

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

August 18, 2023 at 9:30AM, CDT

In-Person Meeting

Country Inn & Suites – Nebraska Ballroom

[North Hotel & Conference Center]

5353 N. 27th Street

Lincoln, NE

The agenda was mailed to Council members prior to the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Rachel Siffring and called to order at 9:30AM, CDT. Quorum was present.

Present: Quinton Corwin, Caiti Donaldson, Jason Gieschen, Shauna Graham, Matt Kaslon, Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra Plisek, Cheryl Montgomery, Stephen Morton, Amy Rhone, Dr. Mark Shriver, Rachel Siffring, Judy Trent, Nate Watson, Dee Valenti, and Kirsten Wilcox.

Absent: Tony Green, George Griffith, Shaistha Kiran Karipi, Seamus Kelly, and Sara Morgan.

Guests: Tania Diaz, Tiffany Donaldson, Sue Gieschen, Theresa Hayes, Dr. Tom Janousek, Candi Kraska, Kristen Smith, Sherry Stansberry, and Pam Wilcox.

Staff: Kristen Larsen, Rachel Ward, Edith Titamoh, and Nikki Krause.

Welcome

Rachel Siffring welcomed everyone. Jason Gieschen submitted a request to start the Council meetings with the *Pledge of Allegiance*. Having no objections, the *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited and afterwards attendees were asked to introduce themselves.

Kristen Larsen explained that Tricia Strauch resigned from the Council. Tricia's job responsibilities prevented her from attending Council meetings and she felt it was in the best interest of the Council to resign. Kristen mentioned that she is continuing to work with the Governor's Office to get Dr. Tom Janousek, DJ Plautz, and Jennifer Severe-Oforah appointed as new Council members. Dr. Tom Janousek would be the Behavioral Health Representative, DJ Plautz would be the Department of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation Representative and Jennifer Severe-Oforah would be the Division of Public Health – Maternal and Child Health Representative. Kristen is also working to fill the self-advocate vacancy that was created when Dustin Henderson resigned from the Council to move to Oklahoma.

Nebraska Open Meetings Act Announcement

Rachel S. explained that Council meetings fall under the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and a copy of the Act is posted on the entrance door by the sign-in table.

The Governor's Public Meeting Calendar referred members of the public and media to the Council's Meetings webpage for additional information (posted July 5, 2023).

Public Comment Period #1

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on the agenda for people who are not members of the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. No public comments were made.

Approval of Minutes

Council members were asked if there were any corrections to the *DRAFT* April 14, 2023 Council meeting minutes. As there were no corrections, Nate Watson made the motion to approve the minutes and Matt Kaslon seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 11, No – 0, Abstain – 4.*** Motion carried.

Rachel S. asked if anyone had any updates to their Conflicts of Interest and Matt stated he did and to add The Arc of Nebraska to his Conflicts of Interest.

FFY2023 3rd Quarter Financial Report and Approval of FFY2024 Budget

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the Designated State Agency (DSA) for the Council. DHHS is the flow thru for Council funds. However, it is the Council that decides on how Council funds are to be allocated and monitors the allocated funds.

Kristen presented the Financial Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023, a handout at the meeting. At the August 5, 2022 Council meeting, the Council approved the budget of \$415,553 for FFY2023 (October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023). The Year-to-Date Expenditures for the third quarter of FFY2023 (October 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023) were \$262,312 – 63% of the FFY2023 budget.

NOTE: Edith Titamoh's salary does not fall under SOS Employee Salary but is a shared full-time employee (FTE) with Emergency Health Systems. That is why the Personal Expenses & Benefits is overbudget and Operating is underbudget. Additionally, the Council has not spent any Operating funds for the Leadership Development Fund or Interpreter Services.

The report reflects the balance of funds from FFY2022 and FFY2023 as of June 30, 2023. Available Current Funds totaled \$873,450.36. Expenditures totaled \$267,607.90. The Balance of Current Funds Available was \$637,246.75.

The Financial Forecast (what is being anticipated) shows a breakout of income and expenses by Federal Fiscal Year.

The Administration on Community Living (ACL) announced that Councils could apply for a No-Cost Extension (NCE) on FFY2022 Grant Awards. Kristen plans to submit a NCE by August 25, 2023. Once accepted, this will change the Period of Performance (time that work can be completed) to September 30, 2024.

NOTE: This is good news since some of the Council's grantees, including People First of Nebraska and PTI Nebraska, do not plan on spending all their obligated award funds and the Council will likely not spend the full Operating and Travel budgets.

FFY2023 will follow the regular Period of Performance Schedule. The Project Period and Obligation of Funds is from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2024. The Liquidation of Funds needs to be completed by September 30, 2025.

One of the responsibilities of Council members, per the DD Act, is to approve the annual Financial Budget. A handout was provided with the *proposed* FFY2024 Financial Budget (October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024). The Estimated Council Expenses for FFY2024 is \$371,459.

- Personal Expenses & Benefits - \$248,174
- Operating Expenses - \$51,006

NOTE: Regarding having American Sign Language (ASL) and CART services at all Council meetings, Council staff learned that top ACL officials do not believe it is a good use of federal funds to have ASL/CART services available at Council meetings if no one attending the meeting has requested the services.

- Travel - \$45,900
- Functions of the DSA - \$26,379

NOTE: At the Technical Assistance Fiscal Roundtable for Lower Allotment Councils, Council staff learned that because the Council is 100% federally funded, the Council is prohibited from buying “swag” items with federal funds. Council staff also learned that the breakfast that is available during the Networking Partners Program is considered “nice”, but not a “necessity”. At future Council meetings, breakfast will not be provided but have light refreshments will be provided for a mid-morning break. The Council will continue with the Networking Partners Program, but food will not be provided.

A motion was made by Matt to approve the *proposed* FFY2024 Financial Budget in the amount of \$371,459 and Quinton Corwin seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 15, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

FFY2024 Meeting Dates and Location

Committee and Council meeting dates for FFY2024 were set.

Grant Review Committee meeting – November 16, 2023

Council meeting – November 17, 2023

Legislative and Advocacy Committee meeting – February 1, 2024

Council meeting – February 2, 2024

Planning Committee meeting – April 18, 2024

Council meeting – April 19, 2024

Grant Review Committee meeting – August 15, 2024

Council meeting – August 16, 2024

It was determined to continue meeting at the Country Inn & Suites [North Hotel & Conference Center – 5353 N. 27th Street, Lincoln] for FFY2024, if possible.

Member Reappointments and Recognition of Outgoing Members

Eligible Council members whose term expire on October 1, 2023, and are interested in continuing to serve on the Council, were encouraged to reapply with the Governor. Applications can be submitted either online at the Boards & Commissions – Application for Executive Appointment webpage at <https://governor.nebraska.gov/board-comm-reg> or by mailing a **completed** Executive Appointment Application to Pat Selk at the Office of the Governor. Council members eligible to apply for reappointment are:

Quinton Corwin (Individual)

Seamus Kelly (State Protection & Advocacy System – Disability Rights Nebraska)

Shaistha Kiran Karipi (Family)

Judy Trent (Family)

Kirsten Wilcox (Individual)

NOTE: Kirsten made the decision to not apply for reappointment.

The following Council member has a term that will expire October 1, 2023 and is ineligible for reappointment due to term limits:

Dee Valenti (Immediate relative/guardian of an individual with a developmental disability who resides or previously resided in an institution or an individual with a developmental

disability who resides or previously resided in an institution [must be a resident of the State.]).

