

June 30, 2023 Legislative Committee Minutes

Attendee Legislative Committee Council Members: Matthew Conaway, Roxanne Cogil, Brady Werger, Kevin Harris, Mark Smith

Absent Council Members:

Council Staff: Brooke Lovelace, Carlyn Crowe, Lindsay Hommer

Public: Emma Bouza

Welcome

Crowe welcomed all attendees

Legislative Agenda for Next Year

Crowe shared rough draft of legislative agenda outline (Appendix A) and asked for input. She emphasized that this is a working document, meant to be inclusive of current and anticipated policy priorities and will serve as our operating plan--it is not intended to be distributed to the public. Our legislative agenda will be developed from this.

Our mission statement is at the top of the document to keep us focused. Crowe suggested we may want a policy mission statement also.

Crowe stated that how we might describe our agenda this year is that we are looking for equity.

Key policy areas:

1) Education – What needs to be addressed for students with disabilities in Iowa. Harris stated we need to address both public and private schools. Crowe stated there is a document (produced by a legislative committee two years ago) that had recommendations for how private schools work with special education that we need to do education on. Cogil stated we need to be consistent with public and non-public or private school wording. Lovelace suggested we shorten the list to three or four items we want to address. Smith stated we may be able to get testimonials from people that use Area Education Agencies (AEA) funding and are now not getting the supports they need.

2) Employment – Lovelace suggested unemployment rates for people with disabilities versus people without. Harris suggested comparing with neighboring states. Lovelace stated we should remove the statement that says Iowa is a leader in education. Cogil suggested the Council meet with the Governor's office about the Employment Initiative Program and incorporating the opportunity for people with disabilities to be employed. Lovelace stated it is very difficult to get a meeting with the Governor. Werger stated he will have a meeting with the Governor this year and will ask if other Council members are able to attend the meeting also. Lovelace stated we will support Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) grants which would go towards eliminating sub-minimum wage. We should also take into consideration some of the recommendations that the Department of Justice (DOJ) settlement will have. Lovelace stated we need to remove "Support DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) programs as an option to put in the legislative agenda. Crowe stated that is important to have this on our radar because DEI

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efforts include people with disabilities. We don't have to have it on our agenda but we need to be prepared to educate and advocate on it.

3) Access to Care – Lovelace stated we should support the restructuring of the waivers suggestions coming from Mathematica. Liz Matney stated that they are going to do an analysis and find out how many people are direct support professionals that are also on Medicaid. If they can raise the wages high enough to eliminate them from being on Medicaid, it would be a savings. Harris asked about the wage theft issue and if this is employers not paying their employees or is this done through garnishments. Crowe stated she will do more research but saw research that it affects people with disabilities disproportionately.

4) A supportive community – This would include the Purple alert system and Project Lifesaver. The Autism Collaborative, which is comprised of the Autism Society and Autism Speaks, we could get research from. Universal changing tables are also being considered as a policy priority for federal law by several disability advocacy organizations.

Crowe stated we could have second page that includes budget considerations and recommendations.

A guide for advocates to get their comments in directly to legislators could also be included.

Cogil asked if we know of any bills that are pre-filed for next session that addresses any of these issues. Crowe stated we do not know of any but will look at past bills that have been introduced. Lovelace suggested we be more specific in our asks this year. Cogil brought up that telehealth should be available and access to specialists should be expanded to include neighboring states.

Legislative Committee

Crowe shared legislative committee roles and responsibilities draft (Appendix B). Crowe stated she would like to have a Chairperson for this committee that would work with her. Lovelace stated this may need to be a formal committee and not an ad-hoc committee. Lovelace stated we will put making the legislative committee an official committee or an ad-hoc on the EC committee agenda.

Next Meeting

July 19, 2PM

Action Items

Crowe asked the committee to review the two documents and please respond with comments by Friday, July 14. She will update the documents for the meeting on July 19.

Appendix A:

Legislative/Policy Agenda – DRAFT –this is a working document, not for public view

NOTE: Consider this as an internal operating plan from which we will develop our public-facing legislative agenda.

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Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council Mission

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

Also add more description

Keys to Success for Iowans with Disabilities

(develop this or something similar as an overarching brand)

The keys to success for people with disabilities and their families are the same as for everyone—a good **education**, access to **quality health care**, **employment** or other source of income, and a **supportive community**.

The difference is equity – people with disabilities must access these services differently because of their disability.

As a state, Iowa can support equity for people with disabilities so that they have the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and achieve the success they desire!

Key Policy Areas that will support (or create) Equity for Iowans with Disabilities EDUCATION

Where we are:

Iowa is known as a leader in education. More students than ever are requiring special education services. (add data)

What success looks like:

Students with disabilities...

