

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**FALL COUNCIL MEETING
MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Location:
Governor's Council on Disabilities
and Special Education
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1220
Anchorage, Alaska**

September 19 – 20, 2024

Thursday, September 19, 2024

Council Members:

Jena Crafton, Chair
Anna Attla
Christine Bohan
Carl (CB) Brady
Art Delaune
Garrett Dominick
Margaret Evans
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Corey Gilmore
Kenneth Hamrick

Elizabeth Joseph
Lisa McDonald
Kayla McDonogh
Director Anthony Newman
Caitlin Poindexter
Sabrina Richmond
Nona Safra
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Marlene Wenger

Council Staff:

Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director
Michael Stevenson
Jamie Kokoszka
Samantha Vetter
Lanny Mommsen
Ian Miner
Chelsea Burke

Minutes Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 a.m.

MINDFULNESS MOMENT

ROLL CALL/ZOOM REMINDERS – Quorum established

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Caitlin Poindexter MOVED to approve the meeting agenda, **SECONDED** by **Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich**. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

APPROVAL OF THE MEETING MINUTES

Sabrina Richmond MOVED to approve the May 2024 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by **Caitlin Poindexter**. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Jena Crafton opened the floor for announcements and introductions. Jacqueline Summers with the Health TIE and part of the Alaska Entrepreneurship Eco System announced that Alaska Entrepreneurship Week is scheduled for October 7 – 11, 2024.

COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT

Chair Jena Crafton reported that she sits on the Legislative Committee, Employment Committee, Self-Advocacy and Leadership Committee and chairs the Executive Committee regularly. She reported the following activities she has been involved in over the past few months:

- Participated in a White House visit
- Attended the NACDD Conference
- Met with Commissioner Cathy Munoz, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOL&WD)
- Attended Trust meetings
- Participated in the executive director evaluation
- Participated in a *Hopes, Dreams, and Dignity of Risk* presentation.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Council participated in the Trust budget discussions that took place throughout June and July. In June, with assistance from the Trust's grant writers, the Council applied for a new \$10M competitive federal grant, but did not receive an award.

Other areas of focus during the summer included:

- Supported Disability Pride events in Anchorage and Soldotna in July.
- Began discussions about future funding for SESA.
- Continued involvement in the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Public Policy Workgroup.
- Worked on contracts related to Peer Power and other groups the Council funds.
- **Patrick Reinhart** was invited to emcee Karen Ward's retirement party. He awarded Karen a legislative citation honoring her 40 years of work in the field.

- **Patrick Reinhart** and other Council members attended the NACDD Conference and met with the Alaska delegation's staff. There will not be an NACDD Conference next summer. The hiatus is to reorganize and retool.
- Continued work with SDS on the Council budget.

Patrick Reinhart reported that the American Association of People with Disabilities, through NACDD, asked the Council to send an Alaskan self-advocate to meet with the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee to promote a national repeal of the subminimum wage for people with disabilities. Former Council Chair Heidi Lieb-Williams was asked to go and represent Alaska.

October events:

- AADD fall face-to-face meeting
- Employment Champions Workgroup
- Trust Planning Committee meeting
- Statewide Independent Living Council IL Conference

November:

- Reducing Recidivism and Reentry Conference
 - November 18-19, 2024
 - Council members and staff are welcome to attend. Admission is free.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Employment Committee

Employment Committee **Chair Anna Attla** shared the following update:

- Committee members:
 - **Chair Anna Attla, Nona Safra, Jena Crafton, Ken Hamrick, Margaret Evans, and Lisa McDonald**
- Committee staff:
 - **Samantha Vetter**

Committee/staff activities:

- The committee met once since May 2024 and reviewed the Employment Work Plan
- Presented *Engaging Employment with Intellectual Disabilities in the Workplace at Improving Lives*
- Employment messaging outreach project:
 - Working with DVR's Jason Caputo on broad messaging
 - Center for the Blind applied for funding from the Trust for the project
- Employment First Conference planning with DVR
 - November 6, 2024 – employer engagement event.

Project SEARCH:

- The current 2024/2025 cohort includes:
 - Anchorage Providence Medical Center – 6 students
 - Fairbanks Memorial Hospital – 6 students
 - Mat-Su Regional Medical Center – 5 students
- For the 2022/2023 cohort:

- Mat-Su Regional was awarded 70-90% employment outcomes
- Providence Medical and Fairbanks Memorial were both awarded 100% employment outcomes.

Disability Innovation Fund Activities:

- Partners, including SILC and CHD, will provide program updates.
- Alaska Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) career fair.
- Advisory Committee meeting:
 - Currently, 11 members. They are seeking more members to broaden representation.
- Participate in RSA meetings.
- Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) is offering school transition camps over the next few months.

Microenterprise Grants:

- The Council supports self-employment for Alaskans with developmental disabilities by serving on Microenterprise Grant Committee:
 - Review, input, and provide recommendations on Microenterprise Grant applications.
 - Grant applications are processed twice per year:
 - The fall application period closed on September 11, 2024, at noon
 - The goal is to increase the number of DD grant awardees.

Community Inclusion and Support Services (CISS)

CISS Committee **Chair Corey Gilmore** shared the following update:

- Committee members:
 - **Chair Corey Gilmore, Art Delaune, Margaret Evans, Dave Fleurant, Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus, Ken Hamrick, Elizabeth Joseph, Nona Safra, Marlene Wenger and Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich**
- Committee staff:
 - **Lanny Mommsen, Samantha Vetter, and Chelsea Burke**

Corey Gilmore reported that the committee met twice since the May Council meeting. He shared an overview of what the CISS Committee does as follows:

Shared Vision

Alaskans share a vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, job, and community. Our vision includes supported families, professional staff, and services available throughout the state now and into the future.

What the CISS does as a Shared Vision advocacy group:

- Understand the full potential of the vision by being a part of the community and actualizing the Shared Vision.

Activities planned for year 4:

- Supporting legislative visits- Juneau and D.C.
- Support Full Lives Conference
- Medicaid, HCBS, Health & Well

- SDMA education & outreach
- Training/education for self-advocates
- Awareness campaigns/events
- Mini-Grant reviews
- Being regs recommendations
- Guidance on self-directed services
- Social media, promote educational materials/opportunities

Planning for educational presentations:

- Understanding the waivers – education opportunity
- HCBS: Living life in 15-minute segments PSA idea
- Plan to host listening sessions on housing topics
- Why we need Vision 2.0.

