

# NEBRASKA: ANNUAL PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT

## SECTION I: IDENTIFICATION

### 1. *State/Territory*

NEBRASKA
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### 2. *Fiscal Year*

2023
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### 3. *Contact person regarding PPR information*

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## SECTION II: COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

### *Adequacy of health care and other services, supports and assistance that individuals with developmental disabilities in Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF) receive.*

There are eleven ICFs in Nebraska including two state facilities and nine private facilities. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, is identified as the survey agency within Nebraska. All facilities have been surveyed within the past year by representatives of Regulation and Licensure within the Division of Public Health. Regulation and Licensure is responsible for surveys and complaint investigations for all ICFs in the state and surveys and complaint investigations for all licensed Centers for the Developmentally Disabled (CDD) facilities in the state. There were 71 licensed CDDs in the state as of November 20, 2023. Survey reports are shared with the Council when requested.

Surveys continue to be positive, finding those surveyed to be in compliance with all eight ICF/IID Conditions of Participation. Review of ICF/IID survey reports for various facilities over the past year

reflect trends in licensure deficiencies. Staff training was often cited, particularly the lack of emergency preparedness training. Program implementation was another area frequently referenced, indicating the need for staff to receive adequate training on how to administer programs. Program monitoring and change was another area noted with deficiencies. Active treatment (W197 and W195) and services provided from an outside source were cited at the Mosaic Axtell facility. Nebraska regulations note that active treatment does not include services to maintain generally independent clients who are able to function with little supervision or in the absence of a continuous active treatment program. Other deficiencies cited were isolated across the settings.

A total of 267 (79 plus 188) individuals lived in the eleven ICFs at the time of the surveys. Current licensed beds versus filled beds at time of survey are recorded below:

BSDC Facilities; Licensed Capacity; Census/last survey date  
400 State Building; 58; 9; 10-1-23  
Solar Cottages; 108; 70; 10-1-23  
TOTAL BSDC; 166 total BSDC licensed capacity; 79 actual residents

Mosaic Facilities (9 Private); Licensed Capacity; Census/last survey date  
West Park Ave (Norfolk); 5; 5; 8-1-23  
Manchester (Omaha); 6; 6; 10-11-23  
Millard (Omaha); 6; 6; 9-7-23  
Papillion (Papillion); 6; 6; 3-29-23  
Hope Street (Grand Island); 6; 5; 10-27-23  
Meadowlark (York); 6; 6; 6-28-23  
Axtell; 73; 59; 7-28-23  
Beatrice Campus; 102; 87; 6-21-23  
Mosaic Tri City Region; 9; 8; 9-20-23  
(Grand Island)  
Total Mosaic Facilities: 219 total Mosaic licensed capacity; 188 actual residents

At the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC), the qualified developmental disabilities professional (QDDP) facilitates an interdisciplinary approach in development of the Individual Support Plan (ISP). The ISP is a plan that includes what is important to the individual and important for the individual. The goal is to ensure a person-centered plan that supports the individual in realizing their personal goals and moving them toward living in the most inclusive environment possible. Quarterly and as needed a review of progress toward the individual plan is completed through IDT review and meetings that address any changes needed. IDT meetings are scheduled by the QDDP, ensuring that the staff who have expertise in the area(s) of concern are present as well as participation by the individual, guardian, and direct support staff.

Members of BSDC Quality Improvement complete a random sample of ISPs, ensuring reviews include monitoring for compliance with BSDC processes, ICF regulations, and if individual needs are met. A Program Specialist monitors and tracks restrictions to individual rights and chairs the Human Legal Rights Committee. BSDC Quality Assurance staff complete thorough incident reviews, monitoring for appropriate interventions to prevent future incidents and track for facility and individual trends. Members of the team provide investigation reports for alleged abuse/neglect incidents, fractures, and deaths. Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) hired Liberty Healthcare to review Quality Management Systems. Liberty Health Care provides Mortality Reviews for deaths at BSDC, followed

by the Mortality Review Committee. BSDC Health Information provides information to Liberty Health Care regarding deaths at BSDC, and any additional documentation requested. BSDC Director of Nursing is a member of the Mortality Review Committee.

On-site healthcare services at BSDC include evaluation, assessment, and treatment of medical, clinical, dental, mental health and behavioral needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). BSDC applies a person-centered, interdisciplinary approach that mitigates existing health conditions, improves quality of life, and prevents development of complications. Annually and as needed, clinical staff complete risk screenings for health, physical and nutritional concerns. Clinical experts complete routine monitoring based on individual needs, to ensure the health and safety of individuals as well as the knowledge of staff for implementation of those supports. Examples include monitoring for proper positioning throughout daily activities, meals to ensure appropriate dining strategies, food textures and liquid consistencies to ensure safe intake without complications. On site nursing and medical provides healthcare monitoring based on individual needs for elements which may include but are not limited to: BMI improvement, blood pressure control, diabetes control, and a reduction in hospital visits. BSDC individuals receive comprehensive therapeutic plan development upon referral, followed by care transition to a physician or specialist in the community as needed. All BSDC individuals have person-centered healthcare plans and use all available services.

Quality Improvement indicators are assigned in the following areas and reported on Quarterly, with action plans identified as needed to address concerns in specific areas.

- Individuals are Safe
- Individuals are Healthy
- Individuals are Supported to Achieve Independence
- Individuals are Treated with Dignity and Respect
- Staff Employee Data

BSDC participates in the National Core Indicator Survey. This includes a random survey of individual and guardian satisfaction with services provided. The 2023 NCI survey was completed through in person interviews with 10 participants across the facility.

Quarterly, as part of individual review of progress/needs toward their personal plan, BSDC monitors service satisfaction with:

- Day Services/Opportunities;
- Recreation/Leisure Services/Opportunities;
- Living Arrangements; and
- Health and Wellness Services/Opportunities (including the medical services).

Between October 2022 and September 2023, 7 participants were served by BSDC acute crisis stabilization services.

- Three individuals were admitted from outside of BSDC during this period.
- Three individuals were transitioned and discharged to a community provider during this period.
- One individual was admitted from the other ICF at BSDC, due to needs for behavioral stabilization, with plans to transition back to BSDC Long Term Care ICF.

*Adequacy of health care and other services, supports, and assistance that individuals with developmental disabilities served through home and community-based waivers receive.*

There are two DD waivers that provide Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS): the Developmental Disabilities Adult Day waiver and the Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities waiver. The Developmental Disabilities Adult Day waiver offers day services and there were 429 individuals on this waiver in December 2023. The Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities waiver offers day and residential services and there were 4,846 individuals on this waiver in December 2023.

The Aged & Disabled (AD) Medicaid Waiver services help people who are aged or have disabilities who meet the Nursing Facility Level of Care. The AD Waiver provides needs identification, service planning & HCBS for eligible individuals, & services not typically seen as medical, such as adult day care, assisted living, chore services, childcare, home-delivered meals, independence skills management, nutrition services, personal emergency response system, respite care, & transportation. There were 7,593 individuals on the Aged and Disabled (A&D) waiver in December 2023.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) also offers service coordination to waiver participants and eligible persons on the DD Registry. For individuals on the Registry, service coordination provides case management services to support individuals on the wait list in accessing benefits and community resources they may qualify for while waiting for a funding offer to receive DD waiver services. For participants in waiver services, service coordination is a mandatory service. Service coordinators work with a participant to develop the participant's Person-Centered Plan (PCP) based on the participant's personal goals and assessed needs, monitor the implementation of the PCP, complete referrals for chosen providers and arrange site visits and transition plans, and help advocate for what the participant wants and needs from service providers. Service coordinators conduct onsite service reviews to monitor the delivery of services and the participant's satisfaction with services.

The PCP is an individualized plan that identifies the supports and habilitation the participant needs to live as independently as possible. The PCP is developed by a team chosen by the participant and includes the participant, the service coordinator, the developmental disabilities providers (agency and independent) who work with the participant, the participant's guardian, family members, advocates and friends, and other organizations that support the participant. The division's quality team reviews a sample of PCPs each month to verify that participant plans meet waiver and policy requirements and generally address participants' goals and assessed needs. The division's quality team also monitors critical incident reports which include hospitalizations, emergency room visits, serious illness/injuries, and other events that affect the participant's health or safety. A cross-divisional Mortality Review Committee convenes monthly to examine participant deaths to identify if there are any concerns or additional follow-up necessary to improve participant health and well-being.

For each DD waiver participant, the Service Coordinator completes level of care and risk screen assessments annually to assess the participant's health and safety needs, in order to develop the PCP. The level of care determines whether a participant requires the same level of services as provided by an Intermediate Care Facility. There are four risk screens administered annually: behavioral risks, overall health and risks associated with medical conditions, risks associated with walking and falls, and nutritional intake and aspiration or choking risks. A participant's provider may complete additional assessments to identify the strengths, needs, and preferences of the participant. The assessments are reviewed by the PCP team and are an important part of service planning. An objective assessment process is used to determine each participants' annual budget for purchasing DD waiver services. The

objective assessment process includes completing an Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP) assessment which is a scientifically validated instrument that assesses adaptive skills and behavioral needs.

Medical care of the participant is the responsibility of the participant, the participant's guardian (if they have one), or a service provider, depending on the participant/guardian's preferences. Participants receiving DD waiver services get their medical care through Heritage Health, Nebraska's Medicaid Managed Care Program. As of December 2023, there are three managed care organizations: Nebraska Total Care, United Healthcare, and HealthyBlue. Heritage Health combines Nebraska's physical health, behavioral health, and pharmacy programs into a single comprehensive and coordinated system for Nebraska's Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program enrollees. All Heritage Health plans offer the same healthcare services in the community including doctor visits, prescriptions, hospital, mental health, emergency room visits, vision and glasses, medical supplies and durable medical equipment, skilled nursing, physical, occupational and speech therapy, hearing and hearing aids, home health, dialysis, and hospice. Dental benefits are available to Medicaid enrollees as well. The services that are not covered by the health plans but are provided by other Medicaid programs if participants are eligible, are: non-emergency transportation, personal assistance services, and long-term care.

Nebraska Medicaid's spending plan for the additional funds available for home and community-based services (HCBS) through the American Rescue Plan Act received conditional approval from the federal government on January 31, 2022. Components of the Spending Plan that were approved as of July 2023 includes grants to agencies to purchase telehealth equipment; funds to convert or renovate facilities for other purposes or enhance purpose; funding of non-federal share for ACL grants for the State Unit on Aging; funds to procure a fiscal intermediary and change the rate methodology for personal assistance services and chore services; and funding increases to address workforce shortages and continued increased costs due to COVID-19 for all four of Nebraska's Waivers (TBI, AD, CDD, and DDAD). Additional Spending Plan elements include home health provider relief payments, a program for all-inclusive care for the elderly provider relief payment, Personal Assistance Services provider rate increase, provider relief payments for Targeted Case Management Option (TCMO) providers, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) consulting, the development of a proposal to reduce Nebraska's reliance on congregate care in support of independent living for DD clients, an evaluation of Nebraska's developmental disabilities system and supports (LB376), community-based behavioral health system enhancements, the development of a new Family Support Waiver, and grants to agencies to provide supervisor training opportunities to front line supervisors. Nebraska is awaiting CMS approval on additional spending plan requests including for the implementation of a standardized assessment tool for Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) Level of Care (LOC).

#### National Core Indicators (NCI) Survey - DD Waiver

The Division of Developmental Disabilities participates in the National Core Indicators (NCI) survey. It is a survey that assists public developmental disabilities agencies with measuring and tracking their performance and comparing that performance with other states. Below are some highlights from the most recent NCI -IDD data report on interviews conducted in 2021-2022. Nebraska conducted 418 NCI-IDD surveys and 13,559 surveys were conducted nationwide.

46% of respondents were female, and 54% were male. Demographics of race and ethnicity were as follows: White - 76%, Hispanic/Latino 6%, Black/African American 10%, American Indian 6%, Asian 2%.

#### NCI HEALTH

- Nebraska respondents reported 94% had a dental exam within the past year; 96% had a physical exam in the past year; 98% had an eye exam; and 85% received the flu vaccination in the last year. 98% reported that they have a primary care doctor. Only 48% have had a hearing test in the past 5 years.
- Nebraska respondents who indicated that they are in good health was 41%, very good health 31%, fair health 13%, and excellent health - 12%.
- Nebraska respondents taking medication for behavior challenges (30%). 31% of respondents have a behavior plan; 40% have disruptive behavior, 16% exhibit self-injurious behavior, and 22% have behavior that is destructive or harmful to others.
- For those respondents that indicated that they take medications for mood, anxiety, and/or psychotic disorder, 68% take 1-2 medications, 28% take 3-4 medications, and 4% take 5-10 medications. Medications taken related to behavior challenges indicates 68% take 1-2 medications, 29% take 3-4 medications, and 3% take 5-10 medications.

#### NCI WELLNESS

- Nebraska respondents who participate in physical activity at least once per week was 83%, and those who exercise or have physical activity that works the muscles at least one per week was 64%.
- Only 12% of Nebraskans have fallen and hurt themselves in the last 6 months.
- 17% of Nebraskans have gone to the emergency room for any reason in the last 12 months.

#### NCI RESPECT AND RIGHTS

Nebraska is within or significantly above the national averages in many areas, including:

- Respondents has a key to their own home
- There is a place to go to be alone
- Staff treats person with respect
- Others requests permission to enter home and bedroom
- Respondents have their own cell phone.

The following are areas below the national average:

- Can lock their bedroom door (50%)
- Voted or chose not to vote (40%)
- Can stay home if others in the house go somewhere (40%)

#### NCI COMMUNITY INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

Areas within the NCI national average:

- Goes out shopping once in the last month (81%)
- Went out for entertainment at least once in the last month (58%)
- Ran errands at least once in the last month (73%)
- Has enough to do in free time (93%)
- Gets help learning new things (82%)
- Able to go out & do things as often as liked (71%)
- Able to do things with the people they want (82%)#
- Can be oneself when in the community or groups (93%)#
- Included in activities and events (86%)#

Area significantly below the NCI national average:

- Takes part in groups that include people without disabilities (37%)#
- The # symbol indicates that this was a new question in 2021-22

#### NCI SATISFACTION

Nebraska's satisfaction with the Community Inclusion Scale is the third highest in the nation (66%).

Items included in the satisfaction scale include:

- Likes where they live (90%)
- Wants to live somewhere else (22%) <
- Has enough things they like to do at home (84%)
- Likes community job (89%)
- Likes how day is usually spent (89%)\*

\* Significantly above average < Significantly below average

#### NCI ACCESS

Within NCI Average Range

- Has way to get places needs to go (89%)
- Access to internet (84%)
- Has a cell phone (71%)

Significantly Below NCI Average:

- Able to get places wants to go (67%) [Up from 61% in 20-21]
- Adequate Transportation Scale for Nebraska is 78%; Weighted NCI-IDD average is 86%

#### NCI TOP ADDITIONAL SERVICE NEEDS IDENTIFIED

- Does not need additional services (49%)
- Residential support services (23%)
- Assistance finding, maintaining, or changing job (22%)
- Transportation (21%)

#### LIBERTY HEALTHCARE CORPORATION AND QUALITY OVERSIGHT

In January 2021, Liberty Healthcare Corporation (Liberty) entered into a contract with the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities (DHHS-DDD) to provide quality improvement services for Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) programs. Liberty is also contracted to perform quality improvement services relating to mortality review processes at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). To promote a system-wide approach to continuous quality improvement, Liberty and DHHS began collecting information regarding all deaths of individuals served by the DHHS-DDD to monitor performance measures and use the data to drive improvement in the delivery of services on 7/15/21 and throughout 2022 and 2023 for all four HCBS waiver programs as well as for BSDC. An important component of quality and risk management oversight in the new mortality review processes developed and implemented by Liberty and DHHS-DDD is the review and analysis of all deaths of supported individuals to identify important patterns and trends that may help mitigate risk factors and provide information to inform service delivery improvements.

#### MORTALITY REVIEW PROCESS (MRC)

The review and analysis of participant deaths is an important component of the quality and risk management systems. The mortality review process collects and analyzes data from mortality reports and case reviews to identify important patterns and trends that may help increase knowledge about

risk factors and provide information to guide system enhancements and improvements.

In the coming year, additional improvements and enhancements are planned, including standardizing the process for submitting notifications of death, further enhancing and refining data collection and analysis processes to yield more trending and predictability capacity; and implementing a more robust technical assistance and remediation process geared toward enhancing improvements in service quality.

In the next year, a goal is to have deaths of participants across all waivers reported via the Therap system by completing a "Death of a Participant" General Event Report (GER). This will streamline and standardize not only the method and platform by which deaths are reported but also the data reported and collected, increasing the reliability of mortality data analyzed.

#### TRIAGE PROCESS

Liberty's mortality review nurse investigator triages (screens) each notification of death to determine if it falls into one or more of the following categories:

- Deaths associated with alleged or suspected abuse, neglect, exploitation, or criminal acts;
- Sudden and unexpected deaths (deaths that occur without warning or are unanticipated); or
- Deaths which could be due to a lack of standard medical care or omitted or inappropriate clinical care.

When a death meets one of these criteria, the mortality review will be expedited. An expedited review is prioritized ahead of non-expedited reviews. Expedited deaths are always prioritized to be completed within 45 calendar days following triage. Non-expedited deaths are reviewed as work on expedited death permits but may not be completed within 45 calendar days of triage depending on the volume of death notices received.

When the initial triage review reveals potential signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, the mortality nurse investigator alerts the DDD Quality Administrator to the immediate concerns that may need to be addressed.

#### NURSE MORTALITY REVIEW

To start the review process, the mortality review assistant begins collecting applicable documents within the state-mandated web-based case management system. A list of additional documents needed to conduct a review is sent to the provider, Service Coordinator, or BSDC staff; receipt of documents is tracked; and the documents are organized in preparation for the review.

The nurse mortality investigator completes the review using the documents received and completes the mortality review brief electronically, entering all appropriate data about the mortality. The investigator determines whether each mortality case:

- Second-Level Physician Review

The Liberty mortality review physician completes a second-level review on all mortality cases that have been expedited and any non-expedited reviews that would benefit from further medical evaluation. The nurse mortality investigator may flag certain aspects of a case for physician review and may have specific questions about the cause of death, meaning, or impact of medical conditions or illnesses related to the mortality, or the appropriateness of the medical care provided in days and weeks preceding the death.



Findings from the second-level review may help answer the mortality questions listed above.

- Mortality Review Committee

The role of the Mortality Review Committee (MRC) is to review and evaluate individual mortality cases referred to the committee, as well as aggregate data from mortality reviews, make recommendations for quality improvements for both individual providers and systems issues, and communicate recommendations to the DDD Quality Improvement Committee to support systemic quality improvement initiatives. The goal of the MRC recommendations is to improve the quality of support and services and prevent avoidable deaths.

Follow-up and Closure Process

Based on the mortality review findings, Liberty and the MRC may make recommendations regarding actions to be taken by the provider, Service Coordinator (SC), or Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC). Liberty generates recommendation letters and the DDD Quality Administrator (or designee) amends and approves the letters before sending to the provider, SC, or BSDC. Liberty, in collaboration with the DDD Quality Unit, may provide technical assistance to providers based on recommendations from the mortality reviews or MRC. Mortality review cases are considered closed when either a recommendation letter or a closure letter is sent to the applicable party (provider, SC or BSDC).

Collection, Analysis, and Reporting of Mortality Data

Multiple sets of data are collected and stored during triage and mortality reviews. These data elements are case factors, characteristics, and attributes that assist in identifying trends, correlations, and themes associated with mortalities when used in data analysis. Some of these data elements include:

- Age at death;
- Location of death;
- Provider of services;
- Cause of death;
- Pre-existing conditions;
- Residential setting;
- Waiver program funding; and
- Fatal Five plus pre-existing conditions.

**SECTION III: STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

<b>A. Introduction</b>	<b>Provide an executive summary with cohesive information that provides an overview of the report including, but not limited to the following: (1) targeted areas of emphasis, (2) strategies used to implement activities; (3) significant</b>
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**accomplishments and/or barriers to OMB Approval 0985-0033 Expiration: 11/30/2024 state plan implementation; (4) needs requiring state plan amendments.**

NCDD continues to demonstrate the power of collective advocacy and small gains on systemic change and capacity building in Nebraska. In FFY2023 the Council funded subawards and contracts, and Council staff worked diligently to meet or exceed the planned work. There was collaboration with the DD Network Partners, Division of Developmental Disabilities, DD advocacy organizations, cross-disability organizations, legislators, boards, commissions, and councils.

The Council continues to use DD Suite for reporting, which has streamlined our reporting and monitoring processes. Subrecipients have had some specific questions and needed some technical assistance from Council staff, but the majority have had no issues using it. The DD Suite team continues to provide technical assistance and remote virtual training as needed to assist Council staff with the platform.

In FFY23, Council staff monitored 6 new subawards, 3 continuation subawards, and 5 contracts. Education was the primary means of providing information to students, families, service providers, and professionals. Supported Employment was also a big focus for this year, with much success and sustainability for future years in Nebraska.

Among the projects:

-PTI Nebraska's Transitioning Youth into Adult Services Project - PTI had a successful second year of this project increasing awareness of Person-Centered Planning (PCP) & its effectiveness in helping young adults plan for their future. They provided trainings, events, and webinars on the transition to adulthood and living independently to youth, young adults, their families, to professionals and caseworkers. PTI Nebraska is Nebraska's only Parent Center and serves as a statewide resource for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs. Council funds are supporting PTI's incorporation of person-centered planning as a process-oriented approach to empowering people to plan their life, speak up for themselves, and work toward reaching their own goals with a team. The Person-Centered Planning process fits nicely with transition planning and is the cornerstone of all of PTI's updated resources and materials. PTI focused on increasing parents, young adults with disabilities, and community professional's knowledge about the importance of young adults with disabilities leading their transition planning and focusing on their likes, preferences, desires, strengths, needs, and abilities, and what it takes to reach their goals in all areas of their lives. PTI increased awareness about the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework that can help all people with disabilities advocate for what they want and don't want in their lives and find the supports and/or services they need to attain their idea of a "good life". During this second year, PTI reached more people and shared more PCP and CtLC resources than in their first year through trainings conducted, events attended or hosted, social media efforts, newsletters sent, and meetings held. PTI was also able to reach young adults with disabilities and Spanish-speaking families which was a great achievement in this project. PTI's main strategy used in reaching more young adults was to participate in a job expo day for young adults with disabilities in high-school transition where they were able to hold mini-training sessions that focused on employment/job skills, daily living skills, strengths, and self-advocacy in voicing what they want to do in their lives and making informed choices. Overall, during this period, PTI reached 158 Hispanic families, 139 parents & 19 young adults. They also

reached 108 young adults with disabilities, both English & Spanish-speaking.

-People First of Nebraska (PFN) - The goals and activities of this project were continuing to promote the profile of PFN and ensuring that people with disabilities are involved in all levels of policy making and program development. The Growing Independence Seminar, the first pre-PFN convention training event ever offered, was hugely successful. Over 60 attendees, self-advocates and service providers together, participated in interactive sessions/discussions. Presenters from NE Vocational Rehab, provider agencies, & NE DHHS, including the Director of DD, Tony Green, presented on a variety of topics of interest to both groups. PFN recruited four Disability Policy Specialists (DPS) for the 2023 Unicameral session. The Disability Rights Nebraska (DRN) trainer, Brad Meurrens, and the MMI LEND Program trainer, Mary Angus, developed/piloted a training outline for the Disability Policy Specialists. Due to a number of challenges, the Specialists were unable to educate Legislators on specific legislation. Instead, the DPS & mentors focused on more generalized policy skills and experiences, including the following: Learning to navigate the Unicameral website, identifying their Senators, process for Bill introductions in the NE Unicameral, practice writing 2-line summaries of various legislation, learning about the importance of Committees and Committee assignments, finding/following Hearing schedules, analyzing Legislation for intent, identifying possible unintended consequences, reading/analyzing Fiscal Notes, developing a list of bills of interest to PFN, viewing floor debates/committee hearings via streaming service, analyzing those discussions, learning about filibusters/rules of the legislature, and learning about how/why bills are bundled. Specialists also developed impact statements on LB535, the voter ID bill, & LB811, the restraint/seclusion bill. They also recruited a fifth Specialist that will complete a 200-hour community-based traineeship. This self-advocate is completing coursework at UNO for a master's degree focusing on non-profit community agencies/policy advocacy. Another very positive outcome is that another of PTI's DPS, Brooke Anderson, was accepted into the Nebraska LEND Advanced Leadership Interdisciplinary Training Program as a Self-Advocate trainee. She will complete a 600-hour paid traineeship over 10 months with a cohort of graduate students, fellows, and family trainees at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. People First of Nebraska is very proud to have their DPS program serve as a pipeline to more advanced and PAID training for the PFN members. Over all with their Board Meetings, conferences hosted/presented at, and trainings for self-advocates/providers, PFN was able to reach and educate over 460 people.

-Niagara University-Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training (EM-DAT) This project has several goals that drive the intention of the program, leading to an ultimate objective of ensuring the people with I/DD are accurately and appropriately planned for in emergency operation plans, which addresses response and recovery activities that meets the needs of the population. This is achieved by including people with I/DD and access/functional needs through inclusive planning and active participation. The first step was meeting with all stakeholders. This included NE Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), NE Association of Emergency Managers (NAEM), Regional Red Cross, NE ADA Coordinator, NE DHHS, Omaha ADA Coordinator, NE Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, NE Disability Organizations and invested entities. The latter includes, but was not limited to, NE ILC's (League for Human Dignity, Independence Rising), NE Commission for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing, DRN, NE Total Care, People First of NE, Nebraska MMI UCEDD, NE/South Dakota Epilepsy Foundation, NE Commission for the Blind/Visually Impaired, Paralyzed Veterans of America - Great Plains Chapter, The Arc of NE, & NE ATP. This served to introduce the program, explain the importance of presence in training and outreach to their constituents, the role they played (per their profession) in implementing the learned materials, and defining inclusive planning and active participation in these trainings and materials. 91 agencies/136 people attended the nine two-day or half day program,

learning what THEY need to do to incorporate effective emergency planning/preparedness into their agency's scope of services. This is emphasized as it is stressed that those with an administrative/leadership role must embrace the program in their daily operations. There were 122 attendees at the 4-virtual sessions with 3 of those focused on DD Service Providers. Dave Whalen of Niagara University said, "Having the ability to compare to other state's that funded this program, Nebraska should be considered a success based on the diversity of attendance that includes the presence of state and local emergency managers and several disability advocacy organizations."

-UNO Project FEET (Family-Engaged Educational Training) - The goals of this first year project with UNO were to increase family knowledge about special education/skills in partnering with school professionals, and to increase school professionals' knowledge and skills in engaging diverse families in the special education process. UNO established an advisory board in partnership with individuals from MMI's Family Care Enhancement Project (FCEP), the MMI UCEDD, PTI NE, the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, the Learning Community of North Omaha, along with local families and school professionals. The advisory board provided much needed insights into the development of family-engaged educational training curriculum to use in college courses taken by school professionals. UNO used the term school professionals to include student candidates enrolled in undergraduate and graduate special education, applied behavior analysis, and school psychology programs. This project created and developed the FEET (Family-Engaged Educational Training) Curriculum, had families participate in activities with pre-service professionals, conducted pre-test surveys to assess families and school professionals, implemented components of the curriculum in 3 classes, hosted guest presentations from service agencies and families, coordinated with interpreters and translators to create resources for families speaking diverse languages, and collected data from the curriculum and training feedback. Over this year, UNO was able to provide training, outreach and guidance to over 80 individuals, families and professionals.

-Easterseals of Nebraska (ESN) Opportunity App Project - ESN worked on their first year project to enhance supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, and professionals, through access to a user-friendly app that would provide a rich "hub" for information and resources. The project goal was designed to support individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals to have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc. A PDF user guide was developed, providing step-by-step text/pictures showing how to access and use the app. This PDF was provided to users and the App Ambassadors, such as special education teachers and transition coordinators for them to feel comfortable promoting and supporting use of the app. Additional public awareness resources were developed, including email templates and brief slides on the app included in various ESN workshops. ESN sent out emails to over 400 recipients, shared information about the App and the QR code for download. Social media posts were initiated, tagging organizations serving individuals with disabilities, their families, and educators. ESN distributed business card-sized resources which introduced users to the App. Key ambassadors working with transition age youth/family members in a parent group, were given multiple cards and encouraged to pass the information about the App to individuals and families in their networks. App awareness education continues as ESN hosts consultations with individuals, workshops, families and providers. They have reached and trained over 800 people on the Opportunity App.

-MMI's Promoting the autonomy of autistic individuals with severe behavior Project -The overall goal of this project with the Munroe-Meyer Institute was to receive information from autistic individuals

and caregivers about their experiences with law enforcement, specifically during behavioral crises. In addition, this goal extended to receiving the opinions of autistic individuals and caregivers related to the training systems for law enforcement. Their feedback helped improve law enforcement's knowledge and awareness of autism, autistic individuals, and behavioral crises. MMI accomplished this overall goal in multiple steps. They collaborated with an expert in criminal justice and intellectual/developmental disabilities to develop a survey. Next, they conducted focus groups with their subject matter experts in meetings to receive feedback on the survey to ensure they asked socially acceptable questions related to their overall goal. MMI then distributed the survey and received responses from over 100 people. 43 participants identified as autistic, 7 chose not to identify, and 56 participants identified as a caregiver of an autistic individual. With these responses they acquired three themes. The majority had unfavorable experiences with law enforcement, all respondents believe that law enforcement personnel need more training on autism and how to manage behavioral crises, and lastly, the majority of the respondents believe that behavioral experts should be available for law enforcement personnel when responding to a behavioral crisis. These outcomes and recommendations are written into a final report. MMI plans to distribute this report to at least 5 law enforcement agencies.

-The Arc of Nebraska - Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD - This project was dedicated to empowering students with I/DD in NE, along with their advocates, to effectively navigate the educational system. The training sessions were organized as a series that were both in-person and accessible online. These sessions provided students with I/DD & their advocates with essential skills and knowledge. Participants learned how to address disability-related challenges in school settings, advocate for necessary behavioral supports, and respond to exclusionary disciplinary measures effectively. Through these training sessions, they aimed to boost confidence and equip them with the tools they needed to advocate for their rights. The comprehensive guidance document served as a valuable resource that outlined the rights of students with disabilities when it comes to school discipline. It provided clear, actionable information, enabling students/advocates to navigate the educational system with confidence. In addition to explaining their rights, the document offered strategies for proactively addressing challenges, advocating for necessary support, and guidance on responding effectively to exclusionary disciplinary measures. The interactive online platform was developed to extend the reach of their project. This digital space serves as a dynamic hub for students with I/DD & their advocates. It offers a wealth of resources, including educational materials, real-world case studies, and interactive tools to help users proactively avoid classroom exclusion. Additionally, the platform guided individuals on exercising their rights when faced with school pushout scenarios. Through The Arc's collective efforts, they achieved their primary goal of providing almost 200 individuals/families the tools to reduce the time of students with I/DD spent outside of the classroom due to various exclusionary disciplinary actions.

-Disability Rights Nebraska (DRN) Supported Decision Making Project-The goal of this project was to raise awareness of Supported Decision Making (SDM) as a tool to increase or maintain self-determination for persons with I/DD. They also wanted to raise awareness of the predominance of "plenary" guardianships over limited guardianships and how SDM can be an alternative to overbroad or undue "plenary" guardianships. They held four meetings of the project's Steering Committee/Task Force workgroups. These meetings produced significant collaboration/input, were instrumental to identify new audiences for educational presentations, to identify topics for the educational brochures, to review the educational materials, and to provide outlets to promote the "clearinghouse" as well as the project overall. They produced a video animation explaining the concept and benefits of SDM. The video is catalogued on the Clearinghouse website. This project identified two potential Ambassadors,

one of which is a new participant on the Task Force. DRN contracted with Mary Phillips to consult/work on this project. Mary presented to ESU-6 about SDM, sharing her family's experience with SDM as an alternative to guardianship (the intent of the Ambassadors, to give lived experience/examples of SDM). DRN has identified two potential schools to approach. A webpage on the DRN website is dedicated to SDM and serves as the web-based Clearinghouse for the grant. The Clearinghouse contains a wealth of resources on a variety of topics related to SDM: videos, slideshows, & research literature addressing SDM in general, for persons with mental illness, the aging community, policy language/legislation, etc. DRN also produced five brochures in FFY23 covering these topics relative to Supported Decision Making: guardianship, independent living/transition students, special education, personal finance, & healthcare. Overall DRN has been able to educate/train over 450 individuals, families, & professionals on SDM.

-UNL Professional Educational Clearinghouse - The University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL) received subaward funding of \$50,000 from NCDD to create a Professional Educational Clearinghouse Platform. The project's focus is on researching institutions in Nebraska to inquire if they are offering courses or programs on special education. UNL has not yet started to collect trainings and professional development programs and courses for the Web platform. UNL has currently been brainstorming this work with just a list of institutions for regular and special education in Nebraska. UNL is required to develop and maintain the online clearinghouse, the website, and its catalog of accessible classes, trainings, and professional development courses for regular and special education teachers. This subaward started Aug 1, 2023, and will be developing more resources for this NE platform and its educators.

-NASP Inclusive Economy Film Project - The overall goal for the 'Inclusive Economy' film contract was to educate/increase participation in competitive, integrated employment for individuals with I/DD (for both employees and employers). NASP had three target audiences: people with IDD and their guardians, business owners/employers, and potential job coaches. There were many steps and people involved in making this film from start to finish. First, they identified subject matter experts to help guide the project, invited interested providers from NASP to be part of the planning team, and recruited three provider organizations to volunteer for the film. The next step was to identify individuals and their employers working with those provider agencies who would be willing to be interviewed on camera. Based on who would participate, the planning team drafted an outline of the 30-minute program and started to develop the scripts. People First of NE, with the guidance of their self-advocates, developed the questions that individuals with I/DD would be asked about their employment. NASP & NE Public Media developed the script for the in-studio segments. The questions and scripts were approved by the planning committee. They then scheduled and completed the film. Scheduling was probably the most difficult part because they had so many players. Not only did they need to coordinate with individuals and find the best time to film while at work without interfering with their jobs, but they needed to ensure availability of the entire film crew at the same time. All deliverables were met by June 30th, 2023. The finished film was available for online streaming July 1st, 2023 (1133 views at time of report). Air dates on NE Public Media television were during July 5th, 9th, 19th, & 23rd, 2023 (total view data unavailable). NASP held a free screening at the Mary Riepma Ross Theater on July 13th, 2023 (38 attendees).

-Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) Nebraska - Technology Training Project - The knowledge of assistive technology devices and services is varied among students, families, educators, related service providers and administrators. This Parent and Educator Training Project with Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) created three high-quality online modules that focus on aspects of

assistive technology devices and the services provided. The modules that ATP created have been using an Articulate Storyline. These modules are interactive and are multimodal, allowing learners to engage with the content in different ways like reading, watching, and listening. Then learners can check their understanding and go at their own pace. Specifically, this project focuses on the development of the modules throughout the projects 4 phases. Creation, Translation, Finalization, and Dissemination. The 3 modules that were created are: 1) What is assistive technology and why is it important for my child? 2) Could my child benefit from assistive technology? and 3) Talking about assistive technology with my child's IFSP/IEP Team. ATP is still collecting feedback from self-advocates and their families. The knowledge gathered from these subject matter experts will then be published and available for viewing.

