

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
Quarterly Council Meeting
April 14-15, 2022
Atlanta, Georgia

Minutes

The mission of GCDD is to advance social change, public policy, and innovative practices that increase opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities and families to thrive where they live, learn, work, play and worship in Georgia's communities.

Thursday, April 14, 2022

I. Welcome/Check In Nick Perry

Nick read a statement about gathering places in Georgia that reiterated GCDD's commitment to reconciliation and respect.

Announcements:

All attendees introduced themselves.

New members: Barbara (Babs) Hall and Sharifa Peart

July meeting is July 14-15.

The Council is now approving travel for members.

The national Technical Assistance Institute will be held online May 5, 10 and 12, and the NACDD national conference will be in Washington, DC, July 19-21. Travel contact is Kim Person.

New issue of *Making a Difference* is online.

Kate Brady has resigned, effective May 1. She is going to the Human Services Research Institute.

Lisa Newbern gave an update on the Executive Director search: job description posted and the search firm is identifying candidates and vetting applicants.

II. State Legislative Update Alyssa Miller and Charlie Miller

2022 Advocacy Day Highlights

Topics: Direct Support Professionals, NOW/COMP Waivers and Advancing Employment Opportunities; approx. 600 registrants and 180 participants; 2 of these days resulted in direct budget wins. Also, rollout of Phone2Action (now Capitol Canary), which resulted in 855 advocates sending more than 1,500 emails.

2022 State Session Updates

Some budget wins:

513 new NOW/COMP waiver slots totaling \$10.3 million

\$4.9 million for a 2% provider rate (organizations) increase (subject to approval by CMS)

\$500,000 for respite services

\$400,000 for Georgia Options in amended budget

\$750,000 for respite care

5 bills (2 Senate & 3 House) and 2 Senate resolutions passed; 6 bills (4 Senate & 2 House) and 1 House resolution did not – some of these were of concern to GCDD. None will automatically roll over for consideration next year; each one will have to be resubmitted.

Special thanks to members of the Advisory Committee on Urgent Public Policy Issues (ACUPPI) as well as the Advocacy Days Working Group members.

Off-Season Advocacy

FY 23 budget advocacy with Governor's office

Voting guidance and potential candidate forum for Governor's office and Senate position

Continue to monitor: HCBS FMAP savings, CMS decision on NOW/COMP waivers and co-sponsoring federal legislation.

Engage with SR770 Study Committee

Summer visits – 9 recent visits during Disability Policy Seminar

GCDD continues to follow what is happening with GNETS and funding for this controversial budget.

III. Audit Response Eric Jacobson

This was kicked off by whistleblower. Federal authorities conducted an audit and provided recommendations. Only violation is regarding membership; Eric is working to take care of this before he retires. Two new state agency reps added, and Eric continues to work with the Governor's office re: individual members.

Five timeframes for due dates of information to the federal authorities:

June 1, 2022 – Be in compliance with membership; Provide list of professional development activities Eric undertook as executive director; Finalize HR manual (draft almost completed); Finalize grants manual (ready)

Oct 1, 2022 – Training for chairperson; Nick will participate when NACDD offers.

Feb 1, 2023 – Complete conflict of interest forms, which is required of all members. So far, only 5 submitted in 2022.

Aug 1, 2023 – Complete annual evaluation of Executive Director.

Jan 1, 2024 – Create a plan for membership development (what do we want to learn and how do staff and Council resources support that to ensure members are knowledgeable about issues of importance to the Council?); Plan for more robust membership participation (in programs and budget development); Create/amend Policy and Procedures Manual to include diversity and inclusion policies; Focus on more diverse selection of vendors when GCDD issues requests for proposals.

IV. Role and Responsibilities Sheryl Matney

Sheryl provides GCDD with training and technical assistance, and helps ensure we remain a leader in the disability field.

Who the Council is – state entity, decision-making body so authorized by the DD act, funded by Congress, looked after by a federal agency (Administration for Community Living/ACL) and the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities/OIDD.

Framework: role is the position, responsibilities is what we do in the position and conduct is how we act in the position. Roles may include DD Council member, committee member or elected or appointed leader of the Council.

Governance – the what: plan and lead the Council. Make decisions and provide leadership and guidance for the overall direction of the Council.

vs. Management – the how: delivery of the plans and work of the Council. Day-to-day running to understand and carry out the vision of the Council.

