



Executive Director's Report April 2026 Council Meeting

Budget

- The budget report with expenditures through March 2026 is included in the packet.

Appropriations

- On February 3rd, the President signed an appropriations package to fully fund the federal government through Federal Fiscal Year 2026 (FFY26) at level funding following a previous 43-day government shutdown. The Council has not received any additional funding for FFY26 this quarter, but anticipates another installment soon.
- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) and State Councils on Developmental Disabilities assisted with sharing Rep. Budzinski's [Dear Colleague Letter](#) to support FFY2027 funding for the DD Act programs. There was a record number of House members (86) including a record number of House Republicans (5) that signed on supporting the request for funding.

Membership Update

- Nominees selected as recommendations for appointment and submitted to the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions on November 3rd included:
 - Individual with Developmental Disability Seat: Landon Hanks
 - Parent/Immediate Relative Seats: Audrey Gilliam and Melinda Perrodin
 - Alternates (Parents): Lorenza Lawless, Latoya Carnahan and Tammy DeBiasi
- Landon Hanks, Ashley Allen and Julia Tanner were appointed on March 6th. Frank Macaluso was reappointed on March 6th as well.
- Tory Rocca resigned from Disability Rights Louisiana (DRLA) March 13th and DRLA will now be represented by Ashley Volion. Her appointment is pending
- Appointments for State agency representatives including Constance Alphonse (LSU HDC), Lauren Wells (LDOE), and Bernard Brown (OCDD) are still pending.

Staff Changes

- There are currently two Program Monitor positions open. An advertisement to fill one of the positions through Civil Service was issued in late February and over 115 applications were received. Review of the applicants and interviews will be completed soon.
- Council staff reviewed internal operations, and staff will continue to function as a team of 7 instead of 8 staff (after the Program Monitor is hired) to reduce administrative costs.

Ad Hoc Committees

- The FY2027 Planning Committee met March 20th to develop recommendations for the Council's FY27 Action Plan. The committee could not finish recommendations, so they will meet again April 21st to complete the recommendations and draft FFY27 Action



Plan. These recommendations for plan initiatives/activities will be considered by the full Council at the April meeting and are linked on the agenda.

Staff Professional Development

- Staff attended a webinar hosted by the Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center with NACDD and the Nebraska DD Council. The webinar discussed how DD Councils can improve employment for people with disabilities. Speakers shared ways Councils bring partners together, influence systems, and promote effective practices.
- Staff also attended a webinar hosted by the Information and Technical Assistance Center (ITACC) to learn how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used as a support tool in Council work.

LaCAN

- Nine Regional Roundtables were held across the state both in-person/hybrid and virtually with a total of 364 participants including 11 legislators, legislative assistants and/or Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) members participating. There were 8 Council members in attendance as well with two 2 members providing testimonies. Council staff presented information on the Council's advocacy agenda. All factsheets can be found on the [Council's website](#).
- LaCAN Leaders are making legislative visits with LaCAN members throughout the middle of legislative session which began March 9th and is scheduled to end on June 1st. Leaders will also be supporting members in providing testimony during key committee meetings.
- The LaCAN Leader vacancy in Region 4 has been filled and the new leader, Ericka Joseph, will be reaching out to Council members in Region 4 soon.

Advocacy Activities and Provision of Information

Community Supports

- National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) continues to host bi-weekly calls where various updates are provided on federal legislation, policies, and conversations on Capitol Hill that will or may impact Councils, the DD Network and/or individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.
- Council staff advocated with Representative Michael Echols' office regarding [HB74](#) which creates a "Spectrum Alert" system to assist in locating missing persons with ASD. Discussed the opportunity to broaden eligibility of the alert to all individuals with I/DD of all ages.
- Council staff contacted Senator Jimmy Harris' office regarding [SB227](#), which would create a pre-Spectrum Alert action plan, to share information and advocate for possible amendments to broaden the alert to cover the I/DD population of all ages and not just autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
- Council staff contacted Representative Edmond Jordan's office regarding [HB829](#) which creates the Louisiana Minority Business Development Fund and would provide a revolving loan fund for minority business owners. Staff shared information and advocated for the possibility of adding business owners with disabilities to the list of eligible minority businesses.
- Council staff have been in communication with disability organizations working with Senator Patrick McMath regarding [SB34](#) by which establishes criteria for state police to issue a Silver Alert for a case of a missing senior citizen or person with a developmental disability on possible amendments and recommendations to address concerns.



Education

- An [Action Alert](#) was shared encouraging advocates to contact Attorney General Liz Murrill regarding the Section 504 Lawsuit. Louisiana and 8 other states are challenging federal rules in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that clarifies governments and organizations receiving federal health funds must serve people with disabilities in integrated setting and avoid actions that create a serious risk of institutionalization.

General

- Provided information through Facebook and Twitter on various issues of interest to people with developmental disabilities and their families.
 - Most notably: The Council participated in NACDD's 2026 Developmental Disability Awareness Month Campaign: "**We're Here: Then, Now, Always.**" The campaign ran throughout March, and focused on a simple truth: people with developmental disabilities have always been part of our communities – and always will be.

Collaborative Efforts

Developmental Disabilities Act Network (DD Network)

- Collaborated in January on the "Speak Up, Stand Up" 3-day virtual summit by people with I/DD for people with I/DD. Reintroduced the DD Network and taught advocacy skills through Advocacy 101 with LaCAN. Sessions focused on building community, sharing values, making advocacy plans and taking action. Also attended the DD Network quarterly meeting in March with leadership from the Human Development Center (HDC) and Disability Rights LA (DRLA) to follow up on agency activities and potential opportunities to partner.