Corey Gilmore reported that the Shared Vision Collaborative is coming back together to update the Vision to version 2.0. The review will include:

- Education and outreach
- Self-directed services
- Digging into Medicaid – understanding federal rule versus state interpretation.

Corey Gilmore noted that the committee will seek input from Council members to update the Vision.

DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE (DPA) PRESENTATION

DPA Director Deb Etheridge joined the meeting to discuss the Medicaid Buy-In Program and share a DPA update. She reported that information about benefits can be found at www.ak.db101.org and shared the following comments:

- The working disabled Medicaid in Alaska has an income limit of 250% of the federal poverty level described in the Social Security Act.
- The only way to effectively increase the income limit for the eligibility group would be to apply a less restrictive income counting methodology.
- The current working disabled program has premiums based on individual incomes. Those premiums are collected by the Division of Health Care Services.
- If the income guidelines were changed, there would be an impact on the Medicaid program expenditures, which could be through regular healthcare expenditures or home and community-based services.
- For working disabled, there is often a third-party liability, so they may be otherwise eligible for other insurance. Medicaid could be the payer of last resort.
- DPA, in coordination with SDS and Health Care Services, would have to look at the advocates' proposal and engage the subject matter experts to ensure that the correct assessment is made.

DPA Updates:

- As of this month, individuals on Medicaid should have initiated a Medicaid reenroll. DPA had to pause procedural closures during the pandemic, but the procedural closures will restart. Before an individual is closed for failing to return their re-enrollment application, DPA will try to contact individuals by phone.
- Many disability determinations had a diary date, which effectively meant that they were only deemed disabled for a period of time and then had to renew their disability. This created many referrals to the Department of Labor (DOL), which

does disability determinations. The DOL immediately had a backlog in both initial determinations and diary-date referrals.

- For the diary-date renewals, DPA still makes the referral to DOL, but they do not end Medicaid based on the requirement for disability determination. They are working with DOL and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) to ensure the rules are followed. This also allows the DOL to prioritize initial disability determinations.
- The Department of Health has authorized the DOL overtime to address the initial disability determination backlog cases. DPA is seeking technical assistance from CMS to determine if they can hire outside qualified individuals to make disability adjudications.
- DPA also contacts individuals for SNAP benefit interviews. She noted that DPA is increasing its use of texting clients with reminders of renewals coming due.

Director Etheridge reported that DPA launched its client portal, Alaska Connect. It can be found on the website or through MyAlaska. Individuals can apply for benefits and watch instructional videos. The next phase in the portal will include real-time information about an individual's application and benefits. DPA is working on developing an all-program application online form.

MAPHABIT PRESENTATION

Kelly Griffon, the director of Business Development & Contracting, joined the meeting to share information about MapHabit, a tool for persons with developmental disabilities, and to report on the Trust-funded pilot project. Kelly shared the following information:

- The MapHabit platform uses scientifically proven step-by-step guides to empower individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), autism, and traumatic brain injuries (TBI), as well as individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) to master their daily routines. Maps are step-by-step guides, accessible via tablet, mobile, or printout, that use visual cues, audio, and video alongside clear, written instructions to help the person supported complete activities independently or with help.
- MapHabit allows the circle of support to help, not to do:
 - Activities of daily living:
 - Eating, bathing, getting dressed, using the bathroom, transferring, incontinence
 - Instrumental ADLs:
 - Shopping, housework, transportation, medication set up/reminders, managing personal finances, communication skills
 - Transition, employment, and independence
 - Memory health:
 - Exercise, nutrition, sleeping, social engagement.
- Individualized by each user:
 - MapHabit has a map library of over 1,000 maps that can be used as-is or individualized according to needs. Users can quickly access paper-based printouts. Audio and video can easily be added to personalize step-by-step maps and cue individuals.

Kelly Griffon explained the user journey from initialization through the monthly check-ins. She provided a demonstration of the MapHabit app and shared how people are using MapHabit and user and caregiver testimonials.

Kelly Griffon reported that MapHabit currently has a grant with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for a pilot project involving 25 individuals in Alaska. They are in the process of applying for a secondary grant. They hope to expand the pilot project to 40 individuals using MapHabit system in Alaska across the four areas it supports. MapHabit would also be open to working with provider agencies in Alaska. Kelly Griffon reported that MapHabit is approved in waiver systems in 15 states through their 1915(c) waivers. She implored the Council to help advocate for the inclusion of assistive technology in the waivers in Alaska.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS CONTINUED

Self-Advocacy & Leadership Committee (SALC)

SAL Committee **Co-Chairs Garrett Dominick** and **Christine Bohan** shared the following update:

- Committee members:
 - **Co-Chair Garrett Dominick, Co-Chair Christina Bohan, Jena Crafton, Anna Attla, Art Delaune, Margaret Evans, Corey Gilmore, Elizabeth Joseph, Nona Safra, Marlene Wenger, and Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich**
- Committee staff:
 - **Jamie Kokoszka, Lanny Mommsen**

Committee news:

- The Anchorage Disability Pride celebration:
 - The Council supported the event with funding for the vendor booth, t-shirts, and the ASL interpreters, and procured an ADA congratulatory letter from Governor Dunleavy.
- Mental Health Trust Authority Improving Lives Conference
 - The Council sponsored Council members and staff registration, a booth, and the *Hopes, Dreams, and Dignity of Risk* presentation that included self-advocates **Jamie Kokoszka, Jena Crafton, Michelle Davidson, and Kenzy Garfield.**

Christine Bohan shared that the Alaska Disability & Aging Summit is scheduled for October 8 – 9, 2024 at the Special Olympics Training Center in Anchorage. The Council will sponsor an ASL interpreter and a presentation of *I Have Rights* with **Anna Attla, CB Brady, Margaret Evans,** and Lucy Odden. **Lanny Mommsen** noted that the Council will limit its sponsorship to registration fees for Council members.

Christine Bohan announced that beginning in 2025, the committee will work on new panel presentations focused on advancing advocacy.

Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)

Chair Sabrina Richmond reported that the ICC has been working with Raviant, LLC to develop recommendations to expand eligibility and funding for the Alaska Infant Learning Program. Following are the final recommendations approved by the ICC:

Eligibility Recommendations

1. Expand eligibility for EI/ILP programming to match school-age special education (Part B)
2. Implement eligibility changes in phases
3. Determine eligibility in standard deviations to match the percent delay
4. Update and reorganize the List of Established Conditions
5. Develop a process and timeframe to update the list regularly
6. Develop a process for providers in the field to contact the ILP office
7. Revise the condition list with each increment to match the current level of developmental delay.

Financial Recommendations

1. Determine costs and reimbursement
2. Expand Medicaid coverage for all ILP services
3. Determine IFSP to be an authorizing document
4. Accurately determine a child's month-to-month Medicaid enrollment
5. Reimburse for non-Medicaid eligible children under a fee-for-service
6. Require private health insurance coverage for ILP services
7. Explore potential funding through other state agencies and programs
8. Enhance the ILP data system to support billing, accountability, and reporting
9. Develop a Central Finance Office (CFO).

Additional recommendation:

- The budget increment to "make ILP whole" from ten years of flat funding cost is approximately \$2.8M

PROGRAM, PROJECT, AND PARTNER REPORTS

Peer Power

Peer Power's Executive Director Ric Nelson joined the meeting and shared an update as follows:

- In April 2024, Peer Power hosted its semi-annual summit. There were approximately 85 people with disabilities in attendance along with 25 supporters, volunteers, and board members. It was a successful event.
- Peer Power hosted Disability Pride events in Anchorage and Kenai in July 2024. Both events were well attended. Anchorage had approximately 500 people attend the event along with 25 different vendors.
- Peer Power is working with the Council on the DIF Grant. Peer Power plans to go into different high schools and middle schools to discuss employment and self-advocacy.

Ric Nelson reported that Peer Power will be focused on the legislative session over the next six months. They will be working with the Council and other stakeholders on advocacy issues.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

SILC's Executive Director **Michael Christian** joined the meeting and shared the following information:

- SILC has been working on the relaunch of the Alaska chapter of the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE).
- SILC is a partner in the Pathways to Partnership Grant and has two programs active under the grant:
 - The Youth Leadership Forum launched in August. There were 14 attendees. One of the program's youths is working for the SILC as a trainee, and three youths were referred to the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Conference being held in October. The SILC is hosting person-centered planning workshops statewide.
 - The Youth Aviation Academy, a career exploration program for young people, including an Immersive Youth Aviation Academy that explores a wide range of careers within the aviation field
 - The Youth Rise Program, formerly the Youth Emergency Management Program, will launch soon.
- The SILC is sponsoring a training on disability rights during disasters. This training is scheduled for September 25, 2024 from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. The training is being done in partnership with Inclusive Disaster Strategies and is open to Region 10. More information is available on the SILC website.

Key Coalition

Key Coalition's Board President Michelle Girault joined the meeting to share a Key Coalition update as follows:

- The primary partners for Key are the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD), Peer Power of Alaska, the Alaska Association of DSPs, and parents and family members who support their loved ones.
- At the end of the last legislative session, Key was gratified with the allocation of additional funds to Senior and Disabilities Services.
- This summer leading up to the elections, Key will be focused on reaching out to legislators to educate them on how disability services are provided in Alaska and to hear the needs of families and individuals with disabilities.
- Key Campaign is scheduled for March 18 – 19, 2025.

Center for Human Development (CHD)

Ken Hamrick shared the following update for CHD:

The Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program is starting its 2024/2025 cohort. There are 14 fellows in the cohort that run from September through April. The program is interested in and is still accepting ideas from community partners for projects.

Combatting Autism Initiative (CBAI) is one of CHD's behavior analytics support for people experiencing autism and their families. CBAI is starting its new cohort with trainees and supervising six trainees who are finishing their caregiver webinars. The Alaska Training Cooperative (AKTC) does much work through CHD for workforce development. In FY '25, they have been working with SDS to provide training certification for direct service professionals (DPS). They are starting a new cohort on September 4, 2024 with 82 DSPs from 14 agencies statewide. The Trust and SDS are providing funding support for the project. DSPs can participate at no charge, and

agencies are provided supplements to make DSPs available to participate in the training. The training is in collaboration with the National Alliance for Direct Support Professionals. During the pilot project that ended on June 30, 53 DSPs completed the training. All 53 completed Level 1, 51 completed Level 2, and 47 completed Level 3 certification and credentialing.

The Alaska Training Center continues to work with the Division of Behavioral Health and the Trust around Crisis Now training for the behavioral health, peer support, first responders, and healthcare workforces. It works with the Statewide Dementia Action Collaborative, focusing in 2025 on making Mental Health First Aid available for older adults and the senior service agency staff and workforce.

Another area of focus at CHD is supporting people in various employment initiatives and understanding how to manage work, disability benefits, and the impact of earned income on benefits. One of CHD's projects is called the Work Incentive and Planning Assistance Program (WIPA), funded by Social Security. It's a statewide program that provides free benefits counseling and advice to beneficiaries receiving SSDI or SSI who are looking to or are currently working. They assist clients and train agency staff and clients regarding work incentives and the impact of work on benefits.

Microenterprise Grants are managed by CHD. The fall application review is complete. There are 13 applications in the process of being finalized and vetted. The awards will be announced in October.

The DB 101 website is being managed by CHD under the Beneficiary Employment Focus Area. The site is being expanded by adding instructional videos and making the site more user-friendly and accessible. Those new videos should be available online by December 2024. The new youth package will provide information and tools for working with youth transitioning to work. It will be published by the end of September 2024.

Effective Behavior Interventions (EBI) is a component of the behavior analytical focus at CHD. The group is consulting and working statewide with the State of Alaska Complex Behavior Collaborative. EBI is working extensively with the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District and has started targeted work with two other districts. EBI continues to work with Southcentral Foundation through the Alaska Native Medical Center's (ANMC) emergency dept and pediatrics unit.

Project ECHO

- CHD continues to collaborate with various partners statewide to implement ECHO programming that supports the health and wellness of Alaskans, including people with disabilities and their families.
- The Examining FASD Diagnosis ECHO has been paused while the program reorganization occurs at the Department of Health. The CHD project ECHO team continues to collaborate with state FASD partners and hopes to return to the series in 2025.
- Dr. Romero stepped down from the Health Planning Team for the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities ECHO, which includes people with co-occurring disabilities, meaning both mental health diagnosis as well as IDD. ECHO teams will collaborate with internal partners in the Behavioral Analysis and Treatment Services and Community Services Team to revamp and update that program.

