

FFY 2026 Public Policy Partnership – Quarter 3 Report



Third Quarter Highlights (April 1 - June 30, 2026)

Goal #1 (Advocacy): Develop strong advocates and leaders who create the positive change they want.

Objective 1.1: Annually increase the number of lowans with developmental disabilities and family members who engage in advocacy in the civic and political decision-making process.	
Host local Capitol days and town hall meetings.	N/A
Provide training for 2026 General Election to both community and facility sites.	Secretary of State's Director of Elections (Bailey Kelley) was on May 8 Capitol Chat to talk about voting in the primary, resources, law changes, what advocates need to know in order to make their voting plans. 197 total advocates participated (47 attended chat, 150 watched recording)
Work with the Secretary of State's office to provide training to poll workers to assure polling places are accessible and welcoming.	N/A
Provide advocacy trainings and advertise our ability to offer this assistance.	N/A
Host and support <i>Make Your Mark!</i> and other self and family advocacy conferences.	N/A

Educate and inform advocates, stakeholders, and legislators, through <i>infoNET</i> , social media posts, and emails.	See Objective 2.1 for the information shared with advocates through INFONET. See attached list of social media posts for full detail. Overall: • Average of 157 advocates attended/watched each Capitol Chat. See 2.2 for details. • Social media (Facebook) posts reached a total of 2,915 people, had 6,018 views, gathered 3,184 impressions, and included 310 actions/reactions. ○ The post about session ending and a final push for MEPD changes got the most views (1,595), had the broadest reach (847), and had the most impressions (918) this quarter. ○ A post on Congress introducing a new bill to create the first ever caregiver support hotline received the second highest views(1,436) this quarter. ○ Second highest reach (353) was announcing the Spring Issue of INFONET highlighted the advocacy success of four super advocates.
Increase the number of advocates connected to the DD Council Network. Develop marketing tools to engage people to join.	N/A (continue to work with Capture on database hygiene)
Objective 1.2: Annually increase the number of Iowans with developmental disabilities – including young adults and their family members – who lead and mentor others and take on leadership roles in projects, coalitions, councils, and boards that increase the inclusion of people with disabilities in community living.	
Support peer-mentoring programs.	N/A
Create an intern position for a person with a disability to assist with advocacy.	N/A
Continue partnerships with our DD network to provide the Youth Leadership Academy.	N/A
Support graduates of the youth leadership academy to engage in other councils, boards, community action groups at the local and state board.	N/A

Support the mentoring program in the Iowa Talent Bank (Iowa's State and Local board and commission application site) by hosting outreach and awareness campaigns about opportunities available on commissions and boards at the local and state level. Work with the Talent Bank and the Governor's office to begin tracking those with disabilities that serve on boards and commissions.	N/A
Work with DD network to train and mentor people with disabilities on how to be effective members of boards, councils, and commissions.	N/A
Work with boards, councils, and commissions to share ways they can be more inclusive of people with disabilities and the importance of inclusion.	N/A
Objective 1.3: With the support of our disability network of advocates, annually support to strengthen self-advocacy organizations led by individuals with developmental disabilities so that there are more leaders with developmental disabilities and a more unified self-advocacy movement.	
Support self-advocates to train others to register to vote and vote.	See objective 1.1.
Support self and family advocates and council members by hosting town hall meetings and other public events with local and state leaders in their communities.	N/A
Continue to support initiatives by Allies in Advocacy.	N/A