-Dr. Lisa Mills (Study/Action Plan/Summit) - NCDD signed & approved two contracts to improve Supported Employment outcomes for individuals with I/DD in NE with Dr. Lisa Mills. The initial contract went from Oct.1, 2021, until Mar. 31, 2023. (A No-Cost extension was provided.) The report was the outcome from Mills' first contract. A second contract was set up with Mills for the period of July 3, 2023, to May 31, 2024. The title of Dr. Mills study is "Necessity or Luxury? Supporting Nebraskans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Join the Workforce and Contribute to Nebraskan's Economy." This report summarizes the methods and findings of a study undertaken to assess and better understand current employment outcomes for people with I/DD in the State of NE. This study also included a focus on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the history of policy, practice and outcomes leading up to the current situation. Overall, the study was undertaken to identify strategic recommendations that the State of NE & other key stakeholders can consider for implementation to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. The second contract supports Mills' efforts to assist the NE state partner agencies and stakeholders on determining an Action-Plan after consideration of recommendations from the comprehensive report with her prior contract. Mills will provide consultation and technical assistance to the NE Divisions of Developmental Disabilities, Behavioral Health, & NE Vocational Rehabilitation on agency-specific goals, issues and challenges, as well as on interactions between the agencies to advance CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with IDD and SMI (serious mental illness). She will also provide consultation and technical assistance to DD Network Partners & NASP, related to their roles in addressing specific issues and challenges to advance CIE outcomes for people with I/DD. On Sept. 20, 2023, multiple agencies across NE came together to host a Supported Employment Summit. The overarching theme of the summit was focused on working together to change the way Nebraska does Supported Employment; with the primary goal to increase employment opportunities and outcomes for Nebraskans who can benefit from Supported Employment.

-Charting the LifeCourse to promote Person-Centered Planning -NCDD has played a pivotal role in funding training to strengthen and incorporate true Person-Centered Planning (PCP) for participants receiving HCBS waiver services in Nebraska. The Council's initial two-year investment (2020 through 2022) with Mark Friedman at The Center for Outcome Analysis provided robust virtual PCP training to service coordination staff, service recipients and their families/guardians, service providers, policymakers, advocates, and other interested persons. Systems change resulted, including the 2022 DHHS Business Plan commitment to using the University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework principles and tools into the service planning process. By December 2023, all HCBS waiver participants have at least one CtLC tool, agreed to by participant and the Service Coordinator, completed and incorporated into their person-centered plan.

CtLC's framework was developed to help individuals and families of all abilities and at any age or stage

of life develop a vision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live. Since its development, it has been used in more than 18 states as a framework for supporting person-centered planning and decision-making. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) also invested in a full membership contract in 2022 and in 2023 with the NASDDS (National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services) and UMKC Community of Practice (CoP) for Supporting Families Across the Lifespan. This investment of \$30,900 is noted as dollars leveraged in the fiscal information section. Participation in the CoP provides state CoP teams with state specific technical assistance and support from the National CoP Project Team, and a learning community across and between states.

The purpose and benefits of national CoP membership is to support states to enhance and drive policy, practice, and system transformation to support the person within the context of their family and community. The CoP provides technical assistance, learning opportunities, and activities that support state teams to identify innovation areas and priorities for systems change that will anchor and enhance supports to families, develop implementation plans, and assist with specific strategies for success. The CoP is intended to assist states to build the capacity to apply supporting families' principles for grassroots, organizational, and systems levels changes. State DD Councils must commit to an active partnership between the state I/DD agency through active participation in the work of the CoP through meeting attendance, participation on the state operating team, CoP individual & all-state CoP calls, annual attendance at the CoP meeting, & dedication of staff time to project activities, implementation, & outcomes. The Council ED has been participating with DDD leadership's CoP in all these areas throughout FFY23.

Additionally, the Council bolstered CtLC incorporation efforts in FFY2023 by funding UMKC's LifeCourse Nexus Training team to help establish a network of innovators and early adopters with the knowledge and skills to champion and support the integration of the CtLC framework into policy, practice, and procedure. This project focused on providing virtual training to families, adults with IDD, and case managers. Opportunities to increase awareness were also offered to state agency staff to ensure alignment across audiences.

In early 2023 UMKC LifeCourse Nexus Training and TA Center provided a virtual CtLC Foundational Series to bring general awareness presentations to introduce stakeholders to the framework and potential ways to utilize it in supporting people and families. The Foundational webinars introduced the CtLC Framework as a foundation for working with people and helping them integrate these strategies into their day-to-day practices. These Foundational Series live webinars were used as a tool to recruit applicants who were interested in becoming a CtLC Ambassador. NCDD received 26 applications for the Ambassador training opportunity, and 15 people were selected to participate in the intensive CtLC Ambassador certification training. The Ambassador online educational series and learning collaborative deepened understanding of the CtLC framework and its application in person-centered planning and will help the Council build capacity for sharing about the framework with others.

The last phase of the Council's CtLC project included a round of CtLC Skill Building Series focused on utilizing an interactive, discussion-based lecture to provide an in-depth introduction on the CtLC key principle(s) and examples of the project implementation, as well as interactive activities related to using the framework to provide hands-on practice and application for these families. The CtLC Skill Building Series was targeted for families, HCBS recipients, advocates, and providers to promote understanding of the CtLC framework and principles, and how they can be used for planning,



problem-solving, and decision making in all stages of life.

The Council also worked with DD Division leadership to coordinate offering a similar Skill Building Series to 150 HCBS Service Coordinators and supervisors. The training helped them understand the CtLC framework and principles as the center of the Individualized Service Plan for HCBS recipients. The training outcome for the Service Coordinators is to empower families and HCBS recipients on using CtLC tools to build their person-centered plan within their HCBS services.

-The Council closely monitored the 2023 Legislative session. Written comments that were included in the official hearing record as an exhibit were submitted via Nebraska Legislature's porthole or chamber viewer page in support or opposition to proposed legislation that would affect the IDD population. The comments submitted online were verified prior to the deadline and identified as comments for the public hearing record which was the only method for submission of official hearing record comments other than testifying in person. The Council ED also testified in person at a few public hearings. Council staff, DD Network CEOs, and other advocacy organizations kept each other informed of changes and updates to proposed legislation. This collaboration is invaluable not just during the legislative session, but throughout the year.

-The Council ED is a strong advocate who was involved in numerous statewide advisory boards, commissions, and councils. She participated in public policy advocacy and cross-systems dialogue collaboration. A small sampling of her activities in 2023 include:

- Informing and educating policymakers and legislators on issues faced by individuals with IDD and their families.
- Collaborating with the Nebraska Association of Service Providers employment subcommittee to improve employment outcomes for people with developmental disabilities.
- Engaging Special Education Advisory Council members to seek ways to impact systems and changes of the Nebraska educational system, especially with the ongoing legislative threat related to the areas of seclusion and restraint.
- Serving as the Council representative on the state statute mandated Governor's Developmental Disability Advisory Committee, which is responsible to advise DHHS regarding all aspects of the funding and delivery of services to persons with DD. The Council ED leverages her membership on this Advisory Committee to bring systemic changes to the delivery and oversight of HCBS services. Throughout FFY23, the Governor's DD Committee focused on the following:
  - o Time spent monitoring the DD waiver Registry (waitlist).
  - o Oversight to the 47 cases of those receiving DD waiver services because of the DD Court-ordered Custody Act - to ensure that they are receiving the least restrictive treatment and services necessary.
  - o Oversight of the design and implementation of the quality management and improvement plan. Quality Updates and annual report from Liberty Healthcare Corporation on the new Critical Incident Management Procedure for HCBS providers and the & Mortality Review Committee. Committee provided Liberty input and support with the annual reports.
  - o Legislative efforts impacting DDD HCBS waivers (LB376 [Family Supports Waiver & DD System Evaluation] & legislation & policy addressing IDD HCBS provider rates).
  - o Family Support Waiver (FSW) Development: LB376 indicates that this committee is responsible with monitoring the development of the FSW, which occurred throughout FFY23. The Committee's role is to be the intermediary voice for families. The DD Division provided frequent updates and sought guidance throughout the FSW development process.
  - o Presentation and engagement with Optumas/Myers and Stauffer consultants at March 2023

meeting about the LB376 System Evaluation. August 2023 these consultants updated committee on the DD System Evaluation draft report and recommendations, seeking Advisory Committee feedback and questions. Final report will be available in December 2023.

- o Reviewing National Core Indicator (NCI) 2021-2022 Survey Results to see what NCI data tells us about the lives of people receiving DD waiver services in Nebraska.
- o Overview of Shared Living Provider (SLP) Changes to Policy effective January 2024, public comment opportunities related to these SLP policy changes.
- o Establishing a committee to review the structure of the committee and the possibility to develop by-laws or more organized structure.

-Work continued on the Nebraska Olmstead Plan. The Council ED continued her involvement with the Nebraska Olmstead Advisory Committee and as an advocate member on the Olmstead Steering Committee and maintained a strong voice to ensure that the plan would be comprehensive and that the voices of those in the disability community were heard. Throughout 2023 the Nebraska Olmstead Advisory Committee monitored changes to the Olmstead Plan's goals that incorporated a "SMART" format to become more effective in measuring progress towards achieving goals.

NCDD continues to create partnerships, strengthen collaboration, and looks for opportunities to provide outreach and education to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. NCDD staff enjoyed representing the Council and sharing resources at a few events, including the NEA Big Read in Northeast NE Kickoff Services Fair, NASP's Legislative Breakfast, The Arc of NE's policy briefing, the NE Special Olympics State Games Healthy Athletes event, and at the annual Disability Pride event in Lincoln. Resources that were shared included hard copies of the Council funded Along the Way Guides, NCDD's Who We Are handout, and informative flyers and the Executive Summary of Dr. Mills' comprehensive supported employment outcomes report. Interactive activities at the Special Olympics event included sharing the Charting the LifeCourse Integrated Star and directions. The integrated star and an apple painting activity featuring Kathy Snow's Disability is Natural message were highlighted at the Disability Pride event.

-Another example of collaborative education is the Council's involvement with the NE Disability Advocates (NDA) & monthly Disability Education Series. The NE Disability Advocates is a group of disability advocates and professionals who have been providing monthly virtual disability related discussions since 2020. The key objectives of the accessible webinars are to find topics of interest to a large audience that includes providers, organizations, people with disabilities, and grass roots advocates. It is the intention to educate on matters that may not be known by many but are imperative for people with disabilities to be aware of in their daily lives. The Executive Director of the NESILC serves as the point of contact. Webinars typically are held on the first Thursday of each month and are very popular. Approximately 75 to 100 people register and attend for each session. The Disability Education Series is an excellent example of 20 cross-disability organizations collaborating. The Council shares webinar events with their large stakeholder email list serve. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons the number of webinars dropped in FFY2023, but we anticipate an uptick in these in 2024. Topics covered in 2023:

- February 2023 - Current Legislative Bills that Affect the Disability Community
- March 2023 - Self Advocacy, what does this mean, and how to become one
- April 2023 - NE Medicaid Unwind: What is it?

-The Executive Summary or annual report summary communicates the work completed by the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities in FFY2023. This summary will be distributed to

Nebraska's 49 senators, the Governor, the five representatives in Washington, DC, the DSA, subrecipients, all Council members, and other interested persons. This annual summary is posted on the Council webpage in an accessible format for subrecipients and other interested persons. A link to the pdf of the Council's full annual Program Performance Report is also posted on the website. Alternate formats will be made available upon request.

<b>Cultural Diversity</b>	<b>Describe the Council's overall efforts to address the needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families of a diverse culture through its state plan supported activities.</b>
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Throughout FFY 23, the Council supported efforts to address cultural diversity. Council staff and members continue to view our approach to advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change through the lens of racial disparity and health equity issues. Throughout FFY2023, Council staff and members recognized that we must continue efforts as ambassadors and advocates for change in health equity and other racial disparities. The Council maintained work alongside internal and external partners to advocate and support people with developmental disabilities and their families from all races and ethnic backgrounds. Conversations continued within the Division of Public Health (DPH), the Council's Designated State Agency, about ethnicity, racial injustice, equity, and related issues.

When releasing Requests for Applications (RFA), the Council strongly encourages applications from organizations that are in rural or urban poverty areas, organizations that employ staff with disabilities, and/or organizations that represent linguistic and cultural minorities. As applicable, subrecipients identify strategies to successfully recruit and train individuals from culturally diverse communities. Specifically, the Council notes that applicants agree to comply with the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act: "In order to avoid discrimination against persons with limited English proficiency on grounds of national origin, adequate steps will be taken to ensure that such persons receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to the programs, free of charge." Applicant responses in proposals are taken into consideration when the Council scores each application.

The Council's competitive subaward application process makes it possible for entities from all areas of the state to submit proposals with innovative ideas on addressing the Council's State Plan focus areas. Six of the Council's FFY23 projects impacted citizens in rural Nebraska while also highlighting inclusivity and diversity. Projects that provided training and outreach virtually had great success in reaching individuals with DD, family members, professionals, and others who may not have been reached otherwise.

In FFY23, NCDD established a contract with UMKC LifeCourse Nexus Training and TA Center to reignite the movement to establish Person-Centered Planning (PCP) as the foundation of services for people receiving HCBS waiver services in Nebraska. The project's purpose was to establish a network of innovators and early adopters who can champion and support the adoption and integration of the CtLC framework into policy, practice, and procedure. In 2022, the Nebraska Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and HCBS announced that they were incorporating the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework as its formal PCP platform to operationalize PCP concepts and ideas statewide. Using CtLC framework will help individuals receiving services to celebrate their strengths and identify

areas where supports and services can be used to help individuals achieve their goals and help people live better lives. The contract with UMKC made it possible for NCDD to host five CtLC Foundational virtual workshops in February to introduce CtLC key principles, concepts, and practices. Simultaneous translation into Spanish and ASL was provided during all five virtual foundational events. These sessions included Using CtLC to Provide Quality Supports & Services (twice), Using CtLC to Support My Family Member (twice), and Using CtLC in My Own Life (once). These sessions hosted a total of 376 unduplicated attendees.

Additionally, in September, NCDD and UMKC LifeCourse Nexus Training team hosted a four-part virtual CtLC Family Foundational and Skill Building Series. NCDD facilitated direct outreach and registration of family members from Spanish speaking families with the assistance of partners with PTI Nebraska and Munroe-Meyer Institute's UCEDD Family Engagement Program. Simultaneous translation into Spanish was provided during all four events, and slide decks were translated into Spanish and provided ahead of time for all the Spanish speaking participants. This series supported 83 enrolled participants, including 18 family members accessing the Spanish translation.

As noted in the FFY2022 PPR, NCDD invested in having the Along the Way Series guides translated into Spanish. The Along the Way series of guides was created and updated to provide information for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, and others. The series of four guides addresses three separate life stages: infants, toddlers and children; adolescents and young adults; and adults. A resource directory guide accompanies the three life stage guides. In FFY23, NCDD paid for professional printing of all the guides in both English and Spanish. The Council printed 150 Spanish versions of the guides and collaborated with our partners at PTI Nebraska, Munroe-Meyer Institutes' Family Care Enhancement Project, and the DD Division outreach staff for distribution. NCDD plans to order more Spanish hard copies soon. Electronic Spanish versions of the Along the Way Guides are also posted on the NCDD website.

The Council is fortunate that our DSA has already vetted and established contracts with a variety of sources for translation services. This provides an avenue for the Council to use translation services to broaden Council reach and impact going forward. Council staff continue to advocate that the DSAs translation services also include a list of contractors to assist with plain language documents.

The Office of Health Disparities Health Equity (HDHE) within the DHHS Division of Public Health (DPH) promotes awareness of health disparities and provides relevant statistical data to stakeholders for increased awareness of health disparities and health equity and to assess and identify the health status of racial ethnic minorities, federally recognized tribes, immigrants, and refugees. HDHE has a vision that Nebraska's culturally diverse populations are as healthy as possible with the mission to promote and support the advancement of health equity in Nebraska using partnerships, funding, training, and technical assistance. Their work also includes health equity for people with disabilities.

The Council Executive Director was invited to present about NCDD and our State Plan work to the staff and leadership at the Office of HDHE on March 2, 2023. In late 2022 the Office of HDHE hired a new Director, Echohawk Lefthand. Having the opportunity to present to the new Director and the entire HDHE team provided opportunities to discuss potential collaboration with reaching Native American communities.

Health equity is also identified as one of the five priorities of the Nebraska State Health Improvements Plan (SHIP), and the Office of HDHE oversees the work of the Health Equity priority area. The

Nebraska SHIP is a collaboration of statewide partners promoting the health and well-being of Nebraskans as a whole, using statewide assessment to establish priorities, plan for action, and empower collective impact. The five priorities of SHIP are Health Equity, Integrated Health System, Utilization and Access, Depression and Suicide, and Obesity. The five co-launch partners are the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Nebraska Association of Local Health Directors, Nebraska Hospital Association, Public Health Association of Nebraska, and the University of Nebraska Medical Center College of Public Health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "health disparities or inequities, are types of unfair health differences closely linked with social, economic, or environmental disadvantages that adversely affect groups of people." Nebraska experiences inequities among its population and seeks program, policy, systems and environmental changes to address these issues. Changing the frame from disparity to health equity and increasing the capacity of organizations to advance health equity is desired. The foundation includes data collection, coordinated delivery models, diversified workforce and leadership.

The SHIP priority states, "Nebraskans will experience health equity and decreased health disparities." Actions to address this priority include addressing social determinants of health; improving the cultural competency and health literacy of the health workforce; improving the collection of data, including standardized collection of demographics for comparison; and studying health outcome data by population characteristics (e.g., rural, ethnicity, race, age, gender, and disability). The DPH supports organizational capacity to address equity through systems, policy, and program efforts that are data informed and culturally competent. As a result of the advocacy of Council staff, individuals with disabilities were included in the targeted populations that experience health disparities. Having health equity and social determinants of health as a priority in the State Health Improvement Plan proved beneficial when the DPH had to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic crisis.

SHIP Partners promote environmental, systems, policy, and programs changes to decrease inequities by:

- Supporting the workforce and the capacity of organizations to meet national cultural standards, utilize common framework for addressing equity and ultimately provide more equitable services.
- Enhancing the capability of organizations to collect, analyze and utilize data to expand the understanding of need and opportunities to improve services and support system collaboration.

In the summer of 2022, the Office of HDHE was moved from the DPH Health Services and Systems Unit to report directly to the Director of Operations for the DPH. This move has proven to be significant, as it has elevated the important role that addressing health disparities and health equity plays in Nebraska's public health system.

The Council ED was invited in FFY23 to participate as an appointed member of the DPH internal Equity Steering Committee. The purpose of this committee is to make directional decisions on various organizational initiatives and projects. Examples of tasks that the committee is undertaking or will undertake include advocating for initiatives, providing expertise, providing input on establishment of processes/protocols/policies/measurement, prioritization of projects, monitoring of a project's progress, making recommendations on various initiatives, and proposing solutions to barriers. Within this committee member role, the Council ED continue to provide feedback stressing the importance of addressing health equity for people with developmental disabilities and other disabilities within the DPH and the Office of HDHE. Addressing intersectionality for the disability population will be a focus in the upcoming year.

In January 2023, the Office of Performance Management, in collaboration with the Office of Health Disparities and Health Equity, notified DPH staff about a year-long learning collaborative journey. The announcement indicated that in order to strengthen efforts for Nebraska's DPH to become a high-performing health department, the two offices would be hosting monthly events to increase awareness, bring in voices, and brainstorm real-world action steps on the topics of Wellness, Belonging, Innovation, and Access. We will spend an entire quarter dedicated to each topic and be guided through the process by a group of highly acclaimed tour guides. DPH staff were invited to join the 2023 Pathways to Power: Transforming our Inner-State. Sessions were not mandatory, and staff were encouraged to drop in, come as you are able to participate.

Each quarter a new tour guide and expert facilitator lead DPH staff participants through three dynamic virtual work sessions, one per month, around a quarterly theme. The first session featured the tour guides giving a virtual presentation followed by a one to two hour talk and learning session, demonstrating methods and tools to transform public health. During the second quarter, a moderated PANEL DISCUSSION with all tour guides and special guests was featured. Time was allowed to reflect on the PRESENTATION and dive deeper into each quarter's theme. At the end of the third quarter DPH staff were invited to attend a PARTICIPATORY WORKSHOP. This Facilitated, participatory workshop provided attendees the chance to apply what they learned into their public health work and everyday lives. The topics of each quarterly Pathways to Power session are noted below.

- Quarter 1: Wellness, hosted by Tour Guide T. Marni Vos
- Quarter 2: Belonging, hosted by Tour Guide Farzin Farzad
- Quarter 3: Innovation, hosted by Tour Guide Dr. Susan Swayze
- Quarter 4: Access, hosted by Tour Guide Emily O. Weltman

These interactive training opportunities have provided Council staff opportunities to improve their cultural competencies with tools that will help guide the entire Council in implementing State Plan activities through the health equity lens.

The Office of Performance Management and the Office of HDHE has also invested in the Pathways to Population health equity assessment. It provides an opportunity for programs and partners with the Nebraska Division of Public Health to assess their organization in the Pathways to Population Health Equity framework. A link was provided for programs to complete the Equity Compass Assessment. This assessment refers to partners with lived experience which such as Race/Ethnicity, Veteran status, Age, Geography, Gender, and Ability groups. Programs within DPH as well as DPH partners including Local Health Departments, Community Based Organizations, Tribes, Healthcare organizations and other similar stakeholders were invited to participate in the assessment process. The assessment report provides feedback on the organization's progress and provides suggestions of resources that may help them plan next steps to engage in the Health Equity journey.

Council staff have agreed to participate in this evaluation process and completed the assessment in mid-October 2023. NCDD will be working with Pathways to Population consultants in FFY2024 to discuss the compass results and start development on strategies to improve at least one of the health equity improvement elements identified in the assessment. NCDD's overall assessment score was at the beginning area of gaining skill. NCDD's assessment score indicates that NCDD has made some good progress on our population health equity journey. Results indicate that NCDD is gaining skills and have probably established some important habits about ensuring that equity considerations are discussed and factored into our decision-making. Results imply that NCDD is at a point in time to begin to build a more balanced strategy in partnership with communities experiencing inequities. We

look forward to meeting with the consultants to identify a few places for NCDD to focus on to build our health equity capacity in FFY2024.

<b>B. Evaluation of State Plan Implementation</b>	<b>In this section report on the evaluation activities conducted and results.</b>
<b>B1. Evaluation Activities</b>	<b>Describe the evaluation activities undertaken during the fiscal year being reported, including evaluation activities conducted to strategically assess the overall progress and direction of the state plan implementation.</b>

Council staff implement formative & summative evaluations through multi-method approaches to evaluate the State Plan goals/objectives addressed by grantees and contractors. The purpose of formative evaluation is to determine the extent to which goals/objectives are achieved; provide a description of the strategies that contributed to achieving the objectives; & provide a description of factors that may have impeded progress. The purpose of the summative evaluation is the collection of data that measures intended project outcomes. Both formative & summative evaluations are carefully designed to match planned activities so progress can be evaluated throughout the life of each Council funded project & the degree to which intended outcomes are achieved. Each RFA released provides info on the reporting requirements; the NCDD Subaward User Manual (manual) provides specific details on the evaluation and reporting requirements.

Official records of each project are maintained in the Council office. Grantees are required to submit Quarterly Progress Reports (QPR), Key Performance Indicators (KPI) data, & final reports using DD Suite.

The QPR is the primary source of information on progress made in completing the Work Plan activities & serves as a formative evaluation tool. Grantees report accomplishments & activities related to each goal & objective listed in the Work Plan, identify any problems in reaching goals, & note whether technical assistance (TA) is needed. QPR & KPI are submitted together & reviewed by Council staff.

KPI data is used in conjunction with the QPR to evaluate progress on goals/objectives & as a summary of statistical accomplishments once the project has been completed. It serves as a formative evaluation tool when reported each quarter & a summative tool at the end of the project. The Project Director (PD) for each subaward is informed via the NCDD Subaward User Manual (manual) to become familiar w/the KPI to track the #s of persons/programs/policies, etc., impacted by the project on an ongoing basis. The manual recommends that the subaward PD initiate data collection methods before the project begins rather than collecting the data after the fact. A complete list of KPI & definitions is provided with the RFA & in the manual.

The Final Report serves as a summative evaluation tool. It requires grantees to summarize project accomplishments & results, including designated measurements, the impact of project activities on target population, barriers or problems encountered & actions to overcome, & satisfaction survey data; address project sustainability; & share personal success stories related to the project.

Additional monitoring of subaward projects is accomplished through the review of expenditure

reports, review of source documentation as required by the OMB Supercircular, phone calls, email, virtual meetings with project staff, and site visits as requested. Council staff may request additional information to clarify project progress, expenditures, or challenges. Council staff provide grantees technical assistance as needed to capture information to strengthen quarterly reports or explore avenues to address project challenges to improve outcomes.

In addition to the narrative reporting, grantees collect and report info from project participants to report on the diversity of participants & to gauge satisfaction of the project activity by people w/DD & their families. The manual suggests collecting the demographic info during registration if the subaward project requires attendees to register for a project activity, or as part of the Satisfaction Survey. Pre/post tests may be used to measure participants' assessments of the gains they make from participating in project education & training programs. Pre/post tests will be designed to demonstrate participants' increased knowledge & skills, changed attitudes, &/or increased motivation in alignment with project-specific outcomes.

A list of KPI definitions & examples is included in the RFA and manual. Not all KPI will be relevant to every project. Grantees are required to review the KPI list to determine which are appropriate & add those to their Work Plan in DD Suite. Only KPI not reported in the QPRs need to be reported in the Final Program report.

Grantees are encouraged to create a satisfaction survey that will be most appropriate for their audience & project activity. There are many survey delivery options: it can be printed & handed out, it can be read out loud for non-readers, sent electronically, or it can be incorporated into online trainings or activities by popping up on the screen & asking participants to respond. The manual offers alternatives to written responses to questions based on the audience, such as allowing participants to circle a Yes/No or an image of a thump up or thumb down instead of providing written responses/comments.

The manual provides guidance on what information should be collected through surveys. Guidance is also provided on not counting participants more than once if they attend multiple sessions of the same training or activity. Required information includes:

Demographics. This will include Race, Ethnicity, Gender Identity, & Geographic Area of project participants,

Whether the participant is an individual w/a DD, a family member/guardian, or a professional/other. This info is necessary for reporting KPI by the # of individuals w/DD & family members/guardians. SC1.4 asks for the total # of people trained or educated, to include the # of professional/other project participants.

Questions that may be included in the project survey include these taken from the KPI:

IFA 1.1/1.2/1.3 - This will show the # of people w/DD (1.1), parents/family members (1.2), & others/professionals or other stakeholders (1.3) who participated in the activity.

IFA 3.1A/3.1B - This question asks whether the person w/DD (3.1A) & their parents/family members (3.1B) are satisfied w/the activity in which they participated. Grantees are encouraged to ask follow-up questions for trainings to professionals that explore why they are satisfied or dissatisfied w/the project; what they liked or disliked about the training or activity; and how they will use what they



learned. This info is reported in the QPR to add weight to the outcomes of the project.

IFA 2.3IND/2.3FAM - This question helps to know whether people w/DD (2.3IND) & parents/family members (2.3FAM) are better able to say what they want, what services & supports they need, or what is important to them after participating in the training or activity.

Systems Change (SC) may occur as a result of their project. The manual clarifies that SC data is tracked and reported by the grantee, not questions they would ask on the SS. However, if their project is to provide training to professionals in the DD field, they could follow up w/them after the training to ask questions such as what policies or procedures they will or have created or implemented as a result of the training. SC KPI are reported in the Work Plan.

Surveys may ask other questions to obtain feedback to improve their project or the delivery of their project & other questions they feel are important or helpful to know & report. They may create their own KPI for reporting this data in DD Suite if they feel the collected info helps to tell the story of project success.

Council staff attended the May 10, 2023, ACL Updates session of the TA Institute. During that session, the OIDD team referenced the new Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) data collection instruments that were cleared with the OMB PRA process. Councils were told that in compliance with Executive Order 13985, Councils will begin reporting SOGI data for FY23. OIDD also noted that they recognized it may be difficult for Councils to fully capture data for this fiscal year, yet Councils were encouraged to report on any SOGI data on project participants, if possible. We were also informed that ACL would work with a consultant and small workgroup to develop guidance to assist in future data collection.

Concerns and possible strategies about collecting the SOGI data have been shared on the NACDD Executive Director list serve. Alison Whyte, ED with the DC DD Council, provided some helpful language that NCDD has edited and will incorporate into our Subaward Manual and sample surveys.

"Our federal funder, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) has asked us to include race, gender identity, disability, and sexual orientation in our demographic data collection efforts. This effort is part of implementing President Biden's Executive Order on Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. The purpose is to understand the demographics of the people involved in our work and then develop strategies to connect with and serve people we aren't reaching. We want to serve people with developmental disabilities and their families in any cultural community they are a part of. NCDD has a shared goal in ensuring our programs reach, serve, and welcome all people, including people who are LGBTQI+."

This topic was also discussed at the Executive Director Leadership Summit in Providence, Rhode Island in October. Council Directors agreed that a providing a statement referencing ACL requirements when seeking SOGI and other demographic data, while providing a place where participants can check a box that they simply prefer not to answer, so no one has to provide information they don't want to provide, is sufficient.

AoD Commissioner Jill Jacobs provided an update to all Councils on September 29, 2023, with more information on the collection of SOGI data. It was helpful to learn about ACL's efforts to develop a data collection protocol with input from the TA providers from the DD Networks. The email included

the updated SOGI data questions followed by the SOGI excel spreadsheet. Commissioner Jacobs noted that ACL will be sending further communication with more details, guidance and technical assistance opportunities as the DD networks begin implementing SOGI data collection over this upcoming fiscal year, including working closely with each network's TA providers. NCDD looks forward to receiving additional guidance. NCDD will begin working with our subrecipients to collect SOGI data during FFY2024.

Over recent years, despite Council staff monitoring and guidance efforts, NCDD's subrecipients/grantees still have difficulty collecting demographic data. NCDD is hopeful that incorporating the newly required SOGI data through effective messaging with Council funded projects will result in better data collection outcomes.

Product review is used if the primary outcome of an objective is a product. Outcome attainment is assessed by an in-depth review of the completed product, & quality & relevance attained through product review instruments.

Council members play a critical role in reviewing progress towards reaching State Plan (SP) goals. The Council meets quarterly & time is designated to review overall progress in meeting State Plan goals & achieving intended results. Council staff provide updates on active projects, & copies of final reports are provided to members. The Council takes action or makes recommendations to address project barriers as necessary.

The Council's Planning Committee & the Council meet annually to determine the status of each State Plan goal & discuss strategies for addressing those objectives & goals that have not been met or activities that have not been successful. Recommendations are made regarding the focus for new RFAs to guide Council fiscal investments in the upcoming FFY. Guidance is provided on modifications to the State Plan in response to emerging trends & needs, w/amendments made as necessary.

The Council's 5-year logic model is broad & reflects the nature of the activities utilized to achieve the outcomes stated in the State Plan. The initial evaluation outcomes provide an overview of increased awareness, knowledge, & skills gained by our stakeholders through Council activities. Intermediate outcomes reflect the translation into application of new & enriched skills, enhanced organizational capacity, improved practices, & greater availability of & access to higher quality services & opportunities for people w/DD & their families. The intermediate outcomes are logically linked to the desired impact of long-term outcomes w/in each State Plan goal.

Focus groups and satisfaction surveys provide the Council with feedback on emerging trends and needs. Council State agency representatives and DD Network representatives provide the Council with updates on emerging issues related to their areas of interest and expertise. Additionally, participation of Council staff and Council members in state and national level groups provides a perspective on trends and issues affecting individuals with DD and their families. This information is taken into consideration throughout the 5-year State Plan cycle.

<b>B2: Evaluation Results</b>	<b>Report the broad results of the evaluation activities described above (B1), including a broad assessment of the overall progress of Council supported activities.</b>
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The Council monitored 14 subawards and contracts throughout 2023. Projects included both training and educating self-advocates, advocates, families, teachers, educators, service providers, policymakers, and lawmakers.

One prevalent on-going issue is that Council subrecipients continue to struggle with collecting demographic data and individual and family performance (IFA) measures from project participants. The Council's Subaward manual provides expectations to subrecipients that in addition to the narrative reporting, data should be collected to report on the diversity of participants and to gauge satisfaction of the project activity by people with IDD and their families. The subaward manual notes that these Demographics and KPIs are included in our annual report to the federal ACL AoD as a critical component for review by federal officers to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's progress on their 5-Year State Plan. Council Requests for Applications (RFA) also indicate this expectation, and the complete list of the KPIs is included with the RFA materials.

Subrecipients are instructed to collect demographic information and IFA measures from project participants both in the manual and within the DD Suite platform. Council staff also send the list of the KPIs to each subrecipient. The manual suggests collecting the data during registration if a project requires attendees to register for a project activity, or as part of the Satisfaction Survey. The manual also provides a satisfaction survey template that can be used to capture demographic and project satisfaction information. Council Program Specialists remind subrecipients verbally and in writing throughout the year to collect the performance measures. Despite this guidance, many subrecipients are still struggling to gather the demographic information and the IFAs. Gratefully system change performance measures have been captured across all Council activities.

The requirement to collect performance measures have been noted in signed subaward agreements for 2023 PPR activities. In August 2023, the Council's DSA's Procurement & Grants Office changed the platform or software that Council staff use to load new agreements for FFY24. Council staff will be mindful to include this requirement in the new platform, as the template has changed and is not automatically included. One potential solution is for Council staff to withhold payments until performance measures are reported, but this will require working with the DSA's Procurement & Grants Office to implement.

In 2023, subrecipients struggled with getting completed surveys from activity participants, especially for the virtual activities. The Council funded several projects with activities attended by only or specifically for professionals. Because of this, the 2023 KPI numbers unfortunately do not reflect this, as the only data that can be reported is the number of people trained or educated of individuals and/or family members. While projects for individuals with IDD and their families are the primary focus, the satisfaction with training opportunities for the professionals who assist and care for them should also be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of the project.

Goal 1, Objective A:

Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) Inclusive Economy Film - This contract was a very fulfilling project for NCDD to fund and work with. This film educates and increases participation in

competitive, integrated employment for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), for both employees and employers. NASP was fortunate to have partnered with Nebraska Public Media (NPM) on this project. They have allowed their film to remain live on their NPM website in perpetuity. They will also rerun the program during July, which is Disability Pride Month and October, which is Disability Employment Awareness Month, every year. Anyone can also share the link to the film and watch it anytime as well. The landing page also includes links to the participating organizations and other relevant resources. The Mary Riepma Ross Theatre in Lincoln was kind enough to show and promote the film for free. NCDD staff was able to attend this screening, it was so fun to have all of the participants from the film come in-person and watch themselves on the 'big screen' with popcorn and snacks just like a 'real' film. You could feel how proud everyone was of their performance and the positive feedback they received from everyone in the audience. Self-advocate and business owner of Poo Patrol, which was the focus of the self-employment segment, was able to share his vignette at a national conference. One of the employers that worked for and was featured on this film with their Country Sliced Ham and Catering, reported that people came in and specifically mentioned seeing her on Nebraska Public Media, so it increased the traffic flow to their business. All deliverables were met by June 30th, 2023. The finished film was available for online streaming July 1st, 2023 (1133 views at time of report). Air dates on Nebraska Public Media television were: July 5th, 9th, 19th, and 23rd, 2023 (total view data unavailable). Screening at the Mary Riepma Ross Theater on July 13th, 2023 (38 attendees). NASP agencies are also able to show new hires the film as training materials.

Dr. Lisa Mills - NCDD collaborated with Nebraska DD Network Partners, state agencies, community programs, and other stakeholders on this contract with Dr. Mills to provide resources and improve competitive, integrated, and meaningful opportunities for employment, including self-employment with competitive wages, for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) from diverse locations and identities. This report and the work Dr. Lisa Mills did this year was to assist with Nebraska state partner agencies and stakeholders on determining an action plan after consideration of recommendations from the comprehensive Employment and Supported Employment Outcomes Study report submitted February 2023. With the Action-Plan from Dr. Mills, this will increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD. Per employment priorities for Integrated Employment which supports Employment First policies as a strategy to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment for individuals with IDD as the preferred outcome, NCDD contracted with Dr. Lisa Mills to create incentives for states to expand work opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities in competitive integrated employment. On September 20, 2023 over 50 agencies across Nebraska came together to host a Supported Employment Summit. The overarching theme of the summit was focused on: Working Together to Change the Way Nebraska Does Supported Employment; with the primary goal to increase employment opportunities and outcomes for Nebraskans who can benefit from Supported Employment. All the hard work put into the report, action plan, and employment summit paid off and will help Nebraska employee's and employers' make the best business decisions for integrated employment strategies moving forward in the future.