- The Co-Occurring Behavioral Health Opioid and Stimulant Use Disorders ECHO has been refreshed and rebranded as Addressing Substance Abuse in Alaska. It will take a broader look at establishing a comprehensive understanding of current data and best practices in the treatment of substance use disorders, focusing on alcohol, opioid, and stimulant use, including the integration of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) 4th Edition updates.

The Community Services Department with the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Program held a training series with Dr. Harvey. She offered in-person workshops on trauma-informed care and positive identity development for people with IDD. Workshops offered were in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kotzebue, and Kenai. There was a total of 93 attendees to the workshops.

The Supported Employment Training Initiative held one employment training session with eight people completing the course, facilitating the ANCOR certification course training for 20 registrants.

Friendship and Dating is a train-the-trainer program that holistically addresses healthy relationships for people with IDD. In addition to holding a facilitator training this quarter, they also participated in a Youth Leadership Forum in Soldotna, which offered attendees an interactive presentation on healthy relationships. They are currently working on a presentation on disability and relationships for the Disability and Aging Summit. The next facilitator training will occur in December.

Research and Evaluation Team

- Three present CHD employees and two previous CHD employees published a paper in the Developmental Disabilities Network Journal titled *Inclusion and Disability Evaluation and Surveillance Projects: Reflections and Recommendations for Inclusive Project Teams*. The manuscript describes hiring, training, and working with people with IDD as research team members.
- During FY 2024, the Research and Evaluation Team members worked on more than 30 projects associated with people who experience IDD, their families, and/or direct support professionals.

Ken Hamrick is nearing retirement. **Patrick Reinhart** expressed the Council's appreciation for Ken's dedication and his work over the many years for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Disability Law Center (DLC)

Dave Berube, a legal rights advocate at the DLC, joined the meeting and shared a brief description of the scope of work at DLC and the 2023/2024 data as follows:

Between October 2023 and September 2024:

- 779 recorded for information and referrals
- 219 cases
- 47 successful cases so far
- Participated in 13 outreach events.

Types of cases DLC worked on for clients with I/DD

- Abuse and neglect 4%
- Employment 6%
- Community integration 8%
- Education 32%
- Government benefits 49%
- Other 1%

Stone Soup Group (SSG)

Stone Soup Group Executive Director Mary Middleton joined the meeting to share an update as follows:

Who is Stone Soup Group:

- Founded in 1992
- Parent Training and Information Center
- Family-to-Family Health Information Center
- Parent-to-Parent USA affiliate
- Developmental Disability Resource Connection (DDRC) – Anchorage and Mat-Su
- Staff of 20

What do they do:

- Offer services to families, caregivers, and professional partners.
- Core services include parent navigation, working one-on-one with families, and helping to connect them to appropriate resources in their community.

Mary Middleton reported that Stone Soup Group has been a part of the Shared Vision Collaborative since its inception. They are also part of the Shared Vision 2.0, which looks to review the Vision and strengthen the message of person-directed services. As a collaborative member, they worked with others to create two videos for educators. One video targets early childhood educators, and the other is for teachers with transition-aged students. The videos introduce the Shared Vision philosophy and the importance of including students and families in IEP meetings and decisions about their lives, stressing the importance of teaching individuals how to express their desires at a young age. The videos are available on Stone Soup Group’s YouTube channel and Stone Soup Group’s website.

Mary Middleton shared portions of Stone Soup Group’s website and how to navigate information on their in-person and virtual services. She noted that the Family Resource Guide and the Special Education Parent Handbook downloads are available on the website. Also available on the website is the Paper Trail Notebook, which is a video guide to help families make the most of valuable resources.

Mary Middleton reported that the Parent Conference will be held March 19 – 21, 2025 in Anchorage. The community calendar has all of Stone Soup Group’s events.

Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD)

AADD’s Executive Director Kim Champney joined the meeting and shared an update on the activities of AADD as follows:

- AADD is a statewide trade association. The members include providers of services to people with developmental disabilities and agency partners. There are approximately 110 members statewide.

Shared Vision 2.0

- Further the empowerment of people with disabilities through actions that result in:
 - Self-directed services as a right in Alaska
 - Services and supports more aligned with the Shared Vision
 - Increased commitment to the Vision throughout the disability community and beyond.

Kim Champney noted that each goal translates to a workgroup. AADD is looking for more involvement in the efforts of the workgroups.

Employment First

- Make the intersection of Medicaid Waiver and DVR more streamlined
- Partner with the SILC to relaunch the Alaska APSE Chapter
- Support the work of AADD employment champions.

Housing

- Lack of affordability and accessibility combined with workforce housing shortages is limiting options.
- Solutions include a mixed approach:
 - What if mixed-use affordable housing was designed to maximize the independence and inclusion of people with disabilities?

DSP Workforce

- Continue to support the Alaska Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (AADSP)
- Distribute booklet - Voices of DSPs: Organizational Best Practices to Retain and Strengthen the DSP Workforce
- Host the second statewide DSP Summit.

Key Campaign 2025

- Scheduled for March 18 – 19, 2025
- Working on fundraising to assist people to travel to Juneau for the event.

Access Alaska

Access Alaska's Executive Director Eric Gurley joined the meeting to share an overview of services at Access Alaska. He highlighted the following information:

- Access Alaska encourages and promotes the total integration of people who experience a disability and senior Alaskans to live independently in the community of their choice. Their mission is guided by the following values:
 - Advocacy, integrity, empowerment, excellence, dignity, choice, community-based, consumer control, diversity, and safety.
- Alaska Access is a nonprofit independent living organization. They serve persons with any/all disability types. Self-identification as an individual who experiences a disability is a sufficient eligibility criterion for many services.

- Independent living removes barriers to allow for inclusion. It's a way of looking at society, disability, and the worldwide movement of people who experience disabilities and are working for equal opportunities, self-determination, and respect.
- Core services include:
 - Information and referral
 - Independent living skills training
 - Peer support
 - Individual and systems advocacy
 - Transition
 - Additional services include:
 - TABI resource navigation
 - Consumer-directed personal care services
 - Durable medical equipment (DME)
 - Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS)
- Access Alaska employs 40 in-office employees and approximately 190 DSPs
- Access Alaska has CIL offices in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Mat-Su, as well as an office in Soldotna that focuses on consumer-directed personal care services and Veterans Administration services.