NOTE: If you know someone who meets this criteria and might be interested in being on the Council, please let Kristen Larsen know at 402-471-0143 or kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov.

Rachel S. explained that one of the many things she picked up at the Chairperson Training was that people should start thinking about the “next steps” they will take when they are getting close to their time to leave the Council. Think about what you can do next to continue the mission of the Council.

The Council engages in Advocacy, Capacity Building, and Systemic Change in activities that assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design and have access to the needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life.

Kirsten thanked the Council for her time with them and she enjoyed meeting “y’all”! She said she will keep helping others with disabilities and the Council should keep doing the same.

Dee thanked the Council for sharing so much with her and the Council means a lot to her. The care, the work, and the love from Council members helps her to be a better advocate and she will be out there using her voice to advocate!

Election of FFY2024 Council Officers

Per the By-Laws, officer elections for FFY2024 were conducted at today’s Council meeting. This included the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. These officers were elected to serve a term of office from October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024. Officers may be re-elected for a maximum of an additional two (2) consecutive terms. That limit on terms being only for that office; they may be elected to another office without a break in service. Agency representatives are not eligible to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair of the Council. On June 8, 2023, Nikki Krause sent an email to all Council members seeking nominations for Council Officers.

Chair – The Chair presides at all meetings of the Council and the Executive Committee, provides overall direction for Council activities, and is an ex-officio member of all Council standing and ad hoc committees. Shauna Graham, Matt Kaslon, and Rachel Siffring had indicated that they would be willing to run for the office of Chair. There were no additional nominations from the floor.

Beth Libra Plisek nominated Shauna for the position of Chair and Judy Trent seconded. Amy Rhone nominated Matt for the position of Chair and Nate seconded. Stephen Morton nominated Rachel S. for the position of Chair and Jason seconded. Each nominee was allotted time to explain why he or she should be elected Chair. A vote was taken by secret ballot. Rachel Siffring will be the Chair for FFY2024. (Rachel 8 votes, Matt 5 votes, Shauna 3 votes)

Vice-Chair – The Vice-Chair assists the Chair in the performance of his/her duties and performs all duties of the Chair in his/her absence. Shauna Graham, George Griffith, Matt Kaslon and Stephen Morton had indicated that they would be willing to run for the office of Vice-Chair. There were no additional nominations from the floor.

NOTE: Kristen stated that George was withdrawing his name for Vice-Chair.

Nate nominated Shauna for the position of Vice-Chair and Dee seconded. Beth nominated Matt for the position of Vice-Chair and Caiti Donaldson seconded. Jason nominated Stephen for the position of Vice-Chair and Judy seconded. Each nominee was allotted time to explain why he or she should be elected Vice-Chair. A vote was taken by secret ballot. Matt Kaslon will be the Vice-Chair for FFY2024. (Matt 9 votes, Shauna 6 votes, Stephen 1 vote)

Secretary – The Secretary will review the *draft* minutes taken by Council staff prior to them being posted on the Council's public webpage and inclusion in the meeting packets mailed to Council members and present the Council minutes for formal approval at the subsequent Council meeting. Jason Gieschen, Shauna Graham, and Matt Kaslon had indicated that they would be willing to run for the office of Secretary. When asked if there were any nominations from the floor, Quinton Corwin was named.

NOTE: Shauna and Matt withdrew their names for Secretary.

Judy nominated Jason for the position of Secretary and Nate seconded. Matt nominated Quinton for the position of Secretary and Nate seconded. Each nominee was allotted time to explain why he should be elected Secretary. A vote was taken by secret ballot. Jason Gieschen will be the Secretary for FFY2024. (Jason 10 votes, Quinton 6 votes)

Kristen will forward the Council's recommendation for the office of Chair to the Governor's Appointments Office. Per Council By-Laws, the Governor appoints the Council Chair based on the Council's recommendation.

Committee Preferences

All Council members are expected to serve on one of the standing committees – Legislative and Advocacy, Planning, or Grant Review. Rachel S. gave a summary of the responsibilities of each committee. Members were asked to complete the FFY2024 Committee Preference form included in the meeting packet and return it to Nikki by the end of the meeting. Council staff and the Chair will review Council members' preferences. Committee preferences will be followed as closely as possible while adhering to iTACC's recommendation of being mindful of potential conflicts of interest for those serving on the Planning and Grant Review Committees.

NOTE: You do not need to be on the same committee that you were on in FFY2023. Each year you can change your committee preference, if you would like. You are also not limited to serving on only one committee.

Council members were asked to note their interest in running for Chair of a committee on the Committee Preference form. Committee Chair elections for FFY2024 will be held during the November 17, 2023 Council meeting.

Council members were encouraged to recommend non-Council members who would make good representatives to one of the three the standing committees. Their names and contact information can be listed on the back of the Committee Preference form.

Report of the Grant Review Committee: Formal and Opportunity Recommendations for FFY2024

Quinton Corwin, Grant Review Committee Chair, reported that the Committee met virtually on August 17, 2023 to review evaluation scores and to make recommendations for FFY2024 subaward funding in response to the Formal and Opportunity Subawards Requests for Applications (RFAs). Quinton explained that the Council will consider the Committee's recommendations, discuss, and vote to approve subaward funding.

Kristen reminded Council members to follow the Conflicts of Interest Policy. Those members who have conflicts of interests will be asked to leave the room for discussion for that application. Members will then be asked to return to the room for voting and should abstain from voting when their name is called during the roll call vote. This will provide transparency in the voting record.

Regarding RFA #6124, the Home and Community-Based Services Final Settings Rule Formal Subaward, no applications were received in response to the RFA. It was felt that not enough time was allowed for applicants to complete their applications. Since the Council is no longer allowed to use DD Suite as the method for submitting subaward applications, there is no way to tell how many (if any) entities started an application in response to the RFA. The Council can do one of three things.

1. Re-release the RFA, as written, and allow more time for the application to be completed.
2. Direct contract with an entity.
3. Change the scope of the RFA.

The Committee's recommendation was to re-release the RFA and increase the amount of funding from \$50,000 to \$75,000. The Committee will evaluate the proposals and provide its recommendation to the Council at the November meeting.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 15, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

In response to RFA #6129, the Employment Formal Subaward, one application was received from BKessler Consulting. BKessler Consulting scored 307 points out of 450 points. The Committee's recommendation was to fund the proposal, with the contingency that the applicant provide an updated budget that reflects the required match amount as well as the correct governmental rates on travel. Nate moved to adopt the Committee's recommendation by Unanimous Consent. As there were no objections, the Committee's recommendation passed by Unanimous Consent.

In response to RFA #6137, Opportunity Subawards, five applications were received. The applications received were from Munroe-Meyer Institute/University of Nebraska Medical Center (MMI/UNMC), Madonna School and Community Based Services, Red Road Ventures LLC, The Arc of Nebraska, and Duet. However, the applications from The Arc of Nebraska and Duet were rejected by DHHS' Office of Procurement and Grants (OPG). The Arc of Nebraska's application was rejected because its application was submitted to last year's email address instead of the email address listed in the RFA. OPG deemed the application as "non-responsive". Duet did not attach Form 2 (Organizational Information) which was a required form. Additionally, the name provided on the application did not match the legal name registered to its Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Duet did not have a budget narrative, nor did they submit their forms in .pdf. Therefore, OPG rejected Duet's application. Kristen mentioned that the Council has funded both The Arc of Nebraska and Duet previously, but the Council must follow OPG's rules.