#### Goal 2, Objective A:

University of Nebraska in Omaha (UNO) Family-Engaged Educational Training (Project FEET) - The two main goals of this project were to increase family knowledge about special education and skills in partnering with school professionals and to increase school professionals' knowledge and skills in engaging diverse families in the special education process. UNO established an advisory board in

partnership with individuals from the Munroe-Meyer Institute's (MMI's) Family Care Enhancement Project (FCEP) and the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), the Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center of Nebraska, the Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, the Learning Community of North Omaha, and local families and school professionals. The advisory board provided insights into the development of the family-engaged educational training curriculums to use in college courses taken by school professionals. UNO used the term school professionals to include student candidates enrolled in undergraduate and graduate special education, applied behavior analysis, and school psychology programs.

The curriculum includes six training modules with interactive components for students to complete and reciprocal partnership-based activities for school professionals and families to do together. The interactive components include engaging in reflections, building their own toolkit, responding to case scenarios, and participating in in-class activities. The partnership-based activities instructors can select from and/or include (a) family-engagement panels; (b) individualized family discussions; (c) a three-part series for understanding family perspective, preparing for IEP meetings, and connecting with resources; and (d) a two-part series for supporting home-learning. UNO's project team also interviewed support organizations to increase awareness of resources available in the community. The advisory board reviewed the modules, and their feedback was used to refine the materials. The curriculum components were piloted during the Spring and Fall of the 2023 semesters. Families and school professionals reported high satisfaction with the curriculum of the program and increasing their advocacy. Overall, this project was able to reach, train, and educate over 80 families and self-advocates. UNO and NCDD anticipate that the program will enhance collaboration in practice between families and school professionals, which is likely to lead to improved child outcomes.

EasterSeals of Nebraska (ESN) Opportunity App Project - The Opportunity App grew out of ESN's work with Nebraskans who were often unaware of potentially life-changing resources that were available to them due to barriers such as living in a rural, under-resourced area; difficulty navigating and verifying the credibility of information available online; or the phenomenon of "not knowing what you don't know," in order to even search for it. To address gaps in access to information, ESN created an app that can be continuously updated and personalized to help individuals, families, and professionals locate, store, and share information to support individuals' inclusion and success in employment, education, recreation, and life in general. The app (now available as the Easterseals Nebraska "Opportunity Hub") builds on the power of ready access to information on topics such as waivers, natural supports, person-centered planning, and assistive technology. The app is considered a promising practice and supportive of potential systems change work, by evolving into the "go-to" source of information and resources for Nebraskans with disabilities, family members, caregivers, service providers, and employers. Just as it is now common practice to check one's phone for the time, ESN envisions the incorporation of the app into the day-to-day lives of individuals and the day-to-day operations of inclusive organizations.

This project supported the launch, implementation, and improvements of the Opportunity Hub app, such as the incorporation of a chat function as an additional layer of user support. This project included the development and publication of promotional content for social media, printed materials, email listservs, and presentations, designed to reach and inform 2,000 Nebraskans about the app. In addition, App Ambassadors were identified and equipped to educate others about the app and encourage its active use. Plans were developed and implemented to continue the improvement of the app, including a means to expand users' ability to access and download resources into the app through a companion website. Plans also include the creation of topic-specific learning modules for

individuals, family members, and employers.

By the end of the one-year project period, more than 800 individuals with disabilities, family members, and professionals had been directly educated about the app (such as through individual consultations, group presentations, and informative emails), in addition to the reach of social media and regional radio. "App-events" that occurred per quarter, ranged from 2,000 to nearly 3,500. Thus far, users reported that the app provides increased access to reliable information and resources, reduces dependency on others, and supports well-being and participation in community life. The launch of the Opportunity Hub app has helped the project team share the app's potential with others and secure additional funding for continued app operation and enhancements. ESN's project team is committed to the continued evolution and adoption of the app as a best practice and as a "go to" source of reliable information, improving access, equity, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment for Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) Technology Training Project- This project aimed to create three high-quality online modules that focused on aspects of assistive technology devices and services within four phases. These three modules that were created will be an interactive and multimodal tool allowing learners to engage with the content in different ways like reading, watching, and listening, to check their understanding, and be able to go at their own pace. Receiving the knowledge of assistive technology devices and services is varied among students, families, educators, related service providers and administrators. This is why ATP wanted to do this project titled: Parent and Educator Training. This project was supposed to start in Jan of 2023, but did not get to start working on the project until after March of 2023. The three modules have been created and are waiting for more feedback from the stakeholders. They will then translate these materials into one other language and load the modules onto Canvas, the system used for interactive consumption. Specifically, this project is focused on the loading and dissemination of the three modules.

#### Goal 2, Objective B:

Parent Training and Information (PTI) Transitioning Youth into Adult Services Project -This project conducted 22 trainings, in-person and through Zoom, and had 335 participants attend these trainings. PTI's main focus was increasing the number of transition-based trainings and incorporating trainings in Spanish as well to help reach Hispanic families in Nebraska. Some of their trainings to reach more young adults with disabilities, covered high-school transition planning where they were able to hold mini-training sessions. Topics included: developing goals around employment, post-secondary education/training, and independent living skills such as where a person wants to live, what social activities a person wants to participate in, how a person will be transported to where he/she needs to go, different daily living skills a person needs to work on related to grooming, chores/housework, food/nutrition, medical/healthcare needs, managing money/budgets, as well as building self-advocacy skills. Other trainings that PTI held, covered adult services and programs such as Developmental Disabilities (DD) services, Medicaid waivers, services provided to people with disabilities, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). They also shared information about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), employment options, workplace incentives, and benefits planning.

PTI's project team participated in 9 events, attending 8 and hosting 1, where they were able to share important transition-based resources including PCP and CtLC information. Connections with 244 people at these events helped PTI increase their outreach efforts to families. Three of the events attended were held in Kearney (Central region of NE), two conferences and one transition agency fair. PTI reached more English-speaking families at these events in Kearney, but they were able to hand out

a few materials translated into Spanish at each event. The main strategy in reaching more Hispanic families was to host a resource fair in South Omaha (Eastern region of NE) in which they had over 15 vendors participate, and every table had a Spanish translator which was a great achievement that helped make the resource fair a big success for PTI's education to families. The project team received a lot of positive feedback from both parents and the vendor organizations themselves about the great resource information that was shared and about all the available Spanish translators. PTI was able to network with 50 Spanish-speaking families and 11 young adults at this resource fair. Another strategy PTI used was to increase their outreach efforts by sending out a monthly newsletter that included information on PCP in each one, sending out additional training information blasts to their newsletter listserv, translating the newsletter to Spanish, developing a listserv for their Hispanic-speaking families, and increasing their outreach via social media. During this project, PTI's newsletter blasts alone reached 45,705 people and their social media posts reached 17,070 people. These efforts made a huge difference between year one and year two. After the end of year one, they had reached 11,372 members of the general public through their awareness trainings, activities, and media initiatives. At the end of year two, they reached 91,873 members of the general public through all of their work on this project. Overall, PTI reached, trained and educated over 800 English and Hispanic-speaking families, self-advocates, professionals, and young adults with and without disabilities through their trainings, events, and individual meetings.

#### Goal 3, Objective A:

University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL) Professional Educational Clearinghouse Project - UNL with Answers4Families is working on this new subaward for 2023. This project's focus is on researching institutions in Nebraska to inquire if they are offering courses or programs on special education and then to create the Professional Development Educational Clearinghouse Platform. There are 16 Institutions with educator programs in Nebraska. A listing of all institutions in Nebraska who offer teacher or special education programs has been developed. Materials that have been reviewed, include the Nebraska Department of Education: Rule 24, 20 and 23, Para-to-Teacher Program, University of Nebraska in Lincoln-Lincoln Public Schools article: To partner and build the special education teacher pipeline. This subaward did not start until August 1, 2023. Currently, they are focusing on the research for those Nebraska institutions offering teacher or special education courses in addition to collecting teacher educational trainings for professional development.

Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) Law Enforcement Interactions- This project with the Munroe-Meyer Institute accomplished their overall goal in multiple steps. First, they collaborated with an expert in criminal justice and intellectual and developmental disabilities to develop a survey. Next, they conducted focus groups and subject matter expert meetings to receive feedback on the survey to ensure they asked socially acceptable questions related to the overall goal. Lastly, the MMI Project Team distributed the survey and received responses from at least 100 respondents. Forty-three participants identified as autistic, seven chose not to identify, and 56 participants identified as a caregiver of an autistic individual. Overall, the project team was highly satisfied with their project and activities. This project provided great insight into the challenges autistic individuals and their caregivers experience during behavior crises, especially when emergency personnel are contacted. Communication with autistic individuals, caregivers, and law enforcement personnel influenced the primary investigators' application of treatment and considerations for safety plans when behavioral crises occur in the community. Additionally, the outcomes of the survey will continue to serve as a basis for improving training initiatives to better support individuals and their caregivers during crises. The primary investigator would only aim to involve more law enforcement personnel and design future surveys to capture their input on the training process received by law enforcement. At the end

of this project, MMI was able to collect data and educate 100 people involved in law enforcement and will further this education by disseminating the educational survey for future law enforcement agencies.

#### Goal 3, Objective B:

Niagara University - This project has several goals that drive the intention of the program, leading to an ultimate objective of ensuring the people with disabilities are accurately and appropriately planned for in emergency operation plans, which would address response and recovery that meets the needs of the population. This is achieved by including people with disabilities and access and functional needs through inclusive planning and active participation. 91 agencies/136 attendees, attended the two-day or half day program, learning what THEY need to do to incorporate effective emergency planning and preparedness into their agency's scope of services. This is emphasized as it is stressed that those with an administrative or leadership role must embrace the program in their daily operations. There were 122 attendees at the 4 virtual sessions with 3 of those focused on Developmental Disability Service Providers. It is difficult to summarize the goals of the project's success as most are anecdotal, which comes either in testimonials or the few that respond to the request to inform Niagara University of the activities they have carried out. This project team has come to learn that to varying degrees, there are actions that many attendees engage in and don't report back on. That said, the narrative, testimonials and activities reported by emails, discussions, and response to requests would indicate there was an embracing of the concept and execution of the intended objectives within Nebraska. With Niagara University having the ability to compare to other state's that funded this program, NCDD was told that Nebraska should be considered a success based on the diversity of attendance that includes the presence of state and local emergency managers and several disability advocacy organizations. Overall this project has been able to train and educate over 250 Nebraska families and professionals on Emergency Management for Disability Awareness.

#### Goal 3, Objective C:

The Arc of Nebraska 's Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD Project - This project with The Arc of Nebraska succeeded in its primary objective of empowering students with I/DD and their advocates. Witnessing participants gain confidence, knowledge, and skills to navigate the educational system and advocate for their rights has been incredibly rewarding. The project had a tangible impact on reducing exclusionary disciplinary measures for students with I/DD in Nebraska. They conducted 5 hybrid trainings, created and developed a reader-friendly guidance document, and lately they developed an easy-to-navigate set of FAQ's/Answers for families related to school discipline and the rights of children with disabilities. This project is sustained by The Arc of Nebraska, with the dedicated support and leadership of staff and board members. This will be carried on and updated as part of their regular resources to guide and assist families. They have undertaken a comprehensive approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data over time, assessing the impact of their efforts not only at the individual level but also at the systemic level. This data has provided The Arc of NE with critical information to shape their advocacy initiatives. This project has been designed with long-term sustainability in mind. They have made trainings accessible online through their website and Facebook Live, ensuring that members of the disability community can access these resources at their convenience. These online resources will continue to be available well beyond the end of this project. Furthermore, The Arc of Nebraska has a strong track record of offering various advocacy-related trainings, including those on special education advocacy and addressing seclusion and restraint in schools. These trainings, both recorded and live, have expanded their training toolkit and have allowed The Arc of NE to educate almost 200 people during this year.



UMKC Nexus Team: Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Capacity Building Project - This project was to support NCDD on establishing a network of innovators and early adopters who can champion and support the adoption and integration of the Charting the LifeCourse framework into policy, practice, and procedure. This project aimed at increasing awareness and skill building in using the Charting the LifeCourse Framework. To provide overview information for broad stakeholder groups, focused professional development, technical assistance, and implementation support to a team of Champions who will expand awareness of the framework and facilitate ongoing activities while creating buy-in and adoption of the principles in the day-to-day work of their peers. This project focused on families, adults with IDD, and case managers. Opportunities to increase awareness were also offered to state agency staff to ensure alignment across audiences. This contract has 4 primary activities: Foundational Presentations-376 attendees, The Ambassador Series-15 participants, Skill Building Series-300 attendees, and The Badge Academy, which is still in progress and has 6 Ambassadors that completed the Presenter Badge and 5 Ambassadors that completed the In-Action Facilitator Badge. At the close of this contract, the LifeCourse Nexus and the NE DD Council will have trained more than 600 self-advocates, advocates, family members, and professionals on Charting the LifeCourse. Sustainability of this project comes from the ongoing implementation of CtLC among those trained, within their lives and at work.

#### Goal 4, Objective A:

Legislation: Key activities and expected outputs and outcomes related to the Council's education and outreach during the State's Legislative session were met and are summarized in Section IV of the report. Legislative efforts continued to be robust, as the Council serves as a source of information and advice for state senators by taking a nonpartisan approach to provide education on legislation that will impact individuals with developmental disabilities. Collaboration occurred within the DD Network and within members of the Nebraska Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (NCCD) on disability related bills.

Workgroups: Council staff served on several coalitions/networks/partnerships to advocate for improved services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities, as well as to address unmet needs and challenges. Activities, expected outputs, and outcomes are reported in Section IV. The highlight of this collaboration effort included a joint meeting/training of representatives from the Council, P&A Board of Directors, and the UCEDD Consumer Advisory Board. Council staff updates the Council members at quarterly Council meetings about these efforts, and share email updates as needed throughout the year. As Council staff become more knowledgeable on the core system of services and supports for citizens with developmental disabilities, additional opportunities to participate evolve, ensuring that the voice of the DD community is considered and incorporated.

#### Goal 4, Objective B:

Disability Rights Nebraska (DRN) Supported Decision Making Project - This project is about educating others on Supported Decision Making (SDM). The membership of the Steering Committee included 14 organizations and the Task Force included the Steering Committee members plus two additional organizations. These meetings produced significant collaboration/input and were instrumental to identify new audiences for educational presentations, to identify topics for the educational brochures, to review the educational materials, and to provide outlets to promote the "clearinghouse" as well as the project overall. DRN produced a video animation explaining the concept and benefits of Supported Decision Making. The video is catalogued on the Clearinghouse website. This project identified 2 potential Ambassadors. The ambassadors presented to Educational Service Unit 6 about SDM, sharing experiences on SDM. The role of the Ambassadors is to give lived experience and

empirical examples of SDM. There have been 2 identified potential schools to approach, Independence Rising has expressed interest in learning more about/promoting SDM. A webpage on the Disability Rights Nebraska website is dedicated to SDM and serves as the web-based Clearinghouse for the grant, with a wealth of resources on a variety of topics related to SDM: videos, slideshows, research, and literature addressing SDM in general, for persons with mental illness, the aging community, policy language, and legislation. DRN produced 5 brochures covering SDM: Guardianship, Independent living/transition students, Special education, Personal finance, and Healthcare. The brochures were developed by Jonathan Martinis and reviewed by the Steering Committee, Task Force and NCDD Staff. DRN has researched/produced a slideshow on legislative language and policy options in other states regarding SDM. One of the other strategies DRN employed in this grant project was continuing to conduct educational presentations to a variety of audiences. The Elder Justice Training event with Nebraska Public Broadcasting: SDM and the Aging Community. Attendees: 400 people. Presentation to Transition Staff at ESU #6 "Family Resources Night" for self-advocates and professionals. Attendees: 25 transition staff. Presentation to a statewide audience of Transition Coordinators. Attendees: 6 Coordinator Staff. Presentation to staff at the Vocational Rehabilitation University Conference. Attendees: 50 Vocational Rehabilitation staff. This project has been able to reach and educate over 460 people.

**Goal 4, Objective C:**

People First of Nebraska (PFN) State Advisor Project - Their 5 Disability Policy Specialists were highly impactful in training other people with disabilities to advocate with elected officials and to make those policy makers aware of the needs of people with disabilities. PFN Disability Policy Specialists, continued their training, attended the PFN Board meetings in person where they provided the legislative updates to the Board. They continued to meet with self-advocates at the Munroe-Meyer Institute who have helped to mentor their DPS' experience. Outcomes include a video on how to plan and make phone calls to elected officials, this is very important to get the self-advocate voices heard. The DPS' are involved in planning the Disability Pride event which had over 800 people attending this year. They also helped plan the Growing Independence Seminar: pre-conference training with NASP which had over 60 attendees. The Disability Pride Event was a huge success that drew over 800 people to Lincoln, Ne and had over 100 vendor tables for people to learn about various organizations, resources and participate in accessible activities. PFN held a Building Bridges conference. Attendees talked about what they wish they had known about attending conferences for their first time. They held discussions on developing a guide for people with disabilities who are going to their first conference: How to determine costs, make a budget, find funding support, how to register for a conference, making hotel reservations, what to wear, what to pack, travel and support considerations, hotel etiquette and safety, what to expect at the conference with keynote speakers, breakout sessions, and social events, how to network and make friends, and also how to practice self-care. This idea has been received well with the PFN Board and their SOAR Conference partners. PFN think this is a wonderful collaborative opportunity and will generate a product of value to self-advocates in every state and at national conferences.

<p><b>B3. Lessons Learned and Future Work of the Council</b></p>	<p><b>Report on how the Council will use lessons learned from state plan implementation and the data gathered from the evaluation activities to move forward the work of the Council.</b></p>
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## NCDD GOVERNOR MEMBER APPOINTMENT PROCESS CONCERNS

Nebraska is comprised of 77,358 square miles, making it the 16th largest state in terms of sheer geographic area. Although Nebraska's total population is approximately two million residents, nearly 60% of its citizens live outside the metropolitan areas of Omaha and Lincoln. Citizens who live in rural Nebraska often feel overlooked and forgotten. The Council is mindful of this concern and works with the Governor's office to seek a diverse Council membership, which includes appointing new members from rural areas and from diverse backgrounds.

As noted in last year's (FFY2022) PPR, NCDD is committed to addressing ACL's concern that we are not in compliance with Section One of the State Plan, because representation of NCDD members does not reflect the diversity of the State with respect to race and ethnicity (Section 125(b)(1)(C)). In order for the current State Plan to gain approval, NCDD was asked to provide information on how the Council plans to educate the Governor to appoint additional members to reflect race and ethnicity of the State. The FFY2022 PPR Cultural Diversity narrative summarized efforts to educate and work with former Governor Pete Ricketts about this compliance measure. NCDD focused recruitment efforts encouraging applicants from diverse backgrounds, resulting in two new citizen appointments reflecting the diversity of Nebraska.

On January 5, 2023, Nebraska's 41st new Governor, Jim Pillen, was inaugurated. Pillen, a member of the Republican party, is a veterinarian and livestock producer. He entered the office with the goal of protecting, training, and keeping Nebraska born and raised kids in the state, cutting taxes, growing agriculture, and defending commonsense, conservative values.

Having a new Governor brought changes and transitions. Kathleen Dolezal, who served former Governors Pete Ricketts and Dave Heineman (both met term limits) as their Administrative Assistant providing oversight to the Executive Appointments to Nebraska Boards and Commissions, changed positions in early 2023. Ms. Dolezal notified NCDD's ED that a new part-time Administrative Assistant, Pat Selk, is serving Governor Pillen with the Executive appointment process.

On January 27, NCDD Executive Director reached out to Ms. Selk in an email welcoming her in her new role and providing information about NCDD, including a copy of the By-laws, ACL DD Councils Info Sheet, and NCDD Who We Are handout. At this time, the ED sought Ms. Selk's assistance with two of the agency representative changes (Title V Maternal Child Health and Division of Behavioral Health) for Governor appointment. On March 22, NCDD ED dropped by Ms. Selk's office to inquire about these appointments. This provided an opportunity to answer some of Mr. Selk's questions and provide some clarification to the current appointed members. At that time, the ED was told that she had not yet had an opportunity to meet with the Governor to discuss board vacancies, as his focus was on the transition and the legislative session.

The NCDD ED reached out in late April after receiving a resignation from a self-advocate member. Ms. Selk noted that she had not had a chance to meet with the Governor. The NCDD ED reached out again in early June regarding the process to appoint a new Vocational Rehabilitation member to replace the member who resigned from Nebraska VR. In late June NCDD ED provided two reference checks for a potential self-advocate member to replace the one who resigned in April. She spoke directly with Ms. Selk in mid-July to check on the agency and self-advocate vacancies, and was told that this would be a priority for the Governor when he returned from an overseas trade trip. On August 15 the ED reached out for an update. Ms. Selk was notified that a family member from the far western part of the state resigned NCDD on August 28. In late August and early September, NDD ED emailed Ms. Selk about the

current members who were reapplying for their second term, including the Protection and Advocacy agency representative. On Sept. 8 the NCDD ED dropped by Ms. Selk's office to follow up directly, since email and phone voice messages were not providing sufficient communication to know the status of pending member vacancies.

Ms. Selk told NCDD ED that the appointment process was still behind for a variety of reasons. When the ED mentioned that NCDD was at risk for falling out of compliance due to these delays, Ms. Selk indicated that there were other boards and commissions with similar predicaments. During the meeting the NCDD ED learned that previous applications under the former Governor's administration were not being accepted, which was why the self-advocate that had reference checks was not being considered. The ED notified the self-advocate to reapply under Governor Pillen. When the ED offered to continue providing the Governor's office with assistance vetting potential NCDD members, Ms. Selk indicated that the Governor would need any assistance, and that this administration was making appointment decisions without feedback or input.

In late September, NCDD was notified that the Governor had appointed the agency vacancies for the Maternal Child Health and Division of Behavioral Health. We have not received any updates on the Nebraska VR agency change or the two other vacancies. Additionally, NCDD has not been notified if those members who reapplied to serve a second term have been reappointed.

NCDD ED contacted Ms. Selk before the Nov. 17, 2023, Council meeting and learned that DJ Plautz has been appointed as the new Nebraska VR agency representative. NCDD also learned that Governor Pillen has reviewed and approved the reappointment applications for four NCDD members. These members will receive official notification in early December.

In the meantime, NCDD is recruiting applicants for the current family member and self-advocate member vacancies. An email blast has been shared with potential stakeholders with the following language:

"State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (Councils) are federally funded, self-governing organizations charged with identifying the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities in their state or territory. Councils were formed into federal law were created by the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act) in 1970. The federal Administration for Community Living is responsible for Council oversight. The DD Act requires that Council membership must be geographically representative of the State and reflect the diversity of the State with respect to race and ethnicity (Section 125(b)(1)(C)). NCDD is committed to recruiting members that reflect the geographical areas of the entire state, as well as the diversity of Nebraska's population with respect to race and ethnicity. Special consideration will be on applicants who are Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, American Indian, or refugees, as well as applicants from the western/panhandle, north central areas of the state. Applicants meeting these criteria are encouraged to note it in the "additional information" section of the application."

NCDD is committed to recruiting well-qualified applicants from diverse, ethnic backgrounds to fill current vacancies. The Council ED will continue to reach out to the Governor's office. The ED also plans to ask the Council agency member representative, the Director of the Division of DD and member of the Governor's cabinet, to speak to the Governor about NCDD's concerns with the appointment process delays, vetting process for NCDD citizen members, and addressing ethnicity and diversity compliance concerns.

## POSITIVE NEWS - GOVERNOR PILLEN DEMONSTRATES HIS SUPPORT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Despite the challenges of securing Council appointments with the new Governor's administration, the Council was pleased to witness Governor Pille's support of individuals with DD and their families through policy and awareness efforts. During the first few months of his leadership, advocates took notice, including The Arc of NE.

The Arc of Nebraska is Nebraska's largest membership organization supporting people with IDD. Their annual Senatorial Appreciation Dinner is hosted to help bring together Senators, individuals with disabilities, family members, professionals, and advocates to help create a more inclusive community. During this annual event The Arc recognizes the hard work of elected officials and advocates dedicated to helping people with disabilities. The Arc of NE's Harold Sieck Public Official of the Year recognizes statewide elected public officials, who have had a positive influence on the lives of people with developmental disabilities and their families through public policy. Harold Sieck served as a Nebraska State Senator. Senator Sieck had a son, Roger, who had developmental disabilities. The Arc of NE named this award in recognition of Senator Sieck's advocacy on behalf of people with developmental disabilities.

Governor Pille, before he even took office, brought together a task force to focus on education reform. Following calls from Special Education advocates for historic Special Education investment, he proposed an Education Plan bringing historic increases in state funding for Special Education. In addition, his budget proposal added funds to decrease the Developmental Disabilities Waiting List.

The Arc of NE presented the 2023 Harold Sieck Public Official of the Year Award to Governor Jim Pille at this event on March 8, 2023. The Governor and his wife attended, and the Governor arrived early to meet with attendees. He was approachable, kind, and took the time to listen to those who spoke with him.

## GOVERNOR PILLEN SUPPORTS DD AWARENESS MONTH & DEAM THROUGH PRESS CONFERENCES & PROCLAMATIONS

NCDD had the opportunity to collaborate with Governor Jim Pille and the DHHS Director of Developmental Disabilities, Tony Green, to feature March 2023 as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month in an official Governor press conference.

NCDD was given the opportunity to invite a small group of selected guests to attend the press conference proclamation event. This was an opportunity for the Governor to educate, inform, and celebrate DD Awareness Month with credentialed media and invited guests. Governor Pille wanted to meet individuals with developmental disabilities to celebrate their contributions to Nebraska.

Special invitation went to each self-advocate members who serves on NCDD, in addition to the Council Chair, Rachel Siffring, and the remaining Executive Committee members. A limited number of additional guests representing MMI UCEDD, The Arc of NE, NASP, People First of Nebraska, and the Governor's DD Advisory Committee Chair were also invited to the event. Following the press conference, a group photo opportunity was available for the invited guests with the Governor.

The Council Director was able to provide some guidance and suggested language for the proclamation. The Governor's proclamation stated:

"A disability is a natural part of the human experience and does not diminish the right of individuals to live independently, exert control and voice in their own lives, and fully participate in and contribute to their communities; and Nebraska encourages and supports the employment of individuals with developmental or intellectual disabilities because it is beneficial for individuals and beneficial for Nebraska employers. Businesses can expand their talent pool, strengthen their workforce by creating a welcoming and supportive workplace, and increase their overall bottom line. Nebraska seeks to provide opportunities for our citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities to advocate for themselves and to receive the supports they need to be productive, successful, and independent members of their communities. These individuals should be seen as contributing neighbors, co-workers, church members, classmates, voters, friends, volunteers, and valued members of our community."

NCDD, DDD, and Governor Pillen were proud to recognize Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month and continue the work of ensuring individuals with DD are leading fulfilling and productive lives and achieving their full potential, goals, and dreams.

Governor Pillen continued to demonstrate his support to the I/DD community when he hosted a press conference on October 20, 2023, to celebrate and proclaim October as Disability Employment Awareness Month. Featured speakers highlighted that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can contribute to Nebraska's workforce, and he encouraged Nebraska businesses to explore this untapped resource.

Like the March 2023 Developmental Disability Awareness Month proclamation press conference, this event was for invited guests and the press. The DHHS Office of Communications coordinated efforts with the Governor's communication team and the Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities to plan the event. NCDD was encouraged to bring three members as invited guests to the press conference and proclamation. Chair Rachel Siffring, Grant Review Committee Chair Quinton Corwin (an individual with a DD who is also competitively employed), the Council ED, and the MMI UCEDD Director attended the event representing NCDD.

The only draw back to these proclamation events is that the Council did not take the lead in coordination like previous years. Instead, the Division of DD, DHHS Communications, and the Governor's office communications team coordinated the proclamations to also serve as press conferences, with limited invitations for stakeholders. The disadvantage of NCDD not coordinating a regular proclamation event meant that not all interested DD stakeholders were invited to the press conference/Proclamation events. On the other hand, these events received press coverage resulting in awareness reaching more Nebraskans.

#### NCDD NAVIGATING RFA RELEASE DELAYS & CONCERNS WITH DSA PROCUREMENT LEGAL NOT ALLOWING NCDD TO SUBAWARD WITH FOR-PROFIT ENTITIES

Transitions with a new Governor's administration has recently impacted the Council's ability to get approval and release new Request for Applications (RFAs). After the August 18, 2023, Council meeting, Council staff notified the Procurement Division that the Council wanted to re-release the HCBS Final Settings Rule RFA and Opportunity Subaward RFA. On August 21, 2023, Greg Walkin, Director of DHHS Procurement and Grants, issued an email to all DHHS announcing that until the arrival of the new DHHS CEO on September 11, 2023, DHHS would be holding the release of all RFAs among other items. In late September 2023, the Council staff were able to proceed with the Procurement approval process to have the two RFAs released. However, Council staff ran into legal issues.

The Lead Contract Attorney would not allow the RFAs to be re-released with "for-profit entities" being allowed to apply, even though the RFAs were previously released with "for-profit entities" being allowed to apply. Council staff provided the Lead Contract Attorney with documentation from ACL's Jack Brandt that "for-profit entities" may apply for subawards, to no avail. As a concession to get the RFAs re-released, the Council ED agreed to take "for-profit entities" out of the re-release of these RFAs, which posted on Dec. 1, 2023. NCDD plans to review proposals at their February 2024 meeting.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In May 2023, Council ED reached out to Jack Brandt seeking documentation from ACL that would allow NCDD to include profit entities in the RFAs that posted in June 2023. The ED was told by one of the DSA's high level Procurement staff that if NCDD received documentation, then NCDD would be allowed to include that eligible entities who could apply for funding would include for-profit entities.

Jack M. Brandt provided the following language to the Council ED on May 18, 2023:

Hello Kristen,

I consulted with the Office of Financial Operations, and they sent me the below message.

I read through the DD Act and found the passage highlighted in yellow. When the Act discusses that no less than 70% of the funds be expended on State plan goals, it states, "part of such funds will be made available by the State to public or private entities." Therefore, I conclude that it is okay to make subawards to for-profit entities under the assumption that a for-profit entity is a type of private entity. In another part of the Act, the narrative makes once makes reference to a private nonprofit groups, but this is in a different context, not focused on award implementation. A keyword search of "profit" through the remaining text of the Act does not produce any passages indicating that for-profit organizations are excluded.

As a reminder, when a subaward is made, responsibility for implementing an award activity is being transferred to another entity in whole or part. More traditionally for-profit organizations are brought on to an award through a consultant agreement or contract to deliver a specific service or provide a good (item). Working under a subaward presents a different set of responsibilities and expectations. I would advise the State that they are permitted to make subawards to for-profit entities as long as their state laws and organizational policies and procedures permit this practice.

Please let me know if you have questions or concerns.

Thank you,

Jack

The Council ED emailed Jack back thanking him for the documentation that NCDD could provide the DSA clarifying that the DD Act authorizes State DD Councils to use funds to support State Plan goals. The ED requested the attachment or language that the Office of Fiscal Operations shared that highlights this area of the DD Act, and Jack provided a snip of the DD Act, page 23, section 124, (B) USE OF FUNDS, (v) "part of such funds will be made available by the State to public or private entities."

After sharing Jack's May 18, 2023, email with high level Procurement staff, the Council ED was told that it would suffice, and the language in the RFA that posted June 29, 2023, stated:

"Eligible entities include local governments, Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, for-profit entities, and nonprofit organizations. Individuals may not apply for this subaward funding."

However, in October 2023 NCDD encountered a change of opinion related to this issue. The Procurement Lead Contract Attorney, Steve Johnson, provided the following feedback related to the email documentation provided by Jack Brandt to the NCDD ED on May 18, 2023. "This for-profit issue is not resolved by an emailed comment by a federal grant administrator, especially since the comment was premised upon there being authority in state law that awards to for-profit entities are permitted."

See email language below shared on Oct. 27, 2023, from Mr. Johnson, the Lead Procurement Contracts Attorney:

"I previously returned the two above referenced draft RFAs because I questioned whether there is authority to subaward funds to for-profit entities.

Since my return of these two RFAs in early October, I have not been directed to persuasive authority that authorizes awards to for-profit entities.

As you know from her email below, Suzanna Ettrich-Glover did not find any Nebraska state law or executive order authorizing award to a for-profit entity.

My attention has been drawn to May 18, 2023 email from Jack Brandt (Community Living Specialist at the Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities of the federal Administration for Community Living) to Kristen Larsen. A copy of that email is attached. While Mr. Brandt's email discusses the for-profit issue, it does not cite authority which supports subawards to such an entity. Rather, the email essentially concludes that, if state laws permit awards to for-profit entities, then he believes such an award would be permissible. As noted above, Suzanna found state law to be silent; it contains neither authorization nor prohibition. Furthermore, Mr. Brandt confuses the concept of public/private control of entities with the concept of for-profit/non-profit entity motivation. "Private entities", which are recognized as appropriate for receipt of funds under 42 USC section 15024 (c) (5) (B) (v.), are not the same as for-profit entities. Private entities can be either for-profit or not-for-profit.

While Mr. Brandt's commentary is helpful, it is not authoritative. An auditor of these programs may well find his commentary inadequate to justify awards to for-profit entities.

I suggest that you ask Mr. Brandt if there exists better authority than his interpretation. A directive or statement from the U. S. Secretary of Health and Human Services (as referenced in 42 USC 15024 (c) (5) (A), for example) would probably be such authority."

The Council ED will continue to work with the DSA's Procurement Lead Contract Attorney to get permission to allow "for profit entities" to apply for the upcoming RFAs that will post in late May or early June 2023. In early November the Council ED has provided him the following documentation language provided by iTACC that 45 CFR 75.216 says that it is allowable to subaward with for-profit or commercial organizations.

45 CFR 75 says that it is allowable. It addresses HHS grantees being able to use for-profits as subrecipients and does not require additional federal approval. For-profit subrecipient information is addressed in 45 CFR 75.216 (eCFR :: 45 CFR 75.216 -- Special provisions for awards to commercial organizations as recipients.\_). Be sure to pay special attention to 45 CFR 75.216 (b) where it says, "...no HHS funds may be paid as profit to any recipient even if the recipient is a commercial organization. Profit is any amount in excess of allowable direct and indirect costs."

The Council ED is aware that the Notice of Award states the following:

1. This grant award is issued under Title I, Subtitle B of Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000. The terms and conditions of this Notice of Award (NoA) and other requirements have the following order of precedence: (1) statute; (2) executive order; (3) program



regulation; (4) administrative regulation found in 45 CFR Part 75; (5) agency policies; and (6) any additional terms and conditions and remarks on this NoA.

The Council ED will also seek guidance from Jack Brandt at ACL to see if it is possible to secure written documentation from a higher authority at ACL to address this interpretation concern.

## CONTENTIOUS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

One of the key activities under the NCDD Advocacy and Self-Advocacy fourth Goal is for the Council to take positions and educate and inform State Senators through in person testimony or online written letters about selected introduced state legislation that has the potential to impact individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The Council's Legislative & Advocacy Committee reviews and recommends an average of 20 introduced bills for NCDD to act on, and the Council votes on these Committee recommendations at their February Council meeting. Council legislative work during the first session (Jan. 4 through June 1, 2023) of Nebraska's 108th Legislature was daunting due to a contentious session.

When the session adjourned sine die June 1, the 88th day of the scheduled 90-day session, and Speaker of the Legislature Senator John Arch recognized that the session was marked at times by "extreme rancor and division." It is safe to say that most of the senators, from the experienced multi-term lawmakers down to the freshman in their first session, thought that this session was unlike any other they had seen in the Legislature. If you had to describe the 2023 session in one word, the word would be "filibuster."

Although filibusters are comparatively rare in most state legislatures, they are common in Nebraska as a way of forcing compromise on bills, since the legislature only has one chamber, a 49-member Senate with 32 Republicans and 17 Democrats. While it only takes a simple majority to pass a bill in the chamber, 33 votes are required to break a filibuster, Nebraska's rules regarding filibusters are also unique, allowing for sitting and bathroom breaks and letting lawmakers discuss basically anything.