Eric Gurley noted that Access Alaska is currently recruiting for a program associate and various independent living advocates. He encouraged people to visit Access Alaska's website for more information.

Eric Gurley commented that as Alaska moves into the legislative session with new legislators in place, re-education will be important, and the primary priority for independent living will be participant-directed services.

VOTING ACCESSIBILITY

Dave Berube shared a PowerPoint presentation titled: *Voting in Alaska* and highlighted the following information:

- On June 18, 2024, the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced that the Alaska Division of Elections violated the ADA by making voting inaccessible to disabled Alaskans. They looked at the elections statewide from 2022 – 2023. Accessible voting machines were unavailable or did not work. The DOJ findings aligned with other complaints filed for the last decade.
- On August 19, 2024, the DOJ announced it would monitor compliance with federal voting rights law in certain jurisdictions for the August 20th primary. The communities are in rural areas.

Rural voting:

- In the 2022 primary, 16% voter rejection was experienced in Alaska Region IV, which holds predominately Alaska Native precincts. That is four times higher than the statewide average.
- In the 2024 primary elections, Wales and Kaktovik did not receive ballots. In 20 rural communities, the Division of Elections determined they did not receive materials until after August 5.

- Reasons included a lack of training by Division of Elections staff and a Region IV supervisor who lacked expertise in dealing with villages and cultural and language barriers.
- Witness signature requirements are often a reason for discarded ballots in rural areas. A bill was introduced to repeal a requirement for a witness signature on absentee ballots.
- Witness signatures are meant to prevent voting misconduct. The Division of Elections currently has no method of verifying the witness signature and accepts any mark on the signature line without review. However, if this is missing, the ballot is rejected. This disproportionately affects rural Alaska voters. Nearly 11% of all ballots were rejected in one rural district for missing witness signatures.

New technology:

- Anchorage introduced a way for voters to cure or fix problems with signatures on the ballot via text message for Anchorage municipal elections.
- New machines were introduced in March 2024, which can read ballots aloud for sight limitations. They also use sip-and-puff technology for voters with physical disabilities.

The group discussed a variety of situations they experienced voting in Alaska. Dave Berube encouraged people to contact DLC and let them know if there is a situation at a polling venue that lacks accessibility.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

A public testimony opportunity was offered, and a full transcript was prepared.

RECESS

The meeting recessed at 4:30 p.m.

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
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COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

**Zoom Videoconference
Governor's Council on Disabilities
and Special Education
550 W 7th Avenue, Suite 1220
Anchorage, Alaska**

September 19 – 20, 2024

Friday, September 20, 2024

Council Members:

Jena Crafton, Chair

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Marlene Wenger

Council Staff:

Patrick Reinhart, Executive Director

Michael Stevenson

Jamie Kokoszka

Samantha Vetter

Lanny Mommsen

Ian Miner

Chelsea Burke

Minutes Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 a.m.

MINDFULNESS MOMENT

ROLL CALL/ZOOM REMINDERS – Quorum established

COUNCIL BUDGET APPROVAL

Nicole Wery-Tagaban directed the members' attention to the budget documents. She briefly reviewed the FY '25 budget the Council approved at the May meeting.

Nicole Wery-Tagaban reported that the FY '26 Governor's budget is being drafted and will be released in December. **Patrick Reinhart** reported that what is known is the funding level recommended by the Trust for next year increased from \$200,500 to \$225,000. He noted that the Council's receipt authority is higher than what it expends to leave room for new grant opportunities. He explained that when the Council does not spend all the funds from state funding sources or the Trust funding, it goes back to the funder. With federal funding sources, there is the option to apply for a carryover. If the funds are not expended at the end of the term, the remainder is returned to the federal government.

Patrick Reinhart expressed the Council's appreciation for the department's budget and administrative support.

SELF-DIRECTED SERVICES PRESENTATION

Kate Murray, president of Applied Self-Direction, a national organization that provides technical assistance and training to stakeholders in self-direction, working to implement or enhance self-directed services, joined the meeting and shared a PowerPoint presentation titled *Implementing Self-Direction in Alaska's Waiver Services* and highlighted the following information:

What Is Self-Direction?

- A model of service delivery in which the individual controls how, when, and from whom they receive services and supports based on the philosophical premise that people with disabilities know best what their needs are and how to meet those needs.
- If an individual is unable or unwilling to hire and manage staff directly, they may appoint a representative of their choice to do so.
- Self-direction is available in Medicaid through 1915(c) waivers, 1915(k) Community First Choice programs, and other authorities.

What Advantages Does Self-Direction Offer?

- In a self-directed model, individuals who receive services select their own staff.
 - This expands the workforce by creating a pathway that includes people for whom caregiving may not be a professional vocation but provides high-quality services.
 - Individuals who self-direct often hire family, friends, and people they already know and trust as paid workers.
- Self-direction has become a first-line approach to waiver service delivery in other rural and frontier states (e.g., Wyoming, New Mexico).
- Individual choice, control, and flexibility are paramount in a self-directed mode.

Kate Murray reported that Applied Self-Direction was hired months ago to explore and develop recommendations for implementing a self-directed service option in Alaska in a practical and scalable way that will work for people, given the needs shared during the stakeholder engagement process.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Waiver participants interviewed across the state focusing on the following questions:
 - What services do you currently receive?
 - What do you like and not like about your services as they are now?
 - How challenging is it to find workers where you live?
 - Are you interested in a new option in which you could hire and manage the staff that you select?
 - Is there anything else you want us to know?

Stakeholder Feedback: Challenges Identified

- Most individuals interviewed indicated they primarily had residential habilitation to address needs:
 - Some said they did not need habilitation because they did not need to learn new skills. They wanted hands-on assistance to complete daily tasks due to physical disability.
 - Several also noted that hands-on assistance would likely be more cost-effective for the state than a more expensive habilitative service.
 - Some also said that residential habilitation was the only available option to provide the number of hours of assistance needed.
- Several individuals mentioned the challenge of living in extremely rural communities making filling staffing needs difficult.
 - Some expressed a reliance on unpaid family members to fill the gap.

Additional Challenges and Constraints

- SDS staff and an AARP representative were interviewed to gain their perspective.
- It is understood that state resources are limited and already stretched across multiple other projects, including implementing the interRAI assessment.
- The report will offer recommendations on an “assessment-neutral” approach to setting the amount of the self-directed budget, which could be implemented pre-interRAI as a pilot or as a larger-scale implementation after the interRAI is complete.

