

# Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council's 2026 work plan

Blue Highlighted: We need help from the Council and/or much more needed here

Yellow Highlighted: New activities since last time

## Goal #1 (Advocacy):

**Develop strong advocates and leaders who create the positive change they want.**

<b>Objective 1.1 Annually increase the number of Iowans with developmental disabilities and family members who engage in the civic and political decision-making process.</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Host local Capitol days and town hall meetings.</li> <li>2. Provide training for 2026 General Election to both community and facility sites.</li> <li>3. Work with Secretary of State's Office to provide training to poll workers to ensure polling places are accessible and welcoming.</li> <li>4. Provide advocacy trainings and advertise our ability to offer this assistance.</li> <li>5. Host and support Make Your Mark! and other self and family advocacy conferences.</li> <li>6. Educate and inform advocates, stakeholders, and legislators, through infoNET, bills of the week social media posts, and emails.</li> <li>7. Increase the number of advocates connected to the DD Council Network. Develop marketing tools to engage people to join.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We awarded six grants and provided training to three other groups. Offering weekly mini advocacy training</li> <li>2. Primary voting education posted and SOS at May Capitol Chat</li> <li>3. Partnering with DRI and possibly other DD partners</li> <li>4. Work with DRI on this next session.</li> <li>5. Planning for MYM! Continues, keynote speakers confirmed</li> <li>6. Continued all through session Spring issue out. 12 bills of the week</li> <li>7. Work continues on database to make sure we can accurately track our network numbers</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Five advocacy groups visit Capitol during session. Three advocacy groups hold town hall meetings during off session.</li> <li>2. 200 Iowans attend voter trainings. Voter materials are updated at least annually to ensure they remain current.</li> <li>3. 20 poll workers educated.</li> <li>4. Training and Advocacy tools update 120 Iowans with Disabilities and family members are active participants in advocacy trainings.</li> <li>5. 100 Iowans with disabilities participate in the annual Make your Mark conference and other self and family advocacy conferences supported by the DD Council.</li> <li>6. Fifteen electronic issues of infoNet are produced, four print publications are produced. 8 bills</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. People with disabilities and family members learn about the legislative process and engage with lawmakers.</li> <li>2. People with disabilities using DD Council resources are registered and voting.</li> <li>3. People with disabilities and family members use the DD Council resources to stay informed and to increase their effectiveness as advocates.</li> </ol>

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	and add special categories	of the week are produced. 4000 stakeholders receive information. 7. Information is shared weekly through social media/and or emails. 50 new advocates connect with our network.	
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**Objective 1.2 Annually increase the number of lowans 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.**

Key Activities	Progress	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support peer-mentoring programs.</li> <li>2. Continue partnerships with our DD network to provide the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA).</li> <li>3. Support graduates of the youth leadership academy to engage in other councils, boards, community action groups at the local or state board.</li> <li>4. Work with DD network to train and mentor people with disabilities on how to be effective members of boards, councils, and commissions.</li> <li>5. Work with boards, councils, and commissions to share ways they can be more inclusive of people with disabilities and the importance of inclusion.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working with YLA alumni on this. Work with allies</li> <li>2. Planning happening, dates are set, marketing will being March</li> <li>3. 3 Alumni invited to Disability Advocacy day April 1<sup>st</sup>. Six alumni planned youth leadership track for Together we can conference and We continue to email out leadership opportunities</li> <li>4. We need to offer a training this year.</li> <li>5. Working with the Governors office to make the appointment system more accessible. Less boards and councils to work with</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. At least five people participate in a peer mentoring event or activity.</li> <li>2. 10 youth attend the Youth Leadership Academy.</li> <li>3. 100% of graduates of YLA are engaged in other leadership types of activities.</li> <li>4. 2 outreach events are held to create awareness of opportunities available on boards and commissions.</li> <li>5. At least one training is held for people with disabilities to be more effective. Council/commissions boards.</li> <li>6. Two or three conversations/meetings are held with leaders/chairs of boards and commissions on how to be more inclusive.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. lowans with disabilities are trained by their peers to advocate, be civically engaged and explore employment opportunities.</li> <li>2. Youth with disabilities are active as leaders in their communities and state boards and commissions.</li> <li>3. Boards and commissions are more inclusive for people with disabilities. People with disabilities are active members on boards and commission.</li> </ol>

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**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.**

