

## Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council Meeting Minutes November 10, 2022

### **Council Member Attendees:**

In Person: Hugh Kelly, Kristen Aller, Mike Vratsinas, Judy Warth, Brady Werger, Steve Steveson, Mark Smith, Eric Evans, Roxanne Cogil, Rob Roozeboom, Julie Bergeson, Kevin Harris, George Thompson  
Virtual Attendance: Mike Hoenig, Matthew Conaway, Jean Willard, Brittney Drinovsky

**Council Staff:** Brooke Lovelace and Lindsay Hommer

**Council Members Absent:** Tiffiny Poage, Scott Lyon, Paula Motsinger, Alecia Balduf, Kitty Hedderich, Carol Cross, Amber Gale

**Members of the Public:** Ed Palmer (Brady's support staff), Amy Robasse – Executive Director at the Iowa Statewide Independent Living Council, Maggie Ferguson – Health and Human Services (HHS), Brandy McOmber – Vocational Rehabilitation, Mike Lightbody and Julia Ganda – Center for Disabilities and Development, Emily Koss and Teri Freeman – Capture Management Solutions,

### **Call to Order:**

Council Chair Werger called the Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council (DD Council) meeting to order on November 10, 2022, at 10:33 AM. A quorum was established.

### **Welcome and Introductions:**

All meeting attendees introduced themselves.

### **Agenda Item/Approval of Minutes and Agenda:**

Willard had a correction from the September 8, 2022 minutes. It states in the minutes that she is a member of the policy committee and she is not. Lovelace stated it should be Cogil instead of Willard. Warth motioned to approve the minutes as modified from the September 8, 2022 meeting, and Smith seconded. Motion approved. Agenda motioned to be approved by Hoenig, Cogil seconded. Motion approved.

### **Executive Committee (EC) report:**

#### **Actions and Recommendations since September Meeting:**

Lovelace stated we are close to hiring a Public Policy Manager. Hopefully this will be done next week. A Legislative Committee meeting was held on October 14th. The legislative agenda was reviewed, edited, and finalized.

Werger said it was a privilege to be on the interview panel for the Public Policy Manager position. It was Werger's first experience doing interviews for the DD Council. It was a rewarding experience. Hoenig

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stated that he is excited that we are close to hiring a Public Policy Manager and that the legislative agenda looks great.

## **Budget Review:**

Final budget for 2022 was reviewed by Lovelace. 2020 funds have all been spent. On the Final 2022 budget sheet, it shows we had \$119,485.31 left to spend. Invoices hadn't come in yet. We will be carrying over \$50,000 of these funds. \$392,324.38 funds are left for 2022. We will receive a new appropriation for 2023. DD Council met with the Department of Human Services fiscal department and our budget reconciles. Thompson asked where the vaccine spending came from and how it was spent. Lovelace stated that we spent most of this and this was separate money that the federal government gave us. We did a campaign to help people feel comfortable getting the vaccine. We ended up reverting \$4,746 to the federal government that we did not spend. Smith asked if there was an average amount returned to the federal government from our budget yearly. Lovelace stated we have spent all of 2020 and will spend all of 2021. Lovelace reviewed October 2022 budget. We have approximately \$45,000 left to spend for 2021 and we asked to carryover \$50,000 so this will be spent. Lovelace stated we haven't received our 2023 appropriation yet, but it will be around the \$774,176.00 that we received last year. Lovelace reviewed the Obligation chart. Hoenig asked if we are over obligated for 2022. Lovelace stated that we are over obligated for the 2022 and 2023 award. We are able to spend funding from the future year if we overspend. Lovelace reviewed the Spending chart. Warth asked if the DD Council could partner with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and use draw down dollars. Lovelace stated she wasn't sure if this could be done with state funds. Warth stated that VR with their federal funding does a three for one match. So, if we took \$10,000 of our appropriation, we could possibly create \$40,000. Lovelace stated that right now we use the state funding of \$35,000 to help pay for salaries. Lovelace stated she would check into if the state funds have to be used for salaries or not. Aller asked for budget handouts to be enlarged when printed.

## **Legislative Agenda:**

Lovelace shared the legislative agenda and stated that the Legislative Agenda is finalized. The Legislative Agenda will be printed tomorrow. A hard copy of the Legislative Agenda and an invite to the DD Council virtual open house will be mailed to all legislators. January 5, 2023 at 11AM is the DD Council virtual open house. Lovelace asked that all council members reach out to their legislators and invite them to the DD Council virtual open house. Lovelace stated that the Council will also share the Legislative Agenda with the legislators February 1, 2023 at the legislative breakfast at the capitol from 7:30am – 10:30am. Cogil asked where the breakfast will be held. Lovelace stated it will be in a corner of the capitol rotunda. Council members are also requested to attend this.

