



Executive Director's Report

Plain Language Version | July 2026 Council Meeting

Purpose: This version uses shorter sentences and clear talking points to make the report easier to review and present.

What Council Members Need to Know

- **July decisions:** Review public comments on the 2027 Action Plan and vote on any proposed changes.
- **Contractors:** Consider the Executive Committee's recommendations and select contractors for new 2027 activities.
- **August 15th deadline:** Staff will submit the 2027–2031 State Plan and the 2027 Action Plan.
- **October report:** Council members will receive the final 2026 budget report and the first-quarter 2027 report.

Budget and Planning

Budget reports

- The meeting packet includes spending through June 2026.
- At the October meeting, staff will share the final 2026 budget report.
- Staff will also share the first-quarter 2027 report, which will include spending through September 2026.

Annual report and state plans

- The 2025 Annual Report is complete and available on the Council's website. [Read the annual report.](#)
- The Council asked the public to comment on the 2027 Action Plan approved on April 30th.
- Council members will review the comments at the July meeting and decide whether changes are needed.
- The 2027–2031 State Plan and the 2027 Action Plan are due to the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities by August 15th.



Federal funding

Federal fiscal year	Council award	Change from prior year
2024	\$1,380,186	—
2025	\$1,376,896	\$3,290 less
2026	\$1,367,746	\$9,150 less

Bottom line: The 2026 award is \$12,440 less than the 2024 award.

- The President's proposed budget kept funding level for State DD Councils and Protection and Advocacy agencies, including Disability Rights Louisiana.
- The proposal did not include funding for University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, including LSU's Human Development Center.
- In June, the House committee changed the proposal to include funding for all DD Act programs.

Council Operations

Membership

- Council members attended one-hour Lunch and Learn orientation sessions on June 11th and June 18th.
- The sessions explained what DD Councils do, the role of Council members, how committees work, and how the Council works with state agencies.

Appointments still pending:

- Ashley Volion — Disability Rights Louisiana
- Constance Alphonse — LSU Human Development Center
- Lauren Wells — Louisiana Department of Education
- Bernard Brown — Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities
- Gearry Williams — reappointment as the Office of Aging and Adult Services representative

Staff

- The vacant Program Monitor left vacant from Rekeesha Branch's promotion to Program Manager, has been filled. The new monitor will start July 13th.

2027 Planning Committee

- The committee met April 21st and finalized recommendations for the 2027 Action Plan.
- The full Council approved the recommended activities at the April meeting.
- The Council requested proposals for the new activities on May 6th. [View the solicitation.](#)
- The Executive Committee will review the proposals and recommend contractors.
- The full Council will consider the recommendations and make final funding decisions at the July meeting.



Staff training and professional development

- Staff attended the 2026 DD Council Training and Technical Assistance Institute.
- Training topics included federal priorities, expanding successful projects, Council and staff roles, meeting leadership, and choosing policy issues that support State Plan goals.
- Staff attended the Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities Learning Lab in May.
- Staff also attend State Plan technical-assistance office hours every two weeks while developing the new five-year plan.

LaCAN update

- LaCAN Leaders and Families Helping Families directors met June 25th for the annual legislative Debriefing.
- The group reviewed 2026 advocacy results and discussed what worked, what needs to change, and how future activities can improve.

2026 Legislative and Advocacy Update

Overall result: The Council's advocacy work helped support changes that will benefit thousands of people with developmental disabilities and their families.

[Read the full legislative recap](#) | [View all tracked bills](#)

Key Results

- **\$250,000 restored** for Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers.
- **\$2 million added** for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services employment services.
- **\$10.7 million added** to help improve waiver service rates and Direct Support Worker pay.
- **Bryan's Call became law.** This new emergency alert will help find missing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Community Supports

State budget: House Bill 1 (Act 3)

- During the session, the Council sent [Action Alerts](#) asking advocates to contact budget committees and attend Yellow Shirt Days.
- Advocates asked lawmakers to protect Families Helping Families funding.
- Advocates asked for more employment-services funding through Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.
- Advocates supported funding to improve waiver services and Direct Support Worker pay.

Missing-person alerts

- **Senate Bill 34 (Act 347):** The bill created Bryan's Call and became law. [View SB 34.](#)
- **House Bill 74:** The bill would have created an alert for missing children with autism. It did not pass. [View HB 74.](#)



Death penalty cases: House Bill 1107

- Council staff raised concerns about how the bill would change decisions about intellectual disability in death penalty cases.
- The House added protections requiring courts to consider adaptive behavior when IQ scores were between 75 and 80.
- A Senate committee later removed those protections. The bill did not pass.