Support other grassroots initiatives led by self-advocates.	Highlighted advocacy work in newsletters this quarter: • Iowa Federation for the Blind & Iowa Council of the United Blind (Accessible Rx) • Iowa Mental Health Advocacy's work on commitments for children • American Heart Association (cardiac emergency response plans) Devoted entire Spring issue of INFONET to highlighting the success and work of four super advocates: • Stacy Ring (Medicaid Managed Care) • Zach Mecham (Let Us Work!) • Kevin Harris (HIPPP Program) • Wendy Anderson (Special Education)
Objective 1.4: In collaboration with our DD network partners, annually the DD Council will provide advocacy and voter training to young adults (18-26) with developmental disabilities across all populations in two rural communities. The Council will reduce the lack of civic engagement and increase self-advocacy in rural areas for youths with developmental disabilities. This is our targeted disparity goal.	
With the assistance of Council members, seek out opportunities in Council members' rural communities to host and/or sponsor advocacy and voter training and townhall meetings.	N/A
Engage YLA graduates and community ambassadors with hosting these events in their communities.	N/A
Partner with our DD network partners including to promote events and host events.	N/A
Continue to sustain relationships developed by adapting DD Council tools, training, and resources so people can better advocate for their needs and stay engaged and informed.	N/A

Goal #2 (Systems Change): Improve policy and practice that positively supports services, supports and communities for people with developmental disabilities.

Objective 2.1: Annually, target at least three key policy proposals (e.g. legislation, executive orders, or regulations being announced) to identify opportunities to educate policymakers about the impact of specific policies and make recommendations to ensure policies align with the principles of the Developmental Disabilities Act and the legislative priorities of the DD Council.

Research state and federal public policies and trends effecting people with disabilities and share information to keep people informed.

The following policies were shared on social media, INFONET, and Capitol Chats:

- Employment Policies:
 - o Vocational Rehabilitation included in unemployment “work search” activities
 - o Work Opportunity Tax Credit
 - o Let Us Work/Work Without Worry
- Education Policies:
 - o Classroom clears/discipline of “disruptive students” and LRE/IDEA law
 - o Pilot separate school for students in special ed or with challenging behaviors
 - o Teacher preparation & education on IEPs and LRE
 - o Cardiac Emergency Response Plans in schools
 - o Epinephrine delivery systems in schools
- Health/Medicaid Policies:
 - o Medicaid funding and provider rates
 - o Money Follows the Person changes
 - o HCBS lawsuit by six states (who do not want to provide HCBS)
 - o MEPD Expansion/Work Without Worry
 - o HMO tax to support Medicaid
 - o Managed care codification
 - o Public Assistance/SNAP reform
 - o Durable Medical Equipment Pilot Program
 - o Governor’s Healthy Hometowns (MAHA)
 - o Accessible prescription information
 - o Defense of Medical Ethics Act
- Behavioral Health Policies:
 - o Commitment changes
 - o Subacute care barriers

	- Voting Policies: - o Checks for legal status against federal databases - o Eliminating voter attestation - Other Policies: - o National Caregiver Support Hotline - o President's budget (disability funding cuts) - o Insurer ban on discriminating against living organ donors - o 2/3 majority for income tax increases - o Moving Special Education/Civil Rights Offices (federal)
Develop Policy briefs and/or white papers with key recommendations.	Researched, wrote, posted, and emailed 1 bill of the week: • SF 2474 (K-12 Cardiac Emergency Response Plans)
Facilitate strong relationships with community organizations.	Continued to communicate common legislative policy goals with Brain Injury Alliance, On With Life, ChildServe, Easterseals, Interfaith Alliance, League of Women Voters of Iowa, ACLU, AARP, Iowa PCA, Iowa Association of Community Providers, AEAs, IASB, ISEA, SAFE Center, Iowa Bar Association, American Cancer Society, AARP, Area Agencies on Aging, and Disability Rights. Participated in Disability Advocacy Day on April 1 and highlighted event's success in weekly Capitol Report.
Collaborate with DD network partners (DRI and CDD) to identify issues and needs.	See above.
Foster relationships with policymakers to influence policy by meeting with key leaders prior to the 2026 session.	N/A
Participate and provide public comment in commissions and council meetings and before administrative rules and legislative committees.	Highlighted opportunities for public comment: • Department of Education's Special Education Accountability Plan (link)

With Council members and DD network partners, develop an annual list of policy priorities that increase community living for people with disabilities.	N/A
Educate policymakers and other state leaders about gathering input from people with disabilities and sharing information in plain language.	N/A

Objective 2.2: With the use of DD Council resources, people with disabilities and/or their family members will educate policy makers about proposed new legislation and/or policy changes or about an issue important to them.