## **Workplan Review:**

Lovelace is concerned with the targeted disparity goal, Objective 1.4. We changed the original objective at the request of the Administration on Community Living to target youth in rural areas. We scheduled three voter trainings in Sheldon, Sigourney, and Spencer for young adults ages 16-26. These had to be cancelled due to lack of registrants. For next year we would like to do advocacy trainings in the school systems. Warth has volunteered to assist with this. Lovelace stated we are going to try to pilot one in the Sheldon/Spencer area. Cogil stated she could check with her school system in Panorama about this. Lovelace stated we could get people registered to vote even though next year is not a voting year. We would focus mostly on advocacy next year due to it not being a voting year. Hoenig stated they just did a podcast interview with a social work practicum student at Center for Disabilities and Development (CDD.) The student works with the special education teacher who teaches in the Waco school district. Hoenig offered to reach out to her. We would like to try these new trainings in those communities first, but if we find out that this model works, we can expand it.

## **Direct Support Professional Publication:**

Lovelace stated we are collecting stories now for this publication. We are highlighting the great work that our direct support professionals do. We are partnering on this project with VR, University Centers for Excellence on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), ASK Resource Centers, Iowa Caregivers Association, and the Iowa Association of Community Providers.

## **Disability Innovation Fund Grant:**

### ***Brandy McOmber – Vocational Rehabilitation – Project director for DIF Grant***

What is a DIF grant. It is a Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Grant. For Iowa it is called the Iowa Blueprint for Change. Funds are provided through a consolidated appropriations act. VR agencies receive federal funds and then those funds are matched with state funds. The US Department of Education uses this pot of money to fund a variety of innovative activities aimed at increasing competitive integrated employment for youth and adults with disabilities. The topic of the grant that VR applied for in 2022 was for subminimum wage. The goal was to look for projects to assist individuals with disabilities that are currently either in subminimum wage settings or those that are contemplating subminimum wage settings. Iowa was one of fourteen states that was awarded this grant. The fourteen states will work together to disseminate information to each other and to the public for the next five years. VR had assistance with this project from many Iowa agencies. To affect change, VR really wanted to look at systems level change to move from the consideration of subminimum wage into competitive integrated employment (CIE) as well as things like developing policies. The overall goal is to advance and improve systems so that Iowans with disabilities have CIE opportunities that lead to economic security. Total grant funds received were \$13,875,048.55. Grant project time is October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2027. The first objective is to establish and engage a coalition of diverse

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stakeholders to develop, pilot, refine, and implement collaborative systems change models that support lowans with disabilities who are employed or contemplating employment at subminimum wage to move into CIE. Objective two is to utilize the US Department of Labor's recognized Direct Support Professional Registered Apprenticeship (RA) and Pre-Apprenticeship (PA) programs as a model to recruit, train, and retain interested lowans with disabilities into CIE. Objective three is to increase ongoing delivery of preparation, placement, and support services that begin in early high school and result in uninterrupted transition to CIE for youth with disabilities. Objective four is to facilitate an increase in lowans with disabilities with obtaining and maintaining CIE that leads to economic security. Objective five is to increase expectation and demand for CIE for all lowans with disabilities. Objective six is align public policies, funding, and practices that support CIE as the first and preferred outcome for all lowans with disabilities. They are looking at three contracts as part of the grant. The contracts would be with University of Iowa who would be the evaluators. They would look at the activities that VR is doing and make sure they can be disseminated and replicated. The next would be with Griffin-Hammis Associates. They would work with VR to continue the focus and efforts on customized employment, help with model design, and with the pilots. The third will be with Iowa Coalition for Integrated Employment (ICIE.) ICIE will be considered the backbone agency of the project. They will have the boots on the ground for coordination of the project. The budget consists of six areas: project participant supports, equipment and Assisted Technology (AT), pilot costs, training and professional development, travel/supplies, and staff and contract costs. Aller asked if there is an age limit for participants. Brandy McOmber stated it is for people ages 14 and older. Hoenig asked if they are working with the Department of the Blind. Brandy McOmber stated VR has invited The Department of the Blind to collaborate with this grant. Conaway asked if they are hiring staff. Brandy McOmber stated that ICIE will have several positions. ICIE hires on their own and VR will not have a hand in it. VR may be able to hire two full-time positions with funding from the federal government. Cogil stated that this is wonderful that VR is working all the different groups. Cogil stated that in rural areas, transportation is not available on weekends and at night. Cogil asked if this will be addressed. Brandy McOmber said they can assist with transportation for project participants. Harris asked about objective one and how people are paid under minimum wage. Warth stated there is a certificate through the Department of Labor that agencies can obtain for youth with disabilities to pay them subminimum wage. Aller asked for all the acronyms to be wrote out.

