

## January 6, 2026 Executive Committee Minutes

**Attendee Council Members:** George Thompson, Wendy Andersen, Kevin Harris, Casey Wilkinson, Charlene Wyatt Sauer

**Council Staff:** Brooke Lovelace, Carlyn Crowe

**Absent:**

A meeting of the Iowa Developmental Disability Council (DD Council) Executive Committee (EC) was held virtually on January 6, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by Thompson.

### Funding Update:

- Lovelace reported that when the federal government opened, approximately three weeks later we received a partial Notice of Award (NOA) of \$258,000. We have spent approximately \$100,000 of that. We have approximately \$240,000 left from 2025 funding. Lovelace reported that we have no word on when we will receive the next NOA but it is typical over the last several years to receive only partial funding. Lovelace reminded everyone that there is still not a final budget.

### 2026 Budget Review:

- Reviewed budget through end of November. Lovelace will try and update costs through December prior to full council meeting although it may be until next meeting we see updated numbers.
- We have \$240,000 funds for 2025. We have \$100,000 left from current NOA
- Lovelace explained that the Iowa Communication Network Costs (ICN) are higher than budgeted for as these costs used to come out of the HHS Cost Allocation Line. Lovelace stated that fiscal says we should see a decrease the HHS Cost Allocation because of this. The ICN costs cover network and survey connection, WI-FI and cellphones.
- Thompson would like to review later the HHS Cost Allocation to see if the costs did go down

### Hiring Update

- Administrative Assistant Position posted on January 5<sup>th</sup>. It will be open until the 15<sup>th</sup>. Lovelace asked the EC to share the posting. We will save funds by having

Creating change with and for persons with developmental disabilities so they can live, work, learn and play in the community of their choosing.

this position open for a while. We also may hire someone not at same salary level as Hommer who was at the cap. Lovelace and Crowe will interview at the end of January, first of February.

## **Mentoring updates with council members**

- Lovelace reviewed assignments for EC to mentor. EC members agreed to reach back out to the members they agreed to mentor.
- Thompson stated he thinks this is still worthwhile to do and we should continue to do it throughout the year.
- Lovelace stated that she is continuing to offer office hours before the council members to all members. There wasn't any attendance for the January Lovelace will see if members want to meet one-on-one.
- Lovelace discussed doing a Council member survey to evaluate how the council is doing, how the executive director is doing, how is the chair doing and how they feel they are doing as council members. This could be used as a tool to see what else the EC and Staff could be doing. It was agreed to do this in May or June. It should also be anonymous as possible. We could use peers to help those who may need help.

## **Workplan discussion/ Stateplan:**

- Lovelace and Crowe could not update the workplan for today's meeting. The federal report was due at the end of December and that took up our time.
- Lovelace reviewed the stateplan chart. Wyatt Sauer stated she liked the chart format.
- Wyatt Sauer brought up the public comment period for the HHS HOME project (Hope and Opportunity in Many environments). She noted the information given during the recent HHS listening sessions had her feeling overwhelming. She asked if the Council should have a role in helping navigate public comments. This was discussed an education component activity in the Stateplan. Anderson stated that education is not enough but that they need to take action and we should help them with that as well.
- Harris suggested the Council for the public comment could pull out information for people and what we think they should make public comment on to make it easier.

- It was agreed that we bring these concerns to HHS Director Johnson who is on the agenda for the full Council meeting Thursday. Thompson agreed to reach out to the Director to let him know about these concerns ahead of time.
- Crowe suggested changing the wording in the 2.1 objective to empower advocates to make changes.

## **State plan public comment period and listening sessions**

- Lovelace reminded EC that the full Council will need to vote on objectives and goals in March. It needs to be out for public comment for 45 days in March and April. There will be a press release, emails, social media posts and listening sessions. It was agreed to do three listening sessions virtually. EC members agreed to facilitate once we decide dates.

## **Iowa Disability Policy Alliance update**

- Lovelace gave an update on this group. A member agreement has been finalized. We will begin asking organizations to agree on our areas of priorities. Priorities include employment, Medicaid and education. Alliance steering committee will meet weekly.
- Harris asked about registering for and against bills. Lovelace explained if the UCEDD signed on to the Member Agreement we cannot sign on for or against a bill.

## **Legislative open house and reception update**

- Crowe shared that the council and legislators have been invited to the Virtual Open House, January 7, 2026. Public Policy Committee will lead. It will be shared that since the priorities didn't change, this is an update. Rain, Waters, Mecham and Lloyd will speak. National Federation for the Blind will talk about voting.
- Crowe shared Allies working on news conference and their reception that will happen with the DD Council's reception on January 28, 2026. Crowe working on talking points.

## **Iowa Wolves event/other events**

- Thompson encouraged people to attend the Wolves event on February 7, 2026. Only seven have bought tickets so far.
- Lovelace shared the IAble training on January 21, 2026

## **Bridging Aging and Disability Network update**

- Lovelace discussed the work of this grant, such as the Managed Care toolkit in clear language, demonstration project in Supported Decision Making. Iowa applied for a grant for this. Lovelace also shared the Disability Rights Iowa training on Disability Rights. A video of the training will be done this January.

## **Cultural diversity discussion**

- Lovelace stated we will be translating the Guardianship handbook in three languages. The UCEDD is partnering on this
- Discussion on the opening we have on the Council for the Title V Program representative. Brenneman retired. A new person has applied but not appointed
- Next meeting we will need to discuss recruiting for EC members and full council members.
- Other possible members for the Council were discussed that represent populations not represented on the Council.

## **Other items:**

- Thompson discussed is conversation with Hy-Vee on potential collaboration on employment initiatives. Although they might not be able to support employment bills, they would be interested giving us airtime that they pay for to share information.
- Wyatt Sauer shared these links for more information on the HOME project :
- <https://hhs.iowa.gov/medicaid/about-medicaid/medicaid-projects/home/public-comment-information>
- <https://hhs.iowa.gov/media/17845/download?inline>

## **Adjourn:**

Thompson adjourned meeting at 11:44 AM.

## **Action Items:**

- Thompson will email Director Johnson about our questions on the HOME Project
- Lovelace will send out updated budget
- Crowe will work on public comment for HOME Project and how to share information.