well, this is a different approach to do this but they're quoted about for how they could do it is over a million annually.

EBONY HAVEN: I don't know if they actually go into specifics about how they would do it. So I'm not sure if they're going to be doing trainings. It sort of just seems like they stated expected outcomes but they didn't really go into any details about how they would actually do that.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: It's included in their concept paper. It's on that second page. They break down the cost of how they got the cost of 1.25-million.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So it seems to me they will tell you how they are going to do it once you hire them. (Inaudible) on the process of how. So they think it's a unique way of doing it that nobody else have done.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: For the concept papers they give us all the information.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Oh, they do?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Correct. We solicited for concepts and just said if you have a concept send it in if you want the committee to take it into consideration for the next five-year plan. And so there were specific things that had to be included. Cost estimate was one. Like an overview. And then I believe just like what your plan was. Like a very short plan. Whenever we do the solicitation of proposal, which is a little bit different, we kind of put out almost like when you put out like a job kind of, right. We say what things we're looking for and what goals need to be accomplished. And if you think you can do this then you send in like your proposal. But within your proposal you get to say how you're going to do it as long as you're reaching whatever goal the council is looking for. Which is why some of the things say like okay, we need more guidance on this because we're trying to figure out how to send out those solicitations to make sure that we're meeting the expectations and the goals for the council, what y'all wanted the activity to be.

I guess it kind of goes both ways. Like yes, they give information and they can kind of plan it but overall the goal is what the council wants and whatever their plan for the activity is it has to fit into that goal or we need to have that discussion with the contractor to say hey, this is what the council is

looking for and we need to make sure you're reaching this goal. I don't know if that helps.

LAMARTINE MEDA: That does.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

NICOLE DEJEAN: My name is Nicole DeJean and I'm with Disability Access Solutions. I wanted to talk about the topic, it looks like it's on the third page. I think it was submitted as create a resource guide by compiling emergency plans for parishes especially as it relates to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We were the ones that submitted a revised recommendation because when we saw this we were really excited about it. The company currently is doing a lot of work across the state and with Texas looking at emergency preparedness plans as it pertains to people with disabilities or the lack thereof. Because what we're finding in a lot of parishes, in a lot of entities individuals with disabilities are not included. Or they're included but in a very inappropriate or minor way that doesn't allow for appropriate emergency preparedness. I guess preparedness, resilience, recovery. All the things that go into disasters.

This is a super important topic but I think the way that it was suggested wouldn't have the impact that the council would be looking for. Because the way that it's suggested right now is creating a resource guide based on each parish's emergency plan. And each parish does create their own specific emergency plan for their citizens but it's really designed for the emergency managers to create a plan, like kind of a big approach. How are we going to keep the parish safe. Not necessarily-- this isn't a document that the average citizen can pick up and really say okay, this is how it applies to me. This is how I can keep myself and my family safe. And these documents generally are about 200 to 500 pages long and it really takes somebody with some expertise to comb through that and figure out, you know, kind of glean that information how the citizen can use it.

So our recommendation is actually based on some work that's being done with the Texas SIL. So the Texas Statewide Independent Living Council they currently have a peer-led training program that's

happening over there for their citizens with developmental and intellectual disabilities specifically on the gulf coast. So what they're experiencing there, their emergencies and disasters really align with what we have here. And so the way they've approached it is they are training individuals with disabilities to be the emergency, like trainers in their own community. So they're taking kind of a two-prong approach to this. A workforce development and emergency preparedness, personal preparedness approach. So the individuals with disabilities are within their own community providing the training to other people with disabilities. So you've got that preparedness piece and the workforce development piece. We think it's something that could be emulated here as well. So that was our recommendation. Because again, this is super, super important. There's a big gap for people with disabilities and emergency preparedness. But again, the way that it's being presented right now the average family or individual couldn't take a parish plan and create a plan for themselves and their family to stay safe.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Can I ask a question? Does this have a centralized or someone that is appointed or in charge of everything that has to do with people with disabilities? Like we have a president of the United States so he's the one that is in charge of us, right. Is there a single point of contact and so and so is that person. School districts do their thing. We do our thing. For example, people with disabilities (inaudible) 200 pages of information, right. Is there a centralized person that is in charge of everything that has to do with people with disabilities?

EBONY HAVEN: Are you talking about on the federal?

LAMARTINE MEDA: No. On the state level.

EBONY HAVEN: No. I would say no, we don't have that. Now there are resources that are single points of contact. And I would say Families Helping Families is a resource that you can contact them about all things disabilities and they will try their hardest to get you resources. But I don't think there's a single person within our state government that is specifically in charge of all things disabilities, no.

LAMARTINE MEDA: There was a hurricane in Southeast

Louisiana. Why wasn't this person at this ZIP code, you know.

NICOLE DEJEAN: But that's why this is so important because people need to be able to make their own plans based on their own needs. Because we're seeing that at the parish level people with disabilities are not, the resources are not necessarily there. The knowledge is not there. So I would encourage you guys to definitely lean into this one or to consider this topic. Maybe not in the way that it was originally presented. But again, I would encourage you-- the model that's being used in Texas with their Statewide Independent Living Council really gives people tangible skills to be able to help themselves so they're not so reliant on maybe a governmental entity coming in. Because people with disabilities know their needs best and you can make a plan that's best for you. But we have to be able to have information that we can use that makes sense to us.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, sir, Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: The chair can correct me.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I don't know if you want me to do that.

ERICK TAYLOR: A lot of people, and I'm being truthful and I'm being honest, a lot of people don't want to take that risk. And when I say take that risk of being responsible of people that's got disabilities and trained in helping people with disabilities if I'm on the track of what I'm trying to say to y'all. A lot of people just don't want to take emergency risks of assisting or helping because a lot of people just not trained. And they so scared of taking that risk.

And what I want to say five years ago, six years ago my daughter was totally disabled where she had to ride around in an ambulance and a lot of people were scared. Okay, what to do cause she can't swallow and she can't eat. She can't do this. What I'm trying to make a point a lot of people just don't want to put things in place that would help people that needs what they needs to be trained to what they need. I'm just being honest. I hope I'm on the right track of what I'm trying to say. To put a plan in place, it's easy to put a plan in place but is it easy to follow that plan. It's hard to follow that plan but you can put it

on black and white but who's trained to really follow that plan. Oh, I know. But how many people going to jump in. Oh, I can do it. But how many people going to jump in. Because when they see machines and all this stuff that needs to be put in place. Oh, I'm not trained. I'm scared. It's easy to ride an ambulance and not be trained. It's easy to be a police officer and not be trained. It's easy to be a fireman and not be trained to the disability community. And if you're not trained to walk that walk it's easy to put it in place but it's hard to follow. That's all I have to say.

NICOLE DEJEAN: To build off of what Mr. Erick was saying that's where there's kind of a concern and a lack of understanding from the emergency managers about different disability-related issues. So like you said, how do we evacuate or how do we engage with this person or their family with a disability. That's why we're seeing where it's super important for individuals and families to be able to have that plan for themselves to be able to help themselves as much as possible because the gaps are there for exactly what you're talking about. We're going oh, wait a minute. They're concerned about it. They're scared about it. They don't want to do the wrong thing. Is it a liability. That sort of thing. That's where the education in the disability community is so important.

EBONY HAVEN: Constance had her hand raised. But Jill also had her hand raised. She put it down so I'm not sure if she still has a question. But Constance is your first.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: How did Texas go about this and what were the costs involved?.

NICOLE DEJEAN: So the Texas SILC currently has a grant with the (inaudible) Foundation which is a foundation that only funds in Texas. And so one of the ways that they addressed it was they partnered with the centers for independent living in Houston, Corpus, Beaumont and Galveston. So they've gone out and they've done focus groups, which we've been able to attend as well, to figure out what are the concerns and the gaps and experiences of people with disabilities in evacuations and disasters and recovery. So based on that now they're recruiting individuals from the SILs

to be the disaster resiliency specialists. So those people will go through a training to become that community-based trainer. So even once the funding ceases those people are still embedded in their own communities as consumers of the SILs so they're able to continue with that training and that knowledge expansion. So the idea is that you've got kind of that two-prong approach with the workforce development. So they've got training and presentation skills but also the emergency preparedness information is distributed in the community from the community. Did that answer your question?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: How much did the foundation?

NICOLE DEJEAN: So their grant was fairly large but that was to hire a program coordinator, technical assistance and evaluation. There's a lot of expenses that we wouldn't necessarily incur if we were to implement something like that. I can't give you a better cost for that just because theirs is a fully built, like it's a staff member in their SIL.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I guess I'm just thinking like they have a grant to cover that. We're looking at 30,000-dollars. What can we realistically do with 30,000-dollars. This is a very real need.

NICOLE DEJEAN: Absolutely. And I think we can scale it to where it would be reasonable. Because they're also covering fairly large territory. Because you're talking about Houston, Beaumont, Corpus and Galveston. They're similar in what they experience as far as disasters and emergencies but territory wise that's a really large space. So we wouldn't necessarily need to cover that kind of territory. There could be an initial phase where depending on how you guys build it out or however it's built out it could be certain areas.

I think our thought would be the resources and things like that are fairly limited in North Louisiana. We get a lot of focus in South Louisiana because we experience hurricanes. There's a lot here. North Louisiana is fairly lacking in some of those, especially emergency preparedness for people with disabilities. We saw that (inaudible). Families and individuals were hit and very isolated during that event. So North Louisiana may be the area to focus on

because of that. Does that answer your question?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, sir.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I was just going to provide clarity. You could potentially have more than 30,000-dollars. Y'all will decide what's your most important activities and you'll fund them appropriately based on your what your vision is. But just keep in mind historically the council has tried to do a lot so you end up just putting a little bit of money towards everything you try to do instead of actively focusing on real big picture and maybe putting your money into a few big projects instead of ten different contracts where you can only pay 10, 20,000-dollars. So that might be something to consider. But if you're really passionate about that particular item you could put more or less depending on what you envision. But I would imagine we'll talk more about that when you get to the budget part further down.

EBONY HAVEN: Jill, did you have anything to say before I let the public speak?

JILL HANO: Nicole, check your text.

EBONY HAVEN: Bambi and Ms. Cosse have their hands raised.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am, Ms. Bambi.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Hey, you guys, can you hear me?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

BAMBI POLOTZOLA: Nicole did a great job of providing you with the information on this particular project. The one thing I would just add is that Disability Access Solutions also has a contract with the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness. And so the work that we're doing there is not this specific work but we are working in every region of the state providing trainings and doing collaboration building in every region of the state. So I think in response to Constance's question, and Nicole responded appropriately, like the cost, we can mitigate some of the costs because we're going to scaffold some of the work that we're doing and be able to build upon that. So I feel like we'll be able to do the work. It's not like starting out at nothing. We already have some other components of a very complex issue around emergency preparedness. We have some other components

and we can build upon that with this. Which I think is a very exciting opportunity and we'll really be able to engage people with disabilities to actually do the work. So that's all I have. Thank you, guys.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Brenda, can you hear us? You have permission to speak. You have the floor.

BRENDA COSSE: Good morning. I wanted to ask about the voter training. Was there reconsideration for that?

EBONY HAVEN: We hadn't talked about it, Ms. Brenda. If you want to let the committee know--

BRENDA COSSE: Are we on that or did I skip?

EBONY HAVEN: No. You haven't skipped. If you want to let the committee know about the training you can.

BRENDA COSSE: Okay. Great. I know it states that we did this initiative in 2024 but in one of the statewide input meetings with LaCAN we discussed about having trainings where we could have videos and maybe some type of publication that was geared towards, again, voters with disabilities. And it was in line with the employment first training that we did. And then the planning committee made a recommendation for us to have videos and virtual types of trainings. And that information is still available on the DDC's YouTube page. So we were discussing how to take that voter training that was done apparently to have it where we have something put onto the YouTube page for people to be able to come and look at ongoing whenever they are interested in going to vote. Thank you.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: What was the 2024 voter training on? My thinking is around like how there have been changes recently. New requirements and parties. Whatever the party system is now.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah, the primaries and no party. I don't believe it covered that particular aspect because that's a more recent change but it would have covered other things such as how do you register. What's the importance of voting. Using the machines. Because the Secretary of State's office would come out to the trainings and provide actual machines that they could walk through and utilize. So it's kind of those aspects. If you need help in the voting place who do

you ask. What do you look for. Who do you contact ahead of time. That type of.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I put up the final report. I didn't include this in your packet but I just put it on the screen. This is the final report for the disability voting rights training. It does say why you should vote, the process for voting, assistance and accommodations with voting, your rights and responsibilities and the meaning of the constitutional amendments. And then this is just the breakdown, like attendance breakdown for those trainings. They did ten trainings. There's the information. That's all I have about that.

EBONY HAVEN: I think what Ms. Cosse was bringing up, her comment was about the employment seminars that we have on our YouTube page that it's a video where people can go back and reference those videos if they want to hear about employment. She's saying instead of doing a training similar to what we've done already to actually make something like a video to show people why they should vote, what their constitutional rights are and responsibilities. Like turning it into a video instead of an actual training so people can go back and reference it later. I know there will be changes like there were changes for the primaries. But at least most of the information probably will stay relevant. Like who they should contact if they need accommodations at the polling places and things like that. So I think that's her idea of continuing the training but not doing the same thing that the council has already done in the past.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So the web-based training that was done in, I guess it was 2023, do we have that video where it would be like a starting point addressing some of that? Could that be something that we start doing that when we're offering web-based trainings, recording them so they can be training tools that can be used later.

EBONY HAVEN: I think that would be something we would maybe need to put into the contract itself. But yeah, that is something that we can probably do.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And I think it would depend on the intent, how you want to use it. Because a lot of-- so, for instance, that particular voter training it was

important to attend in session because the machine was there. And then if we had the web based, if we made it available before these trainings were offered in person then you might get less of a response to in-person trainings if we made that web training available. So you could, like Ebony said, include it in the contract but we would have to be careful if we release that, would it discourage attendance from the members on those trainings.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Yeah. I was thinking like once that year is finished once you have done all those trainings (inaudible) it's 2026 and we're having this voter training. This is where you go get this information. (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah, that could be something also a consideration if the contract is ending. Certainly if it's going to continue in future years if we want to let them build. For instance, like Team Dynamics every year they do it it gets tweaked a little bit because you learn and do additional things. So at the end of that particular initiative we can make something available possibly.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: One of the public comment suggestions was that (inaudible) five-year plan (inaudible) a program for all types of disabilities. The note is legislative advocacy (inaudible). I'm thinking back to one of the meetings we had last year with Lieutenant Governor Nungesser. I'm wondering can we use that (inaudible) doing some things like that. He made himself available to us. So can we use to start maybe building up on that relationship to kind of address that (inaudible). I don't know if we got a bill this session about it.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I will say as far as bills I have not seen one unless it's something buried in a bill that I didn't catch. But I haven't seen anything yet.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Ebony, will you please review the budget.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'll start. Okay. You have the budget in your packet. It's also online and it is linked in the agenda. I would say that the budget and the status, right, they kind of go together which is why I put them on the same agenda line because I built

the budget based on staff recommendation. And this is a draft. So this is if the committee follows the recommendations from the staff this amount right here, this 259,000-dollars is the amount of money that the committee would have for any activities you want to fund for this fiscal year. That's all that I can think of at this point.

EBONY HAVEN: I don't think I have anything to add. Stephanie just already covered, of course, in your five-year plan we want to continue doing Partners in Policymaking. And then all of the other activities that are there, LaCAN our grassroots advocacy network. Our advocacy events which basically pays for our roundtables, yellow shirt days and things like that. We, of course, want to keep the Youth Leadership Forum and then People First. There is a mandate, a federal mandate that the council does have to support a self-advocacy network within Louisiana and the council has throughout the years chosen People First as our self-advocacy network that we support. There is a mandate for that. And I think that's all I had to add. If you guys have any questions about any of those things.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So just to let you know about the document. This is just like the working document that I'll type in as we talk about any kind of funding you want to add to any initiative. So it does, I think I put-- I tried to do the amount that was here to give me this number. But whenever I add down here I'll try to have a running total of the amount of money you have left. I'm not sure if I'm making sense. But that way you know how much money you're working with as we add those activities with the funding.

ERICK TAYLOR: Chair, may I roll up to the table and speak?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I guess so.

ERICK TAYLOR: So Ms. Ebony, you said that we have to stay with the one (inaudible) no matter what? I forgot the first thing you said.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. You guys don't have to, you don't have to keep these activities but we're as staff we're recommending that you keep these particular activities. Number one, Partners has been excellent over the years in creating new advocates for our state.

