LOUISIANA DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL

Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council
Legislative Advocacy Ad Hoc Committee Meeting Summary
Thursday, October 15, 2026
10:00 AM - 3:30 PM

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

View meeting transcript.

Members Present: Ayden Blunschi (Chair), Alaina Chachere, Liam Doyle, Angela Harmon, Christina Martin, Jacki Pierce, Robby Smith, Julia Tanner, Karen Xu

Members Absent: Ashley Allen

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

Others Present: Constance Alphonse, Melissa Bayham, Brian Bennett, Bernard Brown, Adrienne Burns, Konstance Causey, Brenda Cosse, Jacqueline Cummings, Kristine Dauzat, Mylinda Elliott, Nicole Flores, Julie Folse, Meghan Gardner, April Hampton, Lynsey Hebert (captionist), Chanel Jackson, Erika Joseph, Darren Kattan, Ivery Lewis, Angel Magee, Davelyn Patrick, Kellie Pierre, Kristen Reed, Susan Riehn, Dario Scalco, Sandra Trammell, Ashley Voilon, Mimi Webb

Ayden Blunschi, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:09 AM and established a quorum.

The committee reviewed the meeting protocols and discussed the purpose of the committee. Members also reviewed two documents to help guide development of a recommendation to the Council for its 2027 Legislative Advocacy Agenda:

- Guidelines for Advocacy Agenda
- Community Input Received

The committee reviewed many ideas submitted by people across the state. Members noticed a common theme, especially with education issues. Many concerns seemed to be about how current laws or policies are being carried out, rather than a need for a new law.

Members agreed that these concerns should continue to be discussed in Council committees. This will help the Council look for trends, gather more information, and decide what steps may be needed. Depending on the issue, those steps could include working with agencies, doing more research, or considering legislation in the future.

The committee also discussed the upcoming 2027 fiscal session and the limits on nonfiscal bills. Members also considered the projected FY28 budget shortfall and the need to focus on priorities that are important and realistic. These factors helped guide the committee toward funding issues that continue work the Council has already started.

Motion 1:
To recommend the following three issues to the full Council for inclusion in the 2027 Legislative Advocacy Agenda:

1. Provide additional funding for Louisiana Rehabilitation Services (LRS) so Louisiana can access its full federal allotment.
2. Provide additional funding needed to increase home and community-based (HCBS) waiver rates and increase the Direct Support Worker (DSW) wage floor, consistent with the recent rate study.
3. Restore $250,000 in State General Fund to the Council's budget for Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers.

Motion made by: Robby Smith
Seconded by: Angela Harmon
Vote: Passed 3 – 0, with 2 abstentions (Christina Martin and Jacki Pierce)

The LRS and HCBS/DSW items continue advocacy priorities from the 2026 Legislative Session where additional funding is still needed. The Families Helping Families item seeks to restore funding that was included in the FY27 budget but was not continued in the recommended FY28 budget.

Motion 2:
To allow Council staff to adjust the wording of the recommended issues, if needed, to make them easier to understand and keep the committee's meaning.

Motion made by: Robby Smith
Seconded by: Angela Harmon
Vote: Passed 5 – 0, with 0 abstentions

The meeting adjourned at 3:01 PM.