Key Activities	Progress	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support self-advocates to train others to register to vote and vote.</li> <li>2. 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.</li> <li>3. Continue to support initiatives by Allies in Advocacy.</li> <li>4. Support other grassroots initiatives led by self-advocates.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will offer these next fall.</li> <li>2. Now calling these community round tables. We have a few groups interested.</li> <li>3. Working with Allies in Advocacy. They held a press conference and reception</li> <li>4. Planning outreach to other grassroots agencies</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Five proposals for voter education and engagement that include people with disabilities in lead roles are supported by the Council.</li> <li>2. Two town hall meetings and/or other events, led by people with disabilities are supported by the Council.</li> <li>3. Two initiatives are supported by the council led by self-advocate leaders.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Iowans with disabilities and family members demonstrate leadership skills through participating and leading community projects, training and local events.</li> <li>2. Iowans with disabilities are trained by their peers to vote and become advocates.</li> <li>3. People with disabilities are leading self-advocacy initiatives to create change.</li> </ol>

**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.**

Key Activities	Progress	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 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.</li> <li>2. Engage YLA graduates and with hosting these events in their communities.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Still need help with council members and/or allies to determine where do this. Still planning to do this with YLA this session</li> <li>2. See above</li> <li>3. Will work with them once scheduled</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Two community events are held in rural areas.</li> <li>2. Tools and resources adapted.</li> <li>3. Two voter training and/or local capitol days are hosted</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The DD Council will establish relationships with underserved populations.</li> <li>2. Underserved populations advocate for their priorities.</li> </ol>

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<p>3. Partner with our DD network partners including to promote events and host events.</p> <p>4. 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.</p>	<p>4. Continue working with YLA on this. We have working Dept. for the Blind and ICUB and NFB to reach other population of people with disabilities. Worked with IPS employment program and Olmstead task force</p>		
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## **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.**

Key Activities	Progress	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research state and federal public policies and trends affecting people with disabilities and share information to keep people informed.</li> <li>2. Develop Policy briefs and/or white papers with key recommendations.</li> <li>3. Facilitate strong relationships with community organizations.</li> <li>4. Collaborate with DD network partners (Disability Rights Iowa and the Center for Disabilities and Development) to identify issues and needs.</li> <li>5. Foster relationships with policymakers to influence policy by meeting with key leaders prior to the 2026 session.</li> <li>6. Participate and provide public comment in advisory boards, commissions and council meetings) and before administrative rules and legislative committees.</li> <li>7. With Council members and DD network partners, develop an annual list of policy priorities that increase community living for people with disabilities.</li> <li>8. Educate policymakers and other state leaders about gathering input from people with disabilities and sharing information in clear language.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spring issue out focusing on advocates stories</li> <li>2. 12of bill of the week</li> <li>3. Working with newly formed Iowa Disability Policy Alliance. Gorup continues to meet. Disability advocacy day held April 1<sup>st</sup></li> <li>4. Ongoing. Work on projects like the alliance on an on going basis Currently planning 4 issue forums with DRI and other community partners in the fall.</li> <li>5. Staff, council members and advocates met with Rep Turek on Work without worry bill and other disability issues. Council members also developing relationships and following up with stories from other advocates</li> <li>6. On going, HOME Project rules, Home Project steering committee, Olmstead Task Force, presenting at the rehabilitation council on state plan</li> <li>7. Council voted to keep priorities the same and focus on employment and work without worry</li> <li>8. Do this when the opportunity arises . We are working with HHS on this initiative</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of policies shared through email social media and at events.</li> <li>2. Two policy briefs developed.</li> <li>3. Number of events and projects with other community organizations.</li> <li>4. Monthly meetings with the DD network and number of issues identified.</li> <li>5. Five meetings held with legislators prior to session.</li> <li>6. DD Council open house held yearly with legislators.</li> <li>7. Council staff will provide public comment at at least five public meetings.</li> <li>8. Priorities developed.</li> <li>9. One educational event with legislators about gathering input held</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As of a result of the DD Council education, each session sees positive policy changes for people with disabilities.</li> <li>2. Legislative leaders and state agencies obtain input from the DD Council about policy changes that affect people with disabilities.</li> </ol>
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**Objective 2.2: With the use of DD Council resources, people with developmental disabilities and/or their family members will annually educate policy makers about proposed new legislation and/or policy changes about an issue important to them.**