Quinton described each proposal, starting with the top scoring applicant, and the Committee's recommendation for each proposal. The Council then voted separately on the Committee's recommendations for funding.

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)

MMI submitted an application for *Enhancing Care for Individuals with Disabilities through Virtual Health Care Provider Training*. MMI scored 434 points out of 450 points. The Committee's recommendation was to fund the proposal in the amount of \$19,964 with the contingency that the applicant submit an updated budget that breaks down the personnel costs of each person working on the project.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

Madonna School and Community Based Services

Madonna School and Community Based Services submitted an application for *Family Navigation*. Madonna School and Community Based Services scored 374 points out of 450 points. The Committee's recommendation was to fund the proposal in the amount of \$20,000 with the contingency that the applicant resubmit a more detailed work plan (to include measurable outputs indicating how many families they plan to reach) and adjust the budget by removing \$686.25 to bring the total amount of funding to \$20,000.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 15, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Red Road Ventures LLC

Red Road Ventures LLC submitted an application for *Share Today, Shape Tomorrow: Increasing Outcomes and Connecting through Tech*. Red Road Ventures LLC requested funding in the amount of \$80,000. Although the Committee liked the request, the applicant did not follow the RFA requirement limiting the request to \$20,000 as noted in section 4.4 of the RFA on page 19. Council staff sought technical assistance from OPG on how to proceed with the proposal. OPG strongly recommended that the Council not fund the proposal. Red Road Ventures LLC's score of 405 points out of 450 points was based on a work plan that was tied to \$80,000. The work plan would change dramatically with funding of \$20,000. OPG said that if the Council funded this proposal, it would put the Council at risk for a grievance.

The Committee's recommendation was not to fund Red Road Ventures LLC's proposal and that Council staff reach out to the applicant, once the intent to award applications has been posted by OPG, to discuss the reason why they were not funded and to encourage the applicant to submit a different proposal for \$20,000 when the Opportunity Subaward RFA is re-released.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 15, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Finally, the Committee recommends re-releasing the Opportunity Subaward RFA to fund up to two more Opportunity Subaward projects at \$20,000 each. The Committee will evaluate the proposals and provide its recommendation to the Council at the November meeting.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 15, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

FFY2024 Continuation Subawards

In general, DD Councils are finding most grantees are needing a second year of funding to affect systems change. This is why our Council has added the following one (1) year optional renewal statement in the RFAs: "*Subawards may be renewed for an additional one (1) year period, subject to DHHS' discretion.*" Since the Continuation Subawards are already in the system with an optional one (1) year renewal period, the continuation proposals do not need to be scored and it is at the Council's discretion whether to renew a subaward or not.

Kristen explained that Rachel Ward will give a brief summary of the grantee's original work plan, what the grantee has accomplished, and what the grantee is proposing to do for FFY2024. Then the Council will discuss and vote to approve continuation subaward funding. Kristen also reminded Council members to follow the Conflicts of Interest Policy. Those members who have conflicts of interests will be asked to leave the room for discussion for that application. Members will then be asked to return to the room for voting and should abstain from voting when their name is called during the roll call vote. This will provide transparency in the voting record.

PTI Nebraska

PTI Nebraska submitted a continuation proposal for its *Enhancing the Transitioning of Youth to Adult Services* project. Beth made the motion to fund PTI Nebraska's continuation proposal in the amount of \$30,000 with the contingency to partner and host a minimum of two (2) different community trainings to address the needs of families with limited technological access in areas such as north-central Nebraska and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

People First of Nebraska

People First of Nebraska submitted a continuation proposal for its *People First of Nebraska* project. Stephen made the motion to fund People First of Nebraska's continuation proposal in the amount of \$40,000 as it is written and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

Disability Rights Nebraska

Disability Rights Nebraska submitted a continuation proposal for its *Supported Decision Making* project. Matt made the motion to fund Disability Rights Nebraska's continuation proposal in the amount of \$20,000 or \$25,000 with the contingency to clarify the budget and specify which Centers for Independent Living (CILS) and schools are being worked with and Cheryl Montgomery seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

The Arc of Nebraska

The Arc of Nebraska submitted a continuation proposal for its *Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD* project. Quinton made the motion to fund The Arc of Nebraska's continuation proposal in the amount of \$20,000 as it is written and Jason seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 10, No – 0, Abstain – 4.*** Motion carried. [Caiti Donaldson stepped away from the meeting.]

Easterseals Nebraska

Easterseals Nebraska submitted a continuation proposal for its *Opportunity App*. Beth made the motion to fund Easterseals Nebraska's continuation proposal in the amount of \$20,000 as it is written and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 14, No – 0, Abstain – 1.*** Motion carried.

University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO)

The University of Nebraska at Omaha submitted a continuation proposal for its *Family-Engaged Educational Training (Project FEET)*. Cheryl made the motion to fund UNO's continuation proposal in the amount of \$20,000 with the recommendation of tracking the outcomes of the IDD population and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 2.*** Motion carried.

Munroe-Meyer Institute

The Munroe-Meyer Institute submitted a continuation proposal for its *Promoting the Autonomy of Autistic Individuals with Severe Behavior: A Survey of Opinions on Law Enforcement Interactions when in Behavioral Crisis*. Beth moved to deny funding to MMI's continuation proposal and to ask MMI to resubmit its proposal for review at the November Council meeting and Matt seconded.

A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 13, No – 0, Abstain – 2.*** Motion carried.

NOTE: Rachel S. moved by Unanimous Consent to jump ahead in the agenda and have Nate Watson give his State Agency Representative Report since he needed to leave the meeting early. As there were no objections, Rachel S.'s motion passed by Unanimous Consent.

Update from State Agency Representative Nate Watson, Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging

NOTE: Agency representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review.

Division of Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging (M<C)

Nebraska Medicaid has continued regular reviews of Medicaid eligibility since March 1, 2023. The department has completed approximately 25% of renewals. Of the members who have completed their renewals, 72% of the remain enrolled with Medicaid. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Medicaid members had Medicaid coverage even if no longer eligible. It will take approximately twelve months to review all cases. Medicaid members must ensure their contact information is up to date with Nebraska Medicaid. Members can make sure their contact information is up to date by logging into their ACCESSNebraska account or calling toll-free (855) 632-7633. If information is needed from a member to confirm current Medicaid eligibility, Nebraska Medicaid needs to be able to reach the member. If Nebraska Medicaid is not able to reach the member, the member could unnecessarily lose Medicaid coverage. Ensuring the contact data is up to date is a top priority and Medicaid teammates will go above and beyond to try and reach the member. If a person is found to be no longer eligible for Medicaid, Medicaid teammates will let the person know of possible options available to him/her. One possible option is Marketplace, which has little to no cost, and the person can keep seeing his/her providers. There is a 90-day grace period and there is also an option to request a hearing if the person thinks the wrong determination was made regarding eligibility.

Beginning January 1, 2024, Nebraska Medicaid will contract services through the following health plans: Nebraska Total Care, United Healthcare, and Molina. [Molina replaces Health Blue on January 1, 2024.] Members may change plans during Open Enrollment (November 1st to December 15th every year) for any reason. If members do not choose a health plan, Medicaid chooses one for you. As of January 1, 2024, dental rolls into managed care and the \$750 cap will be removed. The incentive to include dental in health plans is: that if more preventative dental work is done upfront, there will be less complicated/emergency dental care later.