Council Member Three Primary Duties:

Direction, Oversight, Resources

Staff helps the Executive Director implement the directives set by the Council.

The Executive Director is responsible for making things happen with staff help.

Council Member Actions: 6 required by federal law and other best practices

Required

1. Hire Executive Director
2. Evaluate the Executive Director annually
3. Actively participate in the planning process
4. Provide leadership for direction of how goals and objectives will be done. Approve funds, monitor results of the activities and monitor how the activities affect people who have developmental disabilities and their families.
5. Approve budget and monitor how funds are spent.
6. Ensure legal and ethical integrity (know laws and rules, know about and follow conflict of interest policies, and build trust with the public)

Best Practices

1. Create a Mission statement
2. Encourage the Executive Director (provide access to professional support as needed)
3. Develop well-informed Council members (help find new members, help them in their role, share information)
4. Improve the Council's public standing (share mission, successes, goals reached)

Authority comes from the Council as a whole. Members should keep the mission, purpose and guidelines of the DD Council as top priorities. Members discuss, agree/disagree and then support DD Council decisions made.

Conflicts of Interest

Direct – member or family member personally benefits from position on the Council.

Perceived – impression someone has that a Council member's judgement might be influenced by outside interests.

The GCDD Executive Committee can further consider COI and its impact on Council member participation on committees and in self-advocacy.

3 Characteristics of Member Behavior

Duty of Care – using reasonable care when making decisions as a steward of the federal grant and Council program.

Duty of Loyalty – undivided commitment when making decision for the Council, not using info for personal gain, keep best interest of Council at hand.

Duty of Obedience – stay true to Council’s mission and act in a way that supports Council’s mission.

State Agency Representatives

Have same membership status, same rights and responsibilities, and equal voice as Governor-appointed members.

Council Staff

Council shall hire, supervise and evaluate the director.

Director shall hire staff to help do the work, and then supervise and evaluate the staff.

Member-Staff Partnership

Staff members share the vision and work with members as partners.

Staff Concerns

Staff should meet and discuss any concerns with direct supervisor or Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for overall management.

Members should remind staff there is a process for resolving grievances.

Staff Responsibilities to Council

Executive Director is the link between Council members and Council staff, but the Executive Director may appoint staff members to support committees. The assigned staff member is not a committee member, but rather staff support on behalf of the Executive Director.

Responsibilities of Staff Support on Committees:

Provide context; Explain standards in the field of developmental disabilities; Take notes; Follow up on administrative tasks; Collect information; and Coordinate meeting arrangements

The standard is to clearly state roles, responsibilities and expectations for:

Committee chair and members, Executive Director and staff person who supports the committee.

V. Identity vs. People First Language Sheryl Matney

Early 1970s – focus on person’s individuality and personhood vs. disability

1984 – DD Act was first federal law to use people first language; ADA in 1990 used “people with disabilities”

Identify first language refers to the disability first.

No current consensus about which to use.

Be aware of the needs and wants of the communities you reach, adopt an approach with respect, and avoid making assumptions.

GCDD Could Consider:

1. Adopting a policy and communicating that position.
2. Following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention approach, which is to use people first language
3. Thinking about our programs and which approach would work best.

A poll of self-advocates participating in the meeting indicates preference for people first language.

[National Center on Disability and Journalism](#) has information on this topic: "... And so we are no longer offering advice regarding a default. Instead, we hope you will double down to find out how people would like to be described. ... we encourage you to confirm on a case-by-case basis."

Attendee feedback:

Mark Crenshaw noted the language we use has consequences for the groups with which we want to collaborate. Dana Lloyd would like to hear from more of the people we serve before we decide which language to use. Kate Brady encourages us to decide if we want to lead or follow. Debbie Hibben noted the lack of diversity among self-advocates and parents on the Council, and she would like to hear from all groups.

Sheryl noted cross-disability representation is something the national office has discussed and encourages, as well as racial, ethnic and geographical representation.

Next Step:

Debbie Hibben moved for the Executive Committee to further discuss and appoint an ad-hoc committee to review people first and identify first language based upon input from stakeholders, and for the ad hoc committee to make a preliminary policy recommendation before the next Council meeting in July. Dorothy Harris seconded, and the Council members approved the motion.