The political unrest slowed all progress due to filibuster activity trying to kill a gender-affirming care bill, LB574, which would prohibit physicians in Nebraska from performing or referring an individual under age 19 for gender altering procedures, including surgical procedures, hormone therapy and puberty blockers. The controversial bill resulting in heated debates on the floor. Even as late as April 7, 2023, Nebraska lawmakers had not passed a single bill this session, as a state lawmaker, Senator Michaela Cavanaugh, continued a weeks-long filibuster protest over trans rights and vowed to "burn this session to the ground" if she had to.

In February Cavanaugh started filibustering every single bill that came before the legislature. She was protesting proposal LB572 - or the "Let Them Grow Act" - which was put forward by Republican Senator Kathleen Kauth. Cavanaugh spent over seven weeks filibustering against the anti-trans bill, spending close to 12 hours a day on the Legislative floor filibustering, which she described in an interview with NPR as "mentally and emotionally tiring."

When asked about whether she was concerned about alienating voters, Cavanaugh expressed that she had been encouraging her colleagues to focus on bills that would address the economy and other "significant, important pieces of legislation." "They are choosing to prioritize legislating hate over the economic well-being of the state," Cavanaugh said. "That is a choice that they are making. They have

the power and the ability to schedule bills that will move our economy forward, that will address childcare subsidies, food insecurity, education. And the people in power need to start standing up and making choices that are best for Nebraska."

The bill introducer, Senator Kathleen Kauth, and other supporters of the bill argued that the measure would protect children from "experimental" treatments with life-long consequences. Kauth claimed that 85 percent of children desist from gender dysphoria if they receive psychological rather than medical intervention. "This an instance where these drugs and these surgeries are too harmful for kids with no proven benefit," Kauth said. "Childhood and teen years are a time of trial and error - figuring out who you are - that changes frequently, and adults know that allowing children to make permanent, life-altering decisions is unwise."

Opponents suggested the measure would harm children and families and warned against setting a precedent of authorizing the Legislature to intervene between parents and doctors in any health care decision. Omaha Sen. John Fredrickson urged senators to take a "bigger picture" view of the impact of LB574. Years down the road, he said, other lawmakers may look to the bill as a precedent regarding the limits of parental rights when it comes to health care decisions. "We really need to consider the precedent that we set," Fredrickson said. "With this bill, we are saying that the government can overrule the parents."

Sen. Danielle Conrad of Lincoln also opposed the bill, calling it a "radical" and "partisan" measure that reflects national culture wars and not the "kitchen table" issues that Nebraskans care about. "Nebraskans are not crying out for this hateful, harmful, divisive measure," Conrad said.

Nebraska's bill is part of a nationwide trend in proposals targeting trans and LGBTQ people. There has been a record number of anti-LGBTQ bills introduced in 2023, according to data compiled the American Civil Liberties Union.

Although Cavanaugh paused her filibuster at the end of March, believing that it did not have the votes to advance, LB 574 moved forward after eight hours of debate over three days. Senators ultimately passed LB574, a bill that bans "gender-altering" care for minors in Nebraska. A physician who knowingly violates the bill's provisions would be subject to review by the state's medical licensing board. An individual who received a gender-altering procedure while under age 19, or their parent or guardian, could bring a civil action against the physician within two years of discovery. The bill also would prohibit the distribution or use of state funds for any entity, organization or individual that provides gender-altering procedures for minors. The provisions of LB574 take effect on Oct. 1, 2023.

Despite the slowdowns, this legislature passed provisions of 291 bills this year, with many bill measures being "packaged" into committee priority bills. Legislation that passed provides significant tax relief, criminal justice reform and a new model for delivery of behavioral health services to communities across Nebraska, allows Constitutional carry, and implements the voter ID ballot initiative. The Legislature also adopted the biennium budget and made a \$1 billion investment in Nebraska's education system, with significant investment in special education. Legislation that bans abortion in Nebraska at 12-weeks gestational also passed despite heated debate.

As a result of the contentious session, many of the bills that the Council was following did not move out of committee onto the Legislative floor for debate. These bills will carry over with the possibility of being debated and voted on in the upcoming 109th Legislative Session in 2024. Provisions or portions

of other bills that the Council was following were amended into other related bills. Additional information about outcomes on bills that the Council is following are discussed in Section IV under Goal 4, Objective A.

<b>C. Input on National Priorities</b>	
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**PAYMENT TO GUARDIANS ON ICF LEVEL OF CARE WAIVERS IN NEBRASKA**

In January 2023, the Nebraska DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) coordinated a Legally Responsible Individuals (LRI) workgroup in partnership with representatives from Disability Rights Nebraska (DRN), the Nebraska Council for Developmental Disabilities (NCDD), Munroe-Myer Institute's (MMI) UCEDD, and The Arc of Nebraska (The Arc). The LRI workgroup met regularly from January to June 2023 to address the feedback received regarding the desire for expanded opportunities of paid family caregivers/guardians. Together, as a workgroup, representatives sought to identify challenges and opportunities available under federal and state law, regulations, and Nebraska's Medicaid waivers to address these workforce challenges.

Except for DRN, representatives on this workgroup were committed to the development of supports, services, and expanded flexibilities for family caregivers and guardians across Home and Community-based Service (HCBS) waivers. DDD lead the process to navigate and mitigate the many challenges not only in the revision of existing statutes, regulations, waivers, and policies but also in the development of robust frameworks to ensure the appropriate oversight to guarantee participant health and safety and the responsible spending of the taxpayer's dollar. Representatives from the workgroup recognized that each aspect of waiver, regulation, policy, and procedure is interconnected and that while some parts may be easy fixes, other challenges may present longer timelines or more complex solutions. Additionally, once possible solutions may be secured, DDD must then work with their various information and technology systems to begin building all the necessary requirements and safeguards that would allow it.

By early May 2023, DDD agreed to attempt to address challenges where feasible, and to simultaneously move forward with changes when solutions could be implemented. To that end, DDD announced to workgroup members that they were launching a project to release a request for proposal (RFP) for a fiscal intermediary which provides both financial management services as well as information and assistance services, to Nebraska's independent provider model. Working on an aggressive timeline, DDD believes that the fiscal intermediary will help to address many of the issues associated with the payment for services to family caregivers and guardians across the HCBS waivers. Furthermore, DDD believes that the fiscal intermediary will provide important context and process to address other issues and challenges identified by the workgroup to effectively balance the needs of participants, families, caregivers, and advocates within an effective and efficient HCBS system.

During the March 31, 2023, LRI workgroup meeting, the Division of DD suggested that the workgroup draft a collaborative letter that would be shared with community partners, stakeholders, and other interested parties. The intent of the letter would be to demonstrate the workgroup's coordinated efforts and diligence with exploring the possibility of changes regarding payments for legally

responsible individuals (LRI)s. In early May, DDD shared a draft of the letter with workgroup members. The draft letter included the summary information shared in the previous paragraphs above.

The end of the proposed letter from DDD on behalf of the workgroup stated:

"We wanted to share this correspondence with you for awareness that each entity is currently working towards solutions. Ensuring the protection of vulnerable Nebraskans from fraud, waste and abuse while balancing the need for flexibility in caregiver options remains our collective vision."

DDD shared that their intension was to have each workgroup organization indicate agreement by submitting their logos or signatures once the workgroup members finalized and approved the letter.

However, Disability Rights Nebraska shared the following concerns about the proposed letter, highlighting their role as the state's designated Protection and Advocacy organization and stressing their concerns over potential conflicts of interest of allowing legally responsible individuals (LRI's) or guardians of adults with DD the ability to be paid for waiver services.

"Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the proposed letter regarding the status of paying legally responsible individuals (LRI's) as caregivers for persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities. After diligent consideration and consultation, Disability Rights Nebraska wishes to remain involved in developing public policy in this area, whether an expansion of LRI's as paid family caregivers is undertaken or not. As we have stated earlier, we are not dismissive of the issues plaguing the ability of the Developmental Disabilities system to meet recipients' full array of needs. However, as the designated Protection and Advocacy organization, we have particular sensitivities where potential conflicts of interests affecting people with disabilities arise, if not codified. We encourage the Division to continue this investigation/discussion, and we believe our organization has unique viewpoint and expertise to offer. We wish to express a strong interest in continuing our participation in this group effort.

Overall, we are unsure this letter is necessary; the information in the letter seems best said directly by the stakeholder agencies who are hearing from anxious families and individuals regarding paying guardians or LRI's as caregivers. However, if this letter presents an opportunity for stakeholders to prompt and engage in a discussion of the timeframes and schedules involved, following are our suggestions for language revisions:

1. We would prefer that the letter remove the names of the partnering organizations and instead refer to them generically. We did not see a strong reason why partnering organizations needed to be named if the general purpose of the letter is to express patience for the procedural complexities and longer timelines involved.
2. We would require that the letter remove "guardians" and only focus on LRI's. It has been our impression throughout the meetings that paying guardians (family or other) is off the table. Our organization has consistently raised significant concerns about this arrangement and we cannot support efforts to pay guardians as caregivers. We would demand that our organization be removed from the letter if "guardians" is not removed from the current draft.

Again, Disability Rights Nebraska is interested in continuing to participate in this workgroup."

\*End of May 23, 2023, email correspondence from Disability Rights Nebraska to workgroup members

Based on the feedback, DDD replied that it would be best to further discuss the intent and need of the letter at the June 20, 2023, workgroup meeting. The DD Division policy team revised the letter utilizing all feedback and provide the group an updated version at the June LRI workgroup meeting.

Edison McDonald, the Executive Director for The Arc of Nebraska, provided the following feedback after receiving the email from Disability Rights Nebraska.

"1a I believe that a broader conversation is necessary with the public regarding this issue. I know we all value the opportunity for transparency and public input from people with disabilities and their families. In particular to have our organizations listed indicates that we have had continuing dialogue.

1b As to having our organizations names on the document: For The Arc of Nebraska it's important because we stepped back from legislation taking pressure from our members. For the DD Council I think it's important as they've had a large amount of public comment on this issue. For Disability Rights I think it's important as there has been many feelings from individuals and families of people with disabilities that they have been dismissed and feel insulted. While I've been communicating that is not your intention it would be a good olive branch.

2 That has not been my impression at all. I believe we have been looking at all categories including guardians. I hope that Disability Rights would still sign off on saying that we are having a discussion and request for public comment. I believe it would be a helpful step to mend bridges burnt with self-advocates and families."

During the June 2023 LRI workgroup meeting, the Council ED shared that she tended to agree with Edison's comments, but she also stressed that she understands that Disability Rights Nebraska must consider all aspects of the issue through the protection and advocacy lens.

Workgroup members noted that they understand Disability Rights Nebraska's concerns regarding being sensitive to the conflicts of interest that may arise, but that has been a core part of why the workgroup took this approach to meet regularly to explore how best to proceed to best meet the needs of families and individuals with developmental disabilities.

The other workgroup members (Council, UCEDD, The Arc of NE) expressed concerns about Disability Rights NE position against allowing court appointed guardians of adult children to be paid for waiver services. Frustrations were evident, as the non-P&A workgroup members expressed opinions that they thought this group was largely about exploring how we might make this payment approach work, rather than not allowing it to work. However, Disability Rights Nebraska did clarify that they were okay with allowing LRI (parents/guardians of minor children) to be paid for waiver services.

After a thorough discussion, the Division of DD decided against releasing a joint coordination letter about the LRI workgroup. Instead, The Division of DD continued sharing the informative flyers and slide deck from their Family Support Waiver Listening Tour to educate the public about the possible implementation of payments to LRI in Nebraska. The LRI workgroup has not met since.

It is important to note that the DD Division hosted a multi-city Listening Tour in late April and early May focused on the proposed Family Support Waiver. Kristen Smith, the Deputy Director of Eligibility, Policy, and Quality, and Colin Large, Policy Administrator with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) with the DHHS, announced the Listening Tour via a news release that the Council shared on their email list serve. Smith and Colin visited four locations across the state (Norfolk, Grand Island, Omaha, Lincoln) and hosted one virtual option.

"The intent of this waiver is to provide support for children and families experiencing a developmental disability in Nebraska," said Kristen Smith, Deputy Director of DDD with DHHS. "This new waiver will serve up to 850 children. This listening tour is an opportunity to gain important stakeholder input and find opportunities for enhancements to our services and supports."

The Council Executive Director attended the Lincoln Listening Session on May 15, 2023. DD Division leaders Smith and Large shared an informative PowerPoint. Two informative flyers were also shared at the listening session: FISCAL INTERMEDIARY IN WAIVER SELF-DIRECTION and LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS AS WAIVER PROVIDERS. The language from the DDD informative flyers is copied below.

LANGUAGE FROM THE FISCAL INTERMEDIARY IN WAIVER SELF-DIRECTION PUBLISHED IN MARCH 2023:

#### Self-Direction

A participant has decision-making authority over the workers who provide services, the mix of services and support, and how and when they are provided.

Self-direction can include:

- Employer Authority (EA) - Participants hire, screen, supervise, manage, set schedules, dismiss, set wages, and give bonuses within the parameters of their waiver budget.
- Budget Authority (BA) - Participants use their waiver budget for services, equipment or supplies not otherwise provided through waiver or Medicaid to address an identified need in their service plan.

Self-directing waiver services requires a Fiscal intermediary (FI) to provide two supports: Financial Management Services (FMS) and Information and Assistance Services (I&A).

#### Self-Direction Example

You need new pants. You decide where to shop and look through what's offered. You compare quality, price, size and how well the pants meet your need. Finally, you pick what is right for you and purchase it.

#### Financial Management Services (FMS)

- Assists a participant with budget authority when self-directing waiver services. This can include, but is not limited to:
  - Ensuring providers have needed information, assistance, support, and training;
  - Confirming pre-employment verifications, continued eligibility with program requirements, and background checks;
  - Registering as the employer-agent with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and assuming full liability for filing reports;
  - Receiving and processing employee time sheets;
  - Computing and paying all federal and state employment-related taxes and withholdings;
  - Distributing payroll on schedule;
  - Maintaining records of all expenses and reimbursements; and
  - Monitoring the budget.

#### Fiscal Intermediary Example

You purchase new pants with a bank card. After you swipe, and sign, your part is done. The card company is your fiscal intermediary, managing how money moves from your account to the store. They send details to your bank, make sure your account is charged correctly, subtract and pay fees, and send money to pay the store, all while keeping the transaction secure.

#### Information & Assistance (I&A)

A service providing information on opportunities and services available within a participant's community; assessing problems and capacities of the participant; linking the participant to opportunities and services; and available for follow-up.

When a participant purchases goods and services, the Fiscal Intermediary can:

- Process and pay for invoices for goods and services as approved by the service plan; and
- Ensure the goods and services purchased fit within the participant's annual budget.

Currently, Legally Responsible Individuals (LRI) are not allowed to be paid for providing services. If this changes, the Fiscal Intermediary would provide oversight to ensure integrity and look for conflict of interest.

\*End of flyer language

LANGUAGE FROM LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS AS WAIVER PROVIDERS PUBLISHED IN MARCH 2023:

#### DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES (DD) WAIVERS

##### Definitions

Family Member is immediate family only, excluding LRI, this includes children and siblings.

Legal Guardian is a person appointed by a court to serve as a guardian for a someone ages 19 years or older.

Legally Responsible Individual (LRI) is a spouse or the natural or adoptive parents of minor children.

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waiver Services - Chart provided to distinguish who is allowed to deliver service

##### Service Type

Adult Day; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; Legally Responsible Individuals (LRI) - No

Assistive Technology; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Behavioral In-Home Habilitation; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Child Day Habilitation; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No, LRI - No

Community Integration; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No, LRI - No

Consultative Assessment; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Day Supports; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Environmental Modification Assessment; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Home Modifications; Family Member - Yes, Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Homemaker; Family Member - Yes, when not living with participant; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Independent Living; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Medical In-Home Habilitation; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Personal Emergency Response System (PERS); Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Prevocational; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Residential Habilitation; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Respite; Family Member - Yes, when not living with participant; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Small Group Vocational Support; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Supported Employment - Follow-Along; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

Supported Employment Individual; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No  
Supported Family Living; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No  
Therapeutic Residential Habilitation; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No  
Transitional Services; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No  
Transportation; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No  
Vehicle Modifications; Family Member - Yes, when with an agency; Legal Guardian - No; LRI - No

#### AGED AND DISABLED (AD) WAIVER

##### Definitions

Family Member is immediate family only, excluding LRI, this includes children and siblings.

Legal Guardian is a person appointed by a court to serve as a guardian for a someone ages 19 years or older.

Legally Responsible Individual (LRI) is a spouse or the natural or adoptive parents of minor children.

AGED AND DISABLED (AD) WAIVER Services - Chart provided to distinguish who is allowed to deliver service

##### Service Type

Adult Day Health; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Assisted Living; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Assistive Technology; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes, for adults; LRI- No

Chore; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Companion; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Extra Care for Children with Disabilities; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - No; LRI- No

Home & Vehicle Modifications; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes, for adults; LRI- No

Home Again; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Home Delivered Meals; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Independence Skills Building; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Non-Medical Transportation; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Personal Care; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Personal Emergency Response System (PERS); Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes; LRI- No

Respite; Family Member - Yes; Legal Guardian - Yes, for adults; LRI- No

\*End of flyer language and charts

#### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FAMILY SUPPORT LISTENING TOUR POWERPOINT SLIDES ARE NOTED BELOW: LB 376 SYSTEM EVALUATION

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services has contracted with Optumas and Myers and Stauffer, who are performing an evaluation of Nebraska's developmental disability (DD) service system for Legislative Bill 376.

We want to learn more about the experiences of individuals with disabilities, their family members, advocates, providers, and other members of the public who support them. We invite you to participate in a virtual listening session. We encourage people who are new to the system, those on the Medicaid Aged and Disabled Waiver and waiting for or on the DD Waiver, people who have never provided feedback on services, or those with ideas on how to improve disability services in Nebraska, to join us.



#### LB 376 System Evaluation Registration info

The following slide provided a QR code and a link to register and select meeting time preferences for feedback sessions with the Myers and Stauffer team. Sessions were limited to 30 participants each to allow for meaningful, focused feedback. If sessions were full, people were notified and sent a link to complete a voluntary electronic feedback survey.

#### Family Support Waiver (FSW) - A New Nebraska HCBS Waiver

The Family Support Waiver will be the fifth Nebraska HCBS Waiver.

Legislature called on DHHS to develop the waiver in LB376.

The waiver is intended to provide support for the child and their family.

#### Family Support Waiver - Demographics;

The FSW will:

Serve up to 850 children with developmental disabilities; and

Provide each child with a maximum annual budget of \$10,000.

Participants will be:

Children ages birth to 21 years old;

Eligible for DD services per NE statute; and

Meet ICF/IID level of care.

#### Family Support Waiver Funding Priorities

To receive funding on this waiver, LB376 lists the following priorities:

1. Children with disabilities and family units in crisis situations in which the child tends to self-injure or injure siblings and other family members.
2. Children with disabilities who are at risk for placement in juvenile detention centers, or other institutional settings, or out-of-home placements.
3. Children with disabilities whose primary caretakers are grandparents because no other family caregivers are available to provide care.
4. Families who have more than one child with disabilities living in the family home.
5. Based on date of application.

Current services being discussed for the waiver:

Assistive Technology

Child Day Habilitation

Community Integration

Day Supports

Environmental Modification Assessment

Home Modifications

Homemaker

Independent Living

Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)

Respite

Supported Family Living

Transportation

Vehicle Modifications

NEW SERVICES IN FSW DRAFT

Family Caregiver Training  
Family and Peer Mentoring  
Participant Directed Goods & Services

Example slides were shared how a family might use their \$10,000 annual FSW budget.

Alex's example on use of FSW

Alex's family uses the waiver to pay an Agency Provider to provide services 2 hours per week all year. They also use this waiver to pay for additional childcare costs with Child Day Habilitation 2 hours per day 45 weeks out of the year. With their remaining budget they are also able to purchase an Assistive Technology device to support Alex.

Waiver Service	Units	Cost
Respite - Agency Provider	96 hours	\$2,737.92
Child Day Habilitation - Agency (Basic)	450 hours	\$5,674.50
Assistive Technology	Invoice	\$1,573.34
Total		\$9,985.76

#### LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUALS

##### Definitions

Family Member: immediate family only, excluding LRI, this includes children and siblings.

Legal Guardian: a person appointed by a court to serve as a guardian for someone ages 19 years or older.

Legally Responsible Individual (LRI): a spouse or the natural or adoptive parents of minor children.

Can a Family Member currently provide Medicaid HCBS waiver services in Nebraska?

Aged and Disabled Waiver: Yes

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waivers: Sometimes

What DD Waiver services can a Family Member provide?

A Family Member CAN Provide: Assistive Technology; Child Day Habilitation; Community Integration; Consultative Assessment; Environmental Modification Assessment; Home Modifications; Independent Living; Supported Employment - Follow-Along and Individual; Supported Family Living; Transitional Services; and Transportation.

A Family Member CAN provide when with an agency: Adult Day; Behavioral In-Home Habilitation; Day Supports; Medical In-Home Habilitation; Personal Emergency Response System (PERS); Prevocational; Residential Habilitation; Small Group Vocational Support; Therapeutic Residential Habilitation; and Vehicle Modifications

A Family Member CAN provide when NOT living with participant: Homemaker and Respite

Can a Legal Guardian currently provide Medicaid HCBS waiver services in Nebraska?

Aged and Disabled Waiver: Sometimes

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waivers: No

What AD Waiver services can a Legal Guardian provide?

A Legal Guardian CAN Provide: Adult Day Health; Assisted Living; Chore; Companion; Home Again;

Home Delivered Meals; Independence Skills Building; Non-Medical Transportation; Personal Care; and Personal Emergency Response System (PERS)

A Legal Guardian CAN provide to an adult: Assistive Technology; Home & Vehicle Modifications; and Respite.

A Legal Guardian CANNOT Provide: Extra Care for Children with Disabilities

Can a Legally Responsible Individual currently provide Medicaid HCBS waiver services in Nebraska?

Aged and Disabled Waiver: No

Developmental Disabilities (DD) Waivers: No

Federal Requirements: Extraordinary Care

The Federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) policy is that payments for personal or similar care delivered by LRI is not eligible for federal financial participation through the State Plan.

A state may use an HCBS waiver to make payment for personal or similar services provided by LRI when services are deemed extraordinary care.

The state must specify satisfactory criteria for authorizing extraordinary care payments.

CMS defines extraordinary care as care exceeding the range of activities an LRI ordinarily performs in the household on behalf of a person the same age without a disability or chronic illness, which is necessary to assure the health and welfare of the person and avoid institutionalization.

Federal Requirements: Provider Requirements

- All providers, including LRI and guardians acting as independent providers, need to comply with Medicaid provider qualifications and other Medicaid requirements.
- When a state pays LRI as providers, they must ensure all waiver criteria required for any other provider is met by the LRI provider.
- This includes meeting established provider qualifications and undergoing provider enrollment activities.
- The LRI provider is subject to the same ongoing monitoring activities as any other provider.

Federal Requirements: LRI Safeguards

- When a state pays LRI as providers, CMS requires additional requirements for LRI to provide safeguards to ensure services are delivered according to the personal-centered service plan.
- This includes establishing why paying the LRI for services is in the best interest of the participant.

Changes for LRI to Provide AD Services

- Amendment to the Aged and Disabled (AD) Waiver.
- Promulgate revisions to Title 471 NAC -Nebraska Medicaid Program Services.
- Develop necessary IT and case management tools, processes, and infrastructure to support payments to LRI.
- Develop necessary outreach and educational resources for participants, families, advocates, independent and agency providers, and DHHS staff.

Changes for LRI or Guardian to Provide DD Services

- Amendment to the Comprehensive Developmental Disabilities (CDD) Waiver.
- Amendment to the Developmental Disabilities Adult Day (DDAD) Waiver.
- Promulgate revisions to Title 403 NAC -Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waiver Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.

- Promulgate revisions to Title 404 NAC -Community-Based Services for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities.
- Develop necessary IT and case management tools, processes, and infrastructure to support payments to LRI and guardians.
- Develop necessary outreach and educational resources for participants, families, advocates, independent and agency providers, and DHHS staff.

Per review of other states' HCBS waivers, CMS approval to pay LRI could be contingent on the use of a fiscal intermediary or require agency affiliation for the LRI.

## FISCAL INTERMEDIARY

### Definitions

#### Self-Direction

- Employer Authority (EA)
- Budget Authority (BA)

#### Fiscal Intermediary (FI)

- Financial Management Service (FMS)
- Information & Assistance (I&A)

#### Self-Direction

A participant has decision-making authority over:

- The workers who provide their services;
- The mix of services and support they receive; and
- How and when they are provided.

Self-direction can include:

- Employer Authority (EA) -Participants hire, screen, supervise, manage, set schedules, dismiss, set wages, and give bonuses within the parameters of their waiver budget.
- Budget Authority (BA) -Participants use their waiver budget for services, equipment or supplies not otherwise provided through waiver or Medicaid to address an identified need in their service plan.

#### Self-Direction Example shared

You need new pants. You decide where to shop and look through what's offered. You compare quality, price, size and how well the pants meet your need. Finally, you pick what is right for you and purchase it.

#### Fiscal Intermediary (FI)

Provides support through:

Financial Management Services (FMS)  
Information and Assistance (I&A)

#### Financial Management Services (FMS)

Assisting a participant with budget authority can include, but is not limited to:

- Ensuring providers have needed information, assistance, support, and training;
- Confirming pre-employment verifications, continued eligibility with program requirements, and background checks;
- Registering as the employer-agent with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and assuming full

liability for filing reports;

- Receiving and processing employee time sheets;
- Computing and paying all federal and state employment-related taxes and withholdings;
- Distributing payroll on schedule;
- Maintaining records of all expenses and reimbursements; and
- Monitoring the budget.

Information & Assistance (I&A)

- Provides information on opportunities and services available in a participant's community;
- Assesses problems and capacities of the participant;
- Links the participant to opportunities and services; and
- Is available for follow-up.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI) -Goods & Services

When a participant purchases goods and services, the FI can:

- Process and pay for invoices for goods and services as approved by the service plan; &
- Ensure the goods and services purchased fit within the participant's annual budget.

Fiscal Intermediary (FI) -LRI Oversight

Currently, Legally Responsible Individuals (LRI) are not allowed to be paid for providing services. If this changes, the Fiscal Intermediary could provide oversight to ensure integrity and look for conflicts of interest.

Fiscal Intermediary Example

You purchase new pants with a bank card. After you swipe, and sign, your part is done.

The card company is your fiscal intermediary, managing how money moves from your account to the store. They send details to your bank, make sure your account is charged correctly, subtract and pay fees, and send money to pay the store, all while keeping the transaction secure.

Contact Information (on last slide)

\*End of Slide Show Presentation

The DD Division submitted the Family Support Waiver draft to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) for their review on October 25, 2023. The Division of DD is hopeful that the FSW will be implemented in March 1, 2024, pending CMS approval.

NE DHHS DIVISION OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SYSTEM EVALUATION FOR LB376:

It is also important to note the intersection of another systems change effort in 2023. The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services contracted with CBIZ Optumas with Myers and Stauffer to perform an evaluation of Nebraska's developmental disability (DD) service system for Legislative Bill 376. The evaluation is focused on understanding how Nebraska can better serve individuals with a variety of disabilities and complex medical conditions and their families and includes a comprehensive evaluation of Nebraska's current service system.

The consultants were interested in learning more about the experiences of individuals with disabilities, family members, advocates, providers, and other members of the public who support these individuals. Outreach to recruit listening session participants was targeted towards people who

are new to the system, those on the Medicaid Aged and Disabled Waiver and waiting for or on the DD Waiver, people who have never provided feedback on services, or those with ideas on how to improve disability services in Nebraska.

In April, outreach through press releases and emails encouraged stakeholders to participate in a unique opportunity to provide input and feedback to the consultant team through listening sessions and email. 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.

The assessment includes an evaluation of Nebraska's Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Waivers, (Aged and Disabled Waiver, the Developmental Disabilities Waivers, and the Traumatic Brain Injury Waiver), as well as services provided through the Medicaid State Plan.

The evaluation has been completed and the final draft of the report is in the approval process. The final report will be submitted to the Governor, the DHHS, the chairperson of the Health and Human Services Committee of the NE Legislature, and the Clerk of the Legislature on or before December 31, 2023.

NCDD anticipates that recommendations will include increasing self-direction in all 1915 (c) waivers, which will address legally responsible individuals as providers. The report will likely reference feedback from court appointed guardians who would like the waivers to provide the flexibility for guardians to provide HCBS services. The Council and other advocates plan to reference this report and recommendations to advocate for continued changes and improvements within the HCBS and Medicaid services system.

## SECTION IV: STATE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS REPORT

### *Planned Goals*

#### *Goal 1: Employment*

##### *Section IV: A*

Area of Emphasis	Planned for this Goal	Areas Addressed
Quality Assurance	Yes	Yes
Employment	Yes	Yes
Formal and Informal Community Supports	Yes	Yes

Strategies	Planned for this Goal	Strategies Used
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Outreach	Yes	Yes
Training	Yes	Yes
Technical Assistance	Yes	Yes
Supporting and Educating Communities	Yes	Yes
Barrier Elimination	Yes	Yes
Systems Design and Redesign	Yes	Yes

Intermediaries and Collaborators	Planned for this Goal	Actual
University Center(s)	Yes	Yes
State DD Agency	Yes	Yes
Other Collaborators	Yes	Yes

<p><b>Goal Narrative</b></p> <p><b>NASP: INCLUSIVE ECONOMY FILM</b>  The Council provided funding to support the NE Association of Service Providers (NASP) disability educational film project, "Inclusive Economy," in partnership with NE Public Media. The film is divided into three, 10-minute segments: 1) encouraging NE employers to hire people with intellectual &amp; developmental disabilities (I/DD), 2) encouraging more Nebraskans with I/DD to seek competitive, integrated employment, &amp; 3) encouraging neurotypical Nebraskans to consider a lifelong career in I/DD supported employment service provision. This film was a great success this year &amp; will continue to be a great tool that can &amp; will be viewed on tv, online &amp; for training purposes. A lot of hard work was put into this, as many people &amp; organizations gave a helping hand in developing the film's outline &amp; script.</p> <p>NASP &amp; People First NE ensured that the identified participants with I/DD who were featured represented diverse backgrounds &amp; skills. NASP also had to recruit a variety of employers &amp; panelists who are subject matter experts (SME) on supported employment to showcase in this film. The SMEs explained benefits planning &amp; how to connect with employers &amp;/or potential employers. After they identified their experts, NASP focused on scheduling the studio &amp; field shoots featuring people with I/DD at their job sites as well as interviews with their employers. The result was a comprehensive, educational, enjoyable film that featured accurate information on employment opportunities &amp; supports for people with I/DD in NE. NE Public Media (NPM) prepared the project for public release. A permanent landing page was developed on both the NASP &amp; NPM websites. These websites are accessible &amp; include useful resources for future employers, employees, &amp; job coach staffing.</p> <p><b>DR. LISA MILLS: COMPREHENSIVE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES STUDY</b>  For the first two years of the new State Plan, the Council decided to focus efforts on addressing Employment's Objective A. To launch efforts in this area, in FFY22 &amp; FFY23 the Council contracted with national subject matter expert Dr. Lisa Mills to conduct a comprehensive study of supported employment outcomes &amp; services for people with I/DD in NE. The Council prioritized the study to learn from history, evaluate the current situation in NE, find avenues to demonstrate positive outcomes, look for untapped opportunities, recognize areas of consensus &amp; consider approaches to tackle barriers to employment for people with I/DD.</p>
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The Council's selection of an employment focused goal was based on the results from the Oct. 2020 Needs Assessment & the State Plan Comprehensive Review and Analysis (CRA). Employment for individuals with developmental disabilities (I/DD) was ranked the 3rd highest priority of the Needs Assessment. A total of 508 individuals completed one of the two versions of the DD Needs Assessment survey, and three focus groups were held with a total of 21 participants. The Needs Assessment gathered information related to employment such as job placement, vocational rehabilitation, integrated employment efforts, & employment policies.

As noted in the Council's State Plan, there was a need to work through current & recent past employment challenges to support CIE for individuals with I/DD. NE's employment challenges developed in recent history (2017-2019) when individuals were not allowed to receive any DD employment-related day waiver services (Prevocational, Supported Employment (SE) -Follow-Along, SE -Individual, or SE -Enclave) while receiving Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services. According to the state's interpretation of federal regulations, individuals could not be determined to be eligible for job coaching or employment supports until assessed through VR. To utilize the prevocational service through the HCBS waivers, an individual had to be deemed ineligible for services through VR. Since getting a VR assessment involved a long waitlist, individuals who would be eligible for one service or the other were not receiving an eligibility determination or the employment services they needed.

NE's employment challenge was heightened in 2017, when NE VR went into an "order of selection" on Dec. 11, 2017. NE VR leadership shared that due to issues with the state/federal match, NE VR was facing a situation where adequate resources were not available to meet the needs of all individuals requiring VR services, so the Order of Selection was initiated to address inadequate budget needs. Priority Group 1 included individuals w/severe physical or mental impairment resulting in a rating of very low in two or more functional areas. Functional areas included: mobility, communication, interpersonal skills, self-care, self-direction, work tolerance & work skills. This resulted in individuals with I/DD, who were wait listed onto NE's VR Order of Selection Priority Group One, not having the ability to access any prevocational or employment services on the HCBS DD Waiver. The issue was so complex that NE VR closed all three Priority groups in April 2018. This systemic issue created a gap between supported education programs & employment for many young adults when they reach the age of 21. It wasn't until early 2021 that NE VR opened Priority Group 1 & began removing individuals from the wait list. It took until April 2021 for Priority Group 1 to no longer have a wait list.

In 2018, the Council ED joined NASP's Employment Subcommittee, which began investigating employment issues (especially during the 2017-2019 timeframe) to present some possible solutions to address these issues. Of particular concern was the interpretation at that time that DDD took with regards to individuals with I/DD receiving SE supports & "the payer of last resort."

In July 2019 the Council provided funding to bring Dr. Lisa Mills to NE to train on "Employment Innovation - Best Practices for Contemporary, Integrated, & Competitive Employment with Individuals w/DD." The training was open to NASP members, NE VR leadership & staff, & DDD leadership & staff. NE VR sent top leadership representatives to the training, & DDD sent mid-managers. Dr. Mills' presentation was concise with the message that HCBS Waivers provide the flexibility for systems to work together to provide SE or prevocational supports to individuals with I/DD. After the training, NASP & other stakeholders struggled to learn if DDD would change their interpretation regarding federal regulations on SE. At that time, DDD leadership indicated that they were working w/CMS to explore a remedy to this situation. The Director of DDD noted her concerns that DDD did not have adequate funding, allocated by the Legislature, to provide HCBS DD employment waiver services.



DDD announced in Nov. 2019 that after receiving technical ass. from CMS, a DD waiver participant can request authorization of prevocational service to develop employable skills prior to his/her VR assessment. When a person is on the VR waitlist, prevocational service w/a DD provider may be authorized to maintain learned employable skills. A person must have a goal of attaining CIE in their individual support plan (ISP) with identified needs for employable skills to receive prevocational service. The ISP team will need to meet in-person to discuss the service, long-term goals, & habilitation before authorizing prevocational service. This announcement & policy change was a step in the right direction in addressing NE's employment challenges.

Dr. Mills' July 2019 speaking engagement, coupled with her April 2021 Value-Based Methodologies to Advance CIE: A Mix of Inspiring Examples from Across the Country report released w/the U.S. Dept. of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, & her other national SE experience, is why the Council sought her expertise to conduct the comprehensive SE outcomes study in FFY22 & FFY23.

NCDD signed & approved two contracts to improve Supported Employment in NE with Dr. Lisa Mills. The initial contract went from Oct.1, 2021, until Mar. 31, 2023. (A No-Cost extension was provided.) The report was the outcome from Mills' first contract. A 2nd contract was set up with Mills for the period of July 3, 2023, to May 31, 2024.

The title of Dr. Mills study is "Necessity or Luxury? Supporting Nebraskans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Join the Workforce and Contribute to Nebraskan's Economy." This report summarizes the methods and findings of a study undertaken to assess and better understand current employment outcomes for people with IDD in the State of NE. This study also included a focus on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the history of policy, practice and outcomes leading up to the current situation. Overall, the study was undertaken to identify strategic recommendations that the State of NE & other key stakeholders can consider for implementation to improve employment opportunities and outcomes for Nebraskans with IDD.