## **Public Health Workforce Grant with the Center for Disabilities and Development:**

***Mike Lightbody and Julia Ganda – Center for Disabilities and Development***

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Mike Lightbody stated that in March 2020 they were getting a lot of calls at Iowa Compass from people needing assistance and feeling overwhelmed. They used some funding through Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) called Covid Recovery Iowa to hire staff and reach out people and see if they needed any assistance and check in with them. Iowa Compass is still funded for this and are still reaching out to people via phone calls and Zoom. The public health workforce grant will allow them to meet with people in-person. They would like peers to do the outreach work. The peers would be trained as mental health ambassadors. They have identified twelve communities throughout the state they would like to implement this outreach. There is a public health intervention model called the "House Party model." It's a small intimate setting where people share resources and ideas. They would like people to share how they feel which tends to be a struggle for people to do. In six months to a year they hope to have this program going. When there is another disaster, they would like to have people able to mobilize to assist. Hoenig stated that he is understanding, that initially, the mental health ambassadors will be paid through FEMA funds. Hoenig asked how long the FEMA funds will be available and is the program sustainable. Mike Lightbody responded that the mental health ambassadors are paid through stipends through the Public Health Workforce Grant. Lovelace commented that that the DD Council and the UCEDD are funding this project.

Werger asked how this program will look and if it will be similar to the current ambassador program already in place. Mike Lightbody stated he thinks they are talking about two different programs. The Community Living ambassadors and Mental Health ambassadors are two different programs. The Mental Health ambassadors want to explore the mental health wellness of people.

Lovelace asked what communities the project is looking to work with. Mike Lightbody stated the communities they are looking at are: Northwest (Sioux City) Southwest (Council Bluffs) North (Mason City, Spencer, Spirit Lake) North Central (Fort Dodge, Storm Lake) West Central (Carroll, Des Moines, Pella) South Central (Atlantic, Decatur, Lamoni) Central (Ames, Marshalltown) Northeast (Decorah, Waterloo) East Central (Cedar Rapids, Iowa City) Southeast (Burlington, Fairfield, Fort Madison, Keokuk, Muscatine, Oskaloosa, Ottumwa) East (Clinton, Dubuque, Quad Cities)

Aller asked if she heard him say something about peer support. Mike Lightbody stated that one of things they learned at Covid Recovery Iowa is to connect people with peers.

Werger asked if Iowa Warm Line could help train the peer support specialists. Mike Lightbody said this is a good idea.

Mike Lightbody asked if anyone knew why it is hard for people with developmental disabilities to share their feelings. Vratsinas said it's hard for him to share feelings. Kelly stated it is not hard for him. Hoenig stated that it may be hard to develop a trusting relationship via the phone or on Zoom where people are comfortable opening up. Hoenig stated that developing a rapport over time may be what's needed. Warth stated that most people in general have problems talking about feelings. Roozeboom stated this is a culture issue, not a developmental disabilities

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issue. Talking face to face is better and training others to ask the right questions is also key. Thompson stated that peer to peer support is important. Lovelace stated Mike Lightbody will be invited back to provide updates on the program in a later meeting, perhaps in May 2023.