Testimony from people who have lost services

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What we can do about it—keys to success:

- Fully fund special education for Iowa's public and (non-public/private) school students
- Bring AEA funding back to levels....
- Fund parent support groups/peer networks (need names) who assist educators
- Develop family navigator programs and peer advisor program
- IDEAE – literacy and transition (schools don't know what they are supposed to be doing) (lots of schools in level 3 in this area)
- Support comprehensive transition programs and services and
- Support in-school care programs and trainings for specific health conditions (epilepsy safety response)
- Classroom safety for students with disabilities
- Develop school programs on disability history and rights

EMPLOYMENT

Where we are:

Data compared to Midwest and national

What success looks like:

What we can do about it—keys to success:

NEED to research and design—considerations:

- What is killing job opportunities for PWD?
- What is holding them back from full participation?
- How can they reach their highest potential?
- Caregivers who are not participating in the workforce because they are caring for loved ones
- Eliminate all sub minimum wage 14c "sheltered workshops"
- Support DIF grant initiatives for competitive integrated employment
- Stop wage theft (look Common Good Iowa) note effects on people with disabilities
- Child labor laws and effect on people with disabilities

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- Support rural broadband and high speed internet infrastructure
- Support a public transportation infrastructure for PWD
- Support IVRS and connect to Future Ready Iowa
- Support all efforts to improve the DSP workforce
- Support DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) programs
- (will there be DOJ issues to look at)

ACCESS TO CARE

Where we are:

What success looks like:

What we can do about it—keys to success:

NEED to research and design—considerations:

- Eliminate waiver waiting lists so that care can be accessed when needed
- Support all efforts to improve the DSP workforce
- Protect and enhance Medicaid
- Supporting the restructuring of waivers
- DSPs on Medicaid and other public assistance programs
- Accessing specialists locally for those on Medicaid? ie approved providers cross borders or telehealth
- Provider rates

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

Where we are:

What success looks like:

What we can do about it—keys to success:

NEED to research and design—considerations:

- Purple alert system

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- Some of the autism considerations
- Statewide project lifesaver
- Access to voting and caucuses
- Universal changing tables (might be federal)

Budget Considerations/Recommendations – separate page

Include

IVRS

AEAs

Medicaid

DSP

Consider adding this somewhere....

Guide for Advocates-- How can your voice be heard in the legislature?

- Contact your legislators directly
- Subcommittees on bills
- Councils, boards and commissions of the state all take public comment – list them

Appendix B:

Legislative Committee Roles & Responsibilities - DRAFT

Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council

The Legislative Committee is an ad-hoc committee with goals of advancing state and federal legislation, policy and funding that enhance opportunities for Iowans with disabilities. (this should be in line with our policy philosophy and goals.)

Membership is comprised interested members of the Council and other interested individuals. Those with advocacy and/or policy-making expertise are welcomed.

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Committee Expectations:

- With support from staff, annually submit policy priorities and legislative agenda for Council approval.
- With support from staff, annually submit objectives and a work plan for the committee as part of the planning and budgeting process.
- The committee will meet monthly and more frequently during the legislative session (to be determined) and on an “as-needed” basis or at the request of any members of the committee. Meetings may be held in person or via Zoom.
- Regularly advise the staff and Council on the needs and policy concerns of Iowans with disabilities to provide
- Advocate for state and federal legislation, policy and funding that supports the Council’s mission and goals
- Facilitate and support outreach to advocates and stakeholders on the policy changes, proposals, bills and calls to action
- With support from staff, annually evaluate its work as a committee and the objectives it has committed itself to

Public Policy Manager and Chair Responsibilities:

- Provide leadership for the committee
- Develop agenda, facilitate meetings and guide communication and discussion
- Serve as spokesperson within the organization for the committee
- Provide research as needed for the committee
- With assistance of staff, record minutes during the meeting
- Stay in regular communication with members
- Bring action items and recommendations from the Committee to the Executive Director and Council

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- Committee will review the committee charter, committee work plan and committee membership. Any members who have not attended regular meetings or documented activities to promote the committee's objectives for a period of 6 consecutive months will be removed from the membership list.

Committee Members Responsibilities:

- Serves in an advisory role to guide the committee
- Expresses ideas and provides input
- Actively participates in meetings, contributing to the discussion, brainstorming and sharing innovative ideas
- Reviews material and provides input for improvement
- Serves as internal/external linkages for the Council to open doors to further the Council's mission and vision.
- Participate in the development and implementation of the committee work plan
- Committee members should anticipate giving an average of 2-3 hours per month to complete the activities.