And then LaCAN is our grassroots advocacy network. That's what allows us to have the LaCAN leaders and LaCAN members to go out regionally before session to talk to legislators. But then while we're in session they're showing up to the capitol for yellow shirt days to help the council push your agenda. Advocacy events. That's what pays for the roundtables like what you were saying. But any other advocacy event that you guys wanted. And then the Youth Leadership Forum, again, it's like a mini Partners where they're taking high school students and teaching them independent skills and then advocacy skills as well. And then the last one, People First, is your self-advocacy network in Louisiana and the council has to support a self-advocacy organization within Louisiana. That's a federal mandate. That has to be in your plan. So the council has chosen People First and we've been supporting them for years.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, sir, Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: And we are happy with all of them, the job that every one of them do?

EBONY HAVEN: That's why Stephanie said this budget and the stuff that we're recommending goes with the status report so you can see the status of those activities and the staff's recommendations if you wanted to go ahead and look at those. It kind of goes hand in hand.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'll pull up the status report right now. If the chair would like we can move onto that since we're kind of getting into that discussion.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am, go ahead.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I wanted to see like what are the members' thoughts on instead of funding many small activities funding a couple larger things that may have a bigger impact. Since I've been attending council meetings there are several issues that come up. Transition comes up every time. There's always a meeting where transition comes up. Recently it's been (inaudible). And then I would say something, early childhood education (inaudible).

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, sir.

ERICK TAYLOR: My thing with benefits, and y'all can correct me on this, we don't have nobody. I'm just going to throw it out there. We really don't have

nobody to come to the table and really give us reports on that where we can get a better understanding of what's going on. As a circle we hear so much information and then when we really look at it we don't know what to believe. We got somebody from Medicaid that sits on this board but we don't have nobody for what we can do and what we can't do. We scared to make a move. And personally for me, I'm going to speak from me, I'm scared because I'm probably going to lose this because I don't know this and we can't get nobody to come forward and really tell us the truth. Okay, if you do this you're going to lose this. If you do that you're going to lose this. If you lean forward you're going to fall out this chair. So we really don't know the truth. So where do we go. We don't know. Because we get people say well, I'm going to look into that. I'm going to see. I'm going to find out. I'm going to figure it out. We're going to look at this. We're going to go back and look at this. And we still don't get it. But we can sit at this table all day long and if we don't get the true truth until it's on black and white oh, your chair's gone. What to do then. We lost.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: And then there's nobody that's going to take the responsibility for it.

ERICK TAYLOR: I make 2,000 I'm going to get 100 taken from it. If I say 3,000 you're get your check taken because you're making some money somewhere. If I go get a house oh, wait a minute, you got a house. How did you get that. Nobody takes accountability. (Inaudible).

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I'm sure you're still disabled. You know you didn't start running overnight.

ERICK TAYLOR: You see that. Oh, yeah, you're right. You is disabled so you need a wheelchair. Right now, y'all, I'm begging for a standing frame. Begging to stand up. Let me put it through the paper. Oh, they denied you. If we do that what's going to happen. We going to get the what ifs. It's our time to speak up. It's our time to find the people we need to talk to. It's our time to get them to listen to us and not be a number. It's our time to turn around and say hey, we're out here. What happened. Hey, we need. But if we come in a circle (inaudible).

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, sir.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Who is responsible (inaudible) the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs tries to serve as a resource for people with disabilities, their families and the agencies they serve. They don't take no responsibility. They are there for you as a resource. They are not responsible for nothing. That is the first sentence on the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. I think that surmises everything we can say.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah, I was just going to, I was thinking of it when Erick first started but I was waiting. I think sometimes as council members maybe you don't know or understand the influence you have and that you can have within a council meeting. Because a lot of what you were talking about, if I reframe it for focus of developing this plan, a lot of that does involve advocacy which isn't necessarily an item that we would have to put a dollar figure on in this particular plan. Often times so specifically a lot of what you talked about could be handled in the self-determination committee. A lot of times we sit in our committees and we sit during our department reports and there's silence or maybe there's one issue that we talk about and then we move on. That's where this is supposed to happen where we engage in these conversations and we as a council, you as a council hold them accountable for statements that they make, for the way that they answer questions, for the processes. (Inaudible) them to come with follow-ups. Submit letters on behalf of the committee and chairs that would say hey, we're asking you to do X, Y and Z to make a change to this particular item and let them explain why they can or can't do it. And so that's the process of holding them accountable.

I think often we want folks to be held accountable and we think within their department or within their agency or their organization someone should be holding them accountable but you as a council are responsible for holding them accountable. You have the charge of monitoring the community and family support system plan. And so they might want to be a resource or they may want to just provide you with information but you have to hold their feet to the fire about what it is

that you want to see changed and what you can ask them to do. The worst they can tell you is no. Then you just find a workaround and ask it in a different way until you get a yes and until we can make some changes. But more focused on how it relates to the plan. A lot of that I just encourage y'all to use those sort of concerns and issues that you have to sort of drive the committee meetings of what's discussed in those meetings and what's discussed in council meetings. Because I think to accomplish some of those things you don't necessarily have to have it in the plan tied to a dollar figure. You have some of these advocacy issues that have a dollar figure on them and so when we find out let's say from a department that oh, we need 10 million-dollars to make this change then we know we have that advocacy and that's already funded in our plan that we can then push to get money from the legislature and those types of things. I just wanted to throw that out there to help y'all in your decision-making. And in your next meeting in April.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Can I ask a question? Anybody have a number of the population of people with disabilities in our state?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Of disability or specifically developmental disabilities?

LAMARTINE MEDA: Well, people that... I mean, I was thinking about when you're saying keep people accountable. Talking about politicians. Well, not just them. Talking about number, they will be accountable if there is 1 million of us.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: For like specifically for federally we follow the federal percentage, which is the guidance from ITAC, I would say 2.79 percent. But I could be wrong. I can probably look it up for you. I don't remember exactly what it is.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Generally 3 percent has been like the running rate that they've had for years. But I have seen estimates as high as like 50, 55 million Americans have a developmental disability. That's closer to 16 percent or something. So I guess it depends on whose numbers you use.

REKEESHA BRANCH: I just Googled it. It said 2.3 percent roughly. Approximately 170,000 people have intellectual and developmental disabilities. This is

for Louisiana.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. I think the going rate is about 3 percent you can expect of your population to have a developmental disability.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Just for federally the reason that we follow the federal number is because our number is like close to that federal number. The guidance was that if it's over whatever the federal number is, I want to say it's like 2.79, I don't remember exactly what it is. But if it were over that then they want us to use the state number. But because we're so close to that federal number we just stick with the federal number for reporting, like what we report I guess.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to talk about this document. It's kind of like the next couple of documents that you have in your packet. So this is our planning status report. It has information for each item. Now this is based on the 2026 action plan. So this is the current plan that y'all have. So it has a little bit of background information. But if you look down here where it says staff recommendation we give some further information for the committee to consider. So I'm going to use Partners since this is activity 1.1.1 as the example. So we recommend continuing this activity. And then I just gave some funding information. The funding was at 90,000-dollars for three years. So for 22, 23, and 24. That's federal fiscal years. And 2025 we increased it. It was increased to 115,000 with an additional 30,000 for that alumni event. And from the Partners coordinator that alumni event is going to be every five years. So it was just done in federal fiscal year 2025. And so for 2026 it stayed at 115,000-dollars.

And then the next part is really the part that I wanted to talk about. We recommend moving it to activity 1.2.1 and changing the wording. You'll see all of the things that we recommend we are recommending where to move it. And the reason that I want to make sure everybody understands is the reason that we're saying we recommend moving this activity is because you have a brand new five-year plan with new goals and new objectives. If you look in your packet your next page it is that five-year plan with those goals and

objectives on it. So that includes your goals and objectives. And just the goals and objectives on there. So we kind of looked to see where these activities that we thought that we should keep since the things like Partners in Policymaking, LaCAN, advocacy events. And then some of the other activities that we just recommended keeping that may not have money attached to it it's going to have something similar to this. And then the second part of that is changing the wording. As a council y'all have presented or I guess instructed staff to ensure that our documents are in plain language. So making sure that these things can be accessed and understood by anyone that reads them. So the wording changes are to take those activities and putting it in more friendly and readable language so it's not so technical. Because at the end of the day y'all are the ones reading this and you need to know what it means.

If you look at the first one it doesn't really change anything. But when we get into like goal two some of them had a lot of words. And a lot of things that even when I read it I'm like not sure what this means. So we tried to make it a little bit easier to understand. But again, as we said earlier, these are just recommendations. You do not have to accept them just because they're coming from us. Or if you think something needs to change or you just don't want to accept the recommendation as the committee that is your job.

The other thing that I just want to-- well, I don't want to get too far ahead, but I included a mapping tool to kind of help as we're talking about-- yeah, it's on the legal sheet, to help as we're talking about activities. And the reason I wanted to talk about this here because it goes with the planning. All these documents are really connected. I've tried to make it make sense and I hope it's not too much. But if I go back to activity 1.1.1 where it says we recommend moving it to 1.2.1. So the mapping tool has the new goals and objectives. And if I can go down to 1.2.1 if you look at that activity, that Partners in Policymaking activity on there. And then the next part is like how long do you want to fund this or how long do you want to do this activity. Because it is such a

big activity that the council does and it produces a lot of advocates and it's something that y'all continuously do I went ahead and I checked all five boxes. So that's saying that y'all are going to do it for the next five years. So for this next five-year plan. Again, y'all, these are recommendations. This is just what I was thinking as staff from conversations that y'all have had at council meetings and committee meetings.

EBONY HAVEN: So I think this is a good tool because let's take Nicole's initiative that she was kind of talking about for the emergency preparedness. Let's say you guys wanted to do 30,000-dollars. And this is all hypothetical. But if you did 30,000 over a three-year period that would be 90,000-dollars that y'all have allocated towards that particular activity. So we want y'all to kind of look at things as a multiyear approach. Some of the things that Stephanie had like the committee recommendations, like that first one is like possible study followed by a multiyear approach for transportation. That's something that always comes up. Especially access to public transit systems. We know transportation is a huge issue in Louisiana but it will be a huge undertaking. And so the recommendation was like if you guys wanted to do something in transportation maybe do a study the first year but it would be a multiyear approach. So it would cross over some of those years. So the first year will be a study then we will work with some agency possibly to maybe address some of the things that the study found. And so just kind of want you guys to start looking at things sort of like okay, maybe we can do this project for three years instead of just year by year. Just looking at it as a whole maybe this could go over five years instead of just oh, this year we'll put 30,000 to it and then we won't ever look at it again. So just trying to get you guys to start thinking like that. Like looking at it multi years instead of just one year. I think Stephanie has something to add.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to add one other side note. It's more administrative but y'all may not know this. When I submit our state plan for the year I'm not just submitting one year. They want two years

of a state plan. So they want whatever year is like upcoming and then they want the year after that. So I do my best to just kind of predict from conversations like what that might look like. Or if we've done this activity for three years I'm like oh, they might not want to continue it after three years so I'm not going to take it off. Now they do allow when that year comes up for us to go in and make any edits. So I don't want you to think that it's like concrete. You need to have two years planned out. But at least having an idea will make it easier when we submit that information to the federal government to show like oh, okay, they're going to be working on this for at least two years. And then I don't have to go in every year and add one activity, you know, all these activities because we weren't sure how long it was going to take. And that's maybe a little selfish of me but I just wanted to let y'all know what it looks like on the back end for us when we're submitting this plan.

But then it also helps like next year for the planning committee if y'all have these planned out and say, okay, we're thinking about doing this year two, three and four then we can bring this document to the next planning committee and say oh, look at this planning committee last year. This is what the planning committee was thinking. Did you want to adopt this or what other activities do you may want to add. And that way we kind of have a foundation when we go into those discussions of what the plan may look like.

LAMARTINE MEDA: To me it's all about accountability. If we're going to give you 115,000-dollars I want to know what you do with the 115,000-dollars. We need to keep people wherever they are accountable. So if we're happy with them, they're doing a great job, a way of checking the box they did a great job. So let's continue. But they have to be accountable. We have metrics (inaudible). Out of ten metrics you only satisfied six of them. We are cutting your funding and giving it to someone else. Well, it's not that drastic. But accountability.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: If y'all want we can go through like the contractual for each goal and kind of allocate those funds first. And then that way you'll have like all the money stuff out of the way and then we can go

into those noncontractual items. I'm going to share this document instead only because I'm going to be typing. Unless y'all don't want me to share it. If it gets too confusing let me know. If there's something specific that you want me to share. This is just a draft of the plan. That way I can type in the activities and the goals. I have the goals and objectives. I did, just like I have on here, if I put it under like these activities right here they're the same ones that are on here but if you want me to move them let me know. These were just the staff recommendations of where we thought that they may fall.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I have a question. With the goals and objectives they're not like measurable (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Specifically for activities are the measurable part. When I submit I have to say like, what do they call it, but we put it in for each activity to answer the question. I understand the way that when they wrote the goals and objectives is that the goal is broad. It would go down very specific for the activities. So specifically for the activities those would be for outcome based, I guess, if that makes sense. And ways to evaluate the actual activity. We have to go in for each activity and say like what we're measuring.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So upfront do the activities like provide funding, support, and technical assistance to strengthen the self-advocacy network. Like how is that measured? I think this goes back to what Dr. Meda was saying about accountable. How do we know, you can't hold people accountable if you don't know what you want them to do.

EBONY HAVEN: That's the one I was saying that's federally mandated. With that particular one that's for (inaudible) and so I would say this is why the status report is so important. And I know we spend a lot of time on the status report because we're trying to give you all updates. So we put the information about what they're doing and like what they've done with the funding that the council gives them. So whether or not that be supporting self-advocates to attend the disability policy seminar in DC or if we are supporting them to attend some type of other leadership

training maybe in Louisiana or another state that's where that information will go. I understand what you're saying where it's not in the actual activity that we're going to train 20 people. And then okay, let's measure and train those 20 people. With some of the activities it's a little bit more difficult for us to hone in on something like that because it changes everywhere. And I will say with that one specifically it changes every year. So the contractor for that is the Arc and so they may send five people to the disability policy seminar in DC where they're getting actual Capitol Hill visits with legislators. But then the next year they may only send three. So it's kind of hard for us to hone in on like hey, we want you all to train or strengthen the network by 20 people by doing this. Because we don't want to make it so specific where that's all they can do. So sometimes we make the activities a little bit more broad so they can I guess navigate and so that they can be flexible as well.

Now if the council is wanting to see more specifics then that's something that we can add for sure if you guys want to make that recommendation to the full council. That is something that we can add. But I will just say historically we have not gotten that specific just for those reasons because we wanted to be, we want them to be a little bit more flexible with what they can do with that funding and how they can do it. If that makes sense.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I think what I'm hearing is to kind of give them a direction (inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: I guess so. Yeah, in a way.

ERICK TAYLOR: So what you're saying is basically we keep them on their toes (inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: Yeah, sort of in a way. I guess this one is a good one for us to use because with People First they just do different activities. Now what they do every year is they host a conference. So we know every year they're going to host a conference. If you guys want to say we want you all to host a conference and at least have 50 self-advocates attend the conference that's something that we can definitely add because that is something we know that they're going to do every year.

And then even for activities, like let's just take the transition training real quick because you guys are doing one. If you guys wanted to get as specific and say we want 100 families and individuals with disabilities to be trained during that training through those transition trainings we can add that information so you guys can have specifics in those activities. We just haven't historically ever been, I guess, as specific as that in your activities.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

NICOLE DEJEAN: I guess I can appreciate the qualitative and the quantitative from all of that. I guess I just wanted to put a hard and fast number. Like we want 100 attendees. Then what are the consequences that the committee or the council's implying if they've done their due diligence and they've advertised and got 75 people. So they have not met the required 100 but they were really close at 75. And there's some variables that play into a lot with the disability community. I wonder like how do you, from an education perspective I get the need to be specific with some of the language, but from the disability perspective the flexibility is needed. So like how do you, when you put those hard and fast, how do you intend to impose the consequences if they don't meet those numbers. Quantitative verses qualitative I think is what has to be considered. Just a thought.

EBONY HAVEN: I think Dr. Meda and Constance have their hands raised.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Starting with there's a reason why, I don't want to say vague, but so they know what they're doing so they know best. And that is why, right. Okay, you're going to have a meeting. Like you said, you're going to have a meeting every year. And so there is no need because we know they're going to do that. It is that way and there is no metrics. Okay. All right. Let's have one meeting per year, right.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I don't know if Constance wanted to go but I just wanted to add one more thing. A lot of the specifics like that are also in the contract that they sign off on. So it does say like, for example, they will host one conference per year. They will send people to the disability seminar. So it

does outline those things. Maybe not as specific as you're looking. Like it doesn't say you'll have at least 75 self-advocates come to the conference. But it does outline at least the main activity that they're doing. And we do outline like you need to make sure you're sharing the information about it. You're advertising for this. So they are very specific in that contract that we don't add on here just because we're monitoring internally.

REKEESHA BRANCH: They send in their reports to let us know too. So we put it on your status report once a quarter.

EBONY HAVEN: That is what I was going to add. This is why this document that we give y'all every quarter is so important. And the staff spend a lot of the time monitoring the contracts. Making sure the contractor is on schedule. And if they're not we're asking a lot of questions. But it's important that the council ask questions too. So whenever the staff is giving contractual updates in the committees, so the self-determination and community inclusion committee, that committee is responsible for goals one and two. If you're assigned to that or if you are appointed to that particular committee you should be looking at the goals or the activities and making sure that okay, well, what are they doing with this. What did the Arc do with People First this quarter. Or what did Partners in Policymaking do. What sessions did they have. What did LaCAN do. You guys should look at those things because we're updating you and if you have questions of course ask because it's our job to hold the contractors accountable as your staff. We want to make sure that the things you all want to get accomplished for your goals and objectives are being accomplished. And so this is why this document is so important that we give you all every quarter.

So just keep in mind if you're on education and employment goal three is your goal. And so you want to make sure that you're looking at those things. Even the ones that are not contractual. The things that we're saying that we're going to hold LDOE accountable with monitoring the school systems that's stuff that we should ask them during the committees like Brenton said. We need to make sure we're asking those hard

questions to them. Even the stuff that Constance brought up earlier, what is the trainings for paraprofessionals. And how are they getting those continuing education units. It's important that we ask them that. That's why those agencies sit on the council.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Instead of we asking them to be accountable, who is asking us when we send this thing to wherever. We say okay, hey, Families Helping Families is going to do A, B, C, D. Are they holding us accountable for what we say Families Helping Families is going to do? Like when we submit this budget to the state, right? I don't know.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The plan goes to the federal government.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I guess my question is who is holding us accountable, DDC. This is why I'm like okay, if someone were to ask hey, what did we do last year with this. And if the contractor didn't do it and put us in a bind now we can answer the question. And that's why I'm looking at-- so if nobody's asking us for metrics then it's okay.

EBONY HAVEN: So the federal government holds, every DD Council across the country the federal government holds them accountable. All of us get an allotment. Louisiana's allotment is \$1.38-million. They want to know what we're doing with that \$1.38-million. So every year as staff we have to submit what's called your program performance report to the federal government. Which is what Stephanie is talking about. So whenever we're going into that report let's say a contractor didn't meet what we wanted them to meet. That's something that we have to explain to them in our program performance report. And why they didn't meet that goal. And so we're being held accountable, yes. Because yeah, they're giving us a million dollars so they want to know what we're doing with that funding. Absolutely.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: And they want to make sure we're doing what we say we're doing with that money.

LAMARTINE MEDA: But they don't tell us what to do. We tell them this is the activities that we are trying to do.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: They have to approve it.

There's a mandate that says it has to be capacity building, self-advocacy or systems change. Sorry. I get them all mixed up. I was trying to think of them in order. If the activity falls under that then they're pretty okay. And we just tell them like this is the activity we're planning on doing and they usually don't have questions unless it's something so far-fetched and they're like this is out of your scope. You should not be doing this. Which we haven't had that. At least while I have been here we have not had that issue.

BRENTON ANDRUS: It's usually why are y'all doing so many things.

EBONY HAVEN: I'll just add, just going back to Constance's question. I guess this is why we don't have like specifics in the activities. Now again, if the committee wants to make the recommendation to change the activities up and make them more specific that is definitely something you all can do. That's not something historically we've done in the past. And I think it kind of goes back to what Nicole said. A lot of things just need a little bit more flexibility because of the population that we work with.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: And I don't think I would necessarily recommend (inaudible) at a bigger level but if they don't require you to put (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. I just have one more thing. We do have to put in like what measures to see if they met those goals and things like that. We'll look at kind of like historically how many people-- I'm going to take a training, for example, because those are kind of the easiest because you can get those like raw numbers. We'll look historically if we had an activity similar to this how many people showed up to this training two years ago. And we'll kind of base those numbers off of that and say like okay, on the contract we might say have at least 100 people attend, 100 participants. And then that is reported and that is like our goal for federally.

And so we'll say like okay, they didn't reach 100. They reached 75. And that is-- we have to make up like a scale. Not to get really deep into it. But we have to make up a scale. Like is it satisfactory. Were they unsatisfactory. And kind of like where did they

fall in that scale. And then we have to give justification saying like okay, even though they weren't like meeting the expectation they almost met the expectation so we're still going to give them one point instead of two because they're still meeting it. Or they have attempted to meet it. And then next year they're going to use this training as their baseline to change it for next year and things like that. I'm not sure if I made it more complicated or gave you enough information. But there are metrics that we do need to submit to them but it's more communicated directly to the contractor and not really on the plan. But like Ebony said, if y'all wanted to include those metrics or those measures it's y'all's committee.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Sounds like it's there. I guess just on our end we don't know what they are. Because it sounds like it's done in that contract. So then we don't know. So I guess on our end it looks like we're doing things but we know we want to increase like the objective. We want to make sure that people with IDD and their families learn about their rights (inaudible) activities. But it seems like we don't see that end goal but it sounds like the contract has the end goal in it. And maybe the council sees the contracts. I just don't. Could be very possible.

EBONY HAVEN: I will add this too, Constance. When you think about the council y'all's job is to let the staff know like what do we hope to accomplish. So that's the governance part, right. It's our part on the management side to say they want this and so we're going to make sure that these metrics are met. And so if you look at it globally or the big picture you guys are telling us what you want. This is why sometimes we're like we need a little more guidance on what you are looking for specifically. And then on the back end we're trying to make sure that those things are met if that makes sense. It's kind of like what Sheryl was saying at the retreat that you all had. And I think everybody attended that retreat. Maybe not you Ayden. But it's like globally the council gives the staff guidance and then it's the staff's job to carry out what you guys want to see as far as like what your goals are.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And I will add just for more

specifics of what might be in the contract. So whenever you get a proposal and you approve it as a council generally that information is just taken and dropped into the contract. So in a way you have all the language because they're telling us what they're going to do. There might be some small tweaks. And then through like this committee if we're looking to continue that initiative the following year in those recommendations that we would have where we say we might want to change X, Y and Z so we might need an extra 5,000-dollars or something. That committee would approve that and the council signs off on it. That would be something added to the contract. So I think a lot of what's in there is discussed throughout all our committees and our updates and the proposals that we vote on. Just maybe not the specific part. And we only really handle the state work part of it and then LDH has all the many pages that we said we don't attribute to.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: You don't have to make a motion. Right now it's just discussion. But we'll just do the one motion maybe when we get to the end. So just motion to send it to the council when we're finished with the draft. But right now, yeah. But yeah, this is just committee discussion. It's an informal discussion right now.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to present them to you all again in case there were any activities. In case any of those-- because I know at the five-year planning committee we talked a lot about those concepts and what people felt were important. So I just wanted to bring them up again to remind you of those conversations and to look at them to see if there were any of those that y'all were thinking oh, this looks like it could be a good activity to do through the years or something like that.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: We just provided that paper. If we were to put out, I'm assuming we would put out a solicitation of proposals for the activity and try to get proposals. So we would send that directly also to the people that submitted the concept so if they wanted

to apply for that proposal they could. And then those proposals go to the executive committee for them too decide--

EBONY HAVEN: (Inaudible) the council.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. Thank you for that correction.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: We can go through the goals on the status report and we can talk about those activities. And then that way if you have a question about any of those activities just let me know. I'm going to go through like the contractual. We'll do all the contractual stuff first just so that way we get all those funds out of the way and then at the end we'll go through those noncontractual items. I think that makes the most sense for how we're going to do this. I'm just going to type in here if there's any activity suggestions or ideas.

So the first goal on the 2026 plan, or I guess the first goal for the new five-year plan, is people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families will get support and information they need to speak up, be leaders and make the community better for people with developmental disabilities. If we look at the status report the first activity on here is the Partners in Policymaking. That would actually fall under goal one and we said under objective two. So it is right here. And staff just recommended keeping the funding the same and moving it to objective two. We felt like it just fit better under objective two because it talks about the history of disabilities, how support systems work, and how to get the help you need, and how to be helpful and involved in your community.

And then also we included a little bit of a wording change. We changed, just to try to keep it more plain language and easier to read, instead of financial we said provide funding. For anything that has any kind of funding if you look they all kind of mirror each other with the wording. So, for example, we tried to include provide funding support and technical assistance. So those three things are what program monitors what they do with the contractors. So we don't provide the funding but the council provides the funding and we support those contractors and

provide technical assistance if they need it. So just kind of keeping that same language for all of the things that included funding. So that was the first one. We did recommend moving it to objective two as an activity. If you want to discuss that it's up to you. If you don't like it there we can move it. Just let me know. I'll move on to the next one.

The next one is activity 1.1.2 and that is on the planning status report. And so that is LaCAN. And we said to move it to activity 1.1.1. So it's this one right here. And it's just because it talks about learning about your rights, connecting the policymakers. We really thought that connecting the policymakers is what LaCAN is about. If y'all feel like it needs to be moved please let me know. Like I said, these are just recommendations. You have the say so so y'all let me know.

The next one is advocacy events. The staff recommends keeping it at its current funding and just moving it to 1.1.2. So right below just the general LaCAN one keeping it at its current funding and just changing the wording. And kind of going back to what I was mentioning earlier. If you look at that wording that was the original on the status report it is very, very wordy. And I can just glance at that page and see the words developmental disabilities about five times just in that one little section. So we did recommend just changing that wording to make it a little bit easier to read and understand. But if you don't agree with it or you think something in there needs to be changed that can also be edited. I don't want y'all to take this as like final, we're done. If there's anything that you're like oh, I don't like that word or I think we need to explain this better please let me know. I'll be typing all of that. Y'all want me to move on? I don't want to move too fast.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: 1.1.3 is to fund things like the legislative round table. Any kind of advocacy events. Yellow shirt days.

EBONY HAVEN: LaCAN training. We do trainings with the LaCAN leaders. Sometimes we bring in speakers and so that would pay for those trainings as well.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: Or like roundtables, yes. If they have an in-person roundtable or a hybrid roundtable it will pay for those in-person activities and trainings like that.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Just anything related to advocacy expenses.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Unless y'all want me to slow down I was going to skip the 1.1.7 only because that's the next one that includes funding and that's on page three.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So 1.1.4.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So 1.1.4 is a little bit different because we give all of our state funds to the FHF centers. So we don't include the funding amount on here because we submit this to the federal government. They're looking at federal dollars we spent. But FHF receives our full allotment of our state general funds.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Just for myself. So LaCAN is more like at the legislative level, right, to our leaders? (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Families Helping Families is like the resources for each community.

BRENTON ANDRUS: A resource center statewide for each area of the state. I mean, there's outreach that's done through LaCAN. There's also outreach that Families Helping Families does. There's kind of outreach components in a lot of our contracts.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So this is personal because the reason why I'm here because I never knew about anything related to disabilities at all. So my son went to school in Jefferson Parish and we didn't know he was having any issues until 6, 7, 8, 9, move through the system. Never know about anything (inaudible). Counselors called to see in the classroom to help him (inaudible) these things, right. My thinking was when I come here like okay, so these services were there and I never knew and that's why I'm here. (Inaudible) 15 years ago a flier or someone said hey, if you're having difficulties blah, blah, blah. Been to Children's Hospital, they never say. Been everywhere. They'll tell us things like your son is having As and Bs so he don't need no help. He's having As and Bs because me and my wife working with him. So you want him to have all Fs before he can receive services and that's what I

was told. Otherwise you can't get these things. And that's why I'm looking here. Where could I have gotten a flier. I think that's the question.

REKEESHA BRANCH: The Families Helping Families centers they do provide outreach. That's actually part of their contract to go out to ABA clinics, doctors' offices, schools and stuff like that. (Inaudible) a part of the report to let me know what places they have gone to for that quarter. So they do go out. They do provide the information. They also have webinars, you know, other outreaches in the community just to give out the information where they kind of tag team with LaCAN leaders to give out the information. I think you didn't get that information a long time ago but I'm hoping that now it's getting out to more places and more people are getting the information.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yeah. Families Helping Families, that calendar is integrated in my calendar. I have everything. But now because I know. So I know all of the activities. And I even get my son they have adult Zoom and my son being a part of it. But it's now but I'm talking about then. And what about the families who don't have the (inaudible) like me and my wife did. That's what I'm looking for. They are struggling. I can tell you that.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. I think some of the breakdown too, just adding to what Rekeesha said, 15 years ago the Families Helping Families centers were going to all of these same places. The breakdown then becomes that provider or that organization or that doctor's office or that school then did not share with the people the information. And so that's what's hard to address, I guess. I mean, just think of the council in general. We share information like hey, this training is coming up. Well, I can't go to all households and shove it down your throat and tell you we got this training coming up. There's an accountability component and then at some point there's also some purpose that our families would have to have to find the information. But it's unfortunate because our Families Helping Families centers spend a lot of time and money going to these hospitals and these doctors' offices and these schools and producing this information and then it's not getting handed out.

Because I'm in the same boat with my son. He has to fail before they would provide any services. It's like well, the services I have provided is why he has As and Bs. I'm not going to let him fail just to check off your boxes. But yeah, even I've only heard of these things by working here. My school has never mentioned Families Helping Families. I've actually run into a Families Helping Families staff person in the hallway at my kids school but the school has never mentioned them to us but I know they have the information. And so that's where it becomes complicated. I think our centers are keeping up their end of the deal of getting the information out there. It's just how do you then ask these people to share that information. We've even gone and asked folks to hang posters in offices and some are receptive. Some doctors' offices you can go and see a Families Helping Families flier up in the waiting room for folks to access. And then some won't let you put up that information. It's really difficult to get it into the hands of the people. I agree with what you're saying.

ERICK TAYLOR: Then it comes out to what I'm getting out of it. If I do this what am I going to get out of it. If I put these fliers out what are you getting from me putting these fliers out. Some doctors' offices you can go to and your flier is the smallest flier. It's not being seen. It's not being showcased like it needs to be showcased. They can put it where they tell them to put it but when they leave it can be showcased somewhere else. It's sad. I run into a lot of families that just don't know because you got to look at it this way too, some families are afraid to reach out for the help, to look for the help because some of them is scared and some of them is ashamed that their kids have a disability or they have not accepted their children with the disability. And I hope I'm making sense what I said to you. And even though your child, your daughter or whoever have a disability for people to help you the first thing you have to do is accept the disability and search for some help. And I understand what Brenton is saying. You got to be all the way low down to the barrel to slip through the system to say I need the help. Some of them is ashamed because they always looking at what I

did wrong. How did I get in here.

EBONY HAVEN: I'll add something too. I know Constance mentioned that the council has on several occasions talked about early childhood intervention. And so I think this kind of goes back to what Dr. Meda is saying. Of course you would hope that your healthcare provider would know this. I'm just thinking about my own personal experience. Like with my children I get developmental questionnaires. And so I fill out those developmental questionnaires every time they have an appointment. And you would hope that's standard at every pediatricians' office but maybe it's not. It's like what can we do as a council to look at early intervention training to help early identify. There's just a gap in the system, Dr. Meda, and it is unfortunate but that's why the council's here for systems change. That's one of our mandates, right, is to change the system so that people who don't have the needs and they won't fall through the cracks.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: In an effort to do kind of some of the stuff you're talking about changes, the I guess current purpose of the centers. Because the centers are a resource center. Now if you want them to get involved in any sort of like direct service provision for them to come out to you to provide a service, to provide emergency supports that's kind of different than what they do. That's not their role. That's just gaps in our current delivery system that are missing for our families. And I think we would have to address it through that mechanism. Because to do kind of some of what you're talking about that's more money, that's changing the structure of how they exist and why they exist. That's, again, more money. That's more staff. You're almost taking a component of letting them become a service provider to some extent to be able to do these things and I think that's definitely outside of our scope of what we would be asking them to do.

KAREN XU: I understand.

BRENTON ANDRUS: But we would have to find how to address your issues.

KAREN XU: Consider it as maybe a goal (inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: Got you.

LAMARTINE MEDA: My experience is that some of it

is specific to Louisiana. In Florida it was a teacher that initiated the process. Hey, your son is not, I don't know, whatever in the classroom. In Alabama it was the teacher that initiated the whole thing. So I thought it was going to continue. When we come here all of a sudden oh, no, your son is not (inaudible). Why didn't you say that. So that's the experience. Always the teachers. Both teachers in both states initiated the process. The teacher is trained. I don't know.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. It is now 11:58 and we will take a lunch break.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: For 30 minutes, right?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Thirty minutes to eat because we're running behind. It's a working lunch. That gives you enough time to eat your lunch and we will go back to this conversation.

EBONY HAVEN: Be back at 12:30.

{Lunch}

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: It is now 12:38 and I would like to call the meeting to order. Let's finish our discussion.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: We are on goal one. I want to go to activity 1.1.7. That's the next activity with funding on the planning status report. That is Youth Leadership Forum. So staff recommends continuing this activity at its current funding. And just to give some background information in 2023 YLF accepted 13 delegates. It was three days. And 2024 the budget was increased from 30,000-dollars to its current level at 45,000-dollars. And they accepted 14 delegates with 11 of them completing it. And it took place over three and a half days. In 2025 they accept 12 delegates. Ten of those completed the program. It also lasted three and a half days. And then this year YLF is going to be four days. It's back on page three. But they do receive funding from three other sources. So they receive 15,000-dollars from the Department of Education. They may also receive funding from LRS and it just depends on the delegates for that if they receive those services. If there is an amount we will share that after the selection of delegates. They're in, I believe, the third year of a five-year

reoccurring grant, which is 5,000-dollars for transportation and meals. And then also they received an additional grant from Louisiana Children's Trust Fund for a little bit less than 10,000-dollars.

LAMARTINE MEDA: What do they do? They do overnight training program for high school aged?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: It's like a miniature Partners in Policymaking. It's one weekend. Or in this case it will be from the 9th through the 12th. It takes place on a college campus. They have different sessions throughout the day. Those sessions include things like disability history, relationship, like healthy relationships, how to advocate, and how to give mock testimony.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Leadership skills. Career, like thinking about career opportunities.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: What you're going to do after high school.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

NICOLE DEJEAN: (Inaudible) for the planning and development of YLF. So it's a four-day program that's on a college campus that immerses youth grades ten and eleven? Anyway, no age limit because we know some of our students have progressed through their educational career at different paces. But it's an immersive experience with, like Stephanie said, advocacy training, disability history. We also have a day at the capitol. Do things there. It's incredibly immersive. It's a one-on-one ratio. They're the only YLF in the country that's ACA accredited, which is American Camp Association. It's a very rigorous accreditation process that they've obtained.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: The only YLF that's what accredited?

NICOLE DEJEAN: ACA accredited. The American Camp Association sets best practices and industry standards for youth residential camps or youth summer camps in the country. So they're the only YLF, which we were number 32 in the country, to be developed. And so far as it stands we're the only one to receive the ACA accreditation.

BRENTON ANDRUS: It kind of builds that pipeline for youth advocacy as they become adults.

NICOLE DEJEAN: Yeah. Because a lot of the

delegates or the alumni they also have alumni events to maintain a network. That way the delegates and alumni stay connected with things like the DDC and opportunities to testify, different opportunities in the DD community to be involved, to advocate. We have a couple of the graduates that are council members that have gone on to PIP.

LAMARTINE MEDA: The 13 delegates that's a total number for three years or per year?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Per year. That was last years.

LAMARTINE MEDA: How are those delegates selected?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: They have interviews that I'm aware of.

NICOLE DEJEAN: Yeah. So there's an interview process and there's a rubric for the interview process. There are multiple interviewers involved in that. And so everybody has to interview and go through that. And so everybody is scored consistently according to that rubric. And it has to be initiated by the delegate. It cannot be their family that signs them up. They have to communicate a personal interest and motivation.

LAMARTINE MEDA: How would we reach out to (inaudible)?

NICOLE DEJEAN: There's a lot of outreach efforts going on for YLF. And the Families Helping Families network throughout the state is actively involved in that. There's a lot of outreach.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And it's similar in structure to Partners in that there's a coordinator. So the coordinator outside posting that annual event is the one that's keeping the alumni engaged and doing outreaches throughout the year to make sure that people are aware of YLF and what we do in Partners, engaging alumni and doing those outreaches or applications. Letting folks know.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, Jill.

JILL HANO: Okay. Thank you. I did notice, and I assumed y'all the staff did this before the council meeting. Because I just wanted to point out that the staff recommends continuing this activity at current funding at 45,000. But I do want to bring y'all over to the page with the costs. Because in January the self-determination committee recommends to increase that funding by 15,000-dollars. So that's just

something for this committee to consider too. That's it.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Thank you.

EBONY HAVEN: So we have two public members with their hands raised. Ms. Brenda Cosse and Ms. Lillian DeJean.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: Yes. Ms. Jill almost got to the question I wanted to know. Was that chart where we showed these contracts y'all had up earlier. Where we would tally up the money. I wanted to know did any of our entities request increases in their funding?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Just to answer Ms. Brenda's question. The only entity, like the only contractor that asked for an increase was YLF at the self-determination meeting where they requested 15,000-dollars additional.

BRENDA COSSE: Okay. And did the staff recommend that increase?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The staff recommends continuing this activity at its current funding.

BRENDA COSSE: Okay. So the staff recommended that everybody continue their funding at their current amount, the contract you're talking about right now?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Correct.

BRENDA COSSE: Okay. So how do you go from doing what the self-determination and inclusion committee meeting requested? Does that go forth now or the full council has the vote on it? The planning committee has the vote on it? How does that work?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: That was a recommendation from a committee so this committee has the option to take that recommendation or not. I'm not sure if that answers your question.

BRENDA COSSE: Yes, it did.

EBONY HAVEN: Ms. Brenda, the planning committee will make a recommendation for the full plan to the council. But the full council still has to vote on April 30th. The full council will vote either to accept the recommendations that the planning committee will make to them today or they can make changes at that meeting as well.

BRENDA COSSE: Okay. And then my last question. Thank you so much. An increase in funding is based on

what? Like more activities, costs increase?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm not sure. But Lillian, who is the coordinator, she is in the public also and she has her hand raised so she may be able to give--

BRENDA COSSE: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm not just talking about YLF. I'm talking about in general. So before you showed us the tally sheet and you said these are the programs or who we fund and FHF comes out of the state general fund. If Partners in Policymaking wants an increase. I'm not just talking about YLF. Y'all are on that one right now. But I had the question before lunch so I waited. What constitutes, I don't know what the word is, reasonable, appropriate request or recommendation for a request in funding? Thank you.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I was just going to say if a contractor makes a request most of the time they give justification of why they want that increase. I'm going to take last years for example. Team Dynamics had an ask and they included everything that they were going to do with that increase in funds and how that was going to help the goal of the activity. So we've also taking into account like Partners in Policymaking just like the rise in the state rates and things like that for hotel rooms and travel and things like that. And that's how they got their increase. And I believe that was in 2022 from 90,000 to 115,000. I think there's multiple ways that people can get an increase in their funding depending on individual circumstance or if the committee wants to see something specific and different that needs to be written into that contract that needs to be increased in order for them to complete that activity. I hope that kind of answered it. But unless there's something else that anybody wanted to add or correct me.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. Ms. Lillian.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Can everyone hear me?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Hello everyone. I appreciate, firstly, the opportunity to speak with you guys today. As mentioned before I am your LAYLF coordinator. The reasoning behind the increase for the ask is-- there's a couple of reasons. One, as with everything else we're seeing costs rise. And already our budget's a

little bit tighter because unlike most YLF and actually most summer camps we do pay our staff a small stipend for their service at camp. And so that does take a good bit of our budget but it allows us to retain our staff year after year and maintain quality staff that we can trust with our campers with higher support needs or more complex care needs. And also allows us to retain very high-quality medical staff as well.

Additionally, what we're seeing is as the program grows there seems to be, as coordinator I am frankly very stretched in my time. And as the program grows between alumni events and maintenance of the program and also managing a larger alumni pool it is getting more challenging and I could use some more assistance with outreach. And that's where part of the ask for the increase in funding would probably be an increase in hours. Whether that be through probably another staff member a couple hours per week. This may take the form of an intern where we can reinvest in the program through our alumni. And what this means is this year we are piloting an intern position with one of our previous alumni who came back as staff last year. And so what this allows us to do is extend the reach of our program while also benefiting our year-round staff as well with providing extra assistance. And so this allows us to reinvest in our alumni by helping them build soft job skills long term in an environment where we know they will be supported and we are familiar with their support needs. But also they can give feedback as people who know the program best, right. Though reviewing our budget recently I think that our ask would probably be closer to 7 to 10K instead of 15K. But a bump in our budget would be greatly appreciated just from a capacity standpoint and also, like I mentioned, an increase in costs. I would be happy to answer any additional questions. Again, appreciate your time.

ERICK TAYLOR: She's saying that it would help to expand, it would help more to move it around better with the increase? With the more funding?

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Not sure I understand the question. Can you rephrase it for me.

ERICK TAYLOR: You're saying they're asking for more money, correct? So it would help them move it

around more better? What are they getting right now? Let me ask that question.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Currently they're getting 45,000-dollars.

ERICK TAYLOR: And that's to run the whole thing?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: They're getting 45,000-dollars but they have three other funding sources that are listed.

ERICK TAYLOR: And how much money they're getting from them?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: 15,000-dollars from the Department of Education. 5,000-dollars from a grant and almost 10,000-dollars from the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund. That is written on the planning status report.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Is it okay if I chime in?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Okay. Sorry. I'm a little bit brain foggy today. I got back very, very late last night from a work conference. I want to clarify that our funding from Louisiana Children's Trust Fund really the reasoning behind the increase in ask from DDC too is the Louisiana Children's Trust Fund is funding a little bit of extra staffing hours for us. Which has been greatly beneficial to the program and really because my capacity is limited in my current hours and just health status as well that LCTF funding has allowed that buffer. But that grant will only last until I believe it's June of this year. And so the idea with asking for an increase in funding from DDC is that would kick in after LCTF ends so we can maintain those extra outreach hours that allows us to keep the program healthy. I hope that makes sense.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I just have a question because I don't know. Will that grant be applied for again and is there any requests for other funders for additional funding opportunities?

LILLIAN DEJEAN: We are generally always looking for additional funding opportunities. I think our challenge right now is that searching and applying and writing for other grants is an incredibly time-consuming process. And previously we relied on a grant writer at Families Helping Families of Acadiana who is no longer with the agency. Like I mentioned, my

capacity I'm at max and that's not including searching for grants and writing grants and applying for that. That's something that we're pushing up against right now.

ERICK TAYLOR: I have another question. The council already increased it so now y'all at 45, correct?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: It was increased in 2024 from 30,000 to 45,000. So it's been 45,000 for 2024, 2025. And will be for 2026, correct.

ERICK TAYLOR: They're asking for another 50,000?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: 15.

EBONY HAVEN: I'll just add that the coordinator just said the more realistic ask would be between 7 and 10,000. So initially in the self-determination and community inclusion committee the request was for an additional 15,000 but she just told the committee the more realistic ask would be between seven and ten.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: I think it also might be important to point out as well that PIP is, it looks like, currently being funded at 115,000-dollars which is essentially your adult YLF. And in terms of YLF we do have additional costs where we're looking at we're having to fund lodging, food, nurses to be on the ground 24 hours a day in addition to paying our staff. So we have a couple of considerations that does pose some additional stretch on our budget. So we really are just looking to maintain the highest quality program possible for our youth. Because parents are sometimes hesitant to send their kid off for the first time and so it's our job to make sure we can support them in the best way possible.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. Let me see how I want to word this myself. Funding wise is any of that funding coming from Families Helping Families themselves? No.

EBONY HAVEN: If you look in your status report if you look at activity 1.1.7 on page three. If you look on page three it list the other funders.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. I see that. But can any funding come from them at all is what I'm asking if I'm making any sense?

EBONY HAVEN: From Families Helping Families?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

EBONY HAVEN: They don't fund.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay. That's all I needed to know.

EBONY HAVEN: I think Mr. Taylor had a question.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Go ahead Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: You done ran over my toes. You answered my question, they don't. Another question I was asking that you said is that 5,000-dollar grant would they get that again or is that?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: If I'm not mistaken they're on their third year and it's a five-year grant. So they would get it for two more years. If I'm not mistaken.

ERICK TAYLOR: They locked in at 45?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: They're not locked in. That's up to y'all to determine.

EBONY HAVEN: That's why we're here today.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Y'all get to decide if you want to increase, decrease, keep it the same.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So this committee is making an independent decision from the other committee. Or can we know why they request an increase?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The reason that they requested it is what Lillian was saying. That they went to the self-determination meeting when we had the recommendations, the committee recommendations in what was that, January. And she made a recommendation or gave a public comment and then it was added to the recommendation list that they wanted an increase in funding. And the reason was costs and pricing and that kind of thing. Now as the committee though you can take that recommendation as it is or you can also change it. So if you don't want to do the recommendation or you do want to but you only want to do 10,000. You get what I'm saying. Y'all can kind of decide what you want to do with that recommendation.

BRENTON ANDRUS: They give you ideas to work with and then you come up with whether you continue initiatives. Whether you change what an initiative is actually doing. And then that's going to go to the full council where then you as a committee get to explain to them why you made the choices that you made if they ask.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I know how much things cost. Inflation, like she said. Seems like from what I'm hearing it's quality, quality, quality, right. Quality

stuff and doctors. So I don't know how much these things cost.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So the recommendation from the self-determination committee in January is 15 and Jillian just said it's more closer to 7 to 10.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Lillian, correct me if I'm wrong, but it was really to cover this Louisiana Trust Fund in case they do not receive that grant so that way they can still keep that extra staffing that this trust fund portion is paying for to help with their capacity.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: When do they know if they're going to get the trust fund grant? If they get it (inaudible) what are the plans. Because now they have an extra 10,000-dollars.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: So really this is about capacity, right, and ability to grow. And so what we're seeing is that there is a need for this program. We are filling a gap in the state that currently no other program is serving. And so fun fact, YLF actually ran from 2000 to 2005 and then was decimated after Hurricane Katrina because funding was cut. During that time period we don't have a lot of details about what funding looked like because a lot of the duplicates are no longer existing. But during that time YLF actually took about 30 delegates per year because they had multiple staff members on the program. They had that capacity for outreach. They had that capacity for planning, right. We are one of the smaller YLFs in the country in terms of how many delegates we take on. And that's largely because of outreach capacity and capacity to plan the program. And so really what this is about is long-term growth and long-term sustainability. We want to make sure that our program can continue to grow alongside the needs of our state whether or not we get grants or not. Because grants are great but they're not necessarily long term, right. We can't necessarily trust that we're going to get that year after year. And so with the DD Council there's a little bit more consistency which allows us to plan long term better. So yes, there is an expectation that this LCTF grant is ending in June of this year. But really it's about that long-term growth and maintenance of the program.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I do have a question. For the ACA

accreditation does that impact funding at all? Meaning so like some of the requirements we currently have in the program where we have to have one-to-one ratios is that anything dictated by ACA or is that something we do more as a safety issue, right, and just making sure folks are having the supports they need there. I guess I'm asking does ACA, having that accreditation, put us in a situation where we have to provide certain things that maybe the YLF program did not provide back in the day and so is that going to impact our funding and necessitate the need for continued increases in funding as we move along just to maintain that certification if that makes sense.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: It does make sense. So in order to achieve the ACA accreditation we had to prove that we were following well over 200 safety and quality standards put out by ACA. And we had to adhere to even more standards because of the fact that we were what was considered a disability/medical camp because we were a specialized population with a higher liability. The reality about running a summer camp specifically for youth with disabilities but specifically because we take on higher support needs youth is that this is an incredibly high liability program. And so that's why we are generally so anal about our policies, about our procedures, about quality and also about maintaining quality staff as well.

In terms of the staff to camper ratio that specifically actually isn't an ACA thing. We do have to maintain a higher staff to camper ratio because we are a disability youth camp as per ACA. But we specifically came up with the one-on-one ratio because that's just what we found works best with our camp in terms of everyone being supported but also preventing our staff from burning out as well. Because that is another huge component because they are on the clock 24th hours for multiple days in a row. And we predominately hire staff with disabilities, right. And so we want to prevent burnout as much as possible so they want to return next year. But also throughout the day every staff member has a required one-hour break in addition to any additional breaks they need also to prevent burnout, also to maintain their health both physical and mental. And so keeping that one-on-one

staff to camper ratio allows us to give our staff a break, give our staff that breather. So we maintain quality staff and so they walk away from camp feeling like they made an impact but it didn't take more than they gave.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I appreciate that answer. That does clear up a lot. I think I was asking because I'm not thinking more so of the decisions y'all have to make as far as funding now because we're not talking an enormous amount of funding. But I am worried about sustainability because of the requirements that we have to follow and to make sure that we are safe in this program. And just looking at the amount of money y'all have to spend on contracts. And if the goal is to eventually get this at a level where it might be similar to Partners, or even back in the day when we could get 30 delegates, I'm worried that you're, and this is years down the line, we're going to have a situation where you're not going to have money to do much of anything outside of your let's say three main advocacy type initiatives. And that's not necessarily something for y'all to figure out now. That was the reasoning behind me asking the questions for y'all.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Absolutely. I think too with the additional support now that's where we invest in the program long term because like I mentioned earlier, I don't necessarily have the capacity right now to go and pursue grants or to solicit private funding, right. But with the additional staffing hours that's where we dedicate additional staffing hours to some of that outreach, right. So we can also maintain the sustainability of the program long term outside of DDC. Not that we plan to not have DDC as a funder but just in terms of diversifying our funding. But right now I frankly don't have the capacity to do that because I am at max with my current amount of hours with the current amount of funding that we have and where the funding is going.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Jill, how can I help you?

JILL HANO: What is the grant, Lillian?

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Say it again.

JILL HANO: Do y'all want me to repeat that without the pen cap this time? What is this grant that y'all been getting that is ending in June?

LILLIAN DEJEAN: The Louisiana Children's Trust Fund grant.

JILL HANO: Okay. Because I thought that in the status report wasn't putting two and two together with the acronyms. My bad. Thank you.

LILLIAN DEJEAN: Thank you, Jill.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Mr. Taylor.

ERICK TAYLOR: I'm just piggybacking on Brenton. She's saying she needs quality staff and I hear what he's saying. You said you have nurses on the ground 24/7. I hear you saying you don't want the workers to get burned out.

EBONY HAVEN: There's another hand raised, Ms. Cosse.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Ms. Brenda.

BRENDA COSSE: Thank you. Can you hear me now?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

BRENDA COSSE: Thank you. So if it's a medical camp are there any medical entities that can help with the sustainability? Especially since we're like one of a kind. Like are any of those funders like LDH could help with the medical component needs of the camp? Because this is very important. I remember when we were on the council when I served it was important that we have something for the youth in high school and that will kind of transition them into Partners in Policymaking and other advocacy capacity building, systemic change entities. I don't know if that's something that's happening now or if the staff could look into. Can LDH assist them with the medical necessities. Thank you. That will be all.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. I would think your opportunities for partnership and funding sources are limitless but I think what Lillian was explaining was they are currently limited in how much grant writing and outreach they can do to find those funding sources. If I can sum it up plainly. Please correct me if I am wrong.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'll share this really quick. I just want to remind y'all that at our current standing you have 259,000-dollars that you have to spend. So I just wanted to make sure that y'all know that.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I could go around all day about this. Like we've already had a committee say yes to the 15,000. Other members have already decided (inaudible). But so I guess my proposal is either yes, let's go with the 15 that the self-determination recommended or listening to what Lillian said that the cost is closer to ten. Ten we know that would cover the Children's Trust Fund grant if they lose that. And if they don't lose it then they have space to build capacity.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Did y'all want to do like a short vote or do you just want me to write it in? I just want to make sure I'm capturing what y'all want. We can do an unofficial vote.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Can we do that?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Sure. And we'll say for the 10,000 I heard that twice so I'll go with that. That would give them 55,000. A vote for yes is that you want to approve a 10,000-dollar increase which would give them 55,000-dollars. A vote for no is to keep it at the 45,000. And I'll start with you Constance.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Constance, yes. Jill. Jill's not there. Lamar.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Lamar, yes. Erick.

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Erick, yes. Karen.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Karen, yes. You have four so it passes. Again, unofficial. So I went ahead and I updated it right here and then I updated it on our budget sheet. And I will show y'all the budget sheet once we go through all the activities, the contractual activities so we can kind of start working on either new contractual activities and then noncontractual activities.

I'm going to move on to activity 1.1.8 in the status report. So this is the abuse and neglect and exploitation training. Right now it is 78,000-dollars and Team Dynamics this is their second year doing it. The staff recommends continuing this activity. This is the second year. Last year they trained 140 people. And I do have that breakdown on there. They did nine

trainings statewide. They're also doing nine statewide this year for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, caregivers, families, community partners. That way you can learn the skills to recognize, prevent and respond to abuse and neglect. They went over definitions and signs of abuse and the importance of self-advocacy and practical steps for reporting. Again, intervention.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: They offer CEUs, continuing education units for, I don't remember for who exactly, but I know they can offer CEUs. If you look at the breakdown they had 96 professionals come and they were able to get a CEU for attending the training. They're focused on like everybody. They went over a lot of information. I went to this training last year when we had it in Baton Rouge. And they are going to have it this year also. And I think last week we sent out all the dates and the registration locations. But they do nine trainings for this. One in each region. I wouldn't say that it's focused on professionals but I will say a lot of professionals do go. There were a lot of professionals that went when I went in Baton Rouge to the training and it was so that they can recognize if the person that they're supporting is being abused by someone else. And then the family members were going more in the sense of how can I recognize abuse that may be happening when I'm not here. And then also they kind of went over like the self-advocate portion of it of how can I recognize if I'm being abused. What are some of the signs I may see or what kind of things that may be happening that should indicate oh, this isn't right. And then what to do from there.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: This is the second year that they're doing this activity so this is the data from that year. Just quick math. About 15 people per training attended. That's kind of a low attendance because they did nine trainings. So with 140 people they only had about 15 people attend for each training. And even looking at the self-advocates that's maybe three self-advocates per session. They did a similar

activity a couple years ago to this one so we just as a staff we were saying this may be something you want to discontinue in order to put your efforts into something new.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: It wasn't exactly this issue but it had components of that and it was done by the same contractor. It focused more on relationships. But as it progressed over the years it did incorporate other forms of abuse and exploitation. And generally as staff after a few years will recommend discontinuing a particular initiative not necessarily to start a new initiative doing the same thing with someone else but just in general to free up your funding to accomplish something else. To change out an initiative you're still trying to accomplish that goal to figure out a different way to address a different need so our plan doesn't become stagnant and we're only addressing this one issue for an extended period of time. That was our thought process with this one. We've done this particular initiative for two years. I think the similar initiative was maybe four years. It was a good bit of time we did that particular initiative. And then we took probably a year or two off and then started this one up again.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I did just want to say at last year's planning committee y'all did increase their funding. I believe it was 28,000-dollars. They had an ask that they sent in to the committee and so they have been making like videos of people talking about this. They're using it in their training as well as like their marketing. I did want to mention that also. So this one was increased this year to include those extra funds.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: And the centers have had trainings on that particular topic. So one of the key aspects of centers is that they are regional based so they're going to respond to the needs of the region. So I think quite often people think of Families Helping Families as a statewide approach, and they are to some extent, but they are also very much regionally based to focus on the needs of the region. And most of the Families Helping Families centers they identify what

the calls are coming in about and what the needs are in that community to develop those trainings. If they do get calls on this particular issue they will cater their trainings to address that issue. And I know some centers have offered trainings that deal with abuse and exploitation. I'm not going to say they do it across the board. But I would say if it's still an issue y'all are passionate about that you want information still out there about it and you want training still happening then you would just maintain your contract that you currently have and not just find a different contractor to kind of do the same thing.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: On the videos that Team Dynamics has been making.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I don't have them yet.

BRENTON ANDRUS: If I'm not mistaken we have the rights to share those videos and things once they're completed.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: What Karen was talking (inaudible) earlier about almost like building a repository. Because it's something that's important to the council that's been paid for, paid for, paid for, got videos for this. So she was saying (inaudible). So there's like this one place where this is housed and located so if you want to go and learn about what's already been done you still have that bank available.

BRENTON ANDRUS: That's actually something really great to consider because so often, and I think Ms. Cosse alluded to it when she was talking about the voting initiative we did in the past. So often this council as a whole, and not the one currently but just even past councils, want to have that training because you want to make sure someone is doing something every month and they report back to you that they're doing something every month. And sometimes it would be really beneficial to do the studies before you act. Or ask someone to make videos where you may not get any real tangible sort of deliverables or documents from someone until the end of your contract period. So it might be a year but then you would have that that you can then post. We've done that. We did a partnership with HDC many years ago before I was even here where we created training programs for nurses, certain folks in the medical field. At the time they could get CEUs.

It became outdated but they were still sharing the information though. But it was something where the council you had nothing to look at for years until it was actually developed. But then you had a training course that we would share every year. Send it out to medical professionals. It was something that could be accessed at a later date and it continued long beyond the terms of that contract and that contract period.

And so those are things I would encourage y'all to consider as well as opposed to always thinking we have to do a training every month for someone to attend. You can look at developing materials that would be accessible later, you would just have to understand you may not have that during this, you might not have it until the end of the contract period. Some people they feel like we're not doing anything if we don't have anything every month to show or we're not hosting a training. But that's where you have to weigh what is the benefit at the end that we have all this information that we can share and push out. I think those are great points that y'all are making of something that can be accessible later.

And depending on how much money you give you might be able to do something similar to what Team Dynamics is doing where there's a training component, some videos coming later that could possibly be used. But kind of paying someone to do a self-guided webinar, if you will, that they can access at any point in time whenever they want to do it, that might be something you consider for a topic that you find very important.

ERICK TAYLOR: I have a question. Is the video being shared on our website?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I haven't received the videos yet. They're not done.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. We don't have videos yet. But we have, in the past, when we have had videos it's been a combination of it's either on the website, our YouTube page or both. They usually go on the website for a little while and then they exclusively move to YouTube just so we don't clog up our website. And YouTube is where all the videos live. Nothing is restricted when we've done videos in the past.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: We share them on Facebook and things like that too.

BRENTON ANDRUS: As long as they're still relevant. We have had videos that we stopped sharing because eventually it's no longer relevant.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Absolutely. That's a good point. We can track online how many people actually watch the videos. (Inaudible) 140 attended. You can see how many people online watched the video.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And that training we did all those years ago with HDC we could do that. We would report out every year I think how many actually accessed the training. How many CEUs were provided.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I was going to say can we make that an activity somewhere? I know we are on one part but I feel like that's relevant.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah. Where would y'all like it to fall I guess?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I think it still falls under where it's at but it looks like making those videos that's another way that you're helping get the information they need.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So are y'all thinking objective one? And this is just how I'm reading it. Objective one is more of like connecting with policymakers. Objective two is more like how things work. So like how to get the help that you need. It says that specifically in that objective. So are you thinking maybe there? I'm just asking so I know where to put it. And then I guess my next question is are you wanting to like fund an activity or just say like we're going to create a, like we're going to create a database to house these things or are we saying you want to have an activity where somebody creates them?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: (Inaudible). Once y'all get the videos then go and use them. If they're using them in their current training. I think we'll revisit. I think it should be revisited once you get them. (Inaudible) being that we paid them. Erick said that he thinks it goes better under one. And I know it says policymakers but it says and how to be active, safe and responsible. So maybe objective one.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Wherever y'all would like it I'll put it there. So I'm just going to throw out what I kind of heard and then you can edit the actual words of however it fits if that makes sense.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I had to step away for a second but I know there was a mention of like quality and stuff. And that can be things that we include whenever we're looking for those proposals. Whenever we're writing contracts. Like making sure some of those mechanisms are in there. Like we make sure they put stakeholder groups together to give feedback on the video or give feedback on the items that they're going to include to make sure it's not all right, see you next September. Show us what you got situation.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Can this video be shared with Families Helping Families? Because they have a lot of videos that they put online on their website. Do we have the right to share it with them and they can put it on the website? They're probably connected to the community more than we can.

BRENTON ANDRUS: We would essentially just write the contract of proposals in a way that gives us the rights to ownership of these videos and then we can share them and make sure whoever we want to have access will have access.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So I have create an online resource that will have important training videos for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families. Again, y'all, this is a conversation so if there's anything I need to add to it or change please let me know. I don't know if that met what y'all were talking about.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: We know right now what we're talking about but when we're meeting April 30th we might not remember what this conversation was about. I don't want it to come across that we're talking about creating trainings. Thinking like either new contracts then that's included as part of any trainings delivered if we can capture recordings of that as well as what videos we already have coming in that we're expecting.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Did that fix it or no?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I feel like something's missing but I can't put my finger on it just yet Stephanie. There's an important piece missing but I don't know exactly what it is yet.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I guess for my clarity more so with that activity. So the way that's written you're looking at an activity so there's not going to be any

cost associated with this. You're just looking for us to do what we already do. When we do have videos we put them on YouTube or we put them on our website. We just don't have videos yet for this particular initiative. That's what we're doing, is that correct? I think I was working off of a mindset that there were going to be some topics you wanted these things created for, which we have done videos before, but there was going to be like development of a course for, not a course but like a webinar type. I don't know what I was thinking but I don't think it was that. But if that's what y'all wanted, that's cool.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I think it's a combination though. It's a combination of moving forward whatever topics are identified we also identify videos that then become housed somewhere. But then these videos on the particular topic we are talking about with Team Dynamics those videos are there so there's no need (inaudible) with videos that are already there. It's a two prong.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Got you.

LAMARTINE MEDA: So since this is going to be permanent, this is not something we're doing every year or two years, the video is going to be online for as long as we want them to be, right? So if we have an activity so we will have to have a timeframe of that activity, correct? It's going to be there forever.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Just like Partners. Until you all say you don't want it anymore. I just had one thing that I wanted to mention going kind of what Brenton was saying. If you look at activity 1.1.5 on your status report it's a noncontractual one so I didn't know if this is kind of what you were looking for. I know you wanted specific like those from contractors and things like that. But this is the actual information through a variety of the media. So having it on the Facebook, on the website, on YouTube, LADDC news. We do provide like social media numbers. But this also includes, I mean it can include anything you want it to include. So I didn't know if you wanted to have like two separate activities for this or if this would encompass what we were talking about. I'm not sure if that makes sense.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: It does and it doesn't. I

think it would encompass (inaudible) on YouTube (inaudible) so everything that would be related to abuse would be under--

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah. That's how it is.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I guess it's a matter of being intentional, making sure (inaudible). If you want to learn about this it sounds like it's already there. We don't need to do what's already there. If the council doesn't know it's there nobody else definitely knows.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I'm sorry. I'm thinking ahead. I didn't mean to cut you off. Looking at that activity 1.1.5 we had said to move it to 1.3.1 but I know you wanted this under objective (inaudible) so I took that wording and I moved it there, to provide clear and important information. We just kind of changed the wording for this to try to make it a little more plain language. But again, if there's anything that you would like me to add or take out or change if you feel like this activity encompasses what you're looking for then we don't have to have that separate activity. It's really up to y'all. I'm just here to make the notes.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I think just put it 1.1.5. Just my opinion.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I put 1.1.4 to provide clear and important information for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families to help them stay informed and connected. And then the thought is that that can include any kind of correspondence to know what the council is doing. So any kind of training activities like LADDC news, action alerts, Facebook posts. And then like those Facebook posts those things include those videos. Like if we're constantly posting, or you know, not constantly but maybe once a month or whatever y'all want to do to post like oh, check out our employment seminars or check out this video that we got. Just really getting it out there I guess. Again, if this is not how you were reading it then I could add words or get rid of words or change the writing for it if y'all would like to do that.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I think it encompasses (inaudible). I think what you said will take care of it. I think when a training that's done (inaudible).

Hey, these videos are now housed here. Because I think it depends on like when you find out about the DD Council what you know (inaudible). And so we found out after it was done and we don't know it's there. Like you said, doing these periodic posts like based on what comes up in council meetings might be a place to keep talking about that so let's put out what's already there.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I agree. But I think the bigger posts would be (inaudible) because that's something that is very important to parents. (Inaudible). And then if you want to know more click on here. (Inaudible).

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Ms. Karen, did you have a comment?

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I guess my question is when the next planning committee meets and as we move forward how are we making sure, how are we capturing these web-based trainings. Our intent is to record them. Sounds like a contract. But how do we make sure it's documented. Like if y'all win the lottery tomorrow and none of y'all were here who's going to know what we were talking about.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Would it help to include the word videos in here? Like not just giving clear and important information but information and videos. Or materials.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I think what I'm thinking is the way it's written if you go and hold a training you can say that activity (inaudible). But our specific purpose is you hold the training but we're not just holding it. We're holding it and capturing information that can be housed.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I could be wrong but it sounds like what you're trying to accomplish through that activity doesn't have to be an activity. It kind of sounds like basically you want language included in our contracts moving forward that if we do offer a training that training will be recorded. It may not be but you want that training whether it's in person, webinar, maybe not all of them but pick one, that will be recorded so everyone that attends knows it will be recorded for future training purposes blah, blah, blah. And we would have the rights to that training to make

it available at the end of that contract to be able to share that information. So if that's what you're trying to accomplish just in general to make sure that our things continue I don't think that's an activity. That is you as a council member or a council or committee is just requesting staff hey, when you start writing these contracts again that are going to begin in October, just include that sort of language. And then moving forward when we put out SOPs that language will be in there that they need to demonstrate to us that they have a mechanism to record. Whatever to make it available. So if that is the intent of just moving forward that should just become a new practice of ours for contracts. I don't think it needs to be an activity.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I agree. I just want to make sure how do we make sure it happens.

BRENTON ANDRUS: At that point you can ask us at the committee in October did you write that in your contracts. Yes, we did. But in the case of if we leave I guess there is no fail proof system if all staff just abruptly leave. Y'all might dismiss us after this meeting. I don't know.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. And honestly at least if you look at contracts that we're doing currently let's say if those were to continue, we put this in their contract, it's probably no cost or minimal cost of just recording a Zoom or just having some sort of-- I mean, most of us have these fancy cinematography devices in our pockets these days and they could just put it on a tripod and record that training. I think that would be the key of knowing that so if y'all do move forward with other initiatives if you want like a really high production sort of video training being made then obviously you will have to consider that cost and you may not get as many trainings because you want 10,000-dollars' worth of video production to be put on the website. But if you're okay with just a basic training like we're doing here we have something recorded that's on YouTube and you're okay with kind of that sort of thing, because the information is still getting out there, I don't think you have to worry about cost as much in that aspect. But they would

certainly have to include that information in their proposals of it might cost us 5,000-dollars over the course of this project to record a training. Or a thousand or no money. Because they also do contribute their time and efforts as well as part of the process. And that might be a cost that they're willing to say that's what I'm putting up to be able to do that. That's part of my cost share. If I understood the question and answered it.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: Got you. I understand.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am, Ms. Jacki.

JACKIE PIERCE: Can you guys hear me?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

JACKI PIERCE: Fantastic. I'm Jacki Pierce. I'm the director of Bayou Land Families Helping Families and y'all kind of touched on what I was going to say in that with our contract with the DD Council we are obligated to provide a specific number of trainings to our regions. And as Brenton mentioned earlier they are region specific. So even though it might be the same topic of training, and I'm just going to go ahead and use social security disability. There may be different needs whenever it comes to what information these families need. But a lot of us, if not all of our centers, we are providing this training through the Zoom platform. So we should have that capability of recording our trainings so that would be something that possibly with the DD Council, since we're already doing this, we could provide them with recordings of our trainings. And again, I wouldn't expect if you have nine regions doing social security disability training I wouldn't expect the council to post all nine of those videos. So it would be probably one with the most pertinent information that would be well rounded statewide. But that's just a consideration to cut costs that may come. And by all means it would not be your premier published video but it would be something that we would be able to provide statewide access to important disability information.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I hope this doesn't come off as rude to anybody but we only have about two hours left and we do not have a plan. So I'm going to finish goal one for the contractual activities so we can move on to

goal two because we are very, very behind.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The next one is activity 1.2.1. That is People First. We talked about that a little bit before. The staff reworded it to say it's going to strengthen the self-advocacy network. It was a lot of wording before. If you don't like that wording we can always change it. Last year the planning committee decreased the funding from 25,000 to 23,000. Historically for about three or four years they left about 5,000-dollars left in the contract at the end of the contract year. So that was the reason that they decreased that funding. But this is a council mandate to collaborate or I guess support the self-advocacy network. A federal mandate. If there's no questions about that I'm going to move on to goal two. Or if there's no discussion. Because that finishes goal one for the contractual activity.

For goal two for contractual activities we're going to go to page six. We're looking at 2.1.2 provide financial support to provide appropriate and accessible sex ed to middle and high school aged people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And that approximate cost for this year is 53,000-dollars. The council partnered with LSU to create a curriculum and host trainings for appropriate accessible sex ed for high school aged students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The contract was approved in October. This information was compiled on March 3rd. So as of March 3rd we had received finalized documents from LSU or a revised timeline of activities. So staff recommends discontinuing this activity. But if you wish to continue it we recommend possibly picking a different organization as we've had a lot of issues with this contractor. For the next plan. I'm talking about for the 2027 plan. And that is just maybe it will be different if they're established. I'm really not sure. But we had some issues working with-- this is being done by LSU. I think it's their nursing school. I'm not really sure. But just sometimes working with colleges there's a lot of red tape and issues for that collaborative process. So I just wanted to point that out.

And then the other thing I did want to say is that

it would have to be, and this is just for anybody who wasn't here when we had these discussions when this was first added to the plan, this would have to be separate from the school day. The Department of Education has curriculum that has been approved. Certain curriculums that have been approved that can be taught at schools but districts get to decide independently if they actually want to teach sex ed. So that is the guidance for LDOE. I'll just leave it at that. Keesha can give you more information on this activity.

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes. So just to give you guys an update. As of Friday we have the timeline but they need to make some corrections. But they still have not done anything as it relates to the contract, deliverables or doing anything that we've asked for the contract. The contract ends in September on the 30th so has us a little worried. But they have assured us they will be able to, I guess, meet the deliverables of what we're looking for. But as of now they have not done anything as far as billing, sending in a report or anything. Or even completed the signed contract.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Is it correct their proposal was kind of meant to be a multiyear process?

REKEESHA BRANCH: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So if you want we can either talk about each one or I can just go through like this goal, talk about those and then we can talk about them as a group of what you may want to keep.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, let's do that.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So the next activity is activity 2.1.3 and that is the dual diagnosis or navigating the system training. This training has been going on for three years. So prior to the Arc we had a different contractor of Hustle and Grow and staff recommended you move on to a different contractor. So the Arc has taken this over. This year they added a wellness component for an emphasis on training self-advocates and just kind of like what wellness is. As of January 2026 266 people have been trained and I have that breakdown. There has been an increase in family member and self-advocate participation since the Arc took it over but participation is still low in each region. Two meetings had to be rescheduled due to low registration and no one showing up to the scheduled

sessions anyway. And then at the end of last year they had about a 1,300-dollar balance remaining on their contract. So staff does recommend discontinuing this because it has been for three years and it's more of just not continuing the same thing but really focusing on maybe something different.

The next contractual activity is 2.3.1. This is on page seven. This is provide financial support to promote accessible educational materials on women's preventative health topics. Again, the council has contracted with LSU. I believe it's the same department that I believe is also the nursing school to create and promote those educational materials. Kind of the same story as the previous one with the sex ed. We are in the same boat with this activity. So if you wish to continue this we would recommend working with a different organization. Or maybe private, not a college. But maybe not. I don't know. That's up to you.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Maybe not one state side. (Inaudible) with out-of-state universities. It's something about LSU.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So those are all of the contractual ones for goal two. So if there's something that, and I'm just throwing this out there, if you're looking at this and you're saying no, we really need women preventative health topics this is that time for that discussion to say like no, we don't want to get rid of it. We need to still do it. Or maybe something different that you think falls under here. That could be something from all of those concepts and other things I gave y'all. Jill, did you have your hand up?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Jill.

JILL HANO: So are you saying-- I'm sorry. I'm very confused all day. Are you saying that we had no activity on the women's health issue because we had an issue with the contracts? Because that seems like it hasn't had a chance to get started yet.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I know. I'm trying to think of how to answer that. I guess, yes. If you would want to continue this I think the bid would have to be put out again. And that is just from administrative as a staff person recommendation. Now if you find that this is important, and I get what you're saying, the work

hasn't been done so how can we look at it. So if that is something that you would want to still add because this is important then absolutely put it on there. But we didn't have much to work with with this one. So we just gave our best recommendation that we could come up with because we didn't have that information from them because nothing has really been done it's hard for us to say which way. Which is why we said maybe we just need to pick a different contractor. But I don't know if now that we've jumped through the red tape to get them as a contractor is it easier to keep that contractor. Am I making sense? Like now that we kind of know what they're looking for and they may have a multiyear plan like for the sex ed one would it make sense to change a contractor at that point or would they be able to complete this multiyear approach. And that's really for y'all to determine. And we have the information that they gave us. I just don't know what that would look like continuing from here.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: For the first year what did they say they were going to give us? This is a multiyear thing, right?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I am not sure.

LAMARTINE MEDA: The other one was ending in September.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: They all start in October and end in September.

REKEESHA BRANCH: All right. So they had to host three workshops to include 15 to 20 adults with IDD, caregivers and family members and interdisciplinary experts totaling about 45 to 60 individuals. Pilot lessons in at least three Louisiana school districts, urban, rural and charter. And revise materials based on feedback. For the HEART initiative, which is the women's health, provide data to show information has been distributed and shared with over 200 Louisiana women with IDD.

And also so phase one-- well, they started with phase zero. Phase zero, a shared project roadmap with clear tasks ownership, protocols and recruitment fliers for workshops. Phase one would be a cohort of ten plus engaged cosigners. Draft prototypes for ten health tool books. Draft lessons and materials for HEART

curriculum lessons. Complete a visual and plain language style guide to inform design of final materials. Phase two, three fully validated and finalized HEART health tool books that are print ready and AAC supported. (Inaudible) complete, codesign (inaudible) toolkit. (Inaudible) lesson validated with accompanying rough-cut video (inaudible) curriculum scope and sequence and all remaining lesson scripts drafted. Validation data from interviews and pilot. For phase three, which is their final phase, three public health toolkits available online and in clinics, data on initial reach and user feedback. Their target is 100 plus downloads and 30 plus QR scans. One successful caregiver/educator workshop with feedback. A comprehensive year one report and draft plan for ongoing work in HER and HEART. HER is sex education and HEART is the women's health.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Imagine to pilot something in the school district and school is almost over.

REKEESHA BRANCH: And just to kind of let you guys know we've been reaching out to them a lot trying to get information, trying to get them to commit to something, to finalize something. And we have hit a brick wall until about a week or two ago.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I have a full timeline but I didn't want to overwhelm this document so I just put the highlights like it was approved in October. We sent them final contracts. There was normal negotiation but by March 3rd we still had not received any finalized documentation from them.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Ms. Cosse.

BRENDA COSSE: Yes, thank you. Could we advance the Word document? It's still showing activity 1.1.4 while we were talking about provide clear and important information for people. That's been like 10, 15 minutes ago.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes, ma'am. This is the draft document of the plan. So I'm typing into it right now. Nothing else has been added since then.

BRENDA COSSE: But what should it be showing for the public?

EBONY HAVEN: The document that they're looking at right now, Ms. Cosse, is the status report. She's just sharing the actual plan as they add activities or take

activities away. The status report is what they're looking at. So we're not sharing that document. It's just available online.

BRENDA COSSE: So the screen says draft plan Word document. We didn't advance beyond activity 1.1.4?

EBONY HAVEN: Yes, we have. This is the draft plan that is showing. The document that we're referencing is the status report. It's not the plan.

BRENDA COSSE: It's moving now. I didn't mean the document y'all was referencing. It's moving now so we can see what goal, activity and objective we're currently on. Thank you so much.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So that's all of the funding activities from goal two.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So I think (inaudible). However, given where we are and where we're not I agree with the recommendation. And then when I look at kind of like what came in public comment wise and everything nothing really seems to be aligned with that so I think it might be something that the council might want to consider like putting in the back of our minds and then thinking about which activities relate. And if we want to fund bigger things one of those might be, there were like several, but the things that keep coming up that we've talked about. The emergency preparedness that would be something that came up. The information on social security comes up in council meetings all the time. Transportation, something that comes up all the time. And then the last page, strengthen early identification.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to say really quickly if you want I can just talk about this last activity. There's only one activity for goal three. So I didn't know if y'all just wanted me to get that out there and then you can start making those decisions about any activities that y'all wanted to add, kind of like what Constance was saying. And just that way you know what activities we have done and the recommendation. But the last one is activity 3.1.4 in your status report. And that is to provide financial support and technical assistance for training of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities transitioning to adulthood to include but

not limited to financial literacy, health waivers, employment and voting. Currently Team Dynamics has this contract and they create support and resources. They do six trainings throughout the state. They do a survey where they survey the state and then they kind of aggregate it by region to see what the needs are for that region. So the training is based upon the survey results. They did also send out-- attendance was low. They had 56 participants out of those six trainings. Not even nine people, maybe ten, nine and a half per training. So one of the things that they included in their survey this year were what dates and times work best for you. Because they're trying to get those self-advocates and the school age students that are going through those transitions that need to learn about this. So trying to figure out what times work best for them so that was one of the questions what dates work for you. What times work best for you. So they're doing a lot of more later in the afternoon ones. They're giving some over spring break, over the summer. Things where these people can come and attend. So just kind of getting a feel from that. I did want to let you know that. Staff does recommend discontinuing it. This is the second year of this activity. And kind of just going along with this is a brand new five-year plan so just kind of maybe a change of priority of things that you think need to be done. And that's all the activities so I'm ready to write notes and things whenever y'all are ready.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I have a question. Typically how many contractual activities does the council generally fund?

EBONY HAVEN: So it varies, Constance. It's all going to depend, again, what the priorities are, how much funding do you guys want to put towards those priorities. I think the recommendation from this committee at least was let's do bigger things to have more impact. And so that's going to lessen the number of activities you're able to have because if Stephanie goes back to the budgeting you will see how much funding you have and that will determine how many activities you guys are able to keep. Because if you're wanting to fund stuff like 80,000-dollars, I'm putting a number out there, then that's going to eat

that money up faster than just doing like little things 30,000, 40,000, 20,000 a year. So it's all going to depend. It varies.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I ask that question because I was trying to kind of see where to start the conversation because I don't want to mention six things if we're already doing six things and that's eating the money up. I made a list of things that I heard that came out even today. Early intervention as it relates to identification. Training for staff. And like parents. Transition would be a second topic. SSI and benefits would be a third. Emergency preparedness would be a fourth. And then this voting discussion today would be five. I don't know if those are the areas we want to focus on.

EBONY HAVEN: My recommendation, because like we're at 2:30, and so we want to start having those conversations. Whatever you think. This is your committee. If you have a priority and you're like I think we should focus on this then you can throw it out there and the committee can discuss it. If you guys feel like the emergency preparedness is a huge one then we can start there and go from there.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The other thing I just wanted to add is if you fund, for example, there's six things that you think are important but we may only have funding this year for four that's kind of where this planning tool comes in to say like oh, we still think this is important and we want to include it on here for the next planning committee to maybe look at for year three, four and five. And that's just an example. Like if you wanted to do the sex ed and see like oh, we want to see what it looks like at the end of this year to see what they actually accomplish before we throw more money at it because we have no data right now. But maybe in year two once we have that data and we're able to kind of see what was done maybe they think about doing it again. And then that's kind of what this document (inaudible). I'm not sure if that helps.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I guess it depends on what the different work is because it has to fall under a council mandate. Like capacity building is training people. Systems change and self-advocacy are really

like advocating for that change. I guess training is like one of the easier ways to accomplish that mandate. But you can fund things like a study that they do a study across the state, for example, on this document like the transportation and specifically the access, the public transportation systems. We've put like this could be a possible study and then a multi-year approach depending on what that study gave information on. We would make sure when we sent out that solicitation that they would know hey, this is going to be a multiyear kind of thing. We want you to do this study and depending on how the council wants to word it, we may ask that same contractor to implement something or create a training or a guide or work with CATS or whatever. Just depending on I guess what y'all wanted to do with it. So there's different approaches.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: There's definitely a limit, yes. We have to clearly document our efforts and submit them to the federal government. Because they want to make sure that we are spending them how the mandate is written.

BRENTON ANDRUS: It doesn't open you up to do a lot outside of training. Like Stephanie said, you can do studies. You can have white papers done. We've paid folks for outreach purposes. We've created books that have been published in the past. We've created like the training components, not a training but more of a CEU type. Yeah, we've created curriculums. So there's a lot you can still do. You have to be creative with that thought. But yeah, I think it is easy to default to a training but the sky's the limit as long as you can line up with the mandate and the mission of the council.

EBONY HAVEN: So Karen, if you look at this document, and this is for the committee in general, I think some of the notes that we included on here we were trying to help guide the conversation when we put the notes. So yeah, like Stephanie just mentioned, the transportation thing. It's a multiyear thing. But also if you look at the early intervention training, it's like one, two, three, four. Early intervention training for early childhood providers to support students with disabilities. That would be curriculum

development. That's building capacity. But I would say that that was a multiyear thing too because once we develop the curriculum we would need to get it out there to daycare centers and workers and then offer continuing education units for the trainings and all of that. So that's a multiyear approach but it's outside of training. It's a curriculum that we would pay to get developed and then we would train. So we can do other things. Like Stephanie said, the easiest way to build capacity is through training so that's why we do trainings a lot.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Jill.

JILL HANO: Thanks, Ayden. So I have more of an understanding, because I do always say training, training, training, but now I'm thinking that under goal two why don't we, or 2.2 or whatever, why don't we put to conduct a transportation study. And then another one, because I'm very excited that capacity building is more than training. Like cause for eight years I've been saying do a training for this. Do a training for that. And now I'm excited. And then I had one more. The committee recommendation and the topic I really like how you broke that down. But then I saw another one. Jumping around to goal three. So Ayden, do you want me to wait or do you want me to say it now?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: You can go ahead.

JILL HANO: Okay. On the second page, the fourth one from the bottom.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The job fair, Jill?

JILL HANO: Yes. Okay. So for job fair scholarship funding I like having a partner. So could we do something where we host regional job fairs and put one in each region? Because like it doesn't help to go to Baton Rouge and you have to navigate okay, which one, which companies are based in my region. So I kind of like that idea as well.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Do you want me to review the two? Or Jill, do you want me to go over what I wrote?

JILL HANO: That was all I had. Thank you, Ayden.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: You're so welcome.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So this is what I typed up to kind of go with what you're saying. Provide funding

support and technical assistance to complete a study on transportation throughout the State of Louisiana for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. If there's anything that y'all would like to change, edit. And then I also need a price tag for that or a cost estimate. Or how much you want to allocate to it. Let me rephrase that. How much money you would like to allocate to that if you would like to. This is just going off of what Jill said.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Could we get all the activities first if that would help.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: We could do that.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Go ahead, Ms. Pierce.

JACKI PIERCE: Thank you. So to go into that goal two, activity two. That's another opportunity to utilize the Families Helping Families centers because we do provide these trainings. And I prefer to call them educational opportunities because we're not necessarily training people for specific topics. We are providing them with the information so that they can be more meaningful self-advocates. So again, another opportunity to utilize the Families Helping Families centers.

And then as far as the job training goes, and how I love that Jill was talking about the job fairs and everything, last year we put on, I did this with SILC and Disability Rights Louisiana. We put on a full day, we called it the Empowerment Through Employment Conference. And what we did was we had speakers from various organizations. We had LAPIE there. That's the Louisiana Post-Secondary Inclusive Education program. We had people come in and talk about ABLE accounts and how to manage those finances. So we covered a lot of topics whenever it comes to providing or gaining access to the job training, gaining employment, maintaining employment. And we are having our next one on July 20th. And it's completely virtual for the sake of simplicity for people to be able to attend because we want as many people to have access to this information. So again, that's something that the Families Helping Families centers are already doing. Just wanted to contribute that.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Thank you.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Did y'all want me to add any

other activities? We do have, and I just want to remind you we have almost 250,000-dollars.

LAMARTINE MEDA: People still don't know about all of these opportunities. I didn't know about the ABLE account. The last page, on the last page of the suggestions I think it says 2.1 where you got the discussion started it says provide a training on milestones or create a resource for pediatrician offices. That's where it starts and for it not to be delayed. So how would we do that. Is there someone we can partner with so they can tell LCMC or Ochsner or whatever. Can you get that information to them. But also it says create a one-page informational to give them when your child comes here. The resources are there. We have a lot of resources. We're going through them and some we are getting rid of. The people out there they just don't know. So to me that's something I really think whether that is dear to me because I'm still ignorant about how much stuff that is out there. I'm just like wow, are you kidding me. (Inaudible) a bunch of people who can help me. And then the people that do these things don't even have the resources. So I would (inaudible) a lot but how would we do it. How would we get in touch with these large organizations to get the physicians to pass the information at the six-month check of this child and say hey, man, you might want to have this or just keep this somewhere.

So my other thing is the K12 transition. I think that is 3.1. We have several 3.1 here. That would be the second page on the very bottom of the second page where it says transition in the K12 space. Building the supports specifically for the moderate and significantly starting early. So middle school, that might be a good place to start (inaudible) some may not. (Inaudible). Getting started early, early on what you going to do and then the training that we are provided. I think these activities are essential. Let me get back. It was space in early childhood. I thought it was one more. But anyway. Those two.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I'm wondering what he's talking about with transition would go with some of the language maybe from that concept paper. And it also addresses some of the concerns that has been talked

about relating to like understanding programs and resources like waivers and job support services. So I wonder if that needs to go in that activity 3.1.2.

And then I also wanted to talk about the early childhood curriculum development. There was a note that said on the first page, the curriculum development one, but then there's a note on the back from the second one from the bottom about providing supportive training for early childhood on children with disabilities. And the note says could do curriculum development and get daycares to participate. It says they could go together. So that as a possible activity.

The last one I want to put up that I think is important to consider what we heard earlier today about the emergency preparedness. And starting as a multiyear project to look at Texas SILCs to see how we can kind of replicate that. So I guess the first year figure out what that would look like in Louisiana and then build on that.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: This one I just wrote early childhood because I was getting bogged down. I'm sorry. I was trying to type and I was confusing myself. So did you want me to read through them?

LAMARTINE MEDA: Can I make my last point? Can you go to 3.2. Anyway, that was on page two and that would be the last 3.2. Training on benefits planning. I think that was one at the last meeting where there are incentives for merchants, right, if they hire people with disabilities. And how do we let them know about those benefits. So I don't remember what they were but not benefits but incentives for merchants if they hire people with disabilities. Something like that. But it says here I think the suggestion was LRS. Lighthouse is already doing this so we can get a one-pager from them. Again, how can we get that one-pager to the community. Everybody know about what we do and the resources. I still think our communities still don't know. But yeah, so that's something to discuss and get that one-pager from LRS or the Lighthouse. But again, it's how do we get it out there. I guess papers are not the way to get them out there. Become obsolete.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I mean, kind of how we push information out now we send it to our list serve. We

put it on social media. We send it to the FHF centers for them to distribute. Again, it gets complicated because we can get the information out there. The question is are the parties you're getting it to are they sharing it where it needs to go to. And that's the hard part. How do you make a pediatrician hand out information. You can't that I know of. So that's where our breakdown is. I know we spend a lot of time on Families Helping Families putting information out there but there's a lot of other organizations that do a lot of outreach to put this information out there and it's not getting to the destination because that middleman is where the breakdown is happening. I don't know how you address that. But like that one-pager you're talking about though we can, just as entities that sit on the council, we can just ask them if they can provide us with something like that and start sharing it.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I do have, at least in my community where I live (inaudible) I found a list of merchants that do do business for people with disabilities. Like that do hire people with disabilities. And they have a different pathway, right, different interviews for them. Where I live Delgado Community College almost provided almost all of these skills. They'll send them there. If you're going to be a nurse they will send them there, get that skill for one more year and come back. But that would be that one tiny little (inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: If you're looking for a list of folks that employ people with disabilities that's harder to get. And we have asked LRS for that and I believe they said they don't really keep a list. Like they can't just provide you a list of oh, I live in Alexandria. These are all the people. They don't keep track of that.

LAMARTINE MEDA: What is the incentive there. Whatever they get by hiring people with disabilities.

BRENTON ANDRUS: I think there are unofficial lists out there that people may have kept of these places in our community might be hiring. But in general they cannot discriminate. An employer cannot discriminate because you have a disability anyway. So the list really should be everybody out there as opposed to

these certain groups as long as you can fulfill the job requirements, right, of what they're looking for.

LAMARTINE MEDA: But what is the benefits do they get there?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I don't know. Constance, you may know.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: What I was going to say is HDC does some things with like-- well, that's benefits planning. I was just talking about this in our office. I think in upcoming council meetings for next year what we could do is like highlight some of the things y'all keep talking about (inaudible) give our report. And so one of them will be what do they get because I can't answer that question. But I will have the person that does our Paycheck program explain what those benefits are because she knows the answer to that. And the things with benefits planning. Lighthouse has half of the state and I think we have the other half. HDC helps individuals with benefits planning so they know how to do their social security (inaudible). That might address some of your questions.

BRENTON ANDRUS: That is a great point. We do have our full business meeting at the end of April and after our agencies present, you know, when LRS goes can you give us that one-pager that provides whatever this information is by the next meeting. And then they can put that information together. But at any point in time if you have those things that you want, ask. We don't ask them for a lot. We could ask them for a lot more. Especially when it's just information because the odds are, like LRS for instance, they do outreaches. I'm sure they have documentation that they can provide us that we can help them share.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I have one question because I've been thinking about this forever. Not that anybody can answer it but that's okay. As far as like when people with developmental disabilities go get a job through LRS or Lighthouse, Goodwill maybe. Whoever Goodwill goes through. Say they're like okay, we go to say Applebee's and we're like okay, we want a job here at Applebee's but you turn in the application, you get to the interview and they're like no, we can't hire you for this and that reason but they don't give you a specific reason. But it is discrimination. Does that

make any sense? And there's a fine line between what is discrimination and what is not. But you can't prove that. Am I making any sense at all? Because that just came out. Y'all, it's the end of the day. That came out crazy. But does that make any sense? Because you can't prove it to be discrimination but you know that it is. So in instances like that what do you do?

BRENTON ANDRUS: Call Disability Rights of Louisiana. DRLA. Worst case scenario they get on the phone with you and talk it through. But yeah, they're the kind of go-to in situations like that.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Okay.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just wanted to go back to this activity, activity 2.1.2 and make sure that I got this and then that way we can start adding the funding because we only have one hour left. I didn't know if y'all wanted to talk about the ones that y'all had recommended and then make sure the wording for the activity is how you want it and then we can move on to the budget part of it and allocate those funds.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yeah, let's do that.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So activity 2.1.2. This one was the early intervention that I think Dr. Meta was talking about and working with an organization to get that information out to pediatricians. Maybe like a one-page document that they pass out or something like that that families can get. And so provide funding support and technical assistance to strengthen early intervention. Now I did not know how to write this so please let me know how to write this, any words to add in.

EBONY HAVEN: Chair, before we get too far, there are public members who have their hands raised. I think Nicole would be first because she's in person and then we have Ms. Cosse.

NICOLE DEJEAN: I was going to say I think we should probably not get too, too bogged down in the how. (Inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: Do you want to take Ms. Cosse's comment?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, go ahead.

BRENDA COSSE: Yes, thank you. I think I just heard Ms. Stephanie say don't get bogged down into the how. But I want y'all to please remember the voter

training. I know council member Constance mentioned it. And that also voter training builds capacity. Council member Jill said that. And my last thought was I saw that you said Team Dynamics does handle voting. Would that be an increase in funding for them to make voter training videos and materials. Thank you.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So I reworded it. Again, I'm trying to like capture what that says on there. Please let me know. I'm not good with the writing part of it. Provide funding support and technical assistance to strengthen early identification systems and reduce delays in screenings and referrals for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. And if y'all don't like it or you think it needs to be changed please let me know. I will edit it however you would like.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I have a suggestion that I overlooked earlier. Not for the wording. But what about the community (inaudible) about legislative advocacy. I'm thinking of a partnership with Lieutenant Nungesser just to build and to start with legislative advocacy to build accessible parks.

EBONY HAVEN: Can I make a suggestion. Before we get there, Constance, because that's going to be more of a noncontractual activity, let's focus on the contractual stuff so we can get the money out of the way and then we can focus definitely on that.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Did y'all want to change any of the wording for this one? Or does everyone agree?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: That's perfect.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: And then also to reduce the delay in the referral. So that way you're getting the screening and the referral quicker and the information is there.

LAMARTINE MEDA: How much?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Well, we can talk about how much in a moment. Let's just work on the wording. Everybody okay with the wording? Did y'all agree with it? Do y'all want to do like a thumbs up, thumbs down unofficial kind of thing. So I got four thumbs up. I'm going to keep it highlighted for now just so I know that we need to go back to it to add that funding if that's okay. So the next one is activity 2.2.2 provide funding support and technical assistance to complete a

study on transportation throughout the State of Louisiana for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

BRENTON ANDRUS: You might want to say after transportation like needs and barriers or something of that nature. I know we're not trying to get bogged down in the how but we have to have at least a little bit of something to know what the proposal is going to say.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Is this part of a multiyear like doing something after? Because the way it's kind of written is more like we're going to do a study just to identify barriers.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: It could be. If y'all wanted you could kind of take it on in two separate ways. Like if you wanted to just say this year we're just going to have the study and then next year at the planning committee the intent is that okay, well now you have the study and now it's a multiyear training or whatever the next years is. So it could be written for our solicitation that this would be a multiyear approach starting with the study and then taking this recommendation into account. But I would say we wouldn't want to add, like I don't know if we would want to add another activity that goes along with it without having that study first. If that makes sense.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: That makes sense. I just feel like we should clarify because if you spend money on a study and don't plan on doing anything with it then why did you spend the money.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Right. Correct.

EBONY HAVEN: I will just add, Constance, we're not going anywhere. We're not winning the lottery tomorrow. We plan on still being here next year for the planning committee. So this is something that as your staff we would be like okay, the planning committee last year wanted to do this transportation study and they still wanted to continue on with whatever activity you guys want to do next. Advocacy or training or whatever.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am, Jill.

JILL HANO: If Ebony or Brenton win the lotto they have to give me some of their winnings.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Wholeheartedly.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The next one, provide funding support and technical assistance. And then again, y'all, I just pulled this from that paper. To build the capacity of workforce development and emergency preparedness and resiliency training. I pulled that from the recommendation, the revised recommendation that was sent to us. But if it doesn't make sense I can kind of add in any of the other words if we need to. Like if you need me to add in that peer-led training part or you think that that's more of a monitor to contractor discussion I guess is what I'm trying to say.

LAMARTINE MEDA: On the notes it says other agencies (inaudible).

EBONY HAVEN: Look on page three. It's like the third one down. The third and fourth one. And then it says revised recommendation for the planning committee in the note section. It's the third one down.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Okay. I got it.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: For this one in the wording maybe add to build the capacity of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to meet their own needs through.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: To build the capacity of individuals-- I can change it to people if you would like if you want to keep it consistent. The capacity of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to meet their own needs through workforce development and emergency preparedness and resiliency training.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Workforce development comma.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah. I was like there's a lot of ands here.

BRENTON ANDRUS: That was going to be my question. Are those three separate topics or does resiliency go with emergency preparedness?

NICOLE DEJEAN: Through emergency preparedness you become more resilient.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Got you.

NICOLE DEJEAN: You could pull out resiliency and just have emergency preparedness training.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Do y'all want to do a thumbs up or thumbs down? All right. I'm going to move on to the next one. Again, y'all, I was just trying to take

notes on it. They're just like more in my brain than they make sense here. Provide funding support and technical assistance to ensure that transition planning is happening during the correct time. I know that was one of the things we were talking about like making it earlier. I'm not really sure how y'all would like to word that. That was for that transition through that K through 12 space.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: So how about provide funding support and technical assistance to ensure that educators, students with developmental disabilities and their families understand waivers, benefits counseling, job support services (inaudible). I'm looking at the concept paper summary for the transition.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Did I capture that right?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I feel like we need to add transition.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Understand transition. Do you want to say like including but not limited to.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Just trying to get clarity for my purposes. So basically what we're currently doing you're just looking at expanding the population maybe a little and maybe adding a topic or two that might not already be there? Am I misunderstanding? This sounds like what Team Dynamics is doing. And if that's the case you could look at just negotiating with them of maybe tweaking something they're already doing.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I'm not sure what exactly is Team Dynamics doing? Because this is to work more so directly with educators and families. So it's more so (inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: Okay. Because I feel like this reads more what Team Dynamics is doing, which is just offering that assistance, I guess, knowing your rights.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: It's tied to the concept paper.

LAMARTINE MEDA: On page two they have some language there on the notes.

EBONY HAVEN: That's kind of the training that we would have. I guess the whole approach would be if you look at the planning section on that concept paper they would try to recruit to high school students. One in an urban and suburban area and one in a rural area participating in the project. So it is different from

what Team Dynamics is doing because they would actually get high schools involved. They would recruit to high schools.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I changed the wording a little bit. I don't know if it helps it or not to try to distinguish the difference. So I put provide funding support and technical assistance to partner with schools to ensure that...

BRENTON ANDRUS: Yeah. When you add partner with schools then it changes. That immediately takes me to you're looking to do something in conjunction with the school system. The other way it just read like what we're already doing. But the paper says we're doing something differently but the plan doesn't read that we're doing anything differently.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Anybody feel like it needs to change? Or if you need me to change wording or add anything or get rid of it. Whatever you need. And if we wanted to keep this including but not limited to and list those. Did y'all want to move on to the next?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Please.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The next one talks about early childhood. And I think this was the daycare one. Sorry. I was trying to type everywhere at the same time.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: The 3.1 on the first page talks about curriculum (inaudible). On the back of that page providing support and training to early childhood for children with disabilities. There's a concept paper. There might be overlap. There may not. I'm not quite sure.

JILL HANO: Are we on the committee recommendations chart?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes.

JILL HANO: Where are you looking at Constance?

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: The first one is on the first page the fourth one down. It says early intervention training.

JILL HANO: Okay. Cool.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: And then on the backside of that page it's the second one from the bottom.

JILL HANO: Okay. Cool.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So just kind of listening to what y'all said I wrote this, but again, we can change

it. Provide funding support and technical assistance to create a curriculum for childcare providers to better support children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

EBONY HAVEN: Childcare providers/early learning centers.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Is that accurate? I just added and early learning centers. And then the last one was provide funding support and technical assistance to complete a job fair in each region for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I know specifically one of the things that was talked about was like very specific disability friendly like organizations including like a highlight of vendors and places. So that can all be incorporated and that would kind of be more in like the statement of work in the contract for the vendor and not necessarily, it doesn't necessarily have to be an activity to have all that wording in there because we can do that on the back end.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: After the word fair I think we should put training.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Provide funding support and technical assistance to complete a job fair or training in every region. And if y'all are good with that we will move on to the budget part where you are assigning moneys. Give me one second. Let me just put everything into the budget sheet to make it a little easier for us.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So right now you have 249,000-dollars to allocate to six activities.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Which one you guys have experienced would be more expensive?

BRENTON ANDRUS: If you're looking at developing a curriculum that's not cheap. Because you're first going to have to do an assessment. What are they already providing. What are the gaps. Develop the curriculum and then how do you get it to them. Because when you're looking at a curriculum that they can voluntarily access or are you trying to make it a part of any sort of training and licensing or whatever they have. That's a whole other level. But that's what I was going to say earlier when y'all were talking about

that. That's definitely going to be a multiyear sort of project. Because you're going to have to have the assessment component of what they need. What's currently required. Is there any legislative advocacy if you want to mandate anything. How do you get it in the hands of the right people and how do you make sure it stays updated.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Jill has her hand raised.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am, Jill.

JILL HANO: Okay sorry. Two questions. Is creating a curriculum part of capacity building?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes.

JILL HANO: And I think I texted Ebony but I got confused again. We increased YLY funding, yes?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yes. Y'all did like an unofficial vote to increase it 10,000-dollars. I did it right here Jill. I increased it to 55,000.

JILL HANO: Cool. Can you write a note like by the YLF like 10,000-dollar increase?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: How about I'll highlight it in red since that one was changed.

JILL HANO: Perfect.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Okay.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: For the ideas that you all have in mind for the SALT what are you all thinking in terms of cost?

NICOLE DEJEAN: So I would shoot for around 50 because the idea is that we employ individuals with disabilities to be the trainers. We'll have the materials because we're working alongside Texas SILC and their project year ends in September. So we'll have those materials built out but we're going to have a training component, obviously travel and some costs there.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So now y'all have 199,000.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: What's the typical cost when y'all have done studies in the past?

BRENTON ANDRUS: The last study I can think that we did, and I use the term study loosely, it was more of a white paper because it was more researched based. If my memory serves me correctly, and this was probably eight years ago, I think it cost us about 12,000-dollars and we got a paper that told us everything we needed and it didn't really give us a lot

of guidance of how to move forward. If we're looking at a transportation study, for instance, what I would envision if you are asking me what I would like to see it's going to cost you a lot of money because I want to see stakeholder groups. I want to see statewide. I want you to go around. I want you to send out surveys. I want you to talk to people. I want you to research. I want to know what every nook and cranny of the state has to offer for what's available, what's missing, where are the gaps. And I want the actual roadmap of how do we address it and how much money it's going to take. Because if we have to go to the legislature I want facts. I want money involved. What that would look like. I want to know what other states are doing to address these issues and concerns. And other states, maybe various states if they are doing anything through their current maybe disability programs. When we're looking at public transit stuff maybe looking at other states that might be more similar to us that might have more rural populations. That's going to be a lot of money. That's not just can you go read up on transportation and write me a ten-page report. That's not what I have in mind. And this is probably some large organization out of some insert large city here that is just going to do a whole bunch of research. And similar to like a rate study that we just had from the department a very involved, very intense process.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I agree. Something that would make real change.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And one thing to consider. Let's say you, throw out a number, you put 50,000-dollars to it. And we put out an SOP and they're like yeah, for 50 I can give you this and it's not enough well, then you as the council need to commit all right, here's your 50 this year to do that. We will commit 50 next year for you to do this. Transportation hasn't been solved in ever so I don't think it's too much. I know people want things now. Transportation you're not getting now or you're not going to get in the next five years. But if we really put the thought into it, even if you have to fund an ongoing study for a couple years to get what you need I think it's very helpful. But I have no idea how much it would actually cost.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: The (inaudible) board just did

something with transportation. They did a bunch of different things but transportation was (inaudible). I'm wondering (inaudible) specific recommendations for the New Orleans area on what needs to be done in terms of accessibility.

BRENTON ANDRUS: The idea of like whoever would try to get this contract from us that might be a resource that they need to tap into, at least for that area, since it's been addressed. And it would be great if they could break it down doing those things. Like in the cities we know we could do this. In Evangeline Parish where I'm originally from we're not having a bus system out there in a town of a 1,000 people. That's not going to happen. I understand that. Knowing that we can't do that what are our other options. How do we do other things. Opportunities that folks might have for transportation. So if they can break it down in that manner too.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, Jill.

JILL HANO: I just love this little chart Stephanie. I'm obsessed. So the transportation study, can we ask or get it to include the second item on the chart, the prevention safety that vehicles, something about the wheelchair (inaudible) in making sure vehicle modifications follow ADA guidelines?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I guess essentially it could be written into the SOP, like a proposal that we send out.

JILL HANO: Okay.

BRENTON ANDRUS: It would just be two very different, you're trying to accomplish two very different things.

JILL HANO: Okay. I didn't know if it was going to be that vastly different.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Yeah. Cause the way that y'all have it written it's to complete a study on transportation needs and barriers throughout the state. So yeah, I would say that's probably a different activity that if y'all wanted to accomplish it may be something in a year or two once we get that information if they find, you know, if one of the findings are access to modified vehicles for individuals with mobility issues than maybe like that could be the tie-in I guess. Future or it could be something like y'all just decide hey, we need to do this in two years

or something. I heard 50,000. I put it down. If we want to change it we can.

JILL HANO: All right. Thank you.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So that's for y'all to decide if you wanted to add another activity, that crisis intervention, this time. If I'm understanding correctly to include a second study on crisis intervention.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I think (inaudible) a job fair is going to be a lot in the sense just from council conversation. That's been a big topic the council was interested in. I think earlier we spoke about doing some sort of advocacy around (inaudible).

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: I will say the good thing with your goals and objectives are that's what you've chosen for the next five years so at any point in that period if we haven't captured it in this action plan you can in a future action plan. Like if something y'all want doesn't make it this year it doesn't mean it's off the table. It just maybe moves into year two of that five-year plan.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I know we were talking about the job fair a moment ago and how that would have a big price tag. So did y'all have a number in mind?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I don't know if Jacki is still on but if she could give us a rough idea of what her Employment Empowerment conference may have run and that could give y'all maybe an idea.

JACKI PIERCE: So I am still here. Thank you. And I'm sorry. I was on a call so I missed most of what y'all were talking about. I know it was something dealing with employment.

BRENTON ANDRUS: They are trying to determine how much to allocate to that activity dealing with job fairs. And so we were just wondering if you had kind of a rough estimate of the Employment Empowerment conference that you had spoken of what that maybe cost.

JACKI PIERCE: Okay. So with my Empowerment through Employment conference along with SILC and Disability Rights Louisiana we didn't have out of

pocket costs. The only cost that we would be paying is if there was a need for a sign language interpreter. But we have a lot of people who are willing to volunteer to provide the information that they are giving during this conference. But whenever it's coming to having a fair you have to consider that you're going to have to rent a venue. So that's where a lot of that cost might go. And then some venues require that you have additional insurance rates. So that's another cost that can sometimes be I'll say a little ridiculously high whenever it comes down to it. Some venues require you to rent their tables and things like that. If you're going to have refreshments that's going to be something to take into account. It's something where the cost can become pretty nominal whenever you're planning to do a fair like that.

But for the most part, and I will say this, I'm one of those people I will talk to anyone about what I do. And the worse thing that's going to happen is they'll say no. Or they'll say yeah, we're going to have to charge you for it. That's the worst thing that can happen. But a lot of people have the same feelings that we do as far as individuals with disabilities having that gainful employment. Having access to the jobs, the trainings and things like that. But again, whenever you're looking at a job fair you have to consider, if I had to take a rough guess, it would probably cost maybe around 10,000-dollars whenever you're looking because venues are expensive. Just having that space itself is expensive. But that might be something where if it's with the FHF centers that might be something where we can collaborate with our local governments. Hey, do you have any type of a facility where we can have an assembly where we would be able to account for hopefully, I mean, I'm pretty ambitious, having 300 people involved. And then you have to consider accessibility as well because not every venue is going to be wheelchair accessible or easily accessible. I hope that helps.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: I just took what Jacki said about 10,000-dollars. And if we wanted it done in every region and there's nine regions that would be 90,000. That's how I got that number. But again, this is your committee. Y'all decide the funding for that.

If we keep it there that leaves y'all with 59,000 and you still have three activities.

BRENTON ANDRUS: One thing I will say about that if you're looking at a job fair and things of that nature you're not going to be bringing people out to feed them and have refreshments and do all that stuff. It's strictly you want a job, these people are here. Bring your resume. Speed date through this process to figure out what might be a good match. I think you could probably figure out a way to get less than ten grand each. Especially I think a good point was made as far as venue because it's going to depend on the size. Like do you need a gymnasium or can you get by with a conference room at the library. There's a very large room at the library here in Baton Rouge that's essentially a ballroom that you can get for free with their tables and chairs and all that. So most of the work there is going to be on your contractor organizing that event to get businesses to show up. And we're not paying them to show up either. In my head I was thinking maybe five grand per region. But knowing that the contractor is going to have to hustle to get these folks to the table.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Some regions 10K per region. Orleans might be 15 and this one might be 5.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And they'll have control of their budget. The way we assign it is you have this pot of money to do these things and you can figure out how much it is in certain places.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So do y'all think we should change it?

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I would leave it as is for now.

BRENTON ANDRUS: Just consideration when you're trying to fund other things.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Then just split the rest down all three.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Let's try to get the staff members experience. Early identification.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I would go to transition next. The conversations the council members as a whole talk about transition ranked higher than everything else.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Do you have an idea?

BRENTON ANDRUS: I was going to say based on the concept paper I feel like you would take the rest of

that money, the 59,000-dollars at least.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Did you want me to put the 59 or do you think 50? If we do the 59 that is everything. That leaves out the early identification and the childcare. At least for this year if you wanted to fund these bigger activities or if you take some money from that job fair and put it in one of those other activities.

EBONY HAVEN: And Jacki has her hand raised.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Yes, ma'am.

JACKI PIERCE: I'm sorry to revisit. Brenton made a very valid point. So I can say this for my region as far as the job fairs go. I will not spend 10,000. I'm probably not going to spend 5,000-dollars in my region because I have relationships with entities that would be able to help out with that. And y'all have to remember with Families Helping Families we are small nonprofit organizations so we do what we can to make ends meet. I was actually just going to put a message in there saying that I would probably actually, and this is just Jacki's hummable opinion, I would probably cut that in half and allocate 40,000-dollars to the job fair. And that way you're going to have more money to play with whenever we are looking at the childcare training, transition planning, all of those other. And then the early identification especially. Just my opinion.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So I cut that in half to do 45. That would be about 5,000 per region. So right now y'all have 45,000 and two activities.

LAMARTINE MEDA: On the first one, early identification, it says here Families Helping Families (inaudible).

STEPHANIE CARMONA: So I'm going to share the activity that y'all just wrote, to strengthen early identification systems and reduce delays in screenings and referrals for children. I think this is the one y'all talked about partnering with somebody to get the information to pediatricians and things like that. So I'm not sure.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I'm trying to figure out how we pay for this and what do we pay for.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Like would it be a training or would it be creating a document, yeah. If y'all wanted

a resource document then that's something that would be less than a training. Getting somebody to get all the information together to create this to go to pediatricians' offices, wherever, schools, daycares.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yeah. The information is not there. The resources are there. Just need people to use them. Every week on Families Helping Families I'm like oh, my goodness (inaudible).

BRENTON ANDRUS: I guess what I don't understand is what we're trying to accomplish. So I can think from a Families Helping Families perspective, right, they're going to go to the pediatrician and say, because as the pediatrician you should know what the milestones are, and then tell the parent we're not reaching them and what those next steps should be. I don't know that in the pediatrician office they're going to have-- so are we looking to make sure they have the information. We need to reach out to Early Steps. We need to do this. We need to do that. Or like what Families Helping Families does this is who we are. This what we do. Have them call us. And then they sit with that family. Tell me your story. Okay, we need to do this. We need to do this. Because if that's the case then you need to scrap this because you're already paying money for Families Helping Families to do these outreaches and you can't dedicate another pot of federal dollars to just say let's do more outreaches. The centers are out there doing the outreaches.

The problem is if the pediatrician sits down and talks to them and then they don't give the information to the families that's how I don't know how you would address that problem. That's where the problem sounds like it lies. Because we track their outreaches and they do tons of outreaches. This was some years ago whenever I was looking at the data. There was one region that would go to the same hospital like 40 times a year and they would just be replenishing the FHF information constantly in those offices. Where are those pamphlets going, I don't know. So if that's where the breakdown is if we're doing what we're supposed to do on the front end I don't know how we address that back-end piece. But certainly if we're just trying to get more info out there about FHF we're already paying them to do that outreach so we can't do

that because that would be double dipping. Especially with federal money because (inaudible). Now that I threw a wrench in your whole plan. I'm sorry.

EBONY HAVEN: Okay. Our chair has to leave. It is 4:10. So the chair has to leave. We're not done. We haven't even gotten to the noncontractual activities.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: I'm so sorry y'all.

EBONY HAVEN: It's okay Ayden. What that means is that this is going to have to go to the full council now. But I would make this recommendation to this committee that things that we have now I would suggest that y'all make a motion to send that stuff to the council and then they can pick up from there. Because we're not going to get done because it's already 4:10 and the meeting was supposed to be over ten minutes ago. So my suggestion is for someone on the committee to make a motion to send the recommendations that you have so far to the full council and then the full council is going to have to finish the work unless you guys want to meet again.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: I would motion for the committee to come back together again.

LAMARTINE MEDA: I agree. How about you guys? Would that be a problem?

REKEESHA BRANCH: We work for y'all.

EBONY HAVEN: We work for you all. Just keep in mind those committee meetings for the full council are going to start April 1st so we have to find time to like squeeze it in. When Stephanie sends out a poll it's important that everybody responds right away so we can schedule the next meeting as soon as possible if that is the will.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: The other thing I just wanted to mention is that everybody could do virtual. My hope is that it would not be another full day meeting. It would be like two hours and we get this completed. For somebody like you Dr. Meta, that way you don't have to drive out here and drive back. Because y'all are getting close to the end of getting the information but it is a little bit more talking. So I just wanted to remind you of that. Motion for the planning committee to meet again to finish the draft of the FFY27 plan.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Does this meeting have to happen before the committee meetings or just have to

happen before the April 30th?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Before the April 30th.

EBONY HAVEN: I would just say be mindful that those meetings are coming up. And so that just puts some of the days that we would be able to meet.

BRENTON ANDRUS: And not like right before the 30th either because we would have to have time to go through it and read all this stuff and include it in your packets for your meeting.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Okay. So just to make sure that this motion is what y'all were looking for. So motioning for the planning committee to meet again to finish the draft of the FFY 2027 plan. Everybody good with that wording? I'm going to do that roll call vote. A vote for yes is that you do agree to meet again. A vote for no is that you would not. And abstain, abstain.

KAREN XU: (Inaudible).

NICOLE DEJEAN: It's a little bit different focus. Our focus would be more disasters, not mental health or medical.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: Is there any public comment? Anybody got anything to say?

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Constance.

CONSTANCE ALPHONSE: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Constance, yes. Jill.

JILL HANO: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Jill Hano, yes. Dr. Meda.

LAMARTINE MEDA: Yes.

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

ERICK TAYLOR: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Karen Xu.

KAREN XU: Yes.

STEPHANIE CARMONA: Karen Xu, yes. You have four yeses and the motion passes.

AYDEN BLUNSCHI: It's 4:16. This meeting is adjourned.