What Might Come Next? (Recommendations)

- Implement a self-directed personal care waiver service that focuses on assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental ADLs (IADLs):
 - Develop an individual budget by multiplying the authorized personal care hours by the reimbursement rate for the service
 - Individuals who self-direct can set the rate of pay for their workers within their budget
 - This could be done on a limited pilot basis or statewide.

- Implement Financial Management Services (FMS), a required payroll and administrative support and program integrity safeguard using existing FMS infrastructure.
- Implement required information and assistance through the CIL network to provide support, coaching, and advisory services to people who self-direct.

Longer-Term Priorities

- Expand self-directed service array (e.g., environmental modifications, individual-directed goods and services).
- Expand the self-directed service delivery option in which individuals directly hire staff across additional waivers and potentially 1915(k) program.
- Expand the pool of FMS entities serving the program.
- Invest in the information and assistance function to more effectively support people who self-direct, particularly through peer support.

Kate Murray opened the floor for discussion. Council members asked clarifying questions. Kate stated that the final report will be available at the end of October at the Independent Living Conference.

COMMITTEE AND OTHER REPORTS

Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP)

Don Enoch directed the members' attention to the SEAP presentation included in the board packet. He reported that DEED will be submitting its federal report, which can be found on DEED's website. It is currently open for feedback, and he encouraged members to review the report and contact DEED with their input.

Special Education Service Agency (SESA)

SESA Board President **Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus** and SESA's Executive Director Olivia Yancey shared a PowerPoint presentation and highlighted the following information:

- SESA board:
 - Board president **Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus, Anna Attla, Caitlin Poindexter, Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich, Elizabeth Joseph, Rich Saville, Don Enoch**, Dr. Madeline Aguillard, Micaela Kolerok, and Heather Wheeler
- **Mission:** SESA provides consultation and training to support the unique educational needs of individuals and the Alaskan communities that serve them.

LID Autism Program Goal: Provide distance and on-site technical assistance to support the educational and training needs of individuals with autism, their school district teams, and the Alaskan communities that serve them.

Emotional Disabilities Program Goal: Collaborate and consult with rural teams regarding the program and student needs. Provide face-to-face, distance, synchronous, and asynchronous training on various topics affecting students with emotional/behavioral disorders. Assist team with on-site visits and distance delivery to

create, maintain, and enhance specific programs that meet the needs of students with emotional behavioral disorders.

Visual Impairment LID Visual Impairment Program: Provide distance and on-site technical assistance to support the educational and training needs of individuals with vision loss, their school district teams, and the Alaskan communities that serve them.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing LID Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Goal: Provide distance and on-site technical assistance to support the educational and training needs of individuals with hearing loss, their school district teams, and the Alaskan communities that serve them.

Multiple Disabilities LID Multiple Disabilities Program Goal: Collaborate and consult with rural teams regarding the program and student needs. Provide small and large group training on various topics affecting students with multiple disabilities. Assist teams in person and through distance delivery to create, maintain, and enhance specific programs that meet the needs of students with multiple disabilities.

LID participants across districts FY '25, 7/1 – 9/11/2024:

- Total number of participants served: 845
- Total number of districts served: 32

Alaska Autism Resource Center's (AARC) mission serves the needs of individuals with autism spectrum disorders, their families, caregivers, and service providers throughout Alaska. SESA provides information, referral, training, and consultation via on-site and distance delivery. Total number of participants served is 150.

Alaska Deaf/Blind Project Mission: Serves any individual from premature birth to age 22 with hearing and vision loss. Specialists serve those in urban and remote areas, as well as individuals not enrolled in school and those in secondary school.

Alaska Center for Accessible Materials (AKCAM) Mission: Collaborate with school districts to provide accessible educational materials (AEM) throughout Alaska. SESA continues to be an authorized user of the NIMAC and alternative materials produced to provide education to districts regarding the use of the NIMAS/NIMAC system to meet the needs of students who need AEM. Alaska Center for Accessible Materials (AKCAM) served 205 individuals with site consultations, materials, and training.

The Anne Freitag Library has books, sensory materials, toys and games, and accessible reading materials.

Upcoming Events:

- Needs Assessment for Technology – Monday, Oct. 28, 2024. The workshop will introduce a needs assessment process for matching technology to students' needs and teach them how to use technology to gather data.
- Show and Tell for Learning Through School Years – Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2024. This workshop will explore instructional strategies for supporting literacy and numeracy concepts from deafblind students.

- Switch-Based Learning, Getting Started and Beyond – Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2024. The workshop will provide guidance and resources on setting up Switches and planning for instruction beyond cause-and-effect activities.

Olivia Yancey encouraged members to visit SESA’s website for more information about SESA and its resources.

STATE AGENCY REPORTS AND DIALOGUE

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

DVR Director Kate Duder and Chief of Services Mariah Krueger joined the meeting and shared the following information:

Alaska DVR FY ‘24 Performance

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Highlights:

- 1,947 individuals with disabilities received services
- 96% of individuals receiving services experienced significant disabilities with multiple barriers to employment
- 905 individuals applied for VR services
- 1,329 individuals received information and referral services
- \$3,385,266 was spent on services to individuals in the VR program
- 320 individuals exited the VR program employed
- \$19.98 was the average hourly wage.

Potentially Eligible (PE) Students with a Disability Highlights:

- 1,399 students with disabilities received services from the PE transition program
- 85 Alaskan cities hosted PE programs, and 80% were held in rural Alaska
- \$1,599,051 was spent on students with disabilities receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services

Disability Types - (% includes all disabilities per participant):

- 35% Cognitive
- 35% Psychosocial
- 22% Physical and orthopedic
- 4% Deafness/Hearing Loss
- 2% Blindness/Visual Impairment
- 2% Communication impairment

FY2024 Legislation

HB 219

- Repealed the Assistive Technology Loan Guarantee Loan Fund
- Transferred remaining funds to Assistive Technology of Alaska
- Funds are to be utilized for allowable expenditures or as sanctioned by the Assistive Technology Act
- Signed into law by Governor Dunleavy on September 3, 2024.

Director Duder thanked the Governor’s Council for its advocacy on the repeal of the AT Loan Fund.

