

Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities

Meeting Minutes

April 15, 2026

I. Call to order:

Lorie Regier called to order the special meeting of the Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities (DD) at 1:00 pm on Wednesday, April 15, 2026. This meeting was a hybrid meeting with in-person attendance at Nebraska State Office Building, Meadowlark Lower-Level Conference Room, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln NE and virtually via Zoom.

II. Roll call:

The following persons were present:

Advisory Members Present: Dorothy Ackland, Mike Browne, Dianne DeLair, Philip Gray, Jennifer Hansen, Shane Hunter, Kristen Larsen, Jennifer Miller, Lorie Regier, Paige Rivard, Mark Shriver, Angie Willey

Advisory Members Absent: Cris Petersen, Joe Valenti, Suzie Wahlgren

DHHS Staff: Tyla Watson

III. 2026 Committee Goal Discussion

- Each committee member was asked to share what things they would like to focus on/find important:
 - Mike Browne
 - For the Committee to be taken seriously. Following legislative attempts to end the committee, there is a perception that the committee is not important to the disabled community.
 - Meeting Cadence Committee currently meetings ever other month, would submit that is not enough time or attention to those in the DD community we represent. What's an appropriate commitment to members. Would suggest a minimum of 4 hours each month. What we do with that time is what we need to determine and commit to. Committee should consider utilizing sub-committee.
 - Need to change from being reactive to proactive.
 - Dianne DeLair:
 - Majority of meetings are updates from the department. Need to think about how we advise as a committee.
 - Sometimes the Department does a good job of notifying of changes 30 days before and other they do not. We recently didn't have details of a pretty major change. I don't think that is allowing us to be more proactive.
 - The committee should think about how we ask for information from the Division. Can't really provide advice on major changes once the decisions are already made. If we had more information about how the waivers are doing before we get to that point, that would be helpful.

- What is the health of those waivers? If they were needing to make such a large change, that has to have been a continuous issue, we should be aware of those issues.
 - We need to be aware of when the waiver renewals or amendments are coming up. The information we get is very appropriate, but it didn't help us when navigating some of those serious changes.
 - Meetings should have reports from the Department, still need time for the committee to discuss. Need to be able to take a deeper look at the changes that the division is thinking about.
 - If possible, would like to talk to families/people on the DD Court Ordered Custody Act.
- Kristen Larsen
 - Committee needs to stay informed about the federal changes that do affect the state. The HR1 bill (one big-beautiful bill) passed - may have impacts on our state budget that we don't see yet. We need to be aware that not only the committee, but HCBS services in general are going to be facing some tuff times. We need to be good stewards. Waiver services are optional services, states do not have to provide them.
 - I also think it's important that you articulate what the difference is between the Different committees such as the: MAC, BAC, and the DD Council compared to the Advisory Committee.
 - What is your return on investment. Need to be aware the measurable outcomes that come from what are we recommending.
 - Need to invest funding into training other advocates so they can have their voices heard. I think it was because of the IDD community is what helped with the AD community. Both communities need to be unified.
 - Remember this is a volunteer committee. It's about how are the quality waiver services improving the lives of the community.
- Dorothy Ackland
 - Figure out what our statute authority is for the DD court ordered custody act. I think that means a lot more than what the committee is currently getting. I feel like we need to figure out how are supposed to be doing oversight.
 - Sub-committee specific to the specific waivers so they can focus on specific communities.
 - Lived experience, spots dedicated to people on the committee that have disabilities, that at least level of care.
- Philip Gray
 - Reach out to the health and human services committee. Should have someone from the committee attend the committee meetings and meet with us regularly.
 - The relationship between the MAC and the DD Advisory Committee . DD Advisory has more understanding than MAC. Has previously asked to have

someone from the MAC attend a DD meeting. That request was denied by the MAC.