NOTE: Medicaid services are the same for each plan. However, each plan can offer "extra perks" for choosing one plan over the other two plans. For example, one plan may have "extra perks" for mothers-to-be or "Back to School Programming".

Update on the Current Request for Applications (RFA) Process

Council staff were a bit frustrated with OPG during the current RFA process. Council staff began working with OPG on the current RFAs in early March 2023 with the intention of having the RFAs posted by June 2, 2023. However, OPG did not post the RFAs until June 30, 2023. It is possible that the reduced timeframe in which applicants had to work on and submit an application impacted the total number of applications we received.

NOTE: OPG is switching to a new Contract Lifecycle Management System that should facilitate an easier contract development.

Dr. Lisa Mills Contract Update

Kristen reported that the Council has entered into a second contract with Dr. Mills to facilitate the Nebraska Employment Summit on September 20, 2023 and provide consultation and technical assistance to: the DHHS Divisions of Developmental Disabilities and Behavioral Health, the Nebraska Department of Education – Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation, the DD Network Partners (DD Council, MMI/UCEDD, and Disability Rights Nebraska), and the Nebraska Association of Service Providers. (These entities are also co-sponsors of the Summit.) The Nebraska Employment Summit will be by invitation only and will include a great deal of cross-agency collaboration.

Council Member Conference Report Summaries

Caiti attended the 37th Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS) Association | USA National Convention June 23-24, 2023 in Orlando Florida. Caiti and a few other self-advocates went to the breakout sessions. (Most of the self-advocates did not attend the breakout sessions, instead they were at the respite camp.) Unfortunately, only one of the breakout sessions was really geared toward self-advocates. Caiti used her attendance at the conference to educate the national organization on the importance of reaching self-advocates. Caiti found the success stories to be very motivational. One person became a personal trainer. Another became a motivational speaker. One overcame PWS and became a black belt in martial arts. Caiti learned that she would like to work on “journal therapy” for herself.

Matt attended the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) leadership Conference June 23-24, 2023 in Kearney, Nebraska. Matt said that Tasha Schuh presented her story to the NYLC members about her focus on hope. He would like to have Tasha speak to the Council before his term is up. She was very motivational. Samantha Jacobson and Kathy Lloyd led a group activity about saying nice things to other people to make them feel good.

Quinton attended the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Annual Conference July 25-28, 2023 in Orlando, Florida. There were numerous breakout sessions with topics ranging from alternatives to guardianship, voting rights for the disability community, financial tips, and public policy. Quinton enjoyed the public policy sessions. He will take what he has learned to grow as a person and as a self-advocate.

NOTE: Today was Quinton’s birthday! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday dear Quinton! Happy birthday to you!

Rachel S. also attending the NACDD National Conference and attended Chairperson Training on July 25, 2023. She learned that Roberts Rule of Order is a guide for Councils to follow. We do not need to follow it perfectly. We need to do what works best for our Council. Rachel said that the Nebraska Council got called out twice for its good work. One was for our Annual Performance Evaluation Policy and Process for the DD Council Executive Director and the other was from David Jones, Director of OIDD, recognizing the good job that the Nebraska Council has been doing. iTACC is now offering podcasts for Chairs and Rachel S. has started listening to them.

First Session of the 108th Legislature Update

The First Session of the 108th Legislature has concluded. One Newsline publication went out in June covering the beginning of the session until mid-April. Kristen hopes to send out a second newsletter since this is a “carry-over” session.

Updates from State Agency Representatives

NOTE: Agency representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review. [VACANT, Division of Behavioral Health; Tony Green, Division of Developmental Disabilities; Sara Morgan, Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health; Amy Rhone, Department of Education – Office of Special Education; VACANT, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation; Nate Watson, Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging]

NOTE: Please review the written reports from absent Agency Representatives. [Maternal and Child Health – Division of Public Health and Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation]

Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)

Dr. Tom Janousek, Deputy Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, provided the DBH update. The 988 Crisis Assistance Line is celebrating its one-year anniversary. The 988 line is available to any Nebraskan and is able to accept webchat from the 988 website, texting, or calling. The 988 Crisis Assistance Line is seeing good utilization. Within the first year, there were over 15,000 contacts. In the coming months, there will be a video chat option that will allow for video interpretation for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.

DBH is looking at updates to the Nebraska Family Helpline, which is the 24/7 family and parenting assistance line. A video option is also being implemented for this service. DBH is looking to develop its resources for the DD population. This includes places for referral, community services, and community resources. If you have helpful information for the DBH repository, email it to

michelle.nunemaker@nebraska.gov.

September is National Recovery Month. DBH is planning on holding an event on September 24, 2023 with a speaker and “swag” at the Capitol Building. For more information, contact

jennifer.ihle@nebraska.gov.

Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)

Kristen Smith, Deputy Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities, provided the DDD update. DDD is working on a Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver renewal for projected implementation on October 1, 2023. The drafted waiver renewal was submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on June 29, 2023. The draft included additional service options in home services and opportunities for community inclusion beyond the current specialized assisted living. The Family Support Waiver is DDD’s 5th waiver and currently DDD is in a Public Comment Period which began on July 28, 2023 and lasts until August 27, 2023. DDD is expecting implementation in 2024.

Work continues regarding expanding payments to Legally Responsible Individuals (LRIs) and Guardians. DDD completed a multi-city tour to talk to interested families and advocates about Self Direction and the Fiscal Intermediary including payments to LRIs. Payments to LRIs continues to be evaluated for future inclusion in DD waivers. DDD has been researching what other states are doing and trying to see if this would be a good fit for Nebraska.

DHHS signed with CBIZ Optumas with Myers and Stauffer to complete the evaluation of all Nebraska Home and Community-Based waivers. Stakeholder engagement was completed in June 2023 and feedback was received from 405 individual stakeholders. The final report is due December 31, 2023.

Department of Education – Office of Special Education (OSE)

The OSE, through the use of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Part B Funding, annually makes available the use of funds for Regional Secondary Transition Support Projects. The intended statewide outcome is to improve transition-focused education and post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities in Nebraska. Historically, funds for transition capacity building, professional development, and administrative and financial support were provided through two separate support projects – The Educational Service Unit 10 Transition System Support Grant and the Regional Secondary Transition Support Projects. Starting with the 2023-2024 school year, these funds will be combined to allocate additional funding to each region. The additional financial support to each region will allow regions to provide capacity-building activities, professional development, and support that is more closely aligned and individualized to each region’s transition needs.

Updates from the DD Network Representatives

NOTE: DD Network representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports in their entirety are attached at the end of the minutes for review. [Seamus Kelly, Disability Rights Nebraska; Mark Shriver, Munroe-Meyer Institute/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities]

Disability Rights Nebraska

Since Seamus Kelly was absent, Chief Executive Officer Tania Diaz provided the update. Work continues with Disability Rights Nebraska’s Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy project to continue training people in the community on Special Education. Training for the spring cohort ended on April 27, 2023 with an additional five advocates joining the 25 that have previously completed the training. Recruitment is underway for the fall cohort that is scheduled for September 12, 2023 through October 29, 2023. Contact Pat Cottingham at 402-413-2016 if you are interested in participating.