The 2nd contract supports Mills' efforts to assist the NE state partner agencies & stakeholders on determining an action plan after consideration of recommendations from the comprehensive report. Mills will provide consultation & technical assistance to the NE Divisions of Developmental Disabilities & Behavioral Health & NE Vocational Rehabilitation on agency-specific goals, issues & challenges, as well as on interactions between the agencies to advance CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with IDD & SMI. She will also provide consultation and TA to DD Network Partners & NASP related to their roles in addressing specific issues & challenges to advance CIE outcomes for people with IDD.

On Sept.20, 2023, multiple agencies across NE came together to host a Supported Employment Summit. The overarching theme of the summit was focused on working together to change the way NE does SE; with the primary goal to increase employment opportunities & outcomes for Nebraskans who can benefit from Supported Employment.

*Objective 1: By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.*

3. This objective is:	System Change
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:	<p>NASP Contract - The overall goal for the 'Inclusive Economy' film project was to educate &amp; increase participation in competitive, integrated employment for individuals with intellectual &amp; developmental disabilities (IDD) (for both employees &amp; employers). NASP had three target audiences: people with IDD &amp; their guardians, business owners/employers, &amp; potential job coaches. They worked with PFN to take over &amp; finalize the Inclusive Economy film. The goal of PFN's employment activities was to make employers aware of the opportunities to hire &amp; maintain successful employees who have disabilities. Overall, they were satisfied with the content &amp; quality of the video produced. This was more polished &amp; professional after working with the National Association of Service Providers (NASP). PFN is proud to promote this Employment Video in NE &amp; with the Regional Partners. A lot of experience was gained about what it takes to produce a video of this quality, &amp; if PFN was offered a chance at a "do-over" they would turn directly to professionals in the business &amp; not try to put together an amateur product. NASP has done a great job at collaborating with other agencies &amp; speaking with many self-advocates to focus on employment &amp; the importance of everyone getting the opportunity to work in the community. DR. LISA MILLS CONTRACT During FFY22 &amp; FFY23, NCDD contracted with national subject matter expert Dr. Lisa Mills to conduct a comprehensive study of supported employment outcomes &amp; services for people with intellectual &amp; developmental disabilities. Dr. Mills</p>
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shared her expertise & knowledge as a national consultant on Employment First who has worked with over 30 states, including Medicaid, VR, & Workforce agencies. Mills has expertise in Medicaid waivers, Customized Employment, & value/outcome-based reimbursement models for supported employment services. Recent historical information about some of the systemic issues related to supported employment (SE) for people with I/DD was noted in the employment goal section above, which also explains the Council's previous connection to Dr. Lisa Mills, who launched her work in December 2021. The report, *Necessity or Luxury? Supporting Nebraskans with Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities to Join the Workforce & Contribute to NE's Economy*, was published in February 2023, & shared with Council stakeholders & partners. The study was undertaken to identify strategic recommendations that the State of NE & other key stakeholders can consider for implementation to improve employment opportunities & outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. The report & Executive Summary addressed the methods & findings of the study which assessed & helped readers improve their understanding of the current state of SE outcomes for NE's I/DD population. The full report provided a comprehensive understanding of NE's history of supported employment policy, practice & outcomes. Report findings demonstrated the lack of access to supported employment services for Nebraskans with I/DD, which has contributed to the low labor force participation rates among people with I/DD as far back as 2010.

**ELEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION** - taken from Executive Summary of report 1. Develop a collaborative plan among all key partners to more strongly & intentionally promote, to employers & the general public, the value of individuals with I/DD as members of NE's workforce. 2. Stakeholders, w/ leadership from key state agencies & other organizations, should collectively seek the new Governor's involvement in promoting the value of individuals with I/DD as members of NE's workforce with NE's business & industry groups & employers. 3. Advance the State of NE as a model employer, by intentionally developing competitive integrated employment opportunities for people w/ disabilities including people with I/DD. 4. NE VR & DDD should update & expand their current memorandum of understanding (MOU). 5. Ensure uninhibited access to publicly funded Medicaid HCBS Waiver Supported Employment services for eligible individuals with I/DD, when the needed service(s) are not timely available through NE VR (or if a student is still in high

school, through special education services funded under IDEA). 6. Promote uninhibited, equitable access to publicly funded Vocational Rehabilitation Supported Employment Services for People with ID/DD. 7. Public funders of Supported Employment services should collaborate to ensure effective Supported Employment practices by implementing competency-based qualification &/or training expectations for staff delivering Supported Employment services. 8. Reach youth with I/DD early, focus on increasing competitive integrated employment (CIE) post-secondary outcomes in Individualized Educational Plans, & promote the use of peer mentors to seed the expectation of a working life in adulthood. 9. Identify available short-term funding that can be invested in the provider network & workforce which can support increased opportunities for competitive integrated employment for people with I/DD. 10. Engage key informants for this study in a one-day summit to discuss this study's findings & recommendations, & determine what consensus can be reached about how a collaborative initiative could move forward to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. 11. Maintain commitment to evolving the comprehensive strategy over time." \*End of Executive Summary recommendations

In late March 2023, NCDD hosted Mills onsite where she had the opportunity to present report outcomes & recommendations to key stakeholders, including hybrid presentations hosted by NCCD & NASP. In person meetings were also coordinated with Mills & the Council ED with top supported employment leaders from NE VR & the Division of Developmental Disabilities. To help keep momentum going, the DD Network Directors agreed to feature Dr. Lisa Mills as the keynote speaker at the annual Tri-Board meeting on June 9, 2023. Supported employment leaders from NE VR & the Division of DD were also invited to attend the Tri-Board event. Following the Tri-Board meeting, NCDD set up a second contract with Mills. This new contract includes consultation & technical assistance to the DHHS Divisions of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) & Behavioral Health (DBH), & NE VR on agency-specific goals, issues, & challenges, as well as interactions between the agencies to advance CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD & serious mental illness (SMI). The contract also includes virtual consultation hours for the DD Network Partners (NCDD, Disability Rights NE, & MMI's UCEDD) & the NE Association of Service Providers (NASP) about their roles in advancing CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. Contract funding also supported Dr. Mills to plan & assume lead facilitator

role in a one-day stakeholder summit held Sept. 20, 2023, to develop a comprehensive action plan to advance CIE employment outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD, autism, mental/behavioral health needs, & acquired brain injury. The Council Executive Director is also a committee member the supported employment (SE) subcommittee with NASP - the NE Association of Service Providers. Dr. Mills also joined this committee. The NASP SE Committee meets monthly for an hour. Current members include four dedicated supported employment providers, NE VR's Supported Employment Program Director, a representative from the DHHS Division of DD, & a parent community activist. NASP played a key supporting role in generating interest & recruiting DD supported employment providers to participate in the data collection process to support Dr. Mills' SE study. The NASP SE subcommittee also provided an avenue for the Council Director & the NE VR SE Program Director to coordinate communication & share preliminary report findings related to the Council's SE report & NE VR's supported employment rate study. In 2021, the Council ED, Kristen Larsen, was appointed to the AoD Disability Employment TA Center's (DETAC) Grantee Representative Work Group as an alternate member. In FFY23 Larsen learned that she is no longer an alternate member since she replaced someone who is no longer working for a DD Council. In June 2023 the ED learned that NE's Council was selected to participate in the AoD's DETAC's Peer e-Learning Community for small allotment State DD Councils focused on employment. The RISE e-Learning Community: Small Allotment State Councils & Employment, provided minimum allotment Councils with the opportunity to engage with Subject Matter Experts who have been successful in establishing & implementing initiatives to increase & enhance CIE outcomes for people with I/DD. Virtual classes took place on Wednesdays in June 2023. Participants learned from experts & one another by sharing creative strategies & talking through ideas to address challenges due to limited resources & other barriers to CIE outcomes for people with I/DD. The NE Council was allowed to extend an invitation to NCDD's employment partners to join Council staff on the Peer e-Learning Community. Invitations were sent to partners at NE VR, DHHS DD Divisions, & members from the SE NASP committee. Some of these individuals attended one or more of the RISE e-learning trainings, including the Director of NE VR, the Director of NASP, & representatives from the DD Division. NE has a lot of momentum occurring on supported employment, & this additional opportunity with DETAC

	proved helpful. --The Demographics and KPI's are only coming from the number of attendees from Dr. Lisa Mill's Employment Summit (96), and NASP's Inclusive Economy Film (38).
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
Advocacy agencies, employment services providers, and employers across the state will participate in the survey.	Yes
Research historical data and trends, and review key public systems policy and programs and the impact of federal legislation and regulations on key public systems in Nebraska.	Yes
Final report of data and data analysis to include a comprehensive set of strategies to revitalize Nebraska's employment support system for PWIDD.	Yes
NASP and People First of Nebraska will collaborate develop the Inclusive Economy film outline/script to feature comprehensive, educational, enjoyable, and accurate information on employment opportunities and supports for people with I/DD in Nebraska.	Yes
NASP and People First of Nebraska will collaborate with disability employment specialists in NE to highlight successful employment video featuring people with I/DD. Identify participants and ensure individuals with I/DD featured have diverse backgrounds and skills; ensure variety of employers; ensure panelists are subject matter experts.	Yes
Schedule studio and field shots. Studio shots will include subject matter experts who can explain benefits planning as well as how to connect with employers and potential employees. Field shots will include people with I/DD at their job sites as well as interviews with their employers.	Yes
Nebraska Public Media professionals will prepare 30-minute final project for public release.	Yes
Develop a permanent landing page on both NASP and Nebraska Public Media websites of the Inclusive Economy' video. The websites will be accessible and include useful resources for future employers, employees, and job coach staff.	Yes
Air the final film product on NPM multiple times. Special viewing at the DD Network June 9 Tri-Board meeting, and at a local theatre in Lincoln, NE on July 13, 2023.	Yes

10. The report should include the following:	(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the
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	<p>objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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NASP Contract - NASP collaborated with PFN, NE Public Media, NE DHHS, & other DD agencies to produce the Inclusive Economy video whose main audience are potential employers showing them the successful careers of Nebraskans w/disabilities in a variety of work settings. The video features several individuals' w/disabilities who have been successful in finding & keeping employment. This video was broadcast several times on public television, at the NE DD Network Tri-Board meeting, & the NE Employment Summit. It has also been shared via the PFN, Heartland Self Advocate Resource Network, & NE ASD team social media accounts. Breakout sessions at the PFN 2022 Convention focused on employment, future planning for getting a job & how to use PCP teams to help with the employment process, & how volunteer activities can help build job skills & experiences to help get a paying job. The video was also shown during the PFN membership meeting at the PFN 2023 Convention & at the 2023 SOAR Regional Conference. -There were many steps & people involved in making this film from start to finish. The first step was to identify subject matter experts to help guide the project. They invited interested providers from NASP to be part of the planning team. Three provider organizations volunteered. The next step was to identify individuals & their employers working w/those provider agencies who would be willing to be interviewed on camera. Based on who would participate, their planning team drafted an outline of the 30-minute program & started to develop the scripts. People First of NE, with the guidance of their self-advocates, developed the questions individuals with I/DD would be asked about their employment. NASP & NE Public Media developed the script for the in-studio segments. The questions & scripts were approved by the planning committee. They then scheduled & completed the film. All deliverables were met by June 30th, 2023. The finished film was available for online streaming July 1st, 2023 (1133 views at time of report). Air dates on NE Public Media television were during July 5th, 9th, 19th, & 23rd, 2023 (total view data unavailable). NASP held a free screening at the Mary Riepma Ross Theater on July 13th, 2023 (38 attendees). Scheduling was probably the most difficult part because they had so many players. Not only did they need to coordinate w/ individuals & find the best time to film while at work without interfering with their jobs, but they needed to ensure availability of the entire film crew at the same time. They also had a last-minute emergency for the studio shoot, as the Benefits Planning subject matter expert got into a motorcycle accident on his way to the studio. Luckily, the CEO of Region V Services agreed to fill in for his staff member for that segment & they were able to complete the shoot. DR. LISA MILLS CONTRACT On March 27 & 28, NCDD hosted Dr. Lisa Mills for an onsite visit to share the comprehensive study of supported employment (SE) outcomes & services report

outcomes w/key stakeholders. On March 27, the NE Consortium for Citizens w/Disabilities (NCCD) member organizations hosted Dr. Mills' hybrid summary presentation. Invitations were sent to all NCCD organization members & stakeholders, & all the NE State Senators. During the afternoon of March 28, NCDD worked w/NASP to host the same hybrid presentation for NASP provider agencies. On the afternoon of March 27, the Council ED arranged for Dr. Mills to meet in person w/NE VR & DHHS Division of DD SE leadership team members. Mills & the Council ED met w/the NE VR & DD Division staff separately, & then a joint discussion was held w/representatives from both groups. The following is from the final report's Executive Summary. "This report summarizes the methods & findings of a study undertaken to assess & better understand current employment outcomes for people w/intellectual & developmental disabilities (I/DD) in the State of NE. This study also included a focus on gaining a comprehensive understanding of the history of policy, practice & outcomes leading up to the current situation. Overall, the study was undertaken to identify strategic recommendations that the State of NE & other key stakeholders can consider for implementation to improve employment opportunities & outcomes for Nebraskans w/I/DD. When considering why the State of NE & key stakeholders for people w/I/DD should prioritize improving competitive integrated employment opportunities & outcomes at this time, the unprecedented labor shortage facing the State of NE & its business community cannot be ignored, w/scores of entry-level positions going unfilled or unreliably filled due to high turnover rates. The combination of record labor force participation & record unemployment has created the serious shortage of workers to grow the state economy further. The labor force shortage is fast becoming the 'single most important' issue facing NE. The lack of workers will slow economic growth according to Christopher Decker, an economist w/the Univ. of NE at Omaha. The shortage isn't limited to one industry, sector or level of worker. Businesses struggling realize 'there's many causes & there's going to have to be multiple solutions.' While there is no single solution to this incredible challenge to the state's economic growth goals, there is a clear need to embrace strategies that have not received serious consideration or investment in the past, which includes enabling people w/I/DD to become part of the NE workforce. People w/I/DD are considered to have some of the most significant impacts of disability, as compared to the broader population of individuals w/disabilities. For people with I/DD, access to Supported Employment (SE) services is typically considered essential to obtain & maintain competitive integrated employment (CIE). Indeed, SE was originally developed for this population. Thus, lack of access to these services &/or lack of utilization of these services can almost certainly be primary explanations for low labor force participation rates among people w/ I/DD. Looking back as far as 2010, evidence suggests SE services to support the participation of Nebraskans w/I/DD in CIE have been used in a very limited way by individuals w/I/DD. This low utilization appears to be the case even though, over the years, elements of SE could, under the Medicaid waivers, be authorized & provided in a variety of ways & under a # of service categories. Information gathered from key informants & through review of available public information led to identification of the primary barriers to significant expansion of SE services & in turn, CIE opportunities for Nebraskans w/I/DD. The following were identified as key barriers to the significant expansion of SE services for people w/I/DD: - The perception of people w/I/DD in the broader community & among Nebraskan employers - Expectations of people w/I/DD within publicly funded service systems that serve people w/I/DD - Lack of effective strategies in person-centered planning for individuals w/I/DD & their families/guardians to facilitate informed choice about CIE - No clear incentives but clear disincentives for Nebraskans w/I/DD to choose CIE - Historically restrictive policies governing the availability & provision of SE services w/some key restrictions still remaining - The blurry intersection of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) & Medicaid waivers in the provision of SE services to people w/I/DD - Implementation of SE services does not always follow best practices - Perceptions about the cost of SE & its lack of cost-effectiveness as a service option for people w/I/DD Each of these barriers is discussed in detail in this



report. Additionally, the results of data collection for individuals w/I/DD already working in CIE are presented & discussed. These results illustrate the outcomes of Supported Employment services. Analysis of the cost-effectiveness of SE services is also presented. Common assumptions about the level of job coaching individuals w/I/DD require to maintain CIE are compared to the results of data collected on just under 200 individuals w/I/DD currently working. These individuals collectively worked over 12,000 hours in the 8-week period for which data was collected during 2022. They received job coaching only 43.7% of the hours they worked. This translates into an average job coaching cost per hour of SE (an hour working in CIE instead of alternative services) that is less than half of the reimbursement rate typically paid for an hour of job coaching services. These promising outcomes are occurring even though the predominant reimbursement structure for job coaching services is fee-for-service, a payment methodology that incentivizes the opposite of what constitutes best practice in the delivery of SE services. Additionally, these outcomes are occurring despite the fact that, while the history of SE services in NE is not significantly dissimilar to other states, NE's history does not yet include a truly comprehensive, intentional & visible effort involving key partner state agencies & key stakeholder partners acting together on a comprehensive shared plan, using resources of all partners in a coordinated way. Where efforts like this are evident in other states, more progress has been made on increasing & sustaining CIE outcomes. NE has a significant opportunity at this particular point in history because of the positive relationships between leadership in the key state agencies, an unprecedented need & opportunity for individuals w/I/DD to join the general workforce, & the availability of SE services that, w/key changes to improve access, effectiveness, & to further improve cost-effectiveness, could deliver the improved outcomes desired. Please see Executive Summary report RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION provided in #7 above.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
The strategies and recommendations from the Employment and Supported Employment Outcomes Study provide the foundation for training people with I/DD and their families.	Yes
Policymakers will have the data to identify how to increase opportunities for competitive integrated employment for PWIDD.	Yes
Final report will reflect that competitive, integrated, and meaningful employment opportunities will be improved through braiding of services and robust partnerships between the Division of Developmental Disabilities and Nebraska VR.	Yes
Inclusive Economy video will increase awareness on the benefits of supporting competitive, integrated employment and how doing so	Yes

improves the quality of life for people with I/DD. Video will address a solution to Nebraska's low unemployment rates and encourage employers to explore this relatively untapped workforce found in the I/DD community.	
Film will bring awareness to future employers on the benefits of hiring people with I/DD, and how CIE improves the quality of life for people with I/DD.	Yes
Inclusive Economy film will be used as a recruitment tool for supported employment staff to support people with I/DD, with an emphasis on job coaching and other supported employment specializations.	Yes
Inclusive Economy video and segments of video will be used for ongoing training tool for provider trainees, number of new employers, and new individuals with I/DD who seek CIE.	Yes

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:

NASP had a great vision for how this project ends. After working with PFN and many others, the video is available on social media and promoted within the SABE, AUCD, HRSARC, and other national, regional, and state/local disability organizations. The video & webpage link will remain on the home page of the PFN website. As PFN travels to their chapters across the state, they will show the video & encourage & assist chapters to take on a project of contacting employers & professional organizations in their communities to encourage them to view the video, invite people first members to their organizations, & consider hiring more people w/disabilities. NASP partnered w/NE Public Media on this project, and they allowed the Inclusive Economy film to remain live on their website in perpetuity. They will also run the program during July (Disability Pride Month) and October (Disability Employment Awareness Month) each year. They can share the link to the film and watch it anytime as well. The NASP video landing page also includes links to the participating organizations & other relevant resources. DR. LISA MILLS CONTRACT On May 12, the Council ED lead a conversation with NE VR & DDD leadership on action steps related to the Mills employment report, especially to gain consensus on hosting a full day Employment Summit. Discussion focused on NCDD setting up a 2nd contract w/Mills to facilitate conversations between NE VR & DDD before & at a full-day employment summit. SE partners agreed that it would be helpful to have Mills facilitate a conversation before the employment summit to discuss pressing items such as the new NE VR SE payment model launching July 1. On June 30 the Council ED shared w/the NE VR & DDD SE leadership team that a 2nd contract for the period of July 3, 2023, to May 31, 2024, w/Dr. Mills was signed & approved. Contract deliverable details were shared including virtual consultation & TA hours to the DHHS Divisions of DD & Behavioral Health, & to NE VR on agency-specific goals, issues, & challenges, as well as interactions

between the agencies to advance CIE outcomes for Nebraskans w/ I/DD & serious mental illness ("SMI"). The 2nd contract also includes virtual consultation hours for key employment stakeholders, including 30 hours for the DD Network Partners (NCDD, DRN, MMI UCEDD) & an additional 30 hrs for the NE Association of Service Providers related to their roles in advancing CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. The 2nd contract also backed one of the report's key recommendations to support Dr. Mills leadership role in helping Council staff plan & assume lead facilitator role in a one-day stakeholder summit. The goal of the summit would be to develop a comprehensive action plan to advance CIE outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. Mills leveraged influence for all key stakeholders (agencies, DD Network Partners, & NASP) to agree to sponsor the event. Each entity assumed leadership roles & commitment to set the foundation for a successful event. The SE Summit was held on Sept. 20 in Lincoln & brought 96 SE leaders together from NE VR, DHHS DDD & DBH, NASP, the DD Network partners, over 45 agency reps or independent contractors who provide SE supports to people with I/DD, ABI, autism, & Behavioral Health needs, & other key stakeholders. The day-long event ran from 8:30 am until 4pm. NCDD staff made all the logistical arrangements for the summit. Four national SMEs facilitated break-out rooms during the summit w/approximately 25 people at each session. Dr. Mills will be referencing scribe notes taken in the four break out rooms to develop the comprehensive action plan. In addition to planning & facilitating the one-day stakeholder summit & virtual consultation hours, Dr. Mills is providing NCDD 5 bi-monthly progress reports & invoices throughout the 2nd contract period to include summaries of planning & consultations provided during the contract cycle. NCDD is also requesting a draft comprehensive action plan after the employment summit, & a final report summarizing consultation provided & results of the summit. Agencies are seeking consultation & guidance separately as well as collectively to make advancements in improving CIE for Nebraskans with I/DD & SMI. The 2nd contract provides all consulting partners the flexibility to coordinate their efforts in pushing up the SE initiative. NCDD hopes that this 2nd contract w/Mills will provide each agency w/the flexibility to seek consultation & guidance separately as well as collectively to make advancements in improving CIE for Nebraskans with I/DD & SMI. It provides an opportunity for all key players to coordinate SE efforts. To promote SE for Nebraskans with I/DD & to resolve lack of access to SE services, NE stakeholders, key partners, & NCDD could address SE issues under Medicaid waiver services in a variety of ways & other service categories. NE's history has not yet included a truly comprehensive, intentional, & visible effort involving key partner state agencies & stakeholder partners acting together on a comprehensive shared plan, using resources of all partners in a coordinated way. Such efforts evidently in other states make more progress on sustainable supported integrated employment outcomes. Work completed by Dr. Mills has revealed barriers to CIE, as identified from info gathered from stakeholders and the public. The initial report summarized a study undertaken to assess & better understand current employment outcomes for people with I/DD in the State of NE. Data collection efforts were conducted to measure the cost-effectiveness of current SE services in NE. Mills and her team collected data during two sample 4-week periods in the spring of 2022. With assistance from NASP, DDD, and NE VR, Mills recruited SE service providers to report data for individuals w/IDD or autism working in CIE as defined in WIOA. Seven provider organizations participate. Data was reported on 234 distinct individuals working in 252 unique jobs. 84% of these jobs were held by individuals eligible for or enrolled in one of the DDD Medicaid Waivers, with ISP not indicating constant supervision required. 194 supported employees with IDD worked a total of over 12,000 hours during the 8-week reporting period. On average, individuals received job coaching 43.7% of the time they worked. Cost of an individual spending an hour working in individualized CIE averaged \$25.84. Based on Medicaid Waiver Supported Employment-Individual Rate (Effective 7/1/22) of \$59.12/hour of service. So, data collection demonstrated that technically it only cost the State half of the reimbursement rate usually paid for an hour of job coaching rate. Average of 56.3% fading of job coaching achieved: -

Through service delivery by staff who have no specific training requirements focused on evidence-based SE service delivery; and - With service delivery payment structure that has minimal if any incentive for providers to successfully fade job coaching Mills asked, "What could be possible if job coaches had training on evidence-based practices & if the payment structure incentivized & rewarded providers for reducing unnecessary provision of job coaching?" Mills stressed the unintentional consequences when the State adopts a fee-for-service SE payment model. The paradox when paying by hour of service is that the more capable an organization, the less hours they need to deliver a service. The less hours of service delivered - the less billable hours. The more capable organization receives less funding as a result of being more capable. Mills challenged NE to change the SE fee for service payment structure to incentivize job coach fading to reward the SE providers who are more capable and successful. According to Mills, promising outcomes have not occurred in NE given the fact that the reimbursement structure for job coaching services does not incentivize what constitutes best practice for SE services. However, Mills stated that NE has a significant opportunity at this particular point in history because: - The positive relationships between leadership and staff in key state agencies. - An unprecedented need and opportunity for individuals with IDD to join the general workforce. - The availability of SE services that, with key changes to improve access, effectiveness & cost effectiveness, could deliver the improved outcomes desired. Mills strongly recommends encouraging people with IDD to consider and pursue work. She asked: Are we doing more than infrequently asking a few questions? Are we effectively involving families/guardians, if present? Is the opportunity to consider working being offered in a way people can understand what's being offered? Are we supporting truly informed choice? Are we actively trying to dispel myths? Have we set goals to increase interest? One significant difference is NE's history does not yet include a truly comprehensive, intentional, and visible effort involving key state agencies and key stakeholder partners acting together on a comprehensive shared plan, using resources of all partners in a coordinated way. Mills resolutely proposes that steps be taken to continue the momentum in NE to explore & implement changes to improve CIE for people w/IDD in NE. Her key recommendations in the final report will serve as a roadmap to guide all SE partners as we move forward to ultimately achieve overall positive outcomes for the Council's employment State Plan goal. NCDD is hopeful that the outcome from the final report and the Supported Employment Summit will lead to improvements and/or innovations in HCBS waiver services, and/or possible actions for NE to finally become an Employment First state. The biggest take away from the SE Summit is that all players are committed to collaborating so that we are all on the same path to improve CIE in NE. NCDD looks forward to reviewing and sharing the comprehensive action plan in the coming months.

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

NASP Contract - One unexpected outcome was how far the film has reached - NASP had a provider in Minnesota reach out to say how much they enjoyed the vignettes of people at work. The Mary Riepma Ross Theatre was kind enough to show the film for free. It was so fun to have all the participants come in-person and watch themselves on the 'big screen' with popcorn & snacks just like a real movie. You could feel how proud everyone was of their performance & the positive feedback they received. Poo Patrol, the main business focus of the self-employment segment, was able to share their vignette at a national conference. One of the employers featured was Country Sliced Ham and Catering, she reported that people came in and specifically mentioned seeing them on NE Public

Media, so it increased traffic flow to their business. Also, NASP agencies can show new hires the film, as training material. People w/disabilities were very eager to be interviewed & to share their stories about what working in competitive employment means to them. They are proud to be recognized for their years of work. One feeling that they all share is the satisfaction they get in not only having meaningful work, but they also talk about "having someplace to be" and "making new friends with the people {they} work with". Another source for satisfaction & a feeling of independence is that they are able to earn their own money from real work. The recording process itself generated some unexpected benefits. Two interviewees reported that their co-workers were interested in the video project and that they have discussed the benefits they've seen by having a co-worker with a disability. Employers have also been very positive about their experiences. During and after interviews, employers have shared some of their ongoing questions. Most are interested in recruiting more people w/disabilities, but don't know where to go to access that worker pool or what support might be available to employers to train disabled employees. They understand that there are often hours and earning limits. One employer was very frustrated that they couldn't give their disabled employee more shifts, a pay raise, or a bonus for good work. The response to the video has been very positive. Individuals at viewings have commented about the info provided about earning a wage without losing vital benefits as information they did not know. Individuals are also often impressed by the interviewee who runs his own business and employs other people with disabilities. Along with the individuals whose interviews appear in the video, many photographs of people w/disabilities are featured in the background of the intro and credits, which further illustrates the successes of hiring people w/disabilities. DR. LISA MILLS CONTRACT Partner organizations said they were pleased with the employment initiative, especially the SE Summit. NCDD is fortunate that we have already established strong partnerships in NE with NE VR, NE DHHS Division of DD & Division of Behavioral Health, NASP, the DD Network partners, over 45 agency reps or independent contractors who provide SE supports to people with IDD, ABI, autism, and Behavioral Health needs, The Arc of NE, People First of NE, and other stakeholders. These partnerships made the SE Summit possible. DHHS Director of DDD & interim director of DBH, brought this important issue to the attention of the Governor's administration, & coordinated opening remarks at the SE Summit from the Lt. Governor, Joe Kelly, since Governor Jim Pillen was not available. Kenny Zoeller from Governor Pillen's Policy Research Office also attended the beginning of the event & expressed a desire to learn more about how NE can move forward to improve CIE for people w/disabilities. The Lt. Governor applauded NCDD's efforts, especially as it fits one of the Governor's aspirations for NE. He promised to carry the positive momentum he saw on states divisions, key stakeholders, & partners. Additionally, one State Senator asked if her staff aide could attend the event to learn more about improving SE & to explore possible legislative bills supporting this effort, such as an Employment First initiative. NCDD plans to follow up with the Governor's office and Senator Lynn Walz to explore further coordinated efforts at the executive & legislative branches of government. NCDD was also able to leverage & coordinate resources to bring top SMEs in the field of SE to the summit. Dr. Mills was joined by three other national experts to help facilitate the breakout sessions. This included Jeannine Plavlak, President, & CEO of NEBAWorks, & SME with NEON (National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network), which is currently providing TA to the NASP organization. Sandy Langfitt Reese with the ISP Employment Center, who has been providing the DHHS Division of Behavioral Health technical assistance this past year. The Council ED also arranged to bring Dr. Tracy Rackensperger from the Univ. of Georgia UCEDD, who is a SME with AoD's DETAC. NCDD submitted an official technical assistance request with AoD's DETAC to support Dr. Rackensperger's time at the summit. Within the request, the ED noted that NCDD encouraged our SE partners to join us in the DETAC RISE Learning Community and indicated that her TA request was simply an extension to include DETAC in NE's evolving systems change endeavor. DETAC approved the request. Dr. Tracy Rackensperger's keynote presentation at the

beginning of the NE SE Summit set the tone for the work accomplished throughout the day. Her presentation, "Our Success Begins with High Expectations: A Message to Prepare Everyone for Today's Breakout Sessions" was delivered to attendees. Her presentation charged the group to move beyond stereotypical perceptions & low expectations of individuals w/disabilities, to a philosophy that sees them as capable & equal members of a diverse global employed community. She challenged us to move beyond seeing SE as "a nice thing to do" to a matter of justice & human rights, providing dignity & self-worth to people w/disabilities. She stressed that SE providers and leaders should not define people by their disability, but to focus on their skills, talents, & abilities, & to look for opportunities to provide necessary resources & accommodations so they can participate fully in society. When perceptions of SE shift from charity to equality, workplaces become more inclusive, benefiting all of society. Dr. Tracy shared her lived experience as a person who experiences a disability who enjoys an independent life, is competitively employed, & has social valued roles in her community. Dr. Tracy has overcome rigid requirements & flawed thinking of incompetence to reach her goals, & this should be true for all people w/disabilities. Dr. Tracy also served as one of four national subject matter experts facilitating a break-out rooms during the summit with approximately 25 people at each session. The intent was for SE Summit attendees to collaborate & work during these breakout sessions to address preassigned questions that Dr. Mills developed. Each breakout room had a scribe or notetaker, who provided Mills typed up discussion notes from each session. Mills will reference these notes to develop a comprehensive action plan for NE SE agency leaders & key stakeholders to implement to improve SE & CIE outcomes for people with IDD. The Council suspects that SE Summit outcomes will lead to improvements &/or innovations in HCBS waiver services, such as a new service that allows benefits planning to individuals & their families, a new service for career exploration, & the use of co-worker job coach supports. NE might also finally become an Employment First state, especially with the interest that the new Governor's administration & Senator Walz's office is taking in SE. The biggest take away is that we are all committed to collaborating so that we are all on the same path to improve CIE in NE. Dr. Mills' final report has already leveraged a systemic impact on NE VR milestone payments. In Nov. 2021, NE VR launched a rate study to revise SE rates. NE VR's SE Program Director reached out to the Council ED in Nov. 2021 to coordinate efforts to share info w/ the Council's SE comprehensive study & NE VR's rate study & changes designed to improve SE services. We agreed to a concerted effort to advance employment opportunities & supports for people w/disabilities. NE VR collaborated with the PCG and Nebraska VR's SE providers to complete a cost methodology study of SE services. The aim of the study was to develop statewide service rates for supported employment. NE VR identified needed upgrades to the program to enhance and SE outcomes for Nebraskans w/disabilities. NE VR appreciated the participation of many people who provided input to the process including SE providers, NE VR staff, NE DHHS partners, & other stakeholders across the state. In a letter dated 9/13/22, NE VR shared that after careful consideration, they decided to postpone the SE rates & other program changes NE VR had originally planned to implement Jan. 1, 2023. This postponement allowed NE VR to: 1) obtain & consider results from a separate SE study (Dr. Lisa Mills) being conducted with funding from NCDD, and 2) work with NE's VR's DHHS partners, the Divisions of DD & Behavioral Health, to ensure continuity & consistency with SE activities of those programs, especially extended services provided after NE VR services are complete, & build in training & program quality standards to support efforts to secure employment outcomes for those who receive SE. The letter indicated that the SE milestone payments will continue to be paid through 6/30/23, with implementation of revised rates & program structure planned for 7/1/23. The changes included rate methodology revisions based on the PCG study & recommendations from Dr. Mills for performance incentives & job coach fading.

Section IV: B

Individual & Family Advocacy Performance Measures

Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	#	%
White alone	0	0%
Black or African American alone	0	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino	0	0%
Asian alone	0	0%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0%
Two or more races and Race unknown	0	0%
Gender	#	%
Male	53	39.55%
Female	81	60.45%
Other	0	0%
Category	#	%
Individual with DD	20	62.50%
Family Member	12	37.50%
Geographical	#	%
Urban	0	0%
Rural	0	0%

I. Output Measures

Objective	Performance Measure: IFA 1.1 People with DD who participated in activities	Performance Measure: IFA 1.2 Family members
By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.	-1	-1
Total # of Output Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

II. Outcome Measures

Performance Measures	Percent (%)
IFA 2.1 Percent of people with DD	2
IFA 2.2 Percent of family members who increased advocacy	1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are better able to say what they want/say what is important to them.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.	-1	-1
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are participating in advocacy activities.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.	-1	-1
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are on cross disability coalitions, policy boards, advisory boards, governing bodies and/or serving in leadership positions.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.	-1	-1
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

## II. Outcome Measures

Satisfied	Percent (%)
IFA 3 The percent of people satisfied with a project activity	-1
IFA 3.1 Percent of people with DD satisfied with activity	-1
IFA 3.2 Percent of family members satisfied with activity	-1



*Section IV: C*

Systems Change Performance Measures

SC 1: Output Measures

Objective	
By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	2
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	2
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	2
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	134
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	1

Systems Change SC 2: Outcome Measures

Outcome Measures	Number (#)
SC 2.1 - Efforts that led to improvements	2
SC 2.2 - Efforts that were implemented	2

III. Sub-Outcome Measures

Objective	Number (#)
By 2026, increase awareness, knowledge, and identify necessary system changes to remove barriers to competitive, integrated employment at a living wage for individuals with I/DD.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	-1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	1
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	1

*Goal 2: Informal and Formal Supports*

*Section IV: A*

Area of Emphasis	Planned for this Goal	Areas Addressed
Quality Assurance	Yes	Yes
Education and Early Intervention	Yes	Yes
Health	Yes	Yes
Employment	Yes	Yes
Formal and Informal Community Supports	Yes	Yes

Strategies	Planned for this Goal	Strategies Used
Outreach	Yes	Yes
Training	Yes	Yes
Technical Assistance	Yes	Yes
Supporting and Educating Communities	Yes	Yes
Interagency Collaboration and Coordination	Yes	Yes
Coordination with Related Councils, Committees and Programs	Yes	Yes

Intermediaries and Collaborators	Planned for this Goal	Actual
State DD Agency	Yes	Yes
Other Collaborators	Yes	Yes

Goal Narrative
<p>--UNO: Project FEET (Family-Engaged Educational Training) - The goals of this project are to (1) increase family knowledge about special education and skills in partnering with school professionals and (2) increase school professionals' knowledge and skills in engaging diverse families in the special education process. Faculty from UNO on the project partnered with the Munroe-Meyer Institute's (MMI's) Family Care Enhancement Project (FCEP) and the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), the Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center of Nebraska, along with local families and developed the family-engaged training curriculum to use in college courses taken by school professionals. They used the term school professionals throughout to include student candidates enrolled in undergraduate and graduate special education, applied behavior analysis, and school psychology programs. This curriculum included reciprocal partnerships between school professionals and families.</p> <p>The school professionals met with families approximately 4 times throughout the semester to learn about the family's story/learn about the family's culture and values, share information about the special education process, discuss ways to be an active part of their child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and identify community resources to support the family. The meetings and materials were made accessible to families, including access to interpreter and translation services. Development of materials in diverse languages proved useful for program sustainability and allow for more provided resources to diverse families. Between meetings with the families, the school professionals learned effective strategies for engaging and supporting families of children receiving special education services, including children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and pointers for working with interpreters and family liaisons. Local services and support organizations also provided information to the families and school professionals. The proposed impact of this program enhanced collaboration in practice between families and school professionals, which is likely to lead to improved child outcomes.</p> <p>--Easterseals Nebraska (ESN): The Opportunity App - This project plan was to enhance Informal and Formal Supports for individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals through a user-friendly</p>

app, providing a rich "hub" for information and resources. The Opportunity App grew out of Easterseals Nebraska's (ESN) work with Nebraskans who were often unaware of potentially life-changing resources that were available to them. To address gaps in access to information, ESN created an app that can be personalized to help individuals, families, and professionals locate, store, and share information to support individuals' inclusion and success in employment, education, recreation, and life in general. The Opportunity App builds on the power of accessible information regarding topics such as waivers, natural supports, person-centered planning, and assistive technology.