VI. New Proposals

Lisa Eaves

Lisa Eaves provided information about proposals to be funded. Full details are available via the meeting recording.

VII. Family Advocacy

Debbie Hibben and Nalini Isaac

Debbie and Nalini provided an overview of current concerns parents who are aging have in relation to their children who have special needs – e.g., who will care for them, where they will live. Eric noted there is nothing in the state plan that covers aging services, so we will need to amend the plan if we move forward with this.

Eric recommends three ways to move forward:

1. Work from the white paper Georgians for a Healthy Future is preparing
2. Appoint an ad hoc Committee to continue the conversation, review data and make recommendation re: how the Council moves forward.

- a. A GCDD ad hoc Committee can have more than Council members.
3. NACDD has funding to create a community of practice around aging and disability issues. GCDD could apply to be a part of this next year (the second year of the program).

Nandi Isaac motioned to move forward with discussions about this topic. Evan Nodvin seconded, and the Council members approved the motion.

Friday April 15, 2022

I. Consent Agenda Lisa Newbern
Minutes from January Meeting, Program Report, Financial Report and Old Business (New Proposals and Audit Response) – all approved

II. Agency Updates
Babs Hall, Division of Aging Services – some work on aging is in place with the Atlanta Regional Commission. Considering what infrastructure is needed to move forward with this.
Hoping to have info about Centers for Independent Living online by July 1.
The agency just received a two-year public workforce grant, so will hire someone to work on COVID 19 education and awareness.

Dana Lloyd, GAO
GAO received ACL funding, too, and will also be hiring for the public health workforce.
Working to produce videos re: vaccine hesitancy.
Center for Public Representation working on policy briefs – advancing employment and ending practice of workforce segregation.
Children’s freedom initiative – GCDD and USEDs spent time with PNA in Maryland re: TBI program about monitoring of skilled nursing facilities to help youth and young adults return to the community
Supported Decision making project continues to go well, especially Center for Youth Voice, Youth Choice. Finalizing a website
Hosted GAO and Citizen Advocacy in Savannah hosted in-person event in late March to think about the overlap between ideals for how we help people get to a good life/have autonomy in their lives. Tom and Michael???. This program has grown during COVID when others have stalled.
Legal update: GNETS. Still in midst of litigation/active discovery, have visits set with experts and continuing to represent individuals in order to divert placement and support the case.
Fulton County Sherriff’s case – has settled. Now monitoring for the terms of the settlement and those jailed – access to out of cell time, recreation, hygiene items

Zo Stoneman, UGA, and Mark Crenshaw, GSU CLD, also provided updates. Full details are available via the meeting recording.

III. Public Input
No comments shared.

IV. Evaluation of Meeting
Participants shared their feedback on the meeting, which included:

Meeting was great/awesome/wonderful (x3), a lot to think about, the meeting was informative (x3) and interesting (x2), wonderful to meet people in person (x2), information was thought-provoking, enjoyed presentations (x2), the experience with Nandi and her family has been the most rewarding experience, best meeting yet, looking forward to what is ahead/where we are going as a Council, kudos to policy team with many wins, thankful for collaborative staff, enjoyed learning more about the Council responsibilities, encouraged all who attended are invested in the work we do and confident in continuing to make change in Georgia, grateful for continuing to learn as a Council member and for the conversations that will continue, easy to understand and follow, intense at times, but meaningful, grateful for the capable hands that will lead us forward, Council members and staff have elevated GCDD to be one of the strongest in the country, concerned about COI conversation and continuing work as a self-advocate, so much passion in the room for what can impact change, very robust discussions and great to be in a space where we want the communities we serve to thrive and flourish, excited for what is to come next for the Council. Also, many comments crediting and thanking Eric and Kate, and an analogy to building a Habitat House – they built a solid foundation for us to continue the work.

Eric gave his thanks for his role and said it has been an incredible journey. He is grateful for the honor and privilege to have served as executive director and his role before that, serving the Council and the people the Council serves. He noted what we have accomplished together is incredible – he would put it up against any other DD Council. GCDD has been innovative, on the forefront, done great work. He thanked Council members and staff for work done, is sure we will get through the leadership transition and will come out better. He gave his love and support, will let all know how to reach him, and, again,, thanked the Council and staff for allowing him to be a part.