The Board of Directors approved the final strategic plan, which included a new vision and mission statements, values statement, and focus areas for the next five-years.

NOTE: Disability Rights Nebraska’s new vision and mission statements, values statement, and focus areas for the next five-years can be found in the attached Disability Rights Nebraska’s DD Network Representatives Report.

Disability Rights Nebraska is continuing to educate people on Supported Decision-Making. It is important for people to be able to make their own decisions with some assistance. Task Force and Steering Committee meetings were held this quarter. The policy piece is being worked on by studying other states and seeing what is working and what is not working.

The Public Policy Director and Monitoring Attorney were asked by Senator McDonnell to advise and suggest language for an interim study resolution (LR196) on reducing the DD Registry of Need (Waiting List) and also suggested language for an interim study (LR 244) addressing various aspects of guardianship, including training, the use of plenary and limited guardianships, and alternatives to guardianship.

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)

MMI hosted the Building Bridges Conference for persons with Cerebral Palsy and related disorders August 4-6, 2023. There were 34 attendees. This was a nice opportunity for people with Cerebral Palsy to connect.

MMI has a new contractual partner with Omaha Public Schools (OPS) and has renewed contracts with Millard Public Schools, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools for the 2023-24 academic year for transition services related to independent living and employment skills training. Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy staff work with students on independent living skills and utilize a mock apartment. One of the MMI psychologists provides behavioral consultation as needed to facilitate work and related skill acquisition. Employment skills currently are taught around environmental services, retail services, and office work. Since 2018, MMI has increased from serving one student in the Trailblazers Transition program to serving 34 students daily.

Project SEARCH will have eight students from OPS and five adults from Madonna this coming year. The Project SEARCH program was initiated in 2015 to create unpaid internship opportunities to help individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities gain knowledge and skills which could potentially lead to paid employment.

MMI is co-hosting the SOAR Conference October 27-29, 2023 in Kansas City. This is a regional conference planned by and for self-advocates.

NOTE: SOAR stands for Seeking Opportunities for an Advocacy Revolution. SOAR brings together self-advocates from seven states across the Midwest. MMI will be hosting this conference in October 2025 in Omaha.

MMI Leadership has given approval to acquisition of a PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT EXPLORATION SYSTEM (PAES) lab. This is an assessment and training room designed explicitly for assessment of employment skills by providing an environment that mimics real life work settings across five components (consumer/service, business/marketing, processing/production, construction/industrial, and computer technology). This will help with assessing aptitudes and soft skills and provides a context for training and skill development.

Council Chair and Staff Updates

Rachel S. said she would be attending the Employment Summit and she will be working with the Executive Committee on the Calendar Year (CY) 2023 DD Council Executive Director's (Kristen) Annual Performance Evaluation. The shorter and briefer Executive Director Evaluation will be emailed to the Council members to complete and then can be returned to Rachel S. via email or snail mail.

NOTE: Nikki emailed the shorter and briefer Executive Director Evaluation to Council members on August 22, 2023.

Kristen had a few updates for the Council.

- Shaistha Kiran Karipi had a baby boy! Congratulations!
- At the NACDD Conference, Kristen's big take away was from Jill Jacobs, Commissioner of the Administration on Disabilities, who stressed the importance of the need to collaborate.
- The June 9, 2023 Tri-Board meeting was a success. There were 54 people in attendance and that is the highest number attending that she could remember.
- A contract was secured for the *Professional Development Clearinghouse for Teachers to Build Capacity* project with Answers4Families.

Rachel W. had a few updates for the Council.

- Disability Pride Day was July 22, 2023 at the Auld Pavilion in Lincoln. It went well. There were fun activities and good resources, but there could have been more provider outreach.

- ATP's *Parent Educator Training* project started in March 2023 instead of January 2023, but it is going well. Content outlines have been completed and feedback is being sought on the content outlines.
- Rachel W., Kristen, and Beth are now certified Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Ambassadors. Rachel W. will be submitting a No Cost Extension for CtLC for three months to allow additional time for the 15 newly trained Nebraska Ambassadors to earn up to five badges each in the CtLC Ambassador Badge Academy.

Council staff had been working on the workplans for FFY2024 and FFY2025 and the plans have been submitted to ACL.

Council members were reminded to turn in their Committee Preference form, Expense Reimbursement form/Invoice to Nikki before they left for the day. They were also reminded to let Nikki know if there are any changes to their contact information for the Roster.

Council Member Updates

Beth mentioned she is being kept busy with IEP meetings and advocating. On a personal note, Ellie has started her own Etsy store for her bead work and painting.

Eddie Kraska said he was doing puppeteering with Kids on the Block. He is also preparing for a fall play with three different stories of Polish culture.

Matt is very honored to be elected Vice-Chair and he is up to the challenge!

Shauna mentioned that Bailey is 14 and she is anxious to see how "transition" changes things.

Dee thanked the Council for everything and said that we will see her somewhere advocating for change.

Judy mentioned that she went to Special Olympics bocce ball with her sister, and it was very hot.

Jason went to the West Central Development Housing Authority and stressed the need to include accessibility requirements. He also thanked the Council for voting him in as Secretary.

Cheryl mentioned the Transition Conference Holy Cow! What Now? will be in Norfolk on October 11, 2023. Brad Meurrens and Mary Phillips will be presenting on Supported Decision Making. The Fall Association of Community Professionals (ACP) Conference will be October 19-20, 2023 in Kearney. Peter Leidy will be the Keynote Speaker on Thursday and his presentation is "*Touching the Heart of Our Work*". Molly Mackey will be presenting on Friday and her presentation is "*High Conflict to Constructive Conflict*".

Rachel S. and Braxton will be speaking at the Kids and Dreams Foundation Autism Conference. Braxton will be showing sheep at the State Fair and Rachel is getting him signed up for Special Olympics bowling. He is also playing EPIC soccer.

Caiti mentioned she is on a trial basis for having no job coach at work. This was her first week without the job coach.

Public Comment Period #2

Rachel S. mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on the agenda for people who are not members of the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. No public comments were made.

Adjourn

Dee motioned to adjourn the meeting and Matt seconded. The meeting adjourned at 3:37 PM, CDT.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for November 17, 2023 and will be in-person. The Grant Review Committee meeting will be held virtually the afternoon of November 16, 2023.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

Mission

The Council engages in **Advocacy**, **Capacity Building**, and **Systemic Change** activities that assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design and have access to needed community services, individualized support, and other forms of assistance that promote *self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion* in all facets of community life.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Thomas Janousek

Agency: Division of Behavioral Health

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- The 988 crisis assistance line is celebrating its one year anniversary. The 988 line is available to any Nebraskan and is able to accept webchat from the 988 website, texting or calling. In the coming months, there will also be a video chat option that will allow for video interpretation for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- We are also looking at updates to the Nebraska family helpline which is our 24/7 family and parenting assistance line. We will also be implementing a video option for this service. We are looking to develop our resources for the DD population, this includes places for referral, community services and community resources. If you have helpful information for our repository, this can be sent to Michelle Nunemaker at Michelle.Nunemaker@nebraska.gov
- Reminder Nebraska's fight against the national opioid epidemic and other co-occurring substance use and mental health disorders is being assisted through the **Opioid Settlement Remediation Advisory Committee** created as a requirement of national opioid-related settlement agreements. The committee consists of local and state representatives.
 - Nebraska stands to receive approximately \$100 million over an eighteen (18) year period from settlements with prescription opioid distributors and manufacturers.
 - Subcommittees include Data/Needs Assessment, Disbursement Criteria and Outcomes Measurements.
 - The link to the committee's work can be found at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Opioid-Settlement-Workgroup.aspx>
- **September is National Recovery Month:** We are planning on holding an event on September 24th with a speaker and swag at the Capitol Building. For more information contact jennifer.ihle@nebraska.gov