This project supported the launch and implementation of the app, including activities such as a contest to name the app and the development and publication of content for social media, print materials, email list serves, e-newsletters, video, and presentations, designed to reach and inform 2,000 Nebraskans about the app. This project would also enable the training of App Ambassadors who are equipped to educate others about the app and support others in its active use. They also added a chat function to the app, providing an additional layer of user support. Plans are developed and being implemented to sustain the app, as well as to continue to develop app enhancements, such as access in languages other than English. At the end of the one-year project period, a minimum of 400 individuals with disabilities, family members, and professionals will be actively engaged with The Opportunity App.

--ATP (Assistive Technology Partnership): Parent and Educator Training - Knowledge of assistive technology devices and services is varied among students, families, educators, related service providers and administrators. This project created three high-quality online modules that focus on aspects of assistive technology devices and the services provided. The modules that ATP created have been using an Articulate Storyline. These modules are interactive and are multimodal, allowing learners to engage with the content in different ways like reading, watching, and listening. Then learners can check their understanding and go at their own pace. Specifically, this project focuses on the development and dissemination of the modules throughout the projects 4 phases.

The first phase is their module content creation. These outlines were shared with a DDC and PTI representative, along with other stakeholders for their valued feedback. This information was put into Storyboard features and housed within Canvas, the Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE) system where learners can create a free account, access the modules, track their progress, and receive a certification of completion. The second phase is translation, where the drafted modules will be translated into one other language besides English. The third phase is ready status, where they finalize the Canvas system, so it is accessible for public consumption. The fourth and last phase is deployment. These modules are promoted in conjunction with the key stakeholder groups. After these are made public, the learners can complete their modules and continue to give their own feedback to ATP for even better use of these modules in the future.

--PTI (Parent Training and Information) NE: Transitioning Youth to Adult Services - This project with PTI will update, refocus, and improve all PTI Nebraska events, trainings, and webinars for the families of youth and young adults. These trainings, materials and resources are refocused on Transition, Along the Way materials and Person-Centered-Planning Information. PTI will update materials in Spanish and other languages as needed. Also presented to a minimum of 75 individuals with a developmental disability, a minimum of 100 additional family members or caretakers who support them, and a minimum of 50 professionals and caseworkers in the area of Transition, each year. PTI collaborated with all of their partners to present Transition to Adulthood information to over 2,000 families they serve each year. Every family and individual are presented with an overview of person-centered-

planning thinking and its importance, as they began to contemplate the Transition to Adulthood and what it meant for their loved one's ability to live independently.

The goal of PTI's Transition planning mission is to keep supporting participants to be the center of planning their own supports and goals. States that have successfully implemented person-centered-planning have been able to significantly increase participant and family satisfaction with many transition-based services. The target audiences of this project are unique and presents challenges and opportunities. Nebraska has fallen behind in providing similar services that are being implemented in other states including self-determination, self-directed services, state provided services, student-led IEP's, peer mentoring, supported decision-making, and competitive integrated employment. These are all key items in a successful Transition Plan. PTI Nebraska, has the opportunity, to use PCP to greatly improve service recipient's lives along with their families, by placing this thinking at the forefront of every contact made through PTI Nebraska. Successful PCP places the service recipient at the center of the planning process, often leading it, with supports as necessary provided by a trained Service Coordinator, teacher, student, or parent acting as a skilled facilitator of the meeting. It requires all the involved parties to empower the individual, to help them reach for and hopefully obtain dreams. It requires enormous and sustained effort, but it provides tremendous benefits to all parties involved, not just the service recipient.

*Objective 1: By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.*

3. This objective is:	Individual & Family Advocacy
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:

--UNO Subaward -The University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) received subaward funding from The Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCDD) to achieve Goal 2, Objective 1 (A). To achieve this goal, UNO established an advisory board in partnership with individuals from the Munroe-Meyer Institute's (MMI's) Family Care Enhancement Project (FCEP) and University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center of Nebraska, Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, Learning Community of North Omaha, along with local families and school professionals. The advisory board provided insights on how to develop a family-engaged educational training curriculum to be used for college courses taken by school professionals including student undergraduate and graduate students on special education, applied behavior analysis, and school psychology programs. UNO piloted course curriculum components in Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 totaling six training modules with interactive components for students to complete and for reciprocal partnership-based activities for school professionals and families to do together. The interactive components included reflections engagement, building one's own toolkit, responds to case scenarios, and participation in in-class activities. Partnership-based activity instructors selected from a family-engagement panel includes individualized family discussions; three-part series for understanding family perspective, IEP meetings preparation, resources connection; and a two-part series for supporting home-learning. UNO interviewed support organizations to increase awareness of resources available in the community. The advisory board reviewed the modules, feedback was used to refine materials. Families and school professionals reported satisfaction with the program and increased advocacy. UNO reported that the program enhanced and would keep enhancing practical collaborations between families and school professionals, leading to improved child outcomes. A worthy mention of the project is that a member of the advisory board who is a Special Education Program Facilitator in a local school district requested to share the Project FEET Curriculum with school teams that are working on family engagement initiatives. She believed the content would be useful for guiding efforts. UNO shared the materials after being refined expressing the need to support school teams within the community. --UNO Key Performance Measures were collected on some Demographics (3-white alone/9-mixed) and rural/urban areas (1-rural/11-urban). IFA 1.2-12, IFA 1.3-67, IFA 2.2B-3, IFA 2.3FAM-5, IFA 2.5FAM-10, IFA3.2-

100% for 6 respondents. -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B. --ESN Subaward - ESN created an app that will be continuously updated & personalized to help individuals, families, & professionals locate, store, & share information to support individuals' inclusion & success in employment, education, recreation, & life in general. The app builds on the power of ready access to information on topics such as waivers, natural supports, person-centered planning, and assistive technology. The app is considered a promising practice & supportive of potential systems change work, by evolving into the "go-to" source of information & resources (I/R) for Nebraskans with disabilities, family members, caregivers, service providers, and employers. -The 1st year project period ended with, more than 800 individuals with disabilities, family members, & professionals had been directly informed about the app via consultations, group presentations, emails, social media, & regional radio. App "events" occurring per quarter ranged from 2,000 to nearly 3,500. ESN subaward for the Opportunity Hub app helped the project team share the app's potential with others & secure additional funding for continued app operation and enhancements. ESN team has been committed to continued evolution & adoption of the App as best practice & a "go to" source of reliable information, improving access, equity, opportunity, inclusion, & fulfillment for Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities. -ESN reported no Demographics but had some Key Performance Measures. IFA 1.2-210, SC 1.3.1-2, SC 1.3.2-2, SC 1.5-1, SC 2.1.4-2 -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B. --ATP Contract - This project aimed to create three high-quality online modules that focused on aspects of assistive technology devices and services. Receiving the knowledge of assistive technology devices and services is varied among students, families, educators, related service providers and administrators. This is why ATP wanted to do this project titled: Parent and Educator Training. These three modules that were created

	will be an interactive and multimodal tool allowing learners to engage with the content in different ways like reading, watching, and listening, to check their understanding, and be able to go at their own pace. Specifically, this proposal focused on the development and dissemination of the three modules. -ATP has no Demographics or IFA to report on for this PPR season, this project did not start until after March 2023 and has been in their creating and development stages.
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
Establish an advisory board for Project FEET consisting of family members of individuals with I/DD, individuals with I/DD, and professionals. Target of 10 individuals (at least 6 being family members of or individuals with I/DD).	Yes
Develop Family Engaged Educational Training (FEET) Curriculum and training videos based on evidence-based practices and advisory board input. Establish collaborative partnerships with families to enrich training.	Yes
Invite diverse family members to participate in FEET Project. UNO will coordinate with the interpreters and translators to create resources and opportunities for families who speak diverse languages to participate.	Yes
Implement FEET curriculum in 3 courses in collaboration with family partners during the Spring 2023 semester at UNO	Yes
Project FEET - Approximately 50 undergraduate and graduate students and 25 family members of children with I/DD will participate in the curriculum.	Yes
The Opportunity App can be personalized to help individuals, families, and professionals locate, store, and share information to support individuals' inclusion and success in employment, education, recreation, and life in general.	Yes
ESN will develop an outreach and awareness strategy, and create resources for the new information app.	Yes
ESN will host an App name/branding content about app provided via website, social media and print materials, slide decks, and video.	Yes
ESN will develop a new chat function within the Opportunity App. ESN will pilot and implement the chat function of the app, providing an additional layer of user support. .	Yes
ESN will implement statewide strategy for awareness of and engagement with the app, including presentations, email	Yes

listservs, e-newsletters, video and social media, designed to reach and inform 2,000 Nebraskans about the app. users to promote the app and/or support others' use.	
ESN will train 20 App Ambassadors who will be equipped to promote the app and/or support others' use.	NO

10. The report should include the following:	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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--UNO Subaward - UNO established an advisory board that includes 13 individuals with diverse backgrounds speaking diverse languages like English, Spanish, Swahili. They ranged in different levels from infants through young adults including parents of children with disabilities, teachers, paraeducators, and professional representatives who work with families of children with disabilities through local organizations such as Munroe-Meyer Institute, Parent Training and Information Center of Nebraska, Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, and Learning Community North Omaha. Eleven (11) individuals participated throughout the full grant period. The board members provided insights on the development and refinement of the Family-Engaged Educational Training (FEET) curriculum. The curriculum content that was developed from evidence-based practices and feedback received from the advisory board, created a curriculum that is true to parents' experiences. This allowed school professionals to send their recommendations in support of diverse families. The curriculum includes: an Instructor Guide; six Modules that are connected to the National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement Competencies for Family-Facing Professionals and based on advisory board feedback; Case Scenarios; a School Professionals Toolkit; and also, Family Handouts. The curriculum included six (6) training modules with interactive components for students to complete and reciprocal partnership-based activities for school professionals and families to do together. These interactive components got the group engaging in reflections, building their own toolkit, responding to case scenarios, and participating with the in-class activities. The partnership-based activities instructors had options to select from and/or include the (a) family-engagement panel; (b) individualized family discussions; (c) three-part series for understanding family perspective, preparing for IEP meetings, and connecting with resources; and (d) two-part series for supporting home-learning. The UNO project team interviewed provider organizations to increase awareness of



resources available in the community. The advisory board reviewed the modules, and their feedback was used to refine the materials. The curriculum components were piloted during the Spring 2023 and Fall 2023 Semesters. UNO Board members found the materials very beneficial as valuable topics were addressed that encouraged family engagement in special education. The project team revised the training curriculum based on advisory committee feedback, such as, ways to enhance the content and design. Board members liked how the modules were organized, how the pre-reflection activities helped students see themselves in different situations, quality videos that break-up the content, and the visuals e.g., Boston Care Map that was helpful in communicating the content. Surveys were sent out and data was collected. The videos highlighted the parent perspective on some topics with integrated quotes from the advisory board members to share a family voice in the modules. A barrier for the UNO project team was the start date being delayed & was not able to translate materials into additional languages. This was from UNO Administration & limited capacity from the NE Council. The reduced time frame for activities led to insufficient time between completion of the materials & the grant period end date. UNO coordinated with the Service-Learning Academy for future community engagement projects & plan to continue partnership with these organizations to share information about Project FEET opportunities for families to participate each year & present information in courses about their organizations. Recruiting families through local organizations for Fall 2023 undergraduate course faced challenges. Registration flyers were sent to organizations in NE. Over 40 families filled out the registration form with many from other states. Individuals from other states who did not meet criteria for continued involvement were given & informed about resources in their states with individualized consultation to assist connect with local resources. Family participants was lower than expected, UNO refined the recruitment process to better connect & screen families for participation that led to positive experiences of families with school professionals. UNO realized that pre-service school professionals often have limited understanding of family engagement & strategies to effectively engage families. --ESN- Just as it is now common practice to check one's phone for the time, ESN envisioned the incorporation of the app into the day-to-day lives of individuals & day-to-day operations of inclusive organizations. ESN developed framework & initial content for a resource app designed to empower self-determination & enable informed choices for individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities, their families, & providers. ESN kick-started a pilot of their resource app that was in development, supporting a lean model to secure user feedback during the early phase of app construction. Beta testing occurred first with ESN staff & selected organization partners, leading to informed evolution of app functionality, format, & content aimed to Develop outreach/awareness strategy & resources for the new information named as ESN "Opportunity Hub." The app was inspired & consistent with ESN brand, supporting users' recognition of the association with ESN, trustworthiness & credibility. ESN found that some colors that worked well for ESN brochures did not for the App. This led to additional revisions and testing. ESN & the App Developer explored options for gathering user feedback & data on user engagement, to inform evaluation of the app's utility for various user groups which provided ongoing enhancements & accountability via ongoing evaluation since the inception of the app. ESN wanted the flow to be like the familiar flow of flipping through a manual. Other aspects of the design were challenging, such as determining the position of buttons and setting the scrolling to the left or right. It was difficult to know what would work well for users, which again pointed to the importance of continued Beta testing. ESN made other discoveries such as the need to consistently include links in articles & other pages that would allow users to return to their prior point within the app which added its helpfulness. Users accessing the app in the Apple store had no difficulties, Android users had some initial difficulty downloading App. Feedbacks were received & used for correction while improvement of the app continued. ESN moved forward on developing the formalized learning modules inside the app, they plan to further create a design for accessibility-by adding instructive video, this is under review. ESN coordinated with Nebraska Center

for the Blind & Visually Impaired for feedback & suggestions. ESN checked on phone features that users can leverage to convert print to auditory, translate languages, enlarge print, etc. The organization recognized their responsibility & opportunity to provide access to information & resources that can improve lives. ESN staff were transparent & accountable in their efforts which strengthened feedback, value, & impact of the Opportunity Hub. The app format & content were modeled somewhat on ESN's resource manual, with information and Resources (I/R) organized by categories. The initial version of the app included I/R focused on the metro areas of Nebraska, as the largest percent of our population lives in these areas and this information was more readily available. As the app format and functions evolved and as we made the app available to the public, ESN acknowledged the need to expand the I/R statewide. ESN project staff & contractor worked part-time on the app, which was a bit daunting. The App was shared with others, who gave suggestions for significant expansions of content for employers or individuals working toward employment. This added to the list of potential content additions & updates and led to consideration to developed learning modules that would incorporate related resources year two. So, the challenge of including what seemed like infinite sources of I/R, led to an even better idea of packaged learning modules. -- ATP Contract - The three modules that were created are: 1) What is assistive technology and why is it important for my child? o Defining the purpose of AT o Examining and dispelling myths about AT o Discussing examples of AT across different functional domains and ages o Differentiating AT from other technologies used in the school, work, and community settings o Discussing outcome scenarios related to AT usage 2- Could my child benefit from assistive technology? o Discussing purpose of AT o Discussing key questions to help decide if AT is a possible solution for a child o Discussing a process for determining if and what AT is a possible solution o Exploring case studies that link AT usage and outcomes at different ages and functional areas 3- Talking about assistive technology with my child's IFSP/IEP Team o Identifying key processes in which AT may be incorporated into a child's IFSP or a student's IEP (e.g., AT Cycle) o Identifying key questions families may ask or discuss with the child's IFSP team or student's IEP Team at each of the process components o Identifying and discussing common errors in talking about AT (e.g., not talking about need but talking about devices only) o Discuss strategies for and importance of AT being written into the IFSP/IEP The Parent and Educator Training project is still collecting feedback from self-advocates and their families. They want to get all the right details needed to continue this educational training and to be able to publish all the knowledge gathered from these subject matter experts.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
Project FEET - Increased access to training for future school professionals and families who complete the program.	Yes
Project FEET - Increased knowledge of school professionals in special education, appreciation for families, and increased confidence engaging diverse families.	Yes
Project FEET - Increased family member confidence with sharing their	Yes

story and values, knowledge of special education, awareness of community resources, and effective communication and advocacy skills.	
Project FEET - Improved partnerships between families and school professionals in educational settings.	Yes
Project FEET - Improved outcomes for individuals with I/DD, their families, and school professionals.	Yes
Project FEET - Increased advocacy for individuals with I/DD.	Yes
Project FEET - school professionals will increase their knowledge and confidence in working with diverse families and the unique challenges that they face, increase their awareness of community resources and supports for supporting the needs of families of children with I/DD, learn strategies to engage families and become a resource for them, learn effective communication skills (e.g., active listening), and gain an appreciation for family perspective, voice, and culture.	Yes
Project FEET - families will increase their knowledge of the special education process, their due process rights, and responsibilities as collaborative partners; increase their confidence with sharing their story, culture, and values; increase their knowledge of rights and responsibilities within special education; increase their awareness of community resources and supports relevant to the needs of their family and child/children with I/DD; and learn effective communication and advocacy skills.	Yes
Project FEET- continued use of the curriculum in UNO undergraduate and graduate programs with family partners will lead to improved partnerships between families and school professionals in educational settings.	Yes

2,000 Nebraskans will be introduced to the ESN app via outreach efforts.	Yes
A minimum of 400 individuals w/disabilities, family members, and professionals will be actively engaged with the ESN app, the vast majority of whom will report that the app gives them increased access to information and supports full participation in community life.	Yes
Twenty people will be trained and intentionally focused on promoting and supporting use of the app, as an accomplishment that will help scale and sustain app implementation.	NO
Long-term outcomes of the app include increasing the independence of individuals with disabilities and empowering them for self-advocacy.	Yes
Family members and providers will also be more effective in supporting others' success and the ESN Opportunity App will become a go to, 24/7 hub for information/resources, sustained through collaborative funding due to its broad value and impact.	Yes
The longer-term impact of the Opportunity App initiative is to expand and enhance individuals' successful participation in community living, including education, employment and other aspects of daily life.	Yes

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:	
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<p>--Spring of 2023, UNO hosted guest presentations from service agencies &amp; family engagement activities in 2 classes at UNO in the graduate &amp; undergraduate level. For the graduate course of Applied Behavior Analysis in Education, the students &amp; families took part in the preliminary draft of curriculum activities focused on home learning. During this time, students met w/ families to review their child's Individualized Education Program, prioritize a goal, &amp; shared resources/activities to support the chosen goal. Interactions &amp; collaboration was strengthened, students attended a presentation about family engagement, completed problem-solving collaboration case scenarios in small groups, applied what was learned in the presentation, &amp; participated in a family panel discussion. The family panel included 3 families &amp; was the most valuable component by students. In the Fall 2023 semester, undergraduate students in Special Education, &amp; the Law/Individualized</p>
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Education Program course completed the Project FEET Curriculum Modules. They met w/ the families at 3 different times. UNO coordinated with the MMI Family Care Enhancement Project, PTI Center of NE, Down Syndrome Alliance of the Midlands, along with Millard Public Schools & invited a diverse group of families who took part in the 3 sessions w/ undergraduate students. 5 NE families participated in the 1st session w/ upcoming sessions scheduled for 11/2023 & 12/2023. Throughout implementation, UNO coordinated w/ interpreters & translators to create resources & opportunities for families with diverse languages to participate. UNO conducted post-test surveys to assess parents' & school professionals' confidence, knowledge, skills, & satisfaction with the training program. UNO piloted pre-surveys of confidence, knowledge, & skills during the Spring 2023 semester & refined them based on the data collected. Components of the UNO FEET curriculum was implemented by UNO & their strategic partners in 3 classes. A total of 67 pre-service school professionals participated in activities & 12 families together with the 7 board members having children with disabilities while families reported increased confidence & satisfaction with activities. Participants in Spring 2023 graduate course indicated that, they felt very confident helping their child, collaborating with school professionals, & advocating for children. In Fall 2023, 4 of the 5 families who participated from Nebraska completed a survey following the first session, 3 reported being very satisfied and 1 somewhat satisfied. Everyone felt better able to advocate for themselves & others. Data from parents & students participants helped UNO identify strengths & areas for improvement of activities to enhancing knowledge, skills, confidence for families & students related to family engagement in special education. -UNO reached out to additional faculty members who are teaching courses where the Project FEET Curriculum might be used to support adoption and implementation. They also coordinated with the Service-Learning Academy for support w/ future community engagement projects. UNO will continue to partner with organizations to share information about Project FEET opportunities for families to participate in each year & present information in courses about their organizations. UNO disseminated this work through a chapter publication & conference presentation at the Office of Special Education Programs Leadership & Project Directors Conference. Dr. Kupzyk continues to disseminate the project w/ collaborations through a national workgroup, the Family Engagement Work Group, Building Capacity for Authentic Family Engagement: Teaching & Learning Opportunities for OSEP-Funded Investments. UNO will also establish an online platform for the curriculum to facilitate dissemination. --ESN Subaward - The developer integrated analytics that provided information such as the number of engagement events; the number of users and new users; and the range and average of engagement time. Currently, ESN is not able to analyze data per user groups, such as individuals with disabilities, family members, and providers. In 2024 ESN plans to be thoughtfully evolve on analytics to support their knowledge of product reach & impact across populations & geographies. This was challenging to incorporate, as ESN wants to protect user identity & information. Input on app content, function, & design came largely through one-on-one feedback, group meeting discussion, & larger group presentations. -ESN encountered many challenges during the project, there are four that seemed to pose the strongest obstacles: Less anticipated time for development, testing & refinement with difficulties during exploring & developing options for strong user analytics, getting people engaged with the app, & with some reality check on what breadth of the I/R to be included. Every detail mattered from the placement of a button to the contrast of colors to the links between pages that supported navigation. As ESN made these changes, additional Beta testing was required to gain user feedback & to further refine the app format & functionality. -The Developer who was available part-time through a contract led to an extended timeframe required to get the app to the point of readiness to the public through the app stores, for exploring & developing options for strong user analytics. Discoveries such as high costs of analytics options & limited information were gotten via App store rating systems. ESN had to segment registered users by individual with disability, family member, educator, etc. This helps ESN to understanding users'

experiences, needs & for planning App enhancements. From this, ESN was able to develop app analytics that allows them to know the number of user events, number of users & new users, range & average time spent in the App. ESN developed Feedback mechanism in the App, that promoted users to provide rating & comments after 10minutes operation in the App. Continual feedback from users who shared their experiences & suggestions. Getting people engaged with the App was difficult than expected. Plans & implementation included multiple avenues for increasing awareness of the app - social media; emails to organization partners; presentations at parent organizations, ESU's, & statewide provider conferences; business sized cards & PDF's including QR codes to download the apps; identification of App Ambassadors to help spread the word about the app; & a press release which triggered radio interviews. Despite a broad reach, ESN realized the app was new & unfamiliar and that, potential users needed face-to-face prompting to download & engage with the app. ESN realized it was helpful to encourage people to simply explore the app to see the type of I/R available, even if they don't have any burning needs for I/R. Going into 2024 project year, ESN planned on facilitating more downloading & exploration, incentivizing individuals to seek & find pieces of information. This shows that, there is a gap between reaching people to make them aware of the app and engaging them with the app. -ESN recognized the importance to leveraged & encouraged App Ambassadors to get the word out & support app, use. The 1st version of the App did not include chat function to provide an alternate route for information seeking & additional layer of user support. Staff reviewed chat functions from other Apps, identified priority features, & worked with the developer to create the chat function for easy use, w/ a login requirement as a protection for chat users & for Beta testing in the App stores. While user feedback on the chat was positive, ESN staff refined how chat messages were displayed for responding staff. Messages were archived that made it difficult for staff to efficiently determine if there were new messages. ESN developer distinguished responded & archived messages from new messages with long term plans for a chat staff. Sufficient funding will have an ESN Specialist for the App Chat. Educators strongly proposed the chat function to individuals & families which expedite their ability to respond to questions from parents or provide reliable resources to support youth success. Knowing this, ESN introduced the chat function to teachers & encourage its use. Wide spread of the App led to significant engagement with the App, its features & functions were explored. App promotion was intentional, via multiple channels like word of mouth, trusted App Ambassadors & other social media communications helped engaged more users. The App is made up of, a Resource Center with categories of Social, Recreation, Respite, Transportation, Employment, Assistive Technology, Education, Housing, Financial, Legal, & Advocacy with Healthcare & Medical Assistance; Benefits Planning & Work Incentives, Counseling, Social Security, & Public Assistance. Also, a "Newsroom" that included updates on "important news," "what's happening near you" and the "ESN Spotlight" which featured organizations and providers. Information on the Nebraska Aging & Disability Resource Center and all ESN services were provided. All information could be accessed without registering on the App. ESN carried out the 2nd Beta Testing of the App in 03/2023, did a press release, had QR codes and gained new registered users. --ATP Contract - There have been a few problems that came up during the timeline of this project so far. Unfortunately, this project could not begin as there were delays with the Procurement Department getting the DocuSign sent out. ATP should have been able to start their work in January 2023, they could not start anything on their end until mid-March. They also have been short-staffed this Fall with 1 resignation and a few employees on personal leave. These issues have made things difficult for their small team in getting these modules translated and system ready.

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

--UNO Subaward - UNO shared quotes & notes from families & students that participated in activities. The greatest success was seeing the families & students learn from one another. Parent comments from the graduate course in Spring 2023 course included: "I enjoyed their interest in learning more about IEP's and individual goals. It is wonderful from a parent perspective to see students interested in a career supporting individuals with disabilities." "I am an educator myself, so I loved the project itself. I am always happy to be part of the next generation of professionals' educational journey." "The student understood what was going on and was able to share their thoughts on said subject." "This helped motivate us to work on our IEP goal." -Students reported learning about ways to create welcoming and supportive environments, create trusting relationships with families, gain family insights for interventions, embrace differences and strengths, take family perspective and daily priorities into consideration, advocate for families, engage in cultural humility, and create reasonable yet challenging goals. A parent who participated in the family panel in the Spring 2023 undergraduate course noted "My goal was to share perspective for the UNO students to be able to understand and speak up for their students someday...I think there is so much value to providing opportunities for the students to interact with real parents living this experience and not only read about it. A picture is worth 1,000 words and when we can give them a glimpse, it's powerful." -The feedback UNO received from the Advisory Board & participants reinforced the importance of the project. UNO heard from families about positive experiences with school professionals, also about challenges & barriers to partnerships. The experiences represent all the competencies for family-facing professionals outlined by NAFCE, with two noted as being very essential to building successful partnerships: 1) Respect, Honor, 2) Value Families & Embrace Equity throughout Family Engagement. UNO agreed that Families need to feel that they are a valuable part of children's education & their observations, ideas, & recommendations matter especially as pre-service school professionals often have limited understanding of family engagement & strategies to effectively engage families. Following participation in Project FEET Curriculum modules or activities, school professionals expressed increased knowledge & skills with engaging families. -The Fall 2023 survey after the first session, families stated, they enjoyed "The informative discussion they had." & noted "It's a great opportunity for parents to share their experiences with students as they learn about special education and get involved with families." --ESN Subaward - Users reported that the App provided increased access to reliable information & resources, reduces dependence on others, supports well-being & participation in community life. User feedback has been incorporated continuously. Initially, feedback focused more on format & functionality. In latter months users provided more feedback on the desire for additional content. This expanded content related to more resources throughout the state. ESN saw or heard expressions among individuals, family members, & providers was summarized in words as: appreciation, relief, pride, enthusiasm, and hopefulness. Individuals expressed appreciation that others recognized their experiences of barriers to information, resources & were working on solutions for increased access to I/R. They felt "heard" in their frustration & marginalization. They appreciated the fact that others understood that all they needed was reliable information for empowerment to advance live & well-being. Providers expressed appreciation that I/R provided through the app (including the chat function) will promote quick & effective response to the needs of individuals & families they serve. -ESN heard expressions of relief, that new tools were being developed to provide them better access to I/R, rather than anticipating ongoing struggles as they didn't know where to start to find trusted information. Some users who discovered the app felt more independent in finding

quality I/R, rather than relying on others to find, filter, & provide them with I/R. Enthusiasm was one of the most frequent responses to the app, as individuals, family members, & providers recognized the power & potential of the app. Enthusiasm was expressed in several ways; schools & Educational Service Unites that hosted group meetings where ESN shared the app, Nebraska Association of Social Workers invited ESN to present & share the app in a conference, & family members asked for additional Opportunity Hub app "business cards" with the app QR code to share the app with individuals with disabilities & their families. --ATP Contract - The success of the project is measured against the successful production of key deliverables and ensuring that these modules are ready for deployment. Additional metrics, like module completion and learner feedback, will be implemented to address further outcomes for this project when completed.

*Objective 2: Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.*

3. This objective is:	Individual & Family Advocacy
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	Yes
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:	--PTI Subaward - PTI's main strategy was increasing the number of transition-based trainings & incorporated trainings in Spanish, reached out to Hispanic families in Nebraska (Ne) while other trainings covered high school transition planning such as develop goals around employment, post-secondary education/training, & independent living skills such as; where a person wants to live, what social activities they wants to participate, how a person will be transported to where he/she needs to go,
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	<p>different daily living skills a person needs to work on like grooming, chores/housework, food/nutrition, medical/healthcare needs, managing money/budgets, &amp; building self-advocacy skills. Other trainings covered adult services &amp; programs such as Developmental Disabilities (DD) services, Medicaid waivers &amp; the services that can be provided to people with disabilities through the different waivers, &amp; Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Strategically, PTI partnered with Nebraska communities and community-based organizations to educate English &amp; non-English speaking individuals with I/DD &amp; their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area, on the importance &amp; about emerging disability related issues, services, &amp; supports available. In the months of Oct - Dec 2022, PTI continue promoting person-centered planning. All participants received PowerPoint slides with PCP. -Through increased networking &amp; collaboration with community partners, &amp; with more strategic planning with training offerings &amp; outreach via newsletter &amp; social media, this project made great progress. In year 2, PTI made a few changes to the training slides towards the end of the grant year including more information &amp; graphics about some key CtLC tools that were helpful in assisting young adults in planning for their futures. Additions have been made to the training slide deck &amp; PTI will conduct these trainings in the third year of this project. PTI felt satisfied with the handouts they created about PCP &amp; the fact that they shared it with parents, young adults, &amp; professionals to help parents, &amp; their young adults understand how important their voice is. The handouts &amp; training materials PTI shared, helped individual understood the importance to discuss their likes &amp; preferences, their dreams &amp; goals, what they want in life &amp; what they don't want in life, what is important to the young adult with disabilities &amp; what is important for them, &amp; then what will take them to make it all happen by way of networking &amp; finding the appropriate supports, education/knowledge, services, &amp; programs. Increasing outreach to young adults/adults with disabilities increased PTI's efforts to get more feedback. Most of the feedback came from parents of children &amp; young adults with disabilities, professionals from different agencies &amp; organizations.</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved

Develop information and training materials for English and non-English speaking individuals on the array of transition services available across the Nebraska system to transition-aged self-advocates and parents.	Yes
Present three new or updated transition-based webinars to self-advocates and parents in three different locations across the state annually.	Yes
Coordinate monthly campaigns focused on transition for posting on website and social media.	Yes
Partner with state agencies to create and disseminate new informational Tip Sheets and other resources on health care, employment, post-secondary education, and independent living topics.	Yes

10. The report should include the following:	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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--PTI Subaward - As a continuation extension into FFY2023, PTI strategically increased its outreach efforts. PTI strategized in reaching more young adults through participation in a job expo day for young adults with disabilities in high school transition where mini trainings sessions focused on employment/job skills, daily living skills, strengths, & self-advocacy in voicing what they want to do in their lives & making informed decisions. Hosting a resource fair in Omaha was another strategy PTI used in bringing Hispanic families & their children to attend PCP events. Resource Fair attendance was, 69 participants (56 parents/13 young adults with disabilities, where 50 were Hispanic parents & 11 were Hispanic young adults). PTI planned on working with other community agencies on resource fairs to reach more Hispanic Families in Nebraska. PTI conducted 22 trainings, some in-person & others virtually through Zoom, & had 335 participants attended these trainings. PTI shared information about Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), employment options, workplace incentives, & benefits planning. These trainings included valuable information on Person Center Planning (PCP), & Supplemental resource handouts on PCP. PTI had 9 events, attended 8, hosted 1. PTI participated in 9 events, attended 8 and hosted 1, where PTI was able to share important transition-based resources

that includes PCP information. PTI connected with 244 people at these events that helped to increase their outreach efforts to families. Three events attended were held in Kearney (Central region of NE), two conferences & one transition agencies fair. More English-speaking families were reached out to for these events in Kearney & materials in Spanish were handed out at each event. PTI's reason for reaching more Hispanic families was to be able to host a resource fair in South Omaha - Eastern region of Nebraska. During this event, PTI had 15+ vendors who participated, & every table had a Spanish translator which was a great achievement that helped make the resource fair a big success. PTI received a lot of positive feedback from both parents & the vendor organizations themselves about the great resource information shared & the available Spanish translators. PTI networked with 50 Spanish-speaking parents & 11 young adults at this resource fair. Overall, during this period, PTI reached 158 Hispanic families, 139 parents and 19 young adults, through our trainings, events, and individual meetings. PTI also reached 108 young adults with disabilities, both English & Spanish-speaking through their trainings, events, & individual meetings. -Another strategy PTI used was to increase outreach efforts by sending out a monthly newsletter in English that included information on PCP in each one, sending out additional training information blasts to our newsletter listserv, translating their newsletter to Spanish & developing a listserv for Hispanic-speaking families, & PTI increased outreach via social media as well. During this period, the Organization's newsletter blasts alone reached 45,705 people while the social media posts reached 17,070 people. These efforts made huge difference between year one & year two. At the end of year one, PTI reached 11,372 members of the public through their awareness trainings, activities, & media initiatives. While at the end of year two, PTI reached 91,873 members of the public through all their work through this project.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
Self-advocates and parents will be educated on preparing for the transition of students with IDD from high school to adulthood.	Yes
Transition materials will be ADA compliant for webpage and social media access, and available in English, Spanish, and other languages as needed.	NO
One new transition document will be updated with a focus on person-centered planning.	Yes

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:

--PTI Subaward - PTI encountered barriers in their efforts to connect with people across NE about person-centered planning. PTI's major challenge was staff shortage. A new executive director and 2 staff members were hired & lost 3 staff members. PTI underwent change throughout 2023. Towards the end of grant year PTI hired two staff members & focused on changing & improving the internal processes at the center. Despite these changes, PTI still planned & strategized efforts. PTI included PCP information in many conducted trainings & events attended that spread awareness & knowledge

of PCP to families across NE. -Efforts to reach Hispanic families in Nebraska faced challenges. PTI faced attendance issue with Spanish-speaking families on in-person/online trainings & events. PTI staff partnered with different school districts & community professionals, traveled to Kearney, Grand Island, Columbus, Crete, & Oakland for Hispanic outreach. Flyers were sent out which communicated the availability of a Hispanic Coordinator available to talk to families & shared information on special education, transition plans in high school, transition planning to adult services and programs, & person-centered planning. Feedback from many interested people via registration was great. Feedback received shows that, Hispanic parents had difficulties in transportation to in-person events & childcare to attend trainings and events. Some Hispanic parents shared that they would attend if their children came with them. PTI's strategy utilized in Columbus was to partner with a community agency that provided childcare for parents to attend. This training had great attendance - 15 participants with 13 parents & 2 professionals and the feedback was very positive from the families. Even with the challenges, an appreciated outcome developed. PTI had a great new community partnership that led to discussions. PTI planned on networking with other community agencies in Nebraska to have them attend other support-type groups for Hispanic families with childcare provision. PTI learned the importance of community engagement & involvement in engaging with Hispanic families & the essentiality in building relationships & trust. -PTI had no Demographics but did report on some Key Performance Indicators. IFA1.1-128, IFA2.1A-44, IFA2.2A-208, IFA2.3IND-44, IFA2.5-11, SC1.4-862, SC2.2-7, CR03-91,873 -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

--PTI Subaward - PTI considered feedback from training participants as success story of this project. Just to highlight a few of them because they convey the positive impact trainings had on participants. -The information on PCP and benefits planning gives me hope for my son. I hope we can find new ideas and opportunities in our small town. -There is a huge benefit in using person-centered planning in all discussions about the student. -I am so glad you told me about the PCP information. I am having issues with my daughter's providers wanting to do things how they want to do them instead of doing the things she wants to do and in the way she wants them done. They are not keeping her preferences, likes, and desires first like you said and now I have information to help me address these concerns with them. -The PCP information is going to be so helpful to my child's next meeting. I needed all this information, and I am looking forward to reading about PCP. -All this PCP information is so helpful. I look forward to sharing it with my child's IEP team. -I appreciate all the PCP information. It is going to help me with conversations about what should be provided for my daughter and what supports and services she needs. -I live in a smaller town so there are less options for my child here, but the [person-centered planning] information will help me talk to his team about what he needs in his transition plan around employment and daily living skills. -I should do what I want to do. (Young adult with disabilities) -I have a lot of strengths. (Young adult with disabilities)

Section IV: B

Individual & Family Advocacy Performance Measures

Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	#	%
White alone	3	1.76%
Black or African American alone	0	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino	158	92.94%
Asian alone	0	0%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0%
Two or more races and Race unknown	9	5.29%
Gender	#	%
Male	400	38.50%
Female	639	61.50%
Other	0	0%
Category	#	%
Individual with DD	525	50.53%
Family Member	514	49.47%
Geographical	#	%
Urban	11	91.67%
Rural	1	8.33%

I. Output Measures

Objective	Performance Measure: IFA 1.1 People with DD who participated in activities	Performance Measure: IFA 1.2 Family members
By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.	367	114
Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important	150	208

and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.		
Total # of Output Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	517	322

II. Outcome Measures

Performance Measures	Percent (%)
IFA 2.1 Percent of people with DD	5
IFA 2.2 Percent of family members who increased advocacy	3

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are better able to say what they want/say what is important to them.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.	-1	5
Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.	44	-1
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	44	5

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are participating in advocacy activities.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.	-1	-1
Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the	-1	-1

Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.		
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are on cross disability coalitions, policy boards, advisory boards, governing bodies and/or serving in leadership positions.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.	-1	10
Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.	11	-1
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	11	10

## II. Outcome Measures

Satisfied	Percent (%)
IFA 3 The percent of people satisfied with a project activity	-1
IFA 3.1 Percent of people with DD satisfied with activity	-1
IFA 3.2 Percent of family members satisfied with activity	-1

## Section IV: C

### Systems Change Performance Measures

#### SC 1: Output Measures

Objective	
By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive	

Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	2
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	3
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	3
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	2
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	2
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	1000
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	1

Objective	
Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	-1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	1
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	1
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	862
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	-1

#### Systems Change SC 2: Outcome Measures

Outcome Measures	Number (#)
SC 2.1 - Efforts that led to improvements	5
SC 2.2 - Efforts that were implemented	4

#### III. Sub-Outcome Measures

Objective	Number (#)
By 2026, individuals with I/DD, their families, and professionals will have increased information and knowledge about waiver, non-waiver, natural supports, and person-centered planning principles as well as the Assistive Technology (AT) needed to strengthen supports in employment, education, recreation, behavior, etc.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	3
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	3



Objective	Number (#)
Annually partner with Nebraska communities and/or community-based organizations to educate English and non-English speaking individuals with I/DD and their families, in the Hispanic/Latino community who live in the Omaha metro and/or Lexington area(s), about important and emerging disability related issues, services, and supports available.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	1
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	1

*Goal 3: Community Integration and Inclusion*

*Section IV: A*

Area of Emphasis	Planned for this Goal	Areas Addressed
Quality Assurance	Yes	Yes
Education and Early Intervention	Yes	Yes
Health	Yes	Yes
Formal and Informal Community Supports	Yes	Yes

Strategies	Planned for this Goal	Strategies Used
Outreach	Yes	Yes
Training	Yes	Yes
Technical Assistance	Yes	Yes
Supporting and Educating Communities	Yes	Yes
Interagency Collaboration and Coordination	Yes	Yes
Coordination with Related Councils, Committees and Programs	Yes	Yes
Barrier Elimination	Yes	Yes
Systems Design and Redesign	Yes	Yes
Coalition Development and Citizen Participation	Yes	Yes
Informing Policymakers	Yes	Yes

Intermediaries and Collaborators	Planned for this Goal	Actual
State Protection and Advocacy System	Yes	Yes
University Center(s)	Yes	Yes
State DD Agency	Yes	Yes
Other Collaborators	Yes	Yes

Goal Narrative
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--UNL: Educational Clearinghouse - The University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) received a subaward funding of \$50,000 from Nebraska Council on Developmental Disability (NCDD) to create a Professional Educational Clearing House Platform. The project's Focus was on researching institutions in Nebraska to inquire if they are offering courses or programs on special education. UNL is required to develop and maintain an online clearinghouse/website/catalog of accessible classes, trainings, and professional development courses for regular and special education teachers.

This project just started in August, so it is still very new and still at the inquiring stage. UNL has not yet started to collect trainings and Professional Development programs and courses for the Web platform. UNL has currently been brainstorming this work with only a list of institutions for general and special education in Nebraska.

--MMI: Law Enforcement Interactions - The goal of this project was to address this research gap and inform law enforcement on strategies for individuals with ASD exhibiting severe behavior. Aim 1 of the project was to conduct a focus group of individuals with ASD and ASD advocates to identify responses and recommendations to common law enforcement on intervention strategies in behavior crisis situations. Aim 2 of the project was the development and distribution of a national survey focused on how individuals with ASD and their advocates would like law enforcement to interact with them during behavioral crises. The survey synthesized available literature on law enforcement interactions with the ASD population and behavioral strategies commonly used to deescalate severe behavior. Currently, few to no resources are available that inform socially acceptable strategies law enforcement personnel apply to the ASD population with severe behavior problems. This project directly impacts the ASD population by incorporating their input on strategies they are likely to experience. Additionally, this project can serve as a foundation for developing future avenues of research exploring more informed, efficacious, and satisfactory training methods for law enforcement.

This project enhanced how communities understand and interact with this vulnerable population, specifically during a behavioral crisis. As behavioral crises are commonly considered emergencies, the proposed project focused on how law enforcement personnel should respond during these challenging situations based on information collected from a survey distributed to autistic individuals and their advocates. The project's expected outcomes suggested how to improve training systems with law enforcement, also supplemented the limited resources available for law enforcement and stakeholders to improve interactions with the ASD population. Lastly, the outcomes will also serve as a guide for other communities going forward on improving the integration of the ASD population and increasing their independence.

--NU: Emergency Management Year 3 - The Emergency Management, Disability Awareness Training (EM DAT) is aimed to increase full inclusion of individuals with disabilities on access and functional needs in emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. While providing emergency management, and those with a responsibility in it, with a customized disability awareness education and the information, tools, and resources necessary for implementation. This project also worked on improving opportunities for person-centered-planning, meaningful community participation, engagement for individuals with disabilities, as well as access and functional needs in all aspects of emergency management in conjunction with municipalities and other NGOs with responsibilities in emergency and disaster planning and response. The training is designed to both sensitize and educate the audience on all aspects of disabilities including, but not limited to, definitions of disabilities, etiquette and interaction skills, stigma and misperceptions, proactive approaches to community inclusion and integration, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and overcoming barriers through

advocacy.

NU's Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training has established relationships within both the Nebraska emergency management operations, to include the State association of emergency managers (NAEM), the state office of emergency management (NEMA), and several disability organizations and advocates. This includes NE Disability Rights, the Independent Living Centers, DD service providers, and several individuals with developmental and other disabilities. Evidence of these relationships include EM DAT being featured in The Beacon, a NEMA magazine publication, NEMA soliciting attendance at the training sessions that were held, outreach by provider groups on behalf of the program, and requested presentations at their meetings and conferences. These directions lead Niagara University into year three, addressing the questions and gaps in expected activities that needed to be carried out to ensure appropriate response and recovery, also checking the implementation of preparedness initiatives and people with disabilities complete presence in the planning process.

--UMKC: Charting the LifeCourse - This project aimed at increasing awareness and skill building in using the Charting the LifeCourse Framework. To provide overview information for broad stakeholder groups, focused professional development, technical assistance, and implementation support to a team of Champions who will expand awareness of the framework and facilitate ongoing activities for creating buy-in and adoption of the principles in the day-to-day work of their peers. It will support NCDD on establishing a network of innovators and early adopters who can champion and support the adoption and integration of the Charting the LifeCourse framework into policy, practice, and procedure.

This project focused on families, adults with IDD, and case managers. Opportunities to increase awareness were also offered to state agency staff to ensure alignment across audiences. At the close of this contract, the LifeCourse Nexus and the NE DD Council will have trained more than 400 people on Charting the LifeCourse. Sustainability of this project comes from the ongoing implementation of CtLC among those trained, within their lives and work. There has been 5 Foundational Overview Events with 376 attendees, 1 Ambassador Series with 15 graduates, 2 Skill Building Series with the max of 150 attendees each and then started the Badge Academy for the last quarter of the contract in 2023.

--The Arc of Nebraska - Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD - This project created a toolkit for students with IDD and their advocates to identify disability related challenges for which positive behavioral supports are needed in school, to advocate for those supports proactively; and to respond once exclusionary school disciplinary measures have taken place. The projected impact was to reduce the time spent outside of the classroom for students with IDD in Nebraska, whether in the form of restraint, seclusion, expulsions, out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, shortened school days, or office referrals. Their work involved 3 major activities: 5 hybrid (in-person and online) trainings, a guidance document on the rights of students with disabilities in the area of school discipline, and an interactive space on their website that allows students with IDD and their advocates to learn how to proactively avoid classroom exclusion by advocating for needed behavioral supports, and how to exercise their rights if and/or when school pushout has begun.

The Arc of NE's project was geared towards not only changes at the individual and family levels, but its goal was to also be a systemic change activity. That they will create sustainable, transferable, and replicable change in a major aspect of supports available to promote positive and meaningful

outcomes for individuals with IDD and their families. They also developed a reader-friendly guidance document between 5 and 10 pages long, written in plain language, that covers the principles of their trainings. This document used universal design in the form of graphics and flow-charts to make behavioral supports and the student discipline process easy to understand. The Arc of NE made this document available online through their website, and also produced approximately 50 hard copies available for those who may not have internet access. Specifically, they worked hard to equip students with IDD and their families to prevent exclusionary school discipline before it starts, and to respond effectively if it does begin.

Please Note: NCDD only collected 95 surveys for projects under Goal Three. Many participants did not complete surveys, or some subrecipients failed to collect the data.

*Objective 1: By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.*

3. This objective is:	Capacity Building
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:	--UNL Subaward - University of Nebraska Lincoln (UNL) received a subaward funding of \$50,000 from Nebraska Council on Developmental Disability (NCDD) to create a Professional Educational Clearing House Platform. In this project, UNL is required to develop and maintain an online clearinghouse/website/catalog of accessible classes, trainings, and professional development courses for regular and special education teachers. -UNL has no recorded Demographics or KPI, this project just started in Aug 2023. --
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	<p>MMI Subaward - Munroe Myer Institute (MMI) in meeting Goal 3, Objective1, MMI carried out activities that promoted the autonomy of autistic individuals with severe behavior by conducting a survey of opinions on which law enforcement can interact and responds during behavioral crisis. This project enhanced how communities understood &amp; interacted with vulnerable population, specifically during behavioral crises especially as behavioral crises are emergencies. This goal extended to receiving the opinions of autistic individuals &amp; caregivers related to training systems for law enforcement. MMI collaborated with community partners to identify individuals interested in participating in the focus groups, by so doing, MMI improved on its recruitment efforts. These collaboration efforts provided MMI the opportunity to conduct a secondary focus group with law enforcement personnel affiliated with community partner. The group provided valuable information on training processes, shows data on knowledge, confidence of autism &amp; behavioral crises. -MMI has no recorded Demographics, but some Key Performance Measures. SC1.3.3-2, SC1.3.2-2, SC1.4-22 -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
<p>The MMI ASD severe behavior &amp; law enforcement study project will conduct a focus group of individuals with ASD and ASD advocates to identify responses and recommendations to common law enforcement intervention strategies in behavior crisis situations.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>The MMI project will develop and distribute a national survey to 100 respondents focused on how individuals with ASD and their advocates would like law enforcement to interact with them during behavioral crises.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>MMI project investigators will recruit respondents (100), collect data, and evaluate outcomes of the survey.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Investigators will develop a report, receive feedback from subject matter experts, and distribute a finalized version of the report to a minimum of 5 local law enforcement agencies.</p>	<p>NO</p>

<p>10. The report should include the following:</p>	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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--UNL Subaward - This project was supposed to start August 2023 through July 2024, however the project did not start as expected because of some administrative delays due to lack of capacity from NCDD- State of Nebraska's Procurement and Grant office impacting the project timeline, as such, UNL did not start the project as reflected in their work plan. -UNL's 1st quarterly report was due and submitted on the 11/15/2023, the project's Focus was on researching institutions in Nebraska to inquire if they are offering courses or programs on special education. Still at the inquiring stage, UNL has not yet started to Collect Trainings and Professional Development programs/courses for the Web platform. UNL has currently been doing brainstorming work with just a list of institution of regular and special education in Nebraska. --MMI Subaward - MMI's objective to increase capacity of caregiver & direct support systems through enhanced training & improved access to information, by this, people with I/DD will be provided services & supports by professionals & caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, & supported. The overall goal of this project is to receive information from autistic individuals & caregivers about their experiences with law enforcement during behavioral crises. This goal extended to receiving the opinions of autistic individuals & caregivers related to training systems for law enforcement. -The Primary investigator was Dr. Huff whose main strategy was Focus group discussions. MMI provided the survey to subject matter experts who were pre-identified based on their expertise in various areas related to the project. The survey was adjusted based on feedback gathered from focus groups & subject matter experts. MMI accomplished the overall goal of this project in multiple steps. Firstly, MMI collaborated with an expert in criminal justice, intellectual & developmental disabilities to develop a survey. After which, MMI conducted focus groups & subject matter expert meetings to receive feedback on the survey to ensure socially acceptable questions related to the overall goal were asked. Lastly, MMI distributed the survey & received responses from at least 100 respondents. Forty-three (43) participants identified as autistic, seven chose not to identify themselves, & 56 participants identified as a caregiver of an autistic individuals. This project enabled people with I/DD to receive services & supports from professionals & caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, & supported. Focus group outcomes were integrated into the survey created to accomplish the objective of this project. -MMI faced challenges in recruiting & coordinating the focus groups. Focus group participants were hesitant to schedule meeting time for survey review but preferred to conduct the review asynchronously especially as the focus groups were designed for

participants to discuss & come out with valuable themes & feedback for the team, improved the survey design, & increase the social acceptability of the survey. The researcher - Dr. Huff saw the focus groups as valuable component to improve quality of the survey. Solution was the fact that, MMI collaborated with community partners who helped identify interested persons. Besides recruited focus group participants, allocated time schedule for multiple individuals was challenging especially as the focus groups were designed to be 5 participants per group. Number was adjusted due to clashed schedules. Such adjustments helped when participants could not attend the scheduled appointment.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
<p>The MMI ASD severe behavior &amp; law enforcement study project aims to accomplish a more integrated and inclusive community in the state of Nebraska that promotes the independence of individuals with ASD who display severe behavior.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>The MMI ASD severe behavior &amp; law enforcement project investigators will follow up with local clinical agencies that received the published report. Follow up will consist of additional conversations on how to improve services for individual with ASD who display severe problem behavior. Investigators will consult with agencies to improve current practices and increase the independence of the ASD population.</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>The MMI ASD severe behavior &amp; law enforcement project investigators will provide training recommendations for law enforcement departments in the greater Omaha area. The published report will provide recommendations on interacting with the ASD population when they are in behavioral crises. These recommendations will be integrated into training procedures to prepare the law enforcement workforce.</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>The MMI project will expand outreach to other law enforcement agencies in the state of Nebraska. Following the integration of the report recommendations into training</p>	<p>NO</p>

programs within the greater Omaha area, training efforts will extend to law enforcement agencies across Nebraska toward further increasing the integration and independence of the ASD population.	
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13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:	
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<p>--UNL Subaward - UNL began its preliminary project's activities on 09/2023, as they began planning &amp; researching for trainings, professional development courses in universities and other institutions on learning for Gen Ed and SPED. UNL found 16 Institutions with Educator programs in Nebraska. UNL developed a list of all institutions of education in Nebraska that have been developed. Materials that have been reviewed including Nebraska's Department of Education's Rule 24, 20 and 23, Para-to Teacher Program, UNL-LPS article to partner and build special education teacher pipeline. A meeting was held on October 24, 2023, to discuss what Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) was looking for regarding information that is required, recommended, &amp; what their vision was in the completed project in the presence of NCDD staff, Director of Special Education, UNL project Director and UNL Project coordinator were present. After the Oct. 24th, meeting, Amy Rhone provided a website on the NDE site: <a href="https://www.education.ne.gov/educatorprep/">https://www.education.ne.gov/educatorprep/</a> The website has been reviewed about 50% and is continually being reviewed. The Director of Special Education agreed with UNL to send of Special Education personnels and Teachers to be a part of the focus group for collecting trainings and Professional Development --MMI Subaward -MMI identified a consultant with experience working with law enforcement &amp; people with disabilities. MMI researched &amp; published various aspects on Law Enforcement interactions with vulnerable persons &amp; individuals with Intellectual &amp; Developmental disabilities. The Organization recruited autistic individuals &amp; caregivers interested in participating in focus groups aimed at evaluating survey. MMI also collaborated with a UNMC Lecturer - Dr. Huff to develop a survey that captured individuals' experiences with law enforcement &amp; their opinions on future training programs. The survey was developed with literature in the areas of law enforcement interactions with autistic individuals &amp; behavioral crises. MMI conducted 5 focus groups with 2-4 participants. Focus groups were conducted by Dr. Huff, supported by a primary investigator. MMI provided the survey to subject matter experts who were identified based on their expertise in areas related to the project. This survey was adjusted based on feedback gotten from the focus groups &amp; subject matter experts. -Other strategies that helped MMI achieved its goal was data analysis. MMI distributed the survey aiming to collect at least 100 respondents &amp; data was analyzed after 100 respondents as objective was to reach out to 100 respondents. A total of 106 persons completed the survey. MMI analyzed the outcomes &amp; identified common themes - A central theme that most respondent has unfavorable experiences with law enforcement with only 11 respondents as favorable interactions. MMI further found out that, all respondents believed law enforcement personnel will need more training on autism &amp; how to manage behavioral crises. According to the survey, most respondents also believed that behavioral experts should be available for law enforcement personnel when responding to behavioral crises. At the end, outcomes &amp; recommendations from the project team were put into a final report. -According to MMI, the project will be sustained after project funds are no longer available. The survey is a permanent product designed with support provided by the Council (NCDD). Although the survey outcomes are strong, they are also limited in scope. Expanding our survey to include more, diverse individuals from different areas would be helpful to understand</p>
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the generality of our current outcomes. The primary investigator intends to increase the total number of respondents following the termination of funds. Additionally, the survey could be altered to include law enforcement's perspectives on current training programs. Second, the outcome of the project can help inform training initiatives for law enforcement & other emergency personnel. The primary investigator will collaborate with community partners who currently coordinate training with law enforcement to improve training that increases their knowledge & confidence when interacting with autistic individuals. Third, the outcomes of this project will provide support to access additional funds to expand training initiatives on a larger scale. These training programs would include identifying necessary support for law enforcement personnel when arriving at a behavioral crisis (e.g., behavioral expert on call) and increasing skills for autistic individuals so they can better interact with law enforcement. The primary investigator continued to pursue additional funding to support future training initiatives. Lastly, the outcomes of the report from this project will be disseminated through publication in a peer-reviewed journal. This will allow other professionals to access the information provided by respondents from the survey.

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

--UNL Subaward - Even though the start date for this project was not maintained, UNL still initiated background work for future activities of project. NCDD staff were very impressed by UNL's optimism to their project. --MMI Subaward - Focused group participants were appreciative of the project's aims. They described concerns with the current training processes for law enforcement personnel as they believed that law enforcement needs better training, they were excited at the possibilities of the survey. Specifically, all participants believe that law enforcement needs better training, and they were excited by the possibilities of the survey. Participants were hoping the outcomes of the survey could better inform training practices and education of law enforcement personnel. Additionally, the focus groups with law enforcement yielded similar results. They indicated a lack of formal training and their expertise with autistic individuals primarily came from on-the-job experiences, which they described as problematic. They hoped that this project could improve training programs during the academy. - Both focus groups with law enforcement yielded similar results. They indicated lack of formal training, that their expertise with autistic individuals primarily came from on-the-job experiences, which they described as problematic. They saw the project as a helpful tool to improve training programs during the academy.

*Objective 2: By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.*

3. This objective is:	Capacity Building
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
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Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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<p>7. Provide an overall description of this effort:</p>	<p>Niagara Subaward - This project has several goals that drive the intention of the program, leading to an ultimate objective of ensuring the people with disabilities are accurately and appropriately planned for in emergency operation plans, which would address response and recovery that meets the needs of the population. This is achieved by including people with disabilities and access and functional needs through inclusive planning and active participation. 91 agencies (136 attendees) attended the nine two-day or half day program, learning what THEY need to do to incorporate effective emergency planning and preparedness into their agency's scope of services. This is emphasized as it is stressed that those with an administrative or leadership role must embrace the program in their daily operations. -There were 122 attendees at the four virtual sessions with three of those focused on Developmental Disability Service Providers. - Having the ability to compare to other state's that funded this program, Nebraska should be considered a success based on the diversity of attendance that includes the presence of state and local emergency managers and several disability advocacy organizations. -Niagara did not report any Demographics but had some Key Performance Indicators. IFA1.1-13, IFA1.2-63, IFA1.3-42, IFA2.2-63, IFA3.1-13, SC1.3.1-32, SC1.4-237, SC2.1.4-2 -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
NU EM DAT will monitor activity, provide guidance, and track expected activities of Inclusive Planning/Active Participation Specialists on all aspects of implementation and application of the program.	Yes
NU will continue the second phase of building program capacity by following up with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency and the Nebraska Association of Emergency Managers on development and implementation of the Core Advisory Groups (CAGs). Continued review, to include consultation with both EM Offices and Disability organizations on progress of intended outcomes. This will include identification of CAGs across EMOs to include the State EMO. Provide guidance and consultation to each group. Address issues where progress is lacking. .	Yes
NU will provide additional mentoring to prior and new training recipients to strengthen and further inclusive disability emergency planning and response efforts. Mentoring will focus on expectations with emphasis on developing and maintaining the CAGs.	Yes
NU will provide mentoring outreach to the Independent Living Centers community. Assist Nebraska stakeholders with setting strategic steps to sustain inclusive EM model.	Yes
NU will host a webinar(s) with past and new trainees to learn how things are going and what to address next. Explore needs and problems to address.	NO
NU will develop and deliver an EM DAT virtual one day webinar (s) to continue training Inclusive Planning and Active Participation (IPAP) Specialists.	Yes
NU will provide up to two additional EM Disability Awareness Training(s) in areas of the state not yet reached.	Yes
NU will host a virtual follow up consortium.	NO
NU will continue to work with NE Disability Rights to move the EM DAT program focus into legislation.	Yes

<p>10. The report should include the following:</p>	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system</p>
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	<p>change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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Niagara Subaward - The first step implemented included meetings with all stakeholders. This includes Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Nebraska Association of Emergency Managers (NAEM), Regional Red Cross, Nebraska ADA Coordinator, Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, Omaha ADA Coordinator, Nebraska Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters, and Nebraska Disability Organizations and invested entities. The latter includes, but was not limited to, Nebraska Independent Living Council, Nebraska Independent Living Center (League for Human Dignity and Independence Rising), Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Nebraska Disability Rights (NE DR), Nebraska Total Care, People First Nebraska, Nebraska University Center of Excellence on Developmental Disabilities, Nebraska/South Dakota Epilepsy Foundation, Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Great Plains Chapter, ARC of Nebraska, and Nebraska Assistive Technology Partnership. -This served to introduce the program, explain the importance of presence in training and outreach to their constituents, the role they played (per their profession) in implementing the learned materials, and defining inclusive planning and active participation. Conversely, NU learned about their programs, how they operate, and issues or challenges related to emergency planning, preparedness, response and recovery, be it the 2019 flood or other emergencies and disasters. This was used to create the Nebraska-specific training and Training manual and the state resources contained within. -The training schedule was driven by the Emergency Managers association in conjunction with the Emergency Management Agency, allowing them to take responsibility and be empowered as partners. This brought the two factions (emergency management and disability organizations) to the table together. A key component was to bring the two together to recognize the role disability stakeholders can and should play in emergency operations planning while educating them on how emergency management operates. -The two-day training encouraged all present to share their roles and responsibilities, providing awareness of the value everyone can bring to the process. Having NEMA embrace and support the program was significant as was the emergency managers, for the most, serve as hosts of the training sessions. -Training allowed everyone to hear the same message, while learning about each other's services. They all received the same information and direction on what makes the implementation of the model a success. -The problem, which is consistent throughout this program in other states served, is the presence of emergency managers and the expectations of those who attended to implement the activities introduced. Because there was an acceptance of the program, initiated by attendance and a presentation at the NAEM April 2021 conference, support from emergency managers, to include hosting the two-day training sessions, was welcoming and seamless. NU established relationships with NAEM Board members, starting with the President, and NEMA contacts with the main point person being their access and functional needs coordinator. No other state OEM and Association, in conjunction with each other, was this receptive. Disability Rights NE embraced the concept from the start. Their presence at sessions, information sharing, and ultimate legislation action was a model for other Protection and Advocacy centers. Rest assured; this has been

shared with other state Disability Rights personnel. -It is difficult to summarize the goals of the project's success as most are anecdotal, which comes either in testimonials or the few that respond to the request to inform us of the activities they have carried out. We have come to learn that to varying degrees, there are actions that many attendees engage in and don't report back on. That said, the narrative in this summary coupled with the testimonials and activities reported (emails, discussions, response to requests) would indicate there was embracing of the concept and execution of the intended objectives.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
Emergency management staff, disability organizations, and disability advocates will receive training and resource materials on how to be prepared to assist people with disabilities and access and functional needs during an emergency.	Yes
Emergency shelter staff will be educated on the rights of people with disabilities and access and functional needs.	Yes
NU and DRN will work to pass legislation to change the provisions of the Emergency Management Act, which will define and add language to include individuals w/functional needs in the Nebraska Emergency Management Act. Change will note that NEMA shall include organizations providing advocacy or other services to persons w/disabilities or who have functional needs when seeking the advice and assistance of other agencies of government and the private sector.	NO

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:

Niagara Subaward - Several key stakeholders embraced the program and advanced some of the components that made my overall summary of this grant a success. This is based on acceptance and activities conducted. -NE DR worked on legislation that brought about bi-partisan support. This is the first state to advance to this level of advocacy. NE DR also noted it as one of six main objectives in their 2022 annual report. -NEMA presence and internal discussion. It is a testament to the state and its Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and to the program, that there was an attendee at the first six training programs. This commitment was also a first for states we have contracted with. -

NAEM responsiveness started with welcoming the program at their 2021 conference to include a presentation and the offering of a table. This led to an understanding of the program and an ability to schedule training sessions through county OEM directors, which then included their presence and support of the program. -NE League of Human Dignity and Independence Rising executive directors attended and have implemented concepts from what they were trained on. This is pivotal as ILCs serve as the lead disability advocacy organization in addressing this topic. It is also an expectation of their funding source (ACL). -Unification of disability stakeholders in understanding the depth of the injustices and issues specific to emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. They now have knowledge of the topic and are aligned to advocate on it. There would be nothing within the deliverables that needed to change with the plan and activities implemented. That said, attempts to be present in-person at the NAEM conference or NEMA functions. This was challenging based on how we allot travel expenses, with priority to conduct the Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training. I believe a lack of personal presence deteriorated the importance of their responsibilities. It also diminished their scope of what NU EM DAT can do to assist them in constructing an appropriate Emergency Operation Plan (EOP) and including persons with disabilities in actively participating. Consideration of more discipline specific half or full day virtual training. While we had several emergency managers host and attend, there were still many who never received the training and information. Having delivered this program in five states, satisfaction comes in comparison to others in line with the objectives we emphasize in the training. Complete satisfaction comes with activities carried out and results, which indicates that participants grasped the concept and truly desire to ensure that proper and appropriate planning and preparedness is in place, leading to response and recovery that optimizes quality of life issues for persons with disabilities. This is defined in a different context than those from the typical/able-bodied population. Nebraska reception of the program and concept, across all entities, was unmatched in comparison to other states. This will be reflective in the activities and changes made within organizations that cannot be measured; attitude, simple initiatives that are effective, basic awareness, knowledge of the tools and resources that were not known prior to training and sharing of information. This cross-discipline acceptance, evident from NEMA and some emergency managers and many disability organizations and advocates, permits me to be satisfied with the grant. A mark has been left. -A meeting was held with the key stakeholders NEDR, NEDDC, NEMA, and the NE ADA Coordinator (League of Human Dignity/ILC was unable to attend) where the sustainability plan was presented (agenda attached). The responsibilities fall upon these stakeholders with an emphasis on Independent Living Centers based on expectations from their federal funding source (ACL). Everyone who attended training that serves in an administrative capacity was made aware of their responsibilities, beginning with having the information (personal preparedness materials, disaster-specific information, advocacy guidance) available on websites, in display racks, and in related forums. Outreach was made asking for activities undertaken to advance the initiatives. This will be an on-going post-grant function. Within this correspondence will be the reminder that NU EM DAT is always available for technical assistance, resource sharing, and guidance on inclusive planning and active participation. The Whole Community concept, explained in detail in training, brings to light awareness of the diverse populations served that may (or will) be challenged in emergencies if implementation of EM DAT is absent in planning and preparedness. The EM DAT two-day full session stand-alone rate is \$12,500 all-inclusive.

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

Niagara Subaward - With the ultimate objective for county/regional Core Advisory Groups (CAG) inception, the first EM DAT session held was an example I share in every training I conduct. All three emergency managers, who represent the 12 counties in the Panhandle, were present. While I was packing up at the conclusion of day two, the regional/host emergency manager began the discussion with the Independent Living Center administrator and the Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing representative on the Core Advisory Group. This group has since gone on to hold regular CAG meetings and hold a public forum that includes To-Go kit giveaways. As noted, the Nebraska Disability Rights worked to pass legislation to address this need. The following is a summation of this activity. LB 1104 was introduced by Senator Jen Day in this recent legislative session (April 2022). The bill required the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to consult with disability advocacy and disability service organizations when developing/revising their Emergency Operations Plans for county/local emergency planning. The bill called for the inclusion of disability organizations or individuals with disabilities in a list of consultants in an emergency. The bill added "disability" to the title of the Functional Needs Registries authorized in statute. While there was no opposition to the bill at the hearing, and it was advanced out of committee, the bill did not ultimately pass. However, the legislation's public hearing did raise policy maker awareness of the impact of disasters on people with disabilities and the unique circumstances a person's disability or functional needs present for emergency planning, response, and recovery. As a result, Disability Rights Nebraska has been invited to participate in a workgroup to assist NEMA develop a new, more inclusive strategic plan and help connect them to the disability community. The workgroup has a strong interest in soliciting input from disability organizations and individuals with disabilities on the strategic plan and cultivating outreach opportunities once the plan is drafted. Activities reported: Christina Dean deancd@unk.edu We have reached out to our safety coordinator on campus to meet to see what is already setup and happening and what we need to adjust. We are going to begin doing emergency planning with all of our DSS students to ensure they are prepared if an emergency strikes. We are looking to put together a disability advisory group that can advise the safety coordinator on issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities, in emergencies. Darla Bowin darla@swatsne.org I have met with the Emergency Management team for this area and surrounding areas I have attended one meeting and will be taking a CERT class this coming weekend also talking about people with disabilities in this class. On May 26, 2023, we experienced major flooding in this area several counties. The day of made the decision to evacuate SWATS and all our individuals that have DD as the creek was rising and moved all vehicles off of the property. Resident 4 was on stand-by as it was raining so hard water was close to the house because a storm drain was slow. After the rain stopped, I knew Swats individuals were good. Me and My family went to other communities that were affected or evacuated to see if there was anything we could help with. Lots of roads were washed out, train tracks, etc. in this flooding. but no lives were lost and only a handful of people had to be relocated or rescued. Residential houses that I am over for SWATS have made grab bags and a backpack with 1 set of clothing, 1set PJs, (items) for personal care so if we have an emergency we can grab bags and go. I have made contact with people about getting lifts and other things to shelters if the shelter does not have them. My goal for the next year is to have more information out to the communities and have a few meetings to answer questions. I want to do better this next year in getting the word out. Thank You for this class and the opportunities to get the word out to others. The following are testimonials from EM DAT sessions: This training opened my eyes and educated me on a lot of information that I would not have even thought about had it not been mentioned. This training has prepared me to go to my teams with individuals with disabilities and talk about the importance of being prepared at all times. I liked the training. It made me think about things in regard to ensuring the safety of those with disabilities that I had not thought of before. I did not really understand that the definition of disability was so much bigger than the word. I understood that the word meant physical or developmental,

however, I never thought that it could play into so many other areas. Your emotional disability affecting your mental disability or other issues, and when you look at this in the bigger picture more people are walking around with a disability and they have just learned how to live with it. I enjoyed this training, I found it very helpful, and necessary. I think this will help people (myself included) be more mindful and considerate of those with disabilities in emergency situations. Persons with disabilities or not, I think this training will help people (myself included) realize that emergency planning is extremely important. I appreciated the verbal change David encouraged the group to use. I also appreciated the knowledge of adaptive equipment that we maybe don't think about with people who are differently abled. Increased my awareness of things I need to do to support those within services, specifically Independent Living where there are less interactions with the providers responsible for health and safety to ensure they are not overlooked. Liked the general discussion on what the person's actual need is instead of the disability itself. I struggle assisting providers with understanding how to write safety plans, and I think this was a really great training with examples that I can use to assist in feedback. I enjoyed the amount of factual based evidence given and the short video clips to break up the speaking. My only criticism would be to add another break period since it is a longer training and a lot of information being provided at one time. Excellent training and presenter. Important for this information to be presented to the Public as well. Would recommend disability awareness training to everyone as a basic requirement for employment at any job not just for EDM. Info and resources were very much appreciated! This training was invaluable. I have already recommended it to others when Mr. Whalen comes to our state next year. It has definitely opened my eyes to the amount of work we have to do and the benefits it will have to not only my community but to the state. Very comprehensive approach to increasing awareness of developmental disabilities. Course information applies across the entire spectrum of preparedness and planning. This class was very informative, and I contacted the Emergency Management Team for my county and am now attending their meetings and also talking with the hospital collation. I also Have shared information with everyone I work with SWATS we provided services for the developmentally disabled. I will continue to give out information in my community and if I need something I will let you know, very awesome class, will recommend it. Very inclusive, interesting content. Held my interest and attention very well. The presenter is very knowledgeable and easy to listen to.