- Should have a joint MAC/DAC/DD meeting at least once a year.
 - Sub-committee's only work is you have commitment from the members of the group.
 - We need to fill committee vacancies.
 - Need measurable results. Tony has previously commented that he would like to see the committee present some measurable goals that we can report. You need some smaller group sometime out of the committee having those conversations. Sub-committees work but you have to have commitment.
 - Not using the expertise we have on this committee well.
 - We need more parents coming to our meetings. Those things have impact.
 - Committee should go to talk to Senator Harding to tell him the things he is not hearing that we can tell him.
 - State should itemize the structure.
- Shane Hunter:
 - Strong passion for Quality
 - Paige Rivard:
 - Define our mission and what we are responsible for. I would like to see us make the system more family friendly. Listening, fixing, and tracking. Need transparency. Metrics. Time commitment.
 - I feel like there is so much going on. Every other month is not enough. We need to have monthly or meet more often. We can't be there for 4 hours and not get through an agenda.
 - Lorie Reiger:
 - We come to listen so we are aware of what is happening. Would like to us to have influence on what is happening.
 - Want to make sure we are asking the right questions, need to know what the division of working on/thinking so we can advise.
 - They don't tell us everything. I want to know all the information before I make a decision, not just what someone thinks I need to know.
 - Mark Shriver:
 - For those an advisory committee, it's essential that the person getting the advice from should clearly articulate what we are needing advice on. This one is here specifically on Developmental Disabilities, division should have parts of the meetings with questions, this is what we need back from you. We have to put some responsibility to the Division, not all of it.
 - I am less in favor is moving to monthly.
 - Prefer smaller workgroups, and having them present finds is more useful.
 - Jennifer Miller
 - I want this group to truly make a difference. This meeting is a first step.

- Enjoy researching. No need to reinvent the wheel.
- Angie Willey
 - Focus on the statutory requirements.
 - We need to help educate. Some families don't know what waiver they are on, what their budget is, how to get into Therap. Make sure they are using all they can get. Make sure outcomes are as good as possible for everyone.
 - Provide formal feedback in writing.

IV. Committee Organization:

- The committee does not have enough time for discussion during the current meetings/how they are currently being set up. The committee has previously utilized sub-committee. Committee asked for opinions on the utilizations of sub-committees, meeting cadence, and any other thoughts on how to improve the effectiveness of the committee. Discussion followed/ideas for consideration:
 - Cadence and day of the meeting.
 - Change the date from Wednesday – Date change. Committee has previously had meetings on other days of the week.
 - 6 with DHHS /6 internal discussion. AND Sub-committee every other month.
 - 6 full meetings, 6 sub-committee
 - Committee Vacancies
 - Need to fill the vacancies. Should be recruiting.
 - It depends on the administration, however in my experience the Governor's office will share the committee applicant names with Tony for review. There are natural consequences to how you treat people. Some people may not realize this when applying.
 - Have had issues having quorum for in-person meetings. Need everyone committed to be at this meeting. It's sometimes easy not to come.
 - Drop end time of the committee, 10:00-2:00 is not long enough to get through everything and have committee discussion.
 - Subcommittees:
 - Subcommittee should be able to ask the Division be able to collect data on behalf of the committee.
 - Current/previously active Sub-committees: Quality; Court-Ordered Custody; Legislative
 - Sub-Committee suggestions for consideration:
 - Waiver/Policy/Budget/Legislative
 - Quality Improvement
 - Court-Order Custody Act
 - Beatrice State Developmental Center

- Self-Advocacy/Family Support Committee
- Membership committee
- They are regulatory on how the department can provide information. Not always user friendly. It's worth exploring.
- Committee needs define various things, such as "Advisory" and Developmental Disabilities County-ordered Custody Act and how the committee is making sure people are in the "least restrictive treatment and services necessary"
- How the committee communicates with the Department/Governor/Legislature.
 - Sending letters is appropriate for the committee. Need to provide opportunities for committee members to have feedback and have a voice in-put before something is sent. If a letter is sent that does not reflect the feeling of the full committee, this is acceptable with majority however this should be memorialized within the letter. Noting it does not reflect the voice of all members.
- Review the structure of the meetings.
- How do we share what the public about this committee what we do/ what we don't do?

V. Adjournment: Committee meeting ended at 3:00 PM

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

In- Person

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE

Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities

Wednesday, March 15, 2026

1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. CT

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that on Wednesday, March 15, 2026 at 1:00 PM CT, the Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities will hold a special virtual meeting. Members of the Committee or the public may physically attend the meeting virtually via Zoom or in-person at Meadowlark, Lower Level, Nebraska State Office Building, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509

The agenda is available on the Committee's webpage at <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Advisory-Committee.aspx>. The agenda will be kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the Department of Health and Human Services, 301 Centennial Mall South, Third Floor, Lincoln, NE 68509 during normal business hours.

The meetings of the Advisory Committee on Developmental Disabilities fall under the Nebraska Open Meetings Act. A copy of the Act is posted on the wall in the meeting room.

The agenda was emailed to the committee members prior to the meeting, on Wednesday April 8, 2026. Meetings documents were posted on the committee webpage <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-AdvisoryCommittee.aspx> on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

The above meeting notice was posted in the statewide paper, Omaha World Herald on April 10, 2026. Meeting notice is also posted on the developmental disability public division calendar <https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Developmental-Disabilities.aspx> and the Nebraska Public Meeting calendar <https://www.nebraska.gov/calendar/index.cgi>.