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

- The Division administers grants focusing on the **opioid crisis and prevention efforts** include:
 - Drug take-back events
 - Medication lock boxes

- Medica campaigns
- Access to Naloxone
 - Naloxone is a life-saving medication that can be administered to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose.
 - Anyone who is a resident can obtain Narcan for free at a participating pharmacy without a prescription. To find a participating pharmacy near you, visit <https://stopodne.com>
- Substance use in I/DD population is often hidden and compounded by a lack of recognition.
- **Suicide Awareness:** Awareness and risk assessment of characteristics of suicidality in the I/DD population is encouraged.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities
State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

August 18, 2023

Representative: Kristen Smith, Deputy Director

Agency: Department of Health and Human Services – Division of
Developmental Disabilities and Home & Community Based
Services

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

TBI Waiver

- The Division is currently working on a TBI renewal for implementation 10/1/2023
 - Tribal and Public Comment was collected between April 11 and May 11, 2023.
 - The drafted waiver renewal, submitted to CMS on June 29, 2023, includes additional service options in-home services and opportunities for community inclusion beyond our current specialized assisted living.

Family Support Waiver

- A Public Hearing on NAC 403 updates related to the Family Support Waiver and other needed changes was conducted on July 17, 2023.
- The Division is currently in a Public Comment period which began on July 28, 2023 and lasts until August 27, 2023. Public Comment sessions occurred on August 4, 7, and 14, 2023. Additional information can be found at: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Public-Comment.aspx>

Expanding Payments to Legally Responsible Individuals (LRIs) and Guardians

- In April and May, DDD completed a multi-city Tour to talk to interested families and advocates about Self Direction and the Fiscal Intermediary including payments to Legally Responsible Individuals.
- Payments to Legally Responsible Individuals continue to be evaluated for future inclusion in DD waivers.

System Evaluation

- DHHS signed with CBIZ Optumas with Myers and Stauffer to complete the evaluation of all Nebraska HCBS waivers. Report is due December 31, 2023.
- Stakeholder engagement was completed in June 2023. They received responses from 405 individual stakeholders via online response, emailed feedback, and through the virtual listening sessions.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- Monthly HCBS Stakeholder Meeting – September, 11 2023, 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM CT Zoom Meetings. Link on the DD Event Calendar <http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Developmental-Disabilities.aspx>
- DD Advisory Committee Meeting – September 13, 2023, 10:00-2:00 PM, Conference Room P, 5220 South 16th St, Lincoln, NE. Public Comment at Noon.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Jennifer Severe-Oforah

Agency: DHHS, Division of Public Health

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Nebraska submitted the Title V Maternal and Child Health/Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Block Grant 2024 Application/2022 Annual Report on July 28, 2023.

A state's acceptance of block grant funds imparts responsibility to assure the health of all mothers and children in the state; to systematically assess health needs and determine health priorities; to develop systems that build capacity across the state to address these priority needs; and to be accountable for programs and services and their outcomes. States must identify their specific health needs of the population through a five year statewide comprehensive needs assessment; submit an annual plan for meeting the needs identified by the statewide needs assessment; and report annually on performance measures.

Please, email Jennifer.severeoforah@nebraska.gov if you would like a copy of the Application/Annual Report or the State Action Plan.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

The Title V Core Team is considering developing a workgroup for family engagement, more to come in the next report.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Amy Rhone

Agency: Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Annually, The NDE Office of Special Education must federally report the percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

Through the OSE Monitoring Process, the following data was reported in the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report for FY 2021-22.

Indicator Data

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2009	86.73%

FFY	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Data	89.41%	85.16%	90.85%	29.29%	55.66%

Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Number of youth aged 16 and above with IEPs that contain each of the required components for secondary transition	Number of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
36	68	55.66%	100%	52.94%	DID NOT MEET TARGET	SLIPPAGE

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

Nebraska has experienced slippage for FFY 2021 because of the Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE) continued differentiated monitoring process. In addition to this, NDE, through the implementation of an annual risk analysis, shifted monitoring from a five-year set cycle to annual monitoring of all LEAs and targeted monitoring of those LEAs at the highest risk. Due to these shifts in monitoring, NDE found more LEAs out of compliance and in need of corrective action. In addition, Nebraska passed a new state statute that changed the age of transition planning to begin at 14 instead of 16. This change resulted in some districts beginning transition planning at age 14 before the statute went into effect and NDE chose to include youth younger than 16 in the Indicator 13 data collection and identified additional noncompliance with LEAs not correctly implementing transition requirements with youth ages 14 and 15. NDE identified areas of need through LEA file reviews and has established targeted monitoring on those areas to better structure corrective action.

Because all states must implement the requirements of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the US Department of Education established 17 indicators on which each state is required to report to evaluate the state's efforts to comply with the law.

Indicator 13 measures "the percent of youth with IEPs aged 14 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age-appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition service's needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services, including, if appropriate, pre-employment transition services, was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority."

The NDE, OSE began preparing districts during our monthly statewide special education webinars, in November of 2022 as the Office of Special Education began conducting an Indicator 13 Pilot District Monitoring (Indicator 13 Pilot), beginning on January 17, 2023. This Indicator 13 Pilot was a differentiated monitoring, focused on secondary transition requirements conducted through a self-assessment completed by all districts.

The Indicator 13 Pilot followed the timeline below:

January 17, 2023: Self-Assessment open to districts in ILCD 3.0 in the NDE portal, under the Accountability Tab, and then the Indicator 13 tab. The Indicator 13 tab will include a list of student identifiers with an individual self-assessment that the district will complete for each student listed. For each student listed the district must answer questions and upload the child's current IEP, past IEP, IEP Team meeting invitation where transition services are to be discussed, consent to invite any participating agency (if applicable), and any other relevant information so that the Office of Special Education can verify that the secondary transition requirements were met for each student.

April 15, 2023: Self-Assessment on ILCD closed

April 15–July 1, 2023: NDE Reviews Self-Assessment Review

August 1, 2023: NDE sends Close Out Letters/Letter of Findings to districts with Corrective Action Requirements (if applicable)

September 15, 2023: District Corrective Action Plans were due (if applicable)

The Indicator 13 Self-Assessment was a pilot as we hoped to gain information from Districts on the ease of the self-assessment process as well as understanding of the compliance needed within this area of focus. It is our intent to continue to provide support to districts in providing the very best transition services for students.

Given the success of the pilot. The NDE, OSE will continue this process with an August 15 start date for the 2022-23 reporting year.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), Office of Special Education, through the use of IDEA – Part B Funding, annually makes available the use of funds for Regional Secondary Transition Support Projects. The purpose of these projects is to promote collaboration and stakeholder engagement among transition partners, increase local capacity, and facilitate data-informed selection and implementation of evidence-based and promising practices (EBPP) identified by the NTACTION Collaborative. The intended statewide outcome is to improve transition-focused education and post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities in Nebraska.