## **Make Your Mark Conference Review:**

### ***Teri Freeman and Emily Koss – Capture Management Solutions***

Make Your Mark! Conference was held on September 14-15, 2022 at Prairie Meadows in Altoona, Ia. The theme was “Knowledge is a Superpower, Make it Yours.” The sponsors of the conference were CareSource, IABLE, Amerigroup, UCEDD, and ChildServe. CareSource was the top level sponsor of the conference. ChildServe participated with the sensory room. Thank you to all the volunteers. The exhibitors that were present at the conference were ASK Resource Center, Community Living Ambassadors, Disability Rights Iowa, Easterseals Iowa, Epilepsy Foundation Iowa, infoNET, Iowa Talent Bank, Iowa Total Care, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, NAMI Iowa, Neurocrine Biosciences, Straw Hat Farms of Marion County, Talk to Me Technologies, and Telecommunications Access Iowa. Total attendance this year was 148, 53 were individuals with disabilities, 29 family members, 47 other, 4 sponsors, and 15 exhibitors. Total expenses for the conference were \$46,200. Total revenue was \$13,025. Total cost was \$33,000 for the DD Council. Lovelace stated we need to include what the Peterson family donates for her award. She believes it is around \$800. Emily Koss will check. Teri Freeman stated the two key-note speakers were Eric Garcia and Kayla McKeon. The general sessions were Disability Rights History, Connect to Advocacy: A Conversation with lawmakers, and Voter Education Panel. The breakout sessions were Intro to IABLE, Work Lets Your Superpower Shine, Community Living and Advocacy are Superpowered, Customized Discovery Leads to Competitive Integrated Employment, Developing Your Superpowers as a Leader/Board Member, and Community Inclusion Through Our Lens. A total of 15 people filled out the overall conference evaluation. 50% thought the conference was excellent, 43% thought it was very good, and 7% thought it was satisfactory. The total number of evaluations filled out throughout the conference was 259. Hoenig struggled to find the conference agenda on the website. Other council members stated they also had trouble finding the information for the conference on the website. Lovelace suggested that next year having council members test the site before it goes live may be helpful. Teri Freeman stated this was a good idea. Lovelace stated the planning committee could also review the website. Cogil stated the conference speakers were excellent. Lovelace stated we do hear sometimes people would like to cut the conference to one day. Werger stated he likes the two-day conference. Hoenig agreed. Thompson stated that most people it seems want a two-day conference. Werger stated after he registered, there was a list of sessions that he was supposed to pick to attend. Werger stated he wasn’t sure which ones he would be able to attend. Teri Freeman said he could mark which sessions he thought he would like to attend but then could change his mind and attend any of them. Teri Freeman said they use people’s choices just to determine room rental size. Warth stated that she believes Council members should assist more at the conference and not let a majority of the work fall on a few.

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Cogil stated that a lot of conferences are having lower attendee numbers post-pandemic. Lovelace stated that we can pay for mileage for volunteers to come to our conference but we cannot pay for someone to attend our conference. We may have to start charging people in the future to attend our conference. Emily Koss stated that the conference may be in a different location next year. Harris asked if hybrid is too expensive to do. Lovelace stated it costs about \$33,000 to do hybrid. Lovelace stated that the planning committee for Make Your Mark! will be put together soon and asked for DD Council members to let her know if they would like to be on it. Cogil suggested leadership be the theme for next year's conference.

## Council Updates:

Kelly represented the DD Council at the Autism conference last week.

Three weeks ago, at Warth's invite, Kelly interacted with employees from Health and Human Services (HHS) talking about what it is like living in the community with disabilities. Warth stated this was in relation to a diversity project. Diversity, equity, and inclusion were topics. Warth suggested they meet actual people and asked Kelly and five other people to sit on a panel and talk about their health, where they lived, where they worked, and quality of life topics.

Aller took part in a panel discussion at Drake a couple weeks ago virtually. They were teaching a course about people with disabilities and they wanted people to share their stories.

Hoenig said they are looking for family members and people with disabilities to come on their podcast. Kelly stated he could be interviewed. Cogil volunteered her daughter. The link to the Disability Exchange podcast is: <https://anchor.fm/disability-exchange>

Warth stated that Werger and her worked together to come up with an idea for council board mentors. Warth stated that partnering someone with lived experience and someone without is beneficial to both. Harris said that this is a great idea. Evans stated this goes along with our leadership discussion. Werger stated it is helpful to have a person to lean on for assistance. Warth will facilitate this and will be reaching out to council members to pair them up.

Lovelace stated it was also discussed to have state agency representatives give updates about what is happening in their agencies. Motsinger and Bergeson will present at January's meeting with updates from their agencies.

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Bergeson stated that the Department of Aging will be the 10<sup>th</sup> arm on the organization chart with the Department of HHS.

Next capitol chat is Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> and Liz Matney will be a guest.

## **Public Comments:**

None

**Adjourn:** Smith made a motion to adjourn, and Aller seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 2:19 PM.

## **Action Items:**

Enlarge budget handouts printouts if possible.

Lovelace will research what we can spend \$35,000 of state funding on.

Warth will facilitate creating board mentors for council members.

Council members will invite legislators to attend open house on January 5, 2023 and the legislative breakfast on February 1, 2023.

Motsinger and Bergeson will give brief updates next meeting and we will rotate among state agencies.