Use <i>infoNET</i> to inform Iowans with disabilities and their families about policies that impact community living and inclusion.	Distributed one seasonal issue (Spring 2026) of INFONET. Specific issues shared with advocates and opportunities for public comment are listed in 2.1.
Share grassroots success stories of people advocating for themselves locally and at the state and federal levels.	Devoted entire Spring issue of INFONET to highlighting the success and work of four super advocates: • Stacy Ring (Medicaid Managed Care) • Zach Mecham (Let Us Work!) • Kevin Harris (HIPPP Program) • Wendy Anderson (Special Education) Also included the following in weekly newsletters and social media posts: • Accessible RX bill passage (Iowa Council for the United Blind, Iowa Federation of the Blind) • Disability Advocacy Day/Medicaid messaging (variety of groups) • Alex Watters speaking at national employment event.
Support and collaborate with the Iowa Family Leadership Training Institute to help families advocate for themselves and others.	N/A

Host regular (at least monthly) policy calls with advocates and stakeholders during the legislative session for discussion and questions about proposed legislation	Capture keeps information about demographics of attendees and survey responses. Hosted four Capitol Chat this quarter (three 30-minute, one hour long): • <u>April 3 – 188 advocates attended/viewed:</u> ○ 33 attended (58 registered) ○ 155 watched recording (69 ASL) • <u>April 17 – 108 advocates attended/viewed:</u> ○ 28 attended (62 registered) ○ 70 watched video (21 ASL) • <u>May 8 – 143 advocates attended/viewed:</u> ○ 22 attended (39 registered) ○ 121 watched video (40 ASL) • <u>June 18 – 187 advocates attended/viewed:</u> ○ 47 attended (51 registered) ○ 150 watched video (99 ASL)
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Goal #3 (Capacity Building): By 2026, communities will be strengthened so that people with developmental disabilities will have the supports they need to live and thrive in the community.

Objective 3.1: Through annual training, technical assistance, and resources, the DD Council will collaborate the DD network, state agencies, and community programs to improve competitive integrated employment outcomes for people with disabilities.	
Partner with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, the Iowa Coalition on Integrated Employment, and our DD network to provide training opportunities to community rehabilitation providers.	N/A

Through infoNET, APSE partners, and our DD Council network promote National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month with various activities with local and state officials and legislators.	N/A
Share employment success stories, with advocates, stakeholders, legislators, and community businesses. Including stories about graduates from comprehensive transition programs (i.e. REACH).	N/A
Sponsor and collaborate with DD partners (the Autism Society, Association of People Supporting Employment First, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, and others) to host employment-specific conferences for people with disabilities and their families.	N/A
With our DD network partners educate legislators on barriers for people with disabilities to gain employment and offer solutions.	Assisted DD Council Public Policy Manager to promote Work Without Worry & Let Us Work activities and the barriers to work that Medicaid puts in place for lowans with Disabilities (and policy solutions/options that other states have implemented to address these barriers).
Objective 3.2: By September 30, 2026, the DD Council will partner with the DD network, state agencies, and/or other community programs to respond to emergent needs that impact individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.	
Work with community partners to host community conversations to determine emergent issues that could be addressed through new initiatives supported by the DD Council.	N/A
Develop and communication informational briefs on lessons learned.	N/A

Implement the use of the health advocacy toolkit.	N/A
Continue to partner with the IABLE staff to provide education about the IABLE accounts to increase independency of people with DD.	N/A

Objective 3.3: The DD Council will partner with the Division of Aging and Disabilities Department within the Health and Human Services and other DD network partners to improve policies and practices to support aging adults and their families and older lowans.

Facilitate a community of practice with members of the State Alliance Team to edit resources in clear language.	N/A
Develop resources on alternatives to guardianship.	N/A