Upcoming Events:

- Partner Open Houses:
 - October 2, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Juneau Branch Office
 - October 9, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Wasilla and Anchorage Branch Offices
 - October 10, 2024, 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Fairbanks Office
- October 17, 2024
 - Employment Systems Retreat. Private Venue - DD service providers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and AADD, DVR, and SDS leaders
- Nov. 6, 2024
 - Employment First Conference
Dena'ina Conference Center

Mariah Krueger added that DVR completed three important tasks, including the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) to identify the needs of Alaskans with disabilities, developed a three-year strategic plan, and submitted DVR's WIOA combined state plan with labor partners in June.

Patrick Reinhart reported that after the Employment First Conference, the Council will reconvene the Alaska Work Matters Task Force to assess where the state is with the recommendations from the task force.

Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)

SDS Director **Tony Newman** shared the following information related to self-directed services, e-mods, and an update from SDS:

For the state to attempt a move to self-directed services, the first thing that needs to be in place is an assessment tool compatible with establishing individualized budgets. The current waiver tools are not appropriate for that task. Next would be to introduce waiver amendments and regulatory changes. There would be a need to develop a financial management service and create training and education for staff and providers. These tasks take time and will be a heavy lift for the department.

Kim Champney commented that provider agencies are fully onboard with self-directed services. She noted the difficulty of figuring out how to make things happen in the system while ensuring the changes do not overwhelm the systems and take twice as long to accomplish. She said the role of the advocacy agencies is to push for change, whereas SDS has to be more methodical. The question remains: How do we best advocate and prepare for self-directed services while also ensuring that progress is being made on rate changes, the interRAI tool, the waitlist, and other priorities for the department?

Art Delaune asked what the downside is for the state. **Director Newman** responded that there are a lot of different definitions of what person-directed services include. Person-directed services are in the VA system as well as personal care services. Still, it's not in the waiver services, and it would be a matter of putting them into place.

Caitlin Poindexter remarked that it would be helpful if Council members knew exactly what they were asking for before the Council meets in Juneau to advocate for self-directed services. It would be valuable for the division to educate the Council on what

the change would look like for the division and help advocates simplify the message. **Director Newman** noted that SDS checks in regularly with AADD's Kim Champney and **Patrick Reinhart** at the Council. He commented that simple, straightforward messaging across advocacy groups is important. That was instrumental in passing rate increases over the past several years.

With regard to home modifications, **Director Newman** reported that the cap increased from \$18,500 to \$40,000. The program was underutilized, and he believes issues beyond the cap limit its use. Increasing the cap is not going to have a significant impact on the Medicaid budget. SDS has put out e-alerts and has shared the information with care coordinators. SDS plans to host a webinar about e-mods later in the fall.

Director Newman reported that a series of grants that started as Trust grants were transferred to general fund/mental health funded grants administered by the Finance Management Division (FMS). FMS asked SDS to take over the administration of those grants, and SDS has agreed to do so. He shared that the competitive solicitation for those grants will happen next year. He said that SDS is excited to bring that aspect of home modifications under SDS's roof, stage it with the waiver services, and ensure they are non-duplicative.

Director Newman reported that there is some ARPA money left. SDS will soon put out an opportunity for assisted living homes to apply for funding to make e-mods specifically to help them better serve individuals with complex needs.

Garrett Dominick remarked that it is important to provide training to providers and advocacy agencies on the roles and responsibilities with regard to self-directed services. **Director Newman** responded that there would be significant training that would go along with self-directed services. **Corey Gilmore** invited **Director Newman** to speak about self-directed services from the division's perspective at a CISS Committee meeting.

Director Newman reported that DOH Deputy Director Lynne Keilman-Cruz is in requisition to the Division of Healthcare Services as interim director.

Director Newman reported that SDS continues work on the overall methodology study of Medicaid and has reached the point of contacting providers to do focused work with them. He noted that SDS needs to survey providers, and this will be an opportunity to address longstanding concerns with Medicaid rates.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)

Program Officer Tina Voelker-Ross, liaison to the Council, and Allison Biastock, interim CEO for the AMHTA, joined the meeting and shared the following update on Trust activities:

GCDSE and the Trust

Alaska Statute AS 44.29.660.13

- MOA defines Trust and GCDSE roles and responsibilities, including:
 - Awareness of/representation at each other's meetings
 - Coordination of advocacy, policy, and planning

- Requires agreement on performance measures regarding Trust-funded GCDSE activities
- Acknowledges each organization has respective statutory obligations
- Other collaborations include:
 - Trustee recruitment/applicant interviews
 - Trust budget development
 - Regulatory review
 - Outreach and awareness event coordination
 - Special projects
 - Joint advocacy.
- FY '26 – '27 Budget
 - Approved and adopted by Trustees in August
 - Submitted to the Governor's office and legislative budget office.
- Budget as it related to the Governor's Council:
 - The Governor's Council funding was increased and will be \$225,006
 - There was an increase in the Microenterprise funding for FY '25 and '27.
- Improving Lives Conference
 - Held September 2024
 - Well attended
 - Heard the value was all stakeholders together with Trust beneficiary groups had an opportunity for networking and cross-pollination and idea sharing inspiration.
- IDD System Assessment
 - During the August board meeting, great public testimony was received related to the data system for serving Alaskans who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities. One of the actions at the board meeting was to direct staff to use funds in the FY '25 budget to conduct an IDD system assessment.
 - The Trust will work closely with the Governor's Council and other key stakeholders to execute the assessment.
 - The Trust is in the early stages of the project, developing scope. Hoping to get an RFP later in the year.
- New Proposal Development Resources
 - The Trust has included a new proposal development resource for Trust grants and grants other organizations provide to agencies/individuals serving Trust beneficiaries.
 - The Trust has started focusing on its proposal development website, which lists beneficiary-related grant opportunities updated every two weeks.
- Infant Learning Program
 - Statewide Equity Project
 - The ILP is one of the earliest opportunities to screen children for developmental disabilities (0-3).

- The Trust worked with Susan Kessler at SDS to develop the statewide equity project. This project is funded to support doing specialized screening in rural areas.
- Once established, the state will look for opportunities to support rural infant learning services.
- ILP Eligibility Requirements
 - Through the ICC, the Trust supported the Raviant, LLC contract to look at recommendations to expand eligibility and funding for the Alaska Infant Learning Program.
 - The Trust is supporting another contract to forward the work.