Historically, funds for transition capacity building, professional development, and administrative and financial support were provided through two separate support projects- The ESU 10 Transition System Support Grant and the Regional Secondary Transition Support Projects. Starting with the 2023-2024 school year these funds will be combined to allocate additional funding to each region. The additional financial support to each region will allow regions to provide capacity-building activities, professional development, and support that is more closely aligned and individualized to each region's transition needs.

Regions that are awarded funds for the 2023-2024 school year will be required to allocate funding to the following:

Regional Transition Projects focused on improvement and capacity building driven by timely and current data and assessment information. Professional development and technical assistance activities should focus on connecting assessment data to the planning and programs, as well as developing educators and other transition service providers to support implementation of EBPPs. Policy analysis and change should ensure that policies facilitate, rather than inhibit, implementation of effective practices.

Funds must be used to assist with implementing practices that have a high likelihood of improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities:

- increasing graduation rate

- decreasing dropout rate
- increasing rate of competitive employment
- increasing rate of enrollment in post-secondary education or training

Projects must be aligned with the *Effective Practices and Predictors Matrix* referenced at [NTACT-C, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition- The Collaborative](#) to improve Post School Outcomes for students with disabilities throughout the applicant's Transition Region.

1.0 FTE Regional Transition Facilitator to support coordination of transition activities within the region. This person will work closely with the NDE Coordinator of Transition Supports to provide technical assistance and help in the facilitation of activities that encourage capacity building and professional development surrounding transition within the region.

Below are the entities that were selected through a RFP process to provide The OSE, Regional Secondary Transition Support Projects.

- 1) PTI Nebraska – Transition and Parent Support Program
- 2) Educational Service Unit #3 – Metro (Region 2) Regional Transition Support Project
- 3) Educational Service Unit #6 – Southeast (Region 1) Transition Support Project
- 4) Educational Service Unit #7 – Northeast (Region 3) Transition Support Project
- 5) Educational Service Unit #10 – Central (Region 4) Transition Support Project
- 6) Educational Service Unit #13- Western (Region 5) Transition Support Project

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: DJ Plautz_____

Agency: Nebraska VR_____

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

- VR implemented a new process and payment structure for supported and customized employment on 7/1/23.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

- VR has partnered with VRTAC-QE to develop a comprehensive training on supported and customized employment.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- VR will be co-sponsoring/co-hosting the Employment Summit on 9/20/23.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

Representative: Nate Watson

Agency: Medicaid and Long-Term Care

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Return to Normal Medicaid Eligibility Determinations

Nebraska Medicaid has continued regular reviews of Medicaid eligibility since March 1, 2023. The department has completed approximately 20% of renewals, of the members who have completed their renewals, 78% of them remain enrolled with Medicaid.

Nebraska Medicaid continues to ask for help in reminding members to update their contact information with Nebraska Medicaid. Members can make sure their contact information is up to date by logging into their [ACCESSNebraska account](#) or calling toll-free (855) 632-7633.

Resources for the Unwind of the Continuous Coverage Requirement

Nebraska Medicaid published a website with informational resources for providers and community partners. We are actively working to ensure our messaging is accessible for all our members to help ensure that they do not unnecessarily lose coverage.

Our website has informational resources including FAQs and fact sheets for providers and community partners to share with the community. We have partnered with stakeholders to customize messaging to communities and school-age children. Recently, we have put in additional efforts to remind families that even though they were found ineligible for Medicaid their children may still qualify.

In an effort to maintain transparency and accountability, Nebraska Medicaid published an Unwind Dashboard in May which is updated monthly. In addition to the Unwind Dashboard, we publish the monthly report that is submitted to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

You can learn more on our unwind website at: <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Medicaid-MOE.aspx>

You can also find information on upcoming public meetings on the unwind and other information for members, providers, and community partners. We encourage you to read through this content and attend a meeting if you would like to learn more about these upcoming changes.

Managed Care Contracts

Beginning January 1, 2024, Nebraska Medicaid will contract services through the following health plans:

- Nebraska Total Care
- UnitedHealthcare
- Molina

Medicaid members will see multiple changes to their coverage in 2024. All these changes are designed to increase the quality of care our members receive and reduce the obstacles some face when trying to access healthcare. We are working with our providers and health plans to ensure that the upcoming changes will not increase their administrative burden

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members
August 18, 2023

Representative: Seamus Kelly/ Tania Diaz

Agency: Disability Rights Nebraska

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy:

- Six (6) families were referred to the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program during this period. All of these families were referred to a Lay Advocate. Two of the referred families were accepted by advocates who were near the completion of the Spring Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy training.
- Recruitment for the training scheduled for September 12 through October 29 began in mid-June resulting in 2 individuals registering. Efforts will continue throughout the summer. Contact Pat Cottingham at 402-413-2016 if you are interested in participating.
- The Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Coordinator participated in several IEP meetings at the request of advocates whose children were struggling. The advocates reported that the positive modeling experience was helpful in their efforts as advocates and will continue as additional cohorts are trained.
- Training for the spring cohort ended on April 27 with an additional 5 advocates joining the 25 that have previously completed the training.
- May 4, the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Coordinator participated in an interview with a television reporter on the struggles of families of children with disabilities in the school systems throughout Nebraska.
- On June 28, the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Coordinator co-hosted a viewing of the documentary *Unseen* and participated in a panel discussion of the difficulties experienced by caregivers and the impact this has on their lives and the lives of the people with disabilities they care for.

Strategic Planning:

The draft strategic plan was presented to the Board of Directors, the PAIMI Advisory Council and staff at an all-day retreat on April 29, 2023. The retreat was structured around the introduction and review of the plan and translating the goals into workable objectives for Fiscal Year 2024. The Board approved the final strategic plan. Below is our new vision and mission statement, values statement and focus areas for the next 5 years.

Disability Rights Nebraska Vision Statement: Disability Rights Nebraska envisions a world where human rights are protected, differences are celebrated and all people have value, visibility, and voice.

Disability Rights Nebraska Mission Statement: Disability Rights Nebraska uses a combination of strategies to promote, protect, and advocate for the legal and human rights of all people with disabilities. We support people with disabilities to help ensure they gain the benefits of full inclusion in their home, community, education, and/or employment. Our support begins with people with disabilities who are the most vulnerable and who live in congregated, isolated, and/or segregated settings.

Disability Rights Nebraska Values Statement:

We believe that:

- Disability is a natural part of the human experience.
- All people have worth, value, and contribute to humanity.
- People with disabilities should have valued roles in their communities.
- Disability rights are human rights.
- Lived experiences of people with disabilities are vital to guiding our work.
- People with disabilities should have real choices and control of their lives.
- Growth and change are possible.

We believe in:

- Dignity of risk
- Encouraging courage
- Truth, transparency, accountability
- Utilizing our federal authority to aggressively pursue equality

- Being steadfast, brave, deliberate, and persistent

Focus Areas:

- Freedom from Harm
- Most Inclusive Settings
- Engaging People with Disabilities in Advocacy

Monitoring of Facilities:

Two monitoring visits occurred at the Beatrice State Developmental Center this quarter. A monitoring attorney has been added to the team who monitors the facility. Staff continue to review incident reports and this information assists them in determining if we need to investigate any incidents further, interview residents or staff of the facility or conduct any follow-up with the Administration.