Key Activities	Progress	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use infoNET to inform Iowans with disabilities and their families about policies that impact community living and inclusion.</li> <li>2. Share grassroots success stories of people advocating for themselves locally and at the state and federal levels.</li> <li>3. Support and collaborate with the Iowa Family Leadership Training Institute to help families advocate for themselves and others.</li> <li>4. Host regular (at least monthly) policy calls with advocates and stakeholders during the legislative session for discussion and questions about proposed legislation.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spring issue out, action alerts, weekly newsletter, bulletin</li> <li>2. Spring issues featured stories of advocacy</li> <li>3. Still sponsoring this. Carlyn providing policy and advocacy training</li> <li>4. 6 capitol chats held</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fifteen electronic issues of infoNet are produced, four print publications are produced. 8 bills of the week are produced.</li> <li>2. 2,000 people with disabilities receive InfoNet.</li> <li>3. Thirty-five social media posts are made.</li> <li>4. Three success stories shared.</li> <li>5. 10 family members are trained through the Iowa Family Leadership Training.</li> <li>6. Eight policy calls are held.</li> <li>7. 20 advocates attend each call.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As a result of using the DD Council resources, people with disabilities and family members are instrumental in positive policy changes.</li> <li>2. Legislative leaders and state agencies obtain input from people with disabilities and family members about policy changes that affect people with disabilities.</li> </ol>

## 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.**

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Key Activities	Progress	Expected Outputs	Expected Outcomes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Partner with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation, the Iowa Blue Print for Change, the Iowa Coalition on Integrated Employment, APSE, and our DD network to provide training opportunities to community rehabilitation providers.</li> <li>2. 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 including Take Your legislator to work day.</li> <li>3. Share employment success stories, with advocates, stakeholders, legislators and community businesses. Including stories about graduates from Comprehensive transition programs( i.e. REACH).</li> <li>4. 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.</li> <li>5. With our DD network partners educate legislators on barriers for people with disabilities to</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to partner, no recent activities to report on. Staff are members of HHS Employment Governance group started in January 2026 Policy update provided to IPS employment programs</li> <li>2. Sponsored the APSE conference. Worked with APSE and VR to host a workday with your legislator campaign. We had 7 people participate. Shared various posts about NDEAM.</li> <li>3. Shared throughout October</li> <li>4. None yet this year</li> <li>5. Let us Work campaign. Legislative reception focused on employment with Allies, VR, APSE, DD network. Capitol day groups have been discussion working. Disability policy day also focused on employment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Five community rehabilitation providers are trained.</li> <li>2. Four events promoting integrated employment are held during NDEAM month.</li> <li>3. 10 people with disabilities take their legislators to work day.</li> <li>4. Four employment success stories are shared.</li> <li>5. Thirty people with disabilities attend an employment-related conference.</li> <li>6. At least one proposed policy change to increase incentives for employment introduced.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Iowans with disabilities and their families advocate for policies and practices that support integrated community employment.</li> <li>2. More people with disabilities are competitively employed.</li> </ol>

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gain employment and offer solutions.			
<b>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.</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with community partners to host community conversations to determine emergent issues that could be addressed through new initiatives supported by the DD Council.</li> <li>2. Develop and communicate informational briefs on lessons learned.</li> <li>3. Implement the use of the health advocacy toolkit.</li> <li>4. Continue to partner with the IABLE staff to provide education about the IABLE accounts to increase financial independency of people with DD.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to meet regularly with the DD network and other partners.</li> <li>2. Nothing to report here for now</li> <li>3. Still hosting this training on our website.</li> <li>4. Hosted a webinar in January Continue to share socials on IABLE .</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Four community conversations are held.</li> <li>2. One informational brief developed.</li> <li>3. One health advocacy training is held.</li> <li>4. One IABLE training is held.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovated practices promoting community inclusion are developed.</li> <li>2. An increase in IABLE account holders.</li> </ol>
<b>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 Iowans.</b>			
<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Expected Outputs</b>	<b>Expected Outcomes</b>

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<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Facilitate a community of practice with members of the State Alliance Team to edit resources in clear language.</li><li>2. Develop resources on alternatives to guardianship.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We continue to meet regularly Medicaid managed care advocacy booklet revamped, SNAP document out.</li><li>2. Iowa received an enhanced funding grant to do a demonstration project on supported decision making Contracting with Polk county project will start in</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Five resources (i.e. applications educational material, flyers) will be edited in clear language.</li><li>2. Three resources (i.e. guide, videos modules) will be developed.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Communication with people with disabilities and older lowans will be improved. Team members will learn best practices.</li><li>2. People with disabilities and older lowans are able to make informed decisions on guardianship.</li></ol>
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