

State Plan Committee Meeting Minutes August 18, 2025

Committee Members: Casey Wilkinson, Wendy Andersen, George Thompson, Charlene Wyatt Sauer, Kevin Harris, Caitlin Owens

Council Staff: Brooke Lovelace, Carlyn Crowe, Lindsay Hommer

Committee Members Absent: None

Review SWOT Whiteboard:

- Owens, who had been absent from previous discussions, reviewed the analysis and noted that some strengths and weaknesses were overlapping.
- Charlene shared her experience visiting the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Berlin, drawing a parallel to the challenges of staffing rural nursing positions.
- The group agreed to continue focusing on identified strengths and opportunities while addressing areas for improvement.
- The group discussed the importance of creating and maintaining a "memory culture" around disability rights history, with Wyatt Sauer raising questions about the Council's role in preserving and sharing this history.
- They explored existing initiatives like training programs with Disability Rights Iowa and the potential for partnerships with organizations like the Harkin Institute to promote awareness of disability rights history and universal design.
- The discussion highlighted the need to educate both new advocates and the general public about the origins and significance of disability rights, with concerns raised about declining awareness of key historical events and figures in the disability rights movement.

Recommending we Limit Two Goal Areas:

- The group discussed simplifying their goal areas from three to two, focusing on leadership and advocacy, while considering whether to incorporate systems change under advocacy.
- Lovelace emphasized that while they must maintain an advocacy goal to meet federal requirements, they could consolidate some objectives.
- The team agreed to review their current activities and state plan to better understand the constraints and requirements for goal setting.
- It is required to support an organization that is run by people with disabilities.

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- Lovelace presented the state plan's advocacy goals, which include developing strong leaders, supporting self-advocacy, and addressing disparities.
- The group discussed consolidating the goals to make the plan more manageable and easier to report on.
- Harris suggested reversing the order of leadership and advocacy under system change activities.
- The team agreed they need to review and potentially reduce the number of objectives under each goal.
- Wyatt Sauer proposed simplifying the wording of the system change goal.
- Lovelace explained that the capacity building goal provides flexibility for various projects and grants.
- The group expressed concern about potential loss of grants tied to specific wording in the goals.

Discussion of Current Activities We Want to Continue:

- The group discussed ongoing programs and their effectiveness, with Andersen raising concerns about the cost-benefit ratio of certain initiatives like voting activities. Brooke explained they would continue these programs while exploring partnerships with DRI and the Secretary of State's office to improve efficiency. The team debated the number of goals to pursue, with Wyatt Sauer noting they had agreed on two goals related to leadership and advocacy, though Brooke clarified this hadn't been formally decided. Owens shared experience with streamlining goals from a previous role, suggesting it could improve effectiveness and reporting success.

Possible New or Expanded Activities:

- The group discussed their state plan goals, focusing on advocacy and leadership development for people with disabilities.
- They explored ways to incorporate storytelling and legislative outreach into their activities, with Wyatt Sauer suggesting using recorded stories as tools for advocacy.
- Andersen raised concerns about the lack of clear goals to fit these activities under, and Lovelace explained the current structure of their goals and objectives.
- The conversation ended with Lovelace mentioning that health activities was the top issue identified in their needs assessment, but this point was not further discussed.

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Other Areas of Focus or Activities from Needs Assessment that Need Addressed/Discussed:

- The group discussed key findings from a needs assessment, including increased awareness about disability and acceptance, workforce issues, and challenges with Medicaid navigation.
- Wyatt Sauer emphasized the importance of working with partners to address these issues, while Andersen shared her experience attending a Nebraska DD Council meeting and mentioned the availability of NACDD public policy meetings.
- The group also touched on the challenges of staffing for institutions and the need for better communication with families regarding available resources.

Targeted Disparity. People in Rural Areas were Identified. Discussion on How to Define an Actionable Objective. Themes From Surveys and Group Discussion:

- The group discussed challenges and opportunities for engaging council members and addressing issues in rural areas.
- They explored ways to educate council members about resources and policies, including national opportunities like NACDD self-advocacy clinics.
- The conversation focused on how to support people in rural areas, with suggestions including bonuses for caregivers, education initiatives, and virtual town halls to gather more specific input.
- Harris raised concerns about new Medicaid requirements and suggested keeping a pulse on emerging issues to inform council goals and advocacy efforts.
- The group discussed strategies for supporting rural communities in Iowa, focusing on youth and families with disabilities.
- They explored the idea of targeting one community per year to pilot initiatives, with Crowe suggesting a partnership approach where communities develop their own solutions with guidance and funding from the state.
- Lovelace highlighted the need to base decisions on survey data, particularly regarding rural areas, and proposed targeting both families and youth in rural communities for support.
- The group also discussed challenges in reaching parents with information about resources like ASK, and considered ways to create excitement around educational events.
- Thompson suggested focusing on providing good information to families at the time

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- of diagnosis, potentially in partnership with healthcare providers in rural areas.
- The group discussed plans to expand their youth transition program to rural areas, building on their successful YLA model.
 - They agreed to target 2-3 communities per year, partnering with schools, disability access points, and local organizations to provide resources and information to families of transitioning youth.
 - The group also explored ways to measure the program's impact and discussed the need to track the effects of policy changes on individuals with disabilities.
 - They considered collaborating with the Harkin Institute and other local organizations to amplify the voices of those impacted by these changes and potentially create merchandise featuring disability symbols to raise awareness.

<https://schoolbussigns.com/decals/handicapable-decal.html>

<https://www.redbubble.com/i/greeting-card/They-See-Me-Rollin-They-Hatin-Handicapable-by-creativecurly/31229351.5MT14>

Next meeting:

TBD

Action Items:

- Lovelace will set up a meeting with the new director of the Harkin Institute.
- Thompson will try to find the logo that a person at the Parent Teacher Organization used.

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