Tri-Board Meeting:

Several members of the Board and staff of Disability Rights Nebraska attended the annual Tri-Board meeting of the Nebraska Developmental Disabilities Network on June 9, 2023 at the Munroe-Meyer Institute (UCEDD) in Omaha, NE. The focus of this year's meeting was competitive integrated employment and the keynote speaker was Dr. Lisa Mills. The meeting included panel presentations from other states who have implemented competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities, and a panel of people with life experience who are part of the mainstream workforce. Participants broke out into small groups to prioritize a list of recommendations provided by Dr. Mills to determine next steps for the Network to pursue collaboratively and to brainstorm strategies.

Establish Supported Decision-Making:

Task Force and Steering Committee meetings were held this quarter. Public Policy Director met with collaborators on the project to plan next steps, upcoming presentations, other opportunities for presentations and what is the direction for the project in year three.

Collaboration with the Community Learning and Leadership program at Munroe Meyer Institute:

Our Public Policy Director worked with our LEND Extern on restraint and seclusion policy. She was interested in understanding the definition and regulation of restraint and seclusion and how it might apply to Physical Therapy. She conducted general research and her assignment was to compare 10 random existing Nebraska school policies on restraint and seclusion to the "15 Federal Principles" and note what of the 15 Principles are contained in those policies.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

Legislative Work this Session:

Public Policy Director and Monitoring Attorney were asked by Senator McDonnell to advise and suggest language for an interim study resolution on reducing the DD Registry of Need (aka Waiting List). Our language culminated in [LR 196](#): *Interim study to review ways to eliminate or reduce the current waiting list for services that adults with developmental disabilities experience.*

Public Policy Director and Monitoring Attorney suggested language for an interim study addressing various aspects of guardianship, including training, the use of plenary and limited guardianships, and alternatives to guardianship. We approached Senator Day's office and she agreed to introduce our language, [LR 244](#): *Interim study to examine guardianship in Nebraska.*

We submitted a letter of support on final reading for AM 623 to LB 705— Prohibit the suspension of students in prekindergarten through second grade in a school in a city of the metropolitan class (Omaha).

Disability Rights Nebraska participated in the evaluation of the DD system (required by the Family Waiver legislation). The consultants hired will develop a report for the Division. We provided direct information and collected information from other people with disabilities to answer the initial questions asked by the consultants. Public Policy Director participated in a meeting with the consultants sharing his collected data and helped promote the series of evaluation session meetings through Disability Rights Nebraska social media.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

THE CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL INCLUSION, virtual workshop led by Darcy Elks, Thursday, September 7, 2023, 9:00-3:00

[Nebraska Values Based Education Coalition 2023 Workshop : Event Calendar \(disabilityrightsnebraska.org\)](#)

Disability Rights Nebraska Board of Directors meeting September 9th

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Mark Shriver_____

Agency: University Center for Excellence in Development Disabilities-Munroe-Meyer Institute

Update on activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD since the last Agency update:

Dr. Brandy Clark started as the new director of the Psychology Department at MMI on July 1st. She will direct a department that includes over 20 faculty members, 60-70 students, multiple staff, and multiple clinics at MMI, in integrated primary care across Nebraska, and in schools. She also directs the Midwest regional Mental Health Technology Transfer Center with emphasis on school-based mental health, integrated behavioral health in primary care, and severe mental illness. She also directs UNMCs Office on Equity.

Dr. Susan Fager started July 1st as director of the MMI Department of Speech-Language Pathology. Dr. Fager, who holds a certificate of clinical competence in speech-language pathology, comes to MMI with experience working with patients across the lifespan with complex communication needs. Dr. Fager has spent nearly 25 years at Omaha's Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital, serving in a number of roles, most recently as director of the communication center in their research institute.

MMI hosted the Building Bridges Conference for persons with Cerebral Palsy and related disorders this past August 4-6. There were 34 participants for the conference. Kellie Ellerbusch and Melanie Davis helped coordinate the event.

UCEDD annual performance report submitted to ACL on July 26th. The annual performance report summarizes annual data, outcomes and activities corresponding to goals and objectives outlined in our 5-year plan across our four core functions of Education and Training, Community and Clinical Services, Research, and Information Dissemination. The report is available upon request.

Current Agency activities/trends/improvements/issues impacting individuals with I/DD:

We have new contractual partner with Omaha Public Schools (OPS) and we renewed contracts with Millard Public Schools, Papillion-LaVista Public Schools, and Westside Community Schools for the 2023-24 academic year for transition services related to independent living and employment skills training. Since 2018, we have increased from serving 1 student in our Trailblazers transition programs to serving 34 students daily. Our OT and PT staff work with students on independent living skills and utilize our mock apartment. We also have one of our psychologists providing behavioral consultation as needed to facilitate work and related skill acquisition. Employment skills currently are taught around environmental services, retail service, and office work.

Project Search will have 8 students from OPS and 5 adults from Madonna this coming year. The UNMC Nebraska Medicine Project SEARCH program was initiated in 2015 to create unpaid internship opportunities to help individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities gain knowledge and skills which could potentially lead to paid employment. This 10-month program targets job seekers 20 years of age and older who benefit from total immersion in a business setting. Potential interns are either in their last year of transition or already receiving adult developmental disability day (vocational) services. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through three 10-week internship site rotations. A successful outcome for an intern is competitive employment on campus or in the community. This is a collaborative program with NE Vocational Rehabilitation, Madonna School and Community Based Services, and OPS.

This academic year, we have 6 new students starting the PhD in Applied Behavior Analysis program for a total of 15 students. This is a 3-year program at MMI that includes faculty in our integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders, Severe Behavior, Pediatric Feeding and Psychology. We have 12 new students starting the MS in Applied Behavior Analysis program for a total of 25 students. This is a joint administered program between MMI and the University of Nebraska Omaha Psychology Department. We also have 4 new students starting in our Certificate Applied Behavior Analysis program for a total of 12 students. This is also a collaborative program with UNO.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

MMI UCEDD is co-hosting the SOAR conference. This is a regional conference planned by and for self-advocates. Seeking Opportunities for a Advocacy Revolution (S.O.A.R.) brings together self-advocates from seven states across the Midwest. It is scheduled for October 27-29 in Kansas City. Kellie Ellerbusch with MMI and People First and Melanie Davis with MMI have been assisting with conference planning. More information is available on the attached page. MMI UCEDD will be hosting this conference in October 2025 in Omaha.

MMI Leadership has given approval to acquisition of a PRACTICAL ASSESSMENT EXPLORATION SYSTEM (PAES) lab. This is an assessment and training room designed explicitly for assessment of employment skills by providing an environment that mimics real life work settings across 5 components (consumer/service, business/marketing, processing/production, construction/industrial, and computer technology). Helps with assessing aptitudes and soft skills and provides a context for training and skill development. Rachel Ray will be leading this initiative with collaboration from our integrated Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders programs and Occupational Therapy.

Registration is now open for the 2023 SOAR Conference, and it is an easy, 2-step process!

Step 1

Register for the conference at bit.ly/3PPWkBr [heartlandselfadvocacy.us12.list-manage.com]!

Registration is \$100 plus tax per person.

Step 2

If you need a hotel, reserve your hotel room at bit.ly/3Oys9O1 [heartlandselfadvocacy.us12.list-manage.com].

Hotel rooms for the SOAR Conference will be \$149.00 plus tax per night until October 1, 2023!

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Jaclyn Anderson at jaclyna@sackonline.org!