Allison Biastock shared that the Trust committee meetings are scheduled for October 15 – 17, 2024. Links can be found on Trust’s website homepage. The Trust board meeting is scheduled for November 13 – 14, 2024 where there will be an opportunity for public comment.

Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus noted that there has not been a conference on FASD in quite some time. FASD still does not qualify for developmental disabilities, and FASD is still not a designated beneficiary population of the Trust. She remarked that it would be valuable if at some point somebody would say, “Let’s talk about FASD.” Allison Biastock noted that she will share the sentiment with the Trust leadership team.

EXECUTIVE SESSION LUNCH

Chair Jena Crafton requested an executive session to discuss the evaluation of the executive director.

Caitlin Poindexter MOVED to go into executive session, **SECONDED** by **Margaret Evans**. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Caitlin Poindexter reported that the topics for the 2024/2025 legislative session activities include speaking with policymakers training, voting, AKLeg.gov, accessibility, NACDD congressional visits, and national legislation.

Caitlin Poindexter reported that discussion points for potential advocacy for the 2024/2025 legislative session include the following:

- ILP program funding
- Revisions to DD Shared Vision
- Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board
- Uniform Act: Guardianship/Conservatorship
- Civil Legal Services Fund
- SESA funding formula
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Child Bill of Rights
- Public and community transit
- Medicaid Buy-In

Caitlin Poindexter opened the floor for input on other potential advocacy for the Council. Suggestions were as follows:

- Flat funding for deaf/hard-of-hearing navigation

- Slow down for Medicaid/Medicare medical appointments, long wait times
- Housing program flexibility for people with disabilities
- Transportation.

Bills signed over the summer:

- Repeal of the AT funding
- SB 91, telehealth bill

The Legislative Committee did not meet throughout the summer. **Caitlin Poindexter** invited Council members to participate in the committee meetings. The upcoming meeting schedule is as follows:

- October 10, 2024, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
- November 7, 2024, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
- December 12, 2024, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.
- January 9, 2024, 12:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Federal Legislation Update:

Heidi Lieb-Williams reported being part of the advocacy groups AADD and NACDD in Washington, D.C. this summer. She highlighted the following information:

- Heidi attended the national Senate Health Education Labor and Pension Committee meeting to bring attention to the dangerous private, for-profit firms owning hospitals.
- The Autism Cares Act passed Congress and the House in 2024.
- Fourteen amendments were added to the Integrative Employment Act, making it illegal to pay people with disabilities less than minimum wage.
- Heidi had a successful meeting with Senator Sullivan gaining support for the Integrated Employment bill, and she asked for his support on marriage equality for disabled adults (HR 6640).
- Other legislative bills include the Voting Rights Act, the SSI Savings Penalty Elimination Act (HR 5408/SR 2767), Improve Medicaid HCBS and HCBS Access Act, eliminating the waitlist and expanding access across states, and the Better Care, Better Jobs Act, which invests in the HBCS workforce.

FY '27 – '32 FIVE-YEAR STATE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Chelsea Burke reported that the Council will begin developing the FY '27 – '32 Five-Year State Plan. She led the committee through an overview of the five-year plan process as follows:

The Five-Year State Plan:

- Describes priorities for the Council's work for the next five years (2027-2032)
- Holds the Council accountable for how it spends federal funds
- Outlines the goals, objectives, and work plans
- Educates policymakers and the public about needs/work done in the state
- Illustrates the current Alaskan landscape in the disability community
- Describes Council structure
- Describes how input was gathered for the plan
- Describes why goal areas were selected.

Chelsea Burke noted that the current state plan will end on September 30, 2026. The current state plan includes three goal areas: Community inclusion, supports, and services; self-advocacy and leadership; and employment.

Steps to creating the next five-year plan:

- Council members decide on values, goals, areas of emphasis
- Public input and analysis of all data collected
- Create a draft plan for the public
- Obtain public feedback on the plan
- Council finalizes state plan
- Submit state plan (summer 2026).

Chelsea Burke noted the reasons for Council members to provide input is because it is an opportunity to impact what programs and projects are developed or continued; it is an opportunity to have members' regions, passions, and points of view represented in decisions about programs; and it is an opportunity to affect where federal dollars are spent for advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change.

Chelsea Burke reminded attendees that the Council's mission is to create change that improves the lives of Alaskans with disabilities, and the vision is living by the DD Shared Vision. She shared examples of the core values in the DD Act and from other states. The attendees broke out into small groups to discuss what descriptors to include in the Council's state plan core values. Following is a summary of feedback from the small groups:

Core value descriptors:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Independence | • Quality of life | • Perseverance |
| • Productivity | • Respect | • Integrated |
| • Integration | • Non-condescending | • Inspiring |
| • Inclusion | • Productivity | • Intersectionality |
| • Self-determination | • Caring for one another | • Respect |
| • Protection | • Valuing diversity | • Encompassing the lifespan |
| • Advocacy | • DD Vision core values | • Dignity of risk |
| • Appreciation | | |
| • Mutual respect | | |

Trends:

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Connectivity with culture and history | • People with disabilities are viewed as contributing members |
| • Shared Vision as the North Star | • Ensure to emphasize that people with disabilities want to contribute through employment and community involvement |
| • Cultural and historical appreciation and compassion | • Encourage understanding of people's individual situations |
| • Employment First | |
| • Judgment-free self-advocacy | |
| • Dignity and acceptance for who I am, not what I do | |

Chelsea Burke reported that the following steps include:

- Continue work towards developing a rough draft and adopt core values
- Select Council priorities
- Begin community forums, collect input.

ROUND-ROBIN AND WRAP-UP

Chair Jena Crafton opened the floor for Council member comments regarding the meeting. Overall, the members agreed that the open dialogue portions of the meeting were beneficial, that there was good information presented at the meeting, and that the opportunity to network with new and current Council members and agency representatives was valuable. Council members reported being excited about the advocacy work for the upcoming legislative session. Members appreciated the Council staff for their daily efforts and for providing accommodations supporting a well-organized meeting. They also appreciated the in-person CART services, which helped many Council members track what was being said at the meeting. Staff noted that the members will see Council surveys in the next few months, and they encouraged people to respond.

Chair Jena Crafton remarked that she continuously learns many new things at the Council meetings and appreciated members and guests taking the time to come and share their thoughts, expertise, and experiences with the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

Caitlin Poindexter MOVED to adjourn, **SECONDED** by **Garrett Dominick**. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.