[View HB 1107.](#)

Education

Student discipline: House Bill 283 (Act 539)

- Council staff were concerned that students could be punished for behavior related to a disability without full consideration of their rights and needs.
- An amendment was added to prevent conflicts with state and federal disability laws.
- A possible gap may remain for students with Section 504 plans and students who have not yet been diagnosed.

[View HB 283.](#)

Student discipline: House Bill 133 (Act 617)

- The original bill raised similar concerns about punishing students for behavior related to a disability.
- Amendments now consider students with intellectual and developmental disabilities and students who have not yet been evaluated.

[View HB 133.](#)

Special education disputes: House Bill 342 (Act 943)

- In a dispute, the school system—not the family—must use evidence to prove that its special education program is appropriate.

[View HB 342.](#)

Medically necessary services: House Bill 352 (Act 944)

- Schools must allow medically necessary services, including during class and instructional time.
- The law also limits delays and other barriers to receiving these services.

[View HB 352.](#)

Outreach and collaboration

Disability Awareness Day

- The Council and LaCAN took part in the 2026 Disability Awareness Day hosted by the Split Second Foundation and the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs. LaCAN hosted a Yellow Shirt Day attended by 58 advocates. Disability organizations shared resources and promoted awareness, inclusion, and meaningful change. The theme was "From Lived Experience to Lasting Policy." Louisiana Department of Health Secretary Bruce Greenstein joined a fireside chat.



Sharing information

- The Council shared information about the 2026 legislative session and other disability issues through [LaDDC newsletters](#) and Facebook.

National collaboration

- The Council worked with the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) and other State DD Councils. Together, they shared [information about a recent U.S. Department of Justice opinion](#) on the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. The integration mandate says people with disabilities should receive services in the most integrated setting that meets their needs. The new opinion changes how the Department of Justice interprets the law. Federal agencies may review or revise related rules and guidance.

Meetings Attended by Council Staff

Time period: April–June 2026

Brenton Andrus

Meeting or activity	Date	Main purpose or result
NACDD Network Calls	Every two weeks	Federal policy and legislative updates that may affect Councils, the DD Network, and people with disabilities.
Senate Health and Welfare Yellow Shirt Day	April 1	Nine advocates attended and shared three testimonies in support of SB 34.
LaCAN Leader Call	April 2	Reviewed the Council's advocacy agenda and bills filed for the 2026 session.
OIDD State Advisory Committee	April 8	Received updates from the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and regional advisory committees
House Appropriations Yellow Shirt Day	April 13	Twenty-one people attended. The committee restored \$250,000 for Families Helping Families and added \$2 million for LRS.
2027 Planning Committee	April 21	Recommended the 2027 Action Plan. The Council approved it in April; it begins October 1.
Disability Awareness Day	May 4	Shared resources and promoted disability awareness, inclusion, and policy change.
House Judiciary Yellow Shirt Day	May 7	Twenty-one advocates attended and one person testified in support of SB 34.



Meeting or activity	Date	Main purpose or result
Senate Finance Public Testimony	May 7	Seventeen advocates attended and four people testified on waiver rates, worker pay, FHF funding, and LRS funding.
LaCAN Leader Call	May 14	Reviewed session activity and advocacy work.
Senate Finance Yellow Shirt Day	May 21	Ten people attended. FHF and LRS funding remained, and \$10.7 million was added for rates and worker pay.
LaCAN Legislative Debrief	June 25	Reviewed advocacy results and ways to improve future activities.

Additional Staff Development

Stephanie Carmona

Training or meeting	Date	What staff learned
DD Council Training Institute — Sessions 1 and 2	April 28	Federal programs and priorities; ways to expand, copy, and sustain successful Council-funded projects.
DD Council Training Institute — Sessions 5 and 6	May 5	Council and staff roles, decision-making, meeting leadership, policy priorities, and stakeholder engagement.
ITACC Learning Lab: Annual Work Plan	May 14	Key parts of an annual work plan and federal expectations.
State Plan Technical-Assistance Office Hours	May 29	Answers and guidance for developing the new State Plan.
Special Education Summit	June 29	Updates shared at the summit hosted by the Louisiana Department of Education and The Arc of Louisiana.

Additional meetings attended by the Executive Director

- **April 20, 2026** — Executive Committee Training
- **May 5, 2026** — Meeting with the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities
- **June 20, 2026** — 2026 Partners in Policymaking Graduation

End of report: Questions and discussion are welcome during the Council meeting.