*Objective 3: By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.*

3. This objective is:	Individual & Family Advocacy
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No



A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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<p>7. Provide an overall description of this effort:</p>	<p>The Arc of Nebraska - Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD - This project was dedicated to empowering students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) in Nebraska, along with their advocates, to effectively navigate the educational system. This team is proud to share what they achieved through their comprehensive project, which included a combination of training sessions, a comprehensive guidance document, and an interactive online platform. Training Sessions: The Arc of NE organized a series of training sessions that were both in-person and accessible online. These sessions were tailored to provide students with IDD and their advocates with essential skills and knowledge. Participants learned how to address disability-related challenges in school settings, advocate for necessary behavioral supports, and respond to exclusionary disciplinary measures effectively. Through these training sessions, The Arc of NE aimed to boost the confidence of participants and equip them with the tools they needed to advocate for their rights. Comprehensive Guidance Document: To complement the training efforts, The Arc of NE created a comprehensive guidance document. This document served as a valuable resource that outlined the rights of students with disabilities when it comes to school discipline. It provided clear, actionable information, enabling students and advocates to navigate the educational system with confidence. In addition to explaining their rights, the document offered strategies for proactively addressing challenges and advocating for necessary support, as well as guidance on responding effectively to exclusionary disciplinary measures. Interactive Online Platform: They developed an interactive online platform to extend the reach of their project. This digital space serves as a dynamic hub for students with IDD and their advocates. It offered a wealth of resources, including educational materials, real-world case studies, and interactive tools to help users proactively avoid classroom exclusion. Additionally, the platform guided individuals on</p>
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	<p>exercising their rights when faced with school pushout scenarios. Through their collective efforts, The Arc of NE achieved its primary goal of providing families tools to reduce the time students with IDD spent outside of the classroom due to various exclusionary disciplinary actions. These actions, which included restraint/seclusion, expulsions, out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, shortened school days, or office referrals, were reduced as a result of this project. The Arc of NE is proud of the impact they made in dismantling educational barriers and ensuring that every student's path to success is clear and unobstructed. University of Missouri at Kansas City (UMKC) - Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) Capacity Building Project - This project was to support NCDD on establishing a network of innovators and early adopters who can champion and support the adoption and integration of the Charting the LifeCourse framework into policy, practice, and procedure. This project aimed at increasing awareness and skill building in using the Charting the LifeCourse Framework. The project provided an overview of CtLC information for broad stakeholder groups, focused professional development, technical assistance and implementation support to a team of Champions who will expand awareness of the framework and facilitate ongoing activities for creating buy-in and adoption of the principles in the day-to-day work of their peers. This project focused on families, adults with IDD, and case managers. Opportunities to increase awareness were also offered to state agency staff to ensure alignment across audiences.</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
<p>The Arc of Nebraska will complete outreach and inform community of the Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD project and trainings. Exclusionary school discipline, or school pushout, includes restraint/seclusion, expulsions, out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, shortened school days, or office referrals.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>The Arc of NE will develop and present five hybrid (in-person and online) shareable PowerPoint Presentations/trainings focused on: 1) How to find resources and learn about your or your family member's disability in order to advocate for proactive positive behavioral supports at school; 2) What makes for an effective FBA and BIP?; 3) The truth about shortened school days; 4) The Manifestation Determination Review: Why it's important and how to advocate effectively in one; and 5)</p>	<p>Yes</p>

Applying our advocacy skills. Trainings will be recorded and available online.	
The Arc of NE will develop a reader-friendly guidance document between 5 to 10 pages long on the rights of students with disabilities in the area of school discipline.	Yes
The Arc of NE will develop, through their website, an easy to navigate set of FAQs and answers that will address the pressing needs of families whose children are at-risk of being pushed out of school.	Yes
The Arc of NE project will equip students with IDD and their families to prevent exclusionary school discipline before it starts, and to respond effectively if it does begin.	Yes
UMKC LifeCourse Nexus Training and TA Center will provide a virtual Charting the LifeCourse Foundational Series to bring general awareness presentations to introduce stakeholders to the framework and potential ways to utilize it in supporting people and families. Five virtual workshops will be held in February that will give individuals, family members, and providers an opportunity to learn about the Charting the LifeCourse framework, and how to use it to make a plan, problem-solve, and make decisions.	Yes
The Charting the LifeCourse Foundational Series live webinars will be used as a tool to train and recruit applicants who are interested in becoming a CtLC Ambassador. NCDD staff will collect applications and select 15 family members, self-advocates, providers, and advocates to receive training to become a UMKC certified CtLC Ambassador.	Yes
UMKC will provide training for up to 15 certified ambassadors to establish a network of innovators and early adopters who can champion the adoption and integration of the CtLC framework into policy, practice, and procedure across Nebraska. The online educational series and learning collaborative will deepen understanding of the CtLC framework and its application in person-centered planning, and to build capacity for sharing about the framework with others.	Yes
NCDD staff and leadership from DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) will participate in a series of champion coaching calls with implementation leads for technical assistance on continued capacity building, scalability, and sustainability of the identified strategic priorities to support buy-in and adoption.	Yes
NCDD will recruit families, HCBS recipients, disability advocates and professionals, including HCBS providers, to participate in four sessions of a virtual Skill Building Series	Yes

presented by UMKC's LifeCourse Nexus team. Sessions limited to 150 attendees.	
The Skill Building Series focuses on utilizing an interactive, discussion based lecture to provide an in-depth introduction on the CtLC key principle(s) and examples of the project implementation, as well as interactive activities related to using the framework to provide hands-on practice and application for these families.	Yes
In collaboration with NCDD, DHHS DDD will recruit up to 150 HCBS Service Coordinators and supervisors to attend a virtual Skill Building Series presented by UMKC's LifeCourse Nexus team. Information shared will be very similar to information shared in family-focused sessions.	Yes

10. The report should include the following:	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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The Arc of Nebraska - Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD Subaward - 1. Trainings: Objective: To provide five hybrid trainings with online and in-person components focusing on proactive positive behavioral supports at school. Activities Implemented: -Conducted a series of training sessions, totaling five sessions that combined in-person and online formats. -Developed a curriculum for the training sessions that covered a wide range of topics related to disability-related challenges in educational settings. -Invited expert speakers and educators to lead the training sessions, providing diverse perspectives and insights. -Developed online resources for attendees, emphasizing research-based documentation and the process of asking for appropriate behavioral supports in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 Plans. Strategy Used: -Hybrid training sessions allowed for a combination of in-person and online learning, ensuring accessibility for a wider audience. Implementation: -Held sessions combining expert presentations, interactive discussions, and resource-sharing. 2. Guidance document: Objective: Develop a reader-friendly guidance document covering principles from the trainings in plain language. Activities Implemented: -Created a comprehensive document using universal design principles, including graphics and flowcharts for easy

comprehension. -Published the document on The Arc of Nebraska's website. Strategy Used: - Employed universal design to make the document accessible to diverse audiences, ensuring clarity and inclusivity. Implementation: -Shared the document through the organization's website and distributed hard copies to reach a broader audience. 3. FAQs and Answers: Objective: Develop an easy-to-navigate set of FAQs and answers addressing the needs of families whose children are at risk of being pushed out of school. Activities Implemented: -Established a section on The Arc of Nebraska's website featuring FAQs related to school discipline and the rights of children with disabilities. - Addressed specific scenarios, such as prolonged shortened school days, to provide practical guidance for parents. Strategy Used: -Utilized the organization's website as a central hub for information, making FAQs easily accessible to the target audience. Implementation: -By executing these activities, The Arc of Nebraska successfully contributed to the project's goals of empowering families and advocating for the rights of children with disabilities in the education system. Barriers and Challenges: --Advocacy Efforts Not Leading to Meaningful Changes Challenges: Stakeholders expressed frustration that their advocacy efforts did not yield the meaningful changes they had hoped for in their individuals' educational experiences. Management: To address this barrier, The Arc of NE took proactive steps to empower stakeholders with effective advocacy strategies. They provided guidance on creating a paper trail of communication. This involved teaching stakeholders how to document all interactions with schools, including emails, meetings, and phone calls. By maintaining a comprehensive record, stakeholders could demonstrate their consistent efforts to address concerns and advocate for needed changes. This paper trail became a valuable tool to illustrate the ongoing commitment to the individual's education. --Feeling Overwhelmed and Alone at the IEP Table Challenges: Many stakeholders expressed feeling overwhelmed and isolated when participating in IEP meetings. Management: To address this barrier, The Arc of NE empowered stakeholders with knowledge about available resources and support options. They informed them about the option of requesting Facilitated IEP meetings, which are offered by all school districts. These meetings involve a trained facilitator who helps guide the discussion and ensure a productive and inclusive atmosphere. They also provided training on how to ask the right questions during IEP meetings to elicit more comprehensive and meaningful responses from school representatives. By equipping stakeholders with these tools, The Arc of NE aimed to alleviate their sense of isolation and empower them to actively participate in the IEP process, advocating effectively for their individuals. In conclusion, by addressing these barriers through education and practical guidance, The Arc of NE sought to empower stakeholders to become more effective advocates for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the educational setting. Their approach aimed to ensure that their efforts led to meaningful changes and improvements in the educational experiences of the individuals they support, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

UMKC CtLC Capacity Building Project - This project had five primary activities, listed below:

1. Foundational Presentations: During the Spring, the LifeCourse Nexus hosted five foundational overview (kick-off) events. These sessions included Using CtLC to Provide Quality Supports & Services (February 7 and February 16), Using CtLC to Support My Family Member (February 13 and February 17), and Using CtLC in My Own Life (February 15). These sessions hosted a total of 376 unduplicated attendees. The intent of this activity was to raise awareness and interest in ongoing learning opportunities, including recruitment for the Ambassador Series.
2. Ambassador Series: An Ambassador Series was hosted for 15 participants over the Summer. These sessions included the research, theory, and application of each of the CtLC Principles as well as exposure to diverse implementation strategies. One adult with IDD completed the series along with six family members. All participants who disclosed their demographic information were white and non-Hispanic. The intent of this activity was to deepen knowledge and comfort among a group who could champion the Framework be used broadly.
3. Skill Building Series: In the Fall, two Skill Building Series were provided, each with a

maximum enrollment of 150 people. One series focused on professionals, primarily case managers. The other focused on families and people with disabilities. In preparation for the family and PWD series, the curriculum and related materials were translated into Spanish, marketing materials were provided in Spanish, and simultaneous interpretation was provided. The intent of this activity was to expand the population of people who were aware of various opportunities to apply the CtLC Framework in their lives and work. 4. Badge Academy: Charting the LifeCourse Ambassadors have the opportunity for ongoing education by attending the Badge Academy. This academy facilitates access to specific CtLC implementation strategies, such as Presentations and CtLC in Action Facilitation. To date, 6 people have completed the Presenter Badge and 5 have completed the CtLC in Action Facilitator Badge. The intent of this activity is to maintain and grow engagement and skill building among those who are championing and embedding the Framework in their advocacy and systems change work.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
The Arc of NE's projected impact will be to reduce the time spent outside of the classroom for students with IDD in Nebraska, whether in the form of restraint/seclusion, expulsions, out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, shortened school days, or office referrals.	Yes
Self-advocates and their families will understand the importance of-and IDEA provisions for-behavioral goals and supports, even before challenging behaviors start.	Yes
Self-advocates and their families will know how to ask for targeted, specific supports, and what to do if those requests are refused.	Yes
Self-advocates and their families will know the basics of the functions of behavior, as well as what a good FBA and BIP look like and when they are entitled to them.	Yes
Self-advocates and their families will understand their right to a full school day in the context of the guarantee of a free appropriate public education (FAPE).	Yes
Self-advocates and their families will understand, step-by-step, how to be part of a successful MDR process so	Yes

they can successfully return to and stay in the classroom with their peers.	
Self-advocates and their families will have interactive resources to turn to when they have questions.	Yes
The Arc of NE's project will be centered around a skills-training approach. The project will present processes as series of steps, create interactive resources, and provide feedback-driven practice opportunities.	Yes
Attendance (online or in-person) of at least one of The Arc of NE trainings by between 100 and 150 individuals.	NO
Dissemination of our guidance document electronically to approximately 12,000 individuals (via the Arc of Nebraska email mailing list); with approximately 50 hard copies produced.	NO
50 individuals will access The Arc of NE's interactive FAQ information on the Arc of Nebraska website.	Yes
A reduction in the use of restraint, seclusion, shortened school days, and overall exclusionary school discipline for students with IDD in Nebraska.	Yes
An increase in the inclusion of positive behavioral supports in the IEPs for students with IDD in Nebraska.	Yes
Greater and more meaningful participation in the FBA/BIP development process of students with disabilities and their families.	Yes
The CtLC Foundational live webinars will introduce the CtLC Framework as a foundation for working with people and helping them integrate these strategies into their day-to-day practices. The training will highlight significant role families play in a person's life across their lifespan. Provide real-life examples and strategies that can be used to develop a plan toward the good life. Provide an opportunity for reflection and	Yes

brainstorming on how this framework can be used for person-centered planning.	
The virtual Skill Building Series targeted for families, HCBS recipients, advocates, and providers will help others understand the CtLC framework and principles, and how they can be used for planning, problem-solving, and decision making in all stages of life. Virtual training will help families and HCBS recipients build skills for utilizing the framework and related tools in their own life or the life of their child who experiences a disability.	Yes
The virtual Skill Building Series targeted for HCBS Service Coordinators (Case managers) will help these professionals understand the CtLC framework and principles, and how they can be used for planning, problem-solving, and decision making in all stages of life, and as the center of the Individualized Service Plan for HCBS recipients. Service Coordinators will build skills to help empower families and HCBS recipients on using CtLC tools to build their person-centered plan within their HCBS services.	Yes

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:

The Arc of Nebraska - Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD Subaward- The Arc of Nebraska is delighted with several aspects of the project: -Empowerment: The project succeeded in its primary objective of empowering students with IDD and their advocates. Witnessing participants gain confidence, knowledge, and skills to navigate the educational system and advocate for their rights has been incredibly rewarding. -Impact: The project had a tangible impact on reducing exclusionary disciplinary measures for students with IDD in Nebraska. Knowing that The Arc of NE contributed to improving their educational experiences and outcomes is immensely satisfying. Areas for Improvement: If the Arc of NE were to continue the project or have a do-over, here are some areas they would consider for improvement: -Extended Duration: The project's impact has been significant, but a longer duration would allow for more sustained support and follow-up with participants. This could include ongoing training sessions, updates to the guidance document, and continued engagement on the online platform. The second year of Council funding will help us to resolve this issue. -Accessibility: While The Arc of NE made efforts to accommodate participants' needs, further



enhancing the accessibility of our materials and training sessions would be a priority in a continuation or do-over. This could include providing materials in multiple formats and offering more comprehensive accessibility support during online sessions. -Staffing Change: They had a team member who struggled with some of the projects in the grant. They have had a staffing model combining administrative and programmatic tasks in one role that seems to be a significant spread. To alleviate this, they are shifting their staffing structure in a way that will ensure they can have staff more focused on grant projects. In summary, while The Arc of NE is pleased with the project's achievements and the positive changes it brought to the lives of students with IDD and their advocates, they recognized that there is always room for improvement. By extending the project's duration, modifying their staff structure, and prioritizing accessibility, they could amplify the impact and reach of their efforts, further empowering individuals with IDD to navigate the educational system successfully. This project will be sustained by The Arc of Nebraska, with the dedicated support and leadership of the organization's staff and board members. This will be carried on and updated as part of their regular resources to guide families. The Arc of NE have undertaken a comprehensive approach to collect both quantitative and qualitative data over time, assessing the impact of our efforts not only at the individual level but also at the systemic level. This data has provided The Arc with critical information to shape their advocacy initiatives. This project has been designed with long-term sustainability in mind. They have made their trainings accessible online through their website and Facebook Live, ensuring that members of the disability community can access these resources at their convenience. These online resources will continue to be available well beyond the 2022-2023 grant year. Furthermore, The Arc of Nebraska has a strong track record of offering various advocacy-related trainings, including those on special education advocacy and addressing seclusion and restraint in schools. These trainings, both recorded and live, have expanded our training toolkit. -The ARC was the only project to record Demographics in Goal 3 (White alone-20, Hispanic/Latino-2, Two or more races-1) Urban-17, Rural-6 and had some Key Performance Indicators. IFA1.1-1, IFA1.2-16, IFA1.3-6 -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B UMKC CtLC Capacity Building Project - At the close of this contract, the LifeCourse Nexus and the NE DD Council will have trained more than 400 people on Charting the LifeCourse. Sustainability of this project comes from the ongoing implementation of CtLC among those trained, within their lives and work. The Ambassadors, specifically, are now equipped to embed the framework in various ways and use it as a lens within their future work. Those who have received the Presenters Badge are equipped to continue offering Foundational Presentations on CtLC to broad audiences. And, those who received the CtLC in Action Facilitators Badge are now equipped to facilitate groups of people who are trying to implement the framework and would benefit from peer learning and support. In addition, the DD Agency has expanded its intent to embed the framework within case management practices. CtLC project had some Demographics and Key Performance Indicators (white alone-3, hispanic/latino-1) IFA1.1-4, IFA1.2-27, IFA1.3-402, IFA2.1A-4, IFA2.1B-4, IFA2.2A-24, IFA2.2B-20, IFA2.3IND-4, IFA2.3FAM-18, IFA2.4-100% from 2 respondents, IFA2.4FAM-19, IFA3.1-100% from 2 respondents, IFA3.2-11 of 13 respondents. -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

--The Arc of Nebraska - Stopping School Pushout for Students with IDD Subaward - One of the most impactful success stories from their advocacy efforts, stems from a proactive stakeholder who immediately applied the information provided about their rights. This success story underscores the transformative power of knowledge and advocacy. A SHORTENED SCHOOL DAYS CHALLENGE The stakeholder, let's call them Sarah, attended The Arc of Nebraska's initial presentation on "Shortened School Days." During the presentation, Sarah learned about the importance of tracking and addressing informal removals from the classroom, which can have a significant impact on a student's educational experience. Inspired by the knowledge gained from The Arc's presentation, Sarah decided to take immediate action. She began tracking the number of days her child was informally removed from the classroom. This included instances where her child was sent to the principal's office, had shortened school days, or was placed in alternative settings. Sarah recognized that these informal removals were detrimental to her child's education, and she was determined to advocate for additional supports and services. Armed with a clear understanding of her child's rights and the data she had collected, Sarah initiated a conversation with the school. She presented the evidence of the informal removals and advocated for additional supports and services that could help address her child's specific needs. She emphasized the importance of ensuring her child's full participation in the classroom and the right to an inclusive education. This success story highlights the profound impact of empowering stakeholders through education. By providing stakeholders like Sarah with the knowledge of their rights and effective advocacy strategies, The Arc of NE equipped them to make meaningful changes in the educational experiences of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Sarah's story exemplifies the transformative power of informed and proactive advocacy, emphasizing the importance of continued support and education for stakeholders in the pursuit of inclusive education for all. EMPOWERING FAMILIES THROUGH DIGITAL ACCESS: A GAME-CHANGER One of the most significant achievements of The Arc of Nebraska's project is the development and implementation of their digital portal-a transformative resource that has garnered heartfelt appreciation from numerous families. This digital portal has emerged as a lifeline for families navigating the challenges of advocating for loved ones with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Arc of NE have already seen over 1734 new users. The Arc of NE's digital portal stands as a beacon of support for families, offering a wealth of resources, tools, and knowledge accessible at their fingertips. They have received heartfelt thanks from families for this digital resource. The true power of the digital portal lies in its availability whenever it's needed most. Families often find themselves stretched thin, juggling the demands of work, caregiving, and daily life. The ability to access crucial resources at their convenience is a game-changer. The families they serve are diverse, each with their own unique circumstances and challenges. Some are balancing multiple responsibilities, while others are juggling hectic schedules. The Arc of NE's digital training resources have been a lifeline for these busy lives, ensuring they have access to essential information and guidance whenever they can find a moment. UMKC CtLC Capacity Building Project - Some of our Nebraska Ambassadors that completed the course shared the following as a result of their experience:

- I am [now] able to provide facilitation as an Ambassador and apply the concepts and materials in my personal and professional roles (paid and non-paid) while assisting families and my nonprofit advocacy organization (The Arc of NE and The Arc of Lincoln). On a personal level, I will help my daughter meet her own needs to the greatest extent possible providing her the tools to share with her teams.
- It is re-affirming in that we need to put effort into relationships. I had been doing that

for years but now I see a different why. I never talked to those people [people who could have a supportive role in my life], though, and now I did and they said YES. - This is super helpful [split star]. This can help to coordinate all the providers. I'm going to print this out, bring it to the ISP meeting with a highlighter and have people identify where they can contribute." - "We are going to use this when talking to legislators about Family Support Waiver and calls with CMS on our application. This helps them see we are only reaching the bare minimum." - He was so PROUD of this. Increased his decision-making confidence. He was scared to do this on his own, this will help him and others see what he has and needs. -This is a huge shift - as seen in having valued social roles, beyond health and safety. Role of a citizen. Josh is becoming a leader in our community as a business owner. - Parents are declining services and supports because they can't envision their young adult child working or living in an apartment with supports. Use the trajectory to help them talk about what the future could be like. Ask the question, with support do you think your child could live in an apartment? Or work? What support would they need to do that?

*Section IV: B*

Individual & Family Advocacy Performance Measures

Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	#	%
White alone	78	82.11%
Black or African American alone	0	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0	0%
Hispanic/Latino	5	5.26%
Asian alone	0	0%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	0	0%
Two or more races and Race unknown	12	12.63%
Gender	#	%
Male	205	28.04%
Female	526	71.96%
Other	0	0%
Category	#	%
Individual with DD	295	40.36%
Family Member	436	59.64%
Geographical	#	%
Urban	17	73.91%
Rural	6	26.09%

I. Output Measures

Objective	Performance Measure: IFA 1.1 People with DD	Performance Measure: IFA 1.2 Family members
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	who participated in activities	
By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.	-1	12
By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.	13	63
By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.	27	48
Total # of Output Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	27	68

## II. Outcome Measures

Performance Measures	Percent (%)
IFA 2.1 Percent of people with DD	1
IFA 2.2 Percent of family members who increased advocacy	3

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are better able to say what they want/say what is important to them.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.	-1	-1
By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.	-1	-1
By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school	-1	-1

settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.		
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are participating in advocacy activities.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.	-1	-1
By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.	-1	-1
By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.	-1	-1
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are on cross disability coalitions, policy boards, advisory boards, governing bodies and/or serving in leadership positions.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.	-1	-1
By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.	-1	-1
By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their	-1	-1

families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.		
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

## II. Outcome Measures

Satisfied	Percent (%)
IFA 3 The percent of people satisfied with a project activity	-1
IFA 3.1 Percent of people with DD satisfied with activity	5
IFA 3.2 Percent of family members satisfied with activity	-1

## Section IV: C

### Systems Change Performance Measures

#### SC 1: Output Measures

Objective	
By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	-1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	2
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	2
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	2
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	100
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	1

Objective	
By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	1
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1

SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	-1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	1
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	258
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	1

Objective	
By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	-1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	-1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	2
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	1
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	828
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	1

#### Systems Change SC 2: Outcome Measures

Outcome Measures	Number (#)
SC 2.1 - Efforts that led to improvements	9
SC 2.2 - Efforts that were implemented	7

#### III. Sub-Outcome Measures

Objective	Number (#)
By 2026, increase capacity of caregiver and direct support systems through enhanced training and improved access to information. As a result, individuals with I/DD are provided services and supports by professionals and caregivers who are knowledgeable, trained, and supported.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	-1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	-1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	-1
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	-1

Objective	Number (#)
By 2026, increase the capacity of advocates and policy makers to address at least three emerging issues that impact individuals with I/DD and their families. Annually review and identify emerging issues/needs.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	1

SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	2
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Objective	Number (#)
By 2026, individuals with I/DD (especially those with co-occurring I/DD and mental health challenges and/or Alzheimer's and other dementia symptoms) and their families will have access to services, supports, and resources to receive services in both community and school settings that are the least restrictive and respect their rights.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	-1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	-1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	2
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	2

*Goal 4: Advocacy and Self-Advocacy*

*Section IV: A*

Area of Emphasis	Planned for this Goal	Areas Addressed
Quality Assurance	Yes	Yes
Formal and Informal Community Supports	Yes	Yes

Strategies	Planned for this Goal	Strategies Used
Outreach	Yes	Yes
Training	Yes	Yes
Technical Assistance	Yes	Yes
Supporting and Educating Communities	Yes	Yes
Interagency Collaboration and Coordination	Yes	Yes
Coordination with Related Councils, Committees and Programs	Yes	Yes
Barrier Elimination	Yes	Yes
Systems Design and Redesign	Yes	Yes
Coalition Development and Citizen Participation	Yes	Yes
Informing Policymakers	Yes	Yes

Intermediaries and Collaborators	Planned for this Goal	Actual
State Protection and Advocacy System	Yes	Yes
University Center(s)	Yes	Yes
State DD Agency	Yes	Yes
Other Collaborators	Yes	Yes

Goal Narrative
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Much work was completed either through subaward or by Council staff under this goal.

The Council ED has continued her strong commitment to bringing the Council's voice and the perspective of individuals with DD and their families to work groups and statewide advisory committees and councils. Within this role she promotes system collaboration and advocacy efforts. As part of the DD Network team, she has met regularly with the DD Network Directors.

Council staff work as well as subaward work helped increase Lawmaker's knowledge, strengthen overall advocacy and self-advocacy skills, assist professionals with increasing their understanding of working with individuals with DD across the lifespan, and assisted advocacy organizations learning from one another to strengthening common advocacy goals and deepen collaborations.

--Legislation - Much work was completed either through subaward or by Council staff under this goal. The Council followed several legislative bills introduced in 2023. NCDD staff listened, discussed about, and monitored the legislative bills that pertain to persons with disabilities that were selected as a priority. The Council members official comments, either in support or opposition to the bills, were sent to senators prior to the public hearings to educate them on how potential legislation would or could impact the DD community. Testimony by the Council Executive Director was given at five public hearings. This was the first session of a two-year legislative session and was scheduled to last 90 legislative days.

--DRN: Supported Decision Making - The goal of this project was to continue raising awareness on Supported Decision Making as an option for families and individuals when considering guardianship. Major activities included creating a series of educational videos explaining Supported Decision Making; creating a group of individuals and/or families who use Supported Decision Making to act as "ambassadors"; identify and work with schools to establish "model" programs using Supported Decision Making; and establishing an online clearinghouse to provide resources and materials for individuals and families considering Supported Decision Making or developing Supported Decision Making agreements. DRN utilized a variety of methods to increase the individuals and family's awareness to understand Supported Decision Making both conceptually and empirically as well as to provide resources and materials to the individuals and families to use when implementing Supported Decision Making.

DRN believe that learning from the experience of individuals and families is an instrumental tool for raising awareness and education. They wanted to incorporate a key component of their educational activities with the experiences of other Nebraska families who have implemented Supported Decision Making. DRN feel that families benefit from having more "formal" educational materials like brochures, webinars, and presentations but also that the empirical examples provided from families when listening to others and learning from others have provided the strongest evidence, as well as the most contextual and thorough education they could receive. These discussions, as well as targeting more "formal" materials to address and apply Supported Decision Making in a variety of contexts, proved also be instrumental in breaking down myths and incorrect assumptions of both guardianship and options such as Supported Decision Making.

--PFN: State Advisor Project - This project supported Nebraskans with disabilities to speak for themselves, know their rights and responsibilities, and support disability advocacy and leadership. PFN educated elected officials and policy makers about issues important to people with disabilities. They educated employers about how to hire and support employees with disabilities so that they are

successful in building long-term careers, not just jobs. This project also supported the PFN chapters and its members with training and experiences to build their advocacy and leadership skills. They continued to collaborate with other disability organizations and projects in Nebraska and the region to promote their mutual interest to improve the lives of people with disabilities in our communities.

PFN again contracted with PFN members and partners to serve as Disability Policy Specialists (DPS) during the Nebraska legislative session. In addition, PFN partnered with the Nebraska Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) training program to support the PFN self-advocates who served as Disability Policy Specialists, as well as an additional two self-advocates recruited through Disability Rights Nebraska. This group of self-advocates learned about the legislative process and how to analyze legislation, reviewed and recommended action on legislation important to people with disabilities, met with elected officials and their staff, produced and delivered testimony to the state senate, and assisted other self-advocates to successfully testify. PFN continues to see the ongoing support for these positions as systems change, in and of itself, as it models the highest values of self-advocacy and the social role it plays.

Please note: We only received 121 total surveys from projects within Goal 4. Many participants did not fill out surveys, or the subrecipient failed to collect the data.

*Objective 1: Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.*

3. This objective is:	System Change
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:

LEGISLATION Council staff review the proposed legislative bills that are introduced annually. Staff collaborated with other advocacy organizations to share information and provide a united front on proposed legislation. The bills were narrowed down to those that may impact individuals with IDD, their families, & service providers. Council staff and members then determined which bills would be supported or opposed with official written comments or testimony, & which should be tracked. A summary of bills being followed and monitored by the Council was printed & mailed to stakeholders, professionals, state senators, & others. WORKGROUPS/COMMITTEES: Council staff continued to participate on many statewide advocacy committees, coalitions/networks & workgroups with broad memberships & representation to advocate on disability issues. Activities for this objective include educating & exchanging information, collaboration, & public policy advocacy. Topics ranged from HCBS waiver services, special education, family support services, employment, Person-Centered Planning, Charting the LifeCourse Community of Practice, Mental health & substance abuse services, & continued work on the State Olmstead Plan. In 2023, the Council ED or her representative attended quarterly or regularly scheduled meetings & provided contributions reflecting the needs of the DD population. Meetings & activities include: DISABILITY RIGHTS NEBRASKA SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING STEERING COMMITTEE & TASK FORCE: The DD Network Partners (DRN, NCDD, & UCEDD MMI) committed to collaborate throughout FFY23 on SDM. DRN established two groups to direct the initiative 1) a Steering Committee of around 10 organizations & 2) a larger SDM Task Force of 20-25 organizations (which includes those serving on the steering committee). The Council ED attended SDM Steering Committee meetings & Task Force meetings throughout FFY2023. SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (SEAC): The Council ED continued serving her second & final term with SEAC for the 2022-2023 school years. Her term ended in May 2023, & NCDD Program Specialist Rachel Ward applied to SEAC to represent NCDD & was appointed to start her first SEAC term on 9/28/23. NCDD membership with SEAC helped address system issues related to student discipline (legislation around seclusion & restraint) & to initiate the NCDD subaward with Answers4Families to create the Professional Educational Clearinghouse to address the special education teacher workforce crisis. The Council ED also reached out to the State Director of Special Education Amy Rhone about the Charting the LifeCourse framework &

connected Amy to Council member & CtLC ambassador Beth Plisek. Beth presented the CtLC framework tools at the 9/28 SEAC meeting. GOVERNOR'S DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE: The Council ED serves as the Council representative on the state statute mandated Governor's DD Advisory Committee, which is responsible to advise DHHS regarding all aspects of the funding and delivery of services to persons with DD. Members are appointed by the Governor, and 51% of these members must be people with developmental disabilities and their family members. The DD Advisory Committee focus also includes providing oversight to make sure people placed in the custody of the department under the DD Court-Ordered Custody Act receive the least restrictive treatment and services necessary; overseeing the design and implementation of the quality management and improvement plan; and assisting, providing feedback, and guiding the implementation of the family support program under recent state statute. The Council ED leverages her membership on this committee to bring systemic changes to the delivery & oversight of HCBS services. She attended frequent meetings throughout 2023. NASP - NEBRASKA ASSOCIATION OF SERVICE PROVIDERS: NCDD belongs to NASP as a Related Industry Partner Member. Benefits of being a NASP Related Industry Partner membership includes communication, networking, teamwork, & progress with key local, state, & national policymakers. Related Industry Partners are not allowed NASP voting rights & may not hold elected NASP office. ED attended monthly meetings throughout 2023. Council ED shared updates on the Council funded comprehensive supported employment study with Dr. Lisa Mills at NASP meetings. The Council ED is also a key member of the NASP Supported Employment Committee, which met monthly in 2023. The ED also attended the day-long NASP NEON (National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network) Supported Employment Training in August. DIVISION OF DD PAID CAREGIVER WORKGROUP: NE DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) coordinated a Legally Responsible Individuals (LRI) workgroup in partnership with representatives from the DD Network (DRN, NCDD & MMI), and The Arc of NE. The LRI workgroup met regularly from Jan. to June 2023 to address the feedback received regarding the desire for expanded opportunities of paid family caregivers/guardians. For additional information, please see info provided in Section III, Input on National Priorities. TITLE V MATERNAL CHILD HEALTH BLOCK GRANT STEERING COMMITTEE: The committee met in Dec. 2022 & April 2023. Updates to the

Action Plan, public input process, and financial updates were discussed. The Council ED focused on activity developments supporting the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs priority of addressing behavioral health needs in schools and with families. DISABILITY SERVICES STAKEHOLDER OLMSTEAD ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Council ED attended the virtual meetings January through June. These meetings were focused on reviewing, updating, & approving Goals to a SMART format to the 2019 Nebraska Olmstead Plan. As of 10/25, the updated 2023 plan has not been posted. MUNROE MEYER INSTITUTE'S UCEDD COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD: Attended three meetings in FFY2023 & provided NCDD report at each CAB meeting. DIVISION OF DD FAMILY SUPPORT WAIVER (FSW) STEERING COMMITTEE & SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS: The Council ED was invited by the Division of Developmental Disabilities Policy Administrator & other top leadership to serve on the DDD Family Support Waiver Steering Committee in late 2022 & continued serving in 2023. She also served on the Service Delivery/Participant Engagement & Participant Services subcommittees. She was invited to serve on the FSW Steering Committee to represent the stakeholder viewpoint, NCDD, & the Governor's DD Advisory Committee. The Steering Committee & the subcommittees were responsible to engage stakeholders, determine services offered on the FSW, develop the waiver, regulations, policies, & procedures, & submit the application to CMS for approval in late 2023. The goal is to have an approved FSW in place by March 2024. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE - NE STATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES: Attended two meetings in FFY2023. NE ATP (Assistive Technology Partnership) Advisory Council: Attended two meetings in FFY2023. DHHS HCBS (HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES) STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS: Attended virtual monthly HCBS meetings for Families & Stakeholders. CHARTING THE LIFECOURSE (CTLC) NASDDDS NATIONAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP) FOR SUPPORTING FAMILIES & CTLC ANNUAL SHOWCASE: Council ED serves on NE's DD Division CoP Supporting Families internal team & attended monthly meetings with the national CoP consultants. She also attended the national CoP for Supporting Families & CtLC Annual Showcase May 2-4, 2023, in Kansas City. The Council ED represented the NE CoP team at the annual meeting & provided a state report on 5/2/23. Her engagement in the CoP makes it possible to advocate for continued improvements in person-centered planning using

	<p>the CtLC framework in all of NE's HCBS waiver programs.</p> <p>PCP CHAMPION'S: The PCP (Person-Centered Planning) Champions Community of Practice (CoP) was formed in 2021 &amp; 2022 under the Council funded PCP project. The PCP CoP continues to meet monthly to provide an opportunity for extensive sharing and discussion for family members, self-advocates, DD Service Coordinators, DD providers, and other advocates on action steps to ensure PCP is central to HCBS services. In 2023 meetings focused on the Charting the LifeCourse framework tools and how to incorporate them into one's person-centered plan.</p> <p>NEBRASKA CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES (NCCD): NCCD is a cross-disability coalition, leverages collaborative activities to identify &amp; research public policy issues, educate policymakers &amp; the public, &amp; advocate for effective solutions regarding Nebraskans w/disabilities. Council staff attend monthly NCCD meetings.</p> <p>ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY PROFESSIONALS (ACP) OF NEBRASKA CONFERENCE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS: A member of the Council staff serves as on the board of the NE Association of Community Professionals (ACP). ACP is a non-profit entity that strives to provide quality and timely training opportunities for direct support staff, frontline supervisors, families, participants with I/DD, and stakeholders in the I/DD field. ACP offers conferences of the highest quality each spring