Additional Meetings Attended by Council Staff

Time Period: January – March 2026

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NACDD Network Call	Bi-weekly
Stand Up Speak Up Summit Day 1	January 9, 2026
OCDD State Advisory Council Meeting	January 14, 2026
Stand Up Speak Up Summit Day 2	January 16, 2026
OCDD Summit	January 20, 2026
Stand Up Speak Up Summit Day 3	January 22, 2026
Functional Behavior Assessment Webinar	January 23, 2026
LaDDC January Quarterly Meetings	January 28 – 29, 2026
OCDD – DDC Monthly Meeting	February 4, 2026
We Thrive Together Vendor Meeting	February 4, 2026
LaCAN Leader Call	February 5, 2026
Region 8 Legislative Roundtable	February 20, 2026
Region 9 Legislative Roundtable	February 23, 2026
Region 7 Legislative Roundtable	February 24, 2026
GACDA Meeting	February 25, 2026
Region 3 Legislative Roundtable	February 26, 2026
OCDD Rate Study Presentation	February 27, 2026
Region 5 Legislative Roundtable	March 2, 2026



OCDD – DDC Monthly Meeting	March 4, 2026
Region 4 Legislative Roundtable	March 4, 2026
Region 6 Legislative Roundtable	March 5, 2026
Region 2 Legislative Roundtable	March 5, 2026
Regions 1/10 Legislative Roundtable	March 6, 2026
Partners in Policymaking Session #3	March 13, 2026
House Appropriations Meeting	March 16, 2026
FY27 Planning Committee Meeting	March 20, 2026
House Appropriations Public Testimony YSD	March 23, 2026
ADA Website Compliance Meeting	March 24, 2026
LAYLF Meeting	March 25, 2026

OCDD State Advisory Committee (SAC)

Multiple updates were shared by the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities and Regional Advisory Committees.

OCDD Summit

Summit hosted by the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities to provide information on many disability related topics including technology, EarlySteps, Wellness, Medicaid, Crisis Response and building a meaningful life. The Council, LaCAN and Partners in Policymaking had an outreach table at the event.

Functional Behavior Assessment Webinar

Webinar opportunity offered by FHF of Southwest La. to discuss what FBAs are, the policies around them and how parents could request an FBA for their child.

Monthly Meeting with OCDD

Participated in monthly meeting with Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities staff to share and discuss updates from respective agencies. Discussed results of rate study completed by the department and potential next steps. Discussed upcoming legislation and possible renaming of OCDD.

We Thrive Together Vendor Meeting

Met with Executive Director of We Thrive Together to discuss possible Council partnerships on future initiatives.

LaCAN Monthly Leader Call

This call focused on leader responsibilities during legislative session and legislation being monitored by the Council. Also discussed roundtable preparation.

Governor’s Advisory Council on Disability Affairs

Shared an update on the Council’s advocacy agenda and new initiatives for the upcoming year.

OCDD Rate Study Presentation

Participated in the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities presentation with Milliman on the home and community-based rate study. Findings and recommendations were shared with participants. Feedback from participants was taken to address discrepancies in the study.



Partners in Policymaking March Session

Attended PiP March session to discuss with participants the Council and LaCAN's legislative advocacy agenda and the importance of advocacy to achieve systems change.

House Appropriations Committee Meeting

Attended House Appropriations committee meeting to review/discuss the Louisiana Department of Health's Fiscal Year 27 proposed budget.

LaDDC Planning Meeting

Participated in the Council's FY27 planning meeting to develop activities for the upcoming year. Committee did not finish and will meet to finalize a plan recommendation for the full Council.

Public Testimony Day – House Appropriations

Hosted a Yellow Shirt Day in House Appropriations to share testimonies related to the need for FHF funding restoration, increased funding to raise waiver rates and direct support worker pay, and increased funding for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.

Gatorworks Website Accessibility Meeting

Met with representatives from Gatorworks to review Council website accessibility and work to ensure future compliance with regulations to ensure website accessibility standards are being met.

Louisiana Youth Leadership Forum Meeting

Met with LAYLF Coordinator to discuss program updates and concerns.

Stephanie Carmona:

State Plan TA Office Hours	January 23, 2026
State Plan TA Office Hours	February 13 & 27, 2026
Region 5 Legislative Roundtable	March 2, 2026
NACDD Webinar: We're Here. Then, Now, Always. & The Evolving Role of DD Councils in Employment	March 10, 2026
Gatorworks for ADA Website Compliance	March 24, 2026
LAYLF Meeting	March 25, 2026
Peer-2-Peer: technology- Using AI as a Support Tool	March 26, 2026

State Plan TA Office Hours

Attended office hours with the Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) on the Annual State Plan.

Additional Meetings Attended by Executive Director

- LDH Annual Shareholders Meeting January 21, 2026
- Partners in Policymaking Session 1 January 22, 2026
- DD Council Executive Directors Meeting February 10, 2026
- DD Network Meeting March 11, 2026
- ABLE Account Advisory Council March 19, 2026

LDH Annual Shareholders Meeting

Meeting with residents of Louisiana – LDH true “shareholders” – to give the opportunity to hear from Department leadership and agency heads about the work completed in 2025, highlight key accomplishments and share measurable goals for 2026.



DD Council Executive Directors Meeting

State DD Council Executive Directors met and networked with the Administration on Disabilities' (AoD) new Commissioner, Dr. Rebecca Hines. Dr. Hines shared her personal experiences in the disability community and her plans and vision on how to move AoD forward.

ABLE Account Advisory Council

Attended the Council meeting to elect new officers and get updates on awareness campaigns and legislation that positively affects ABLE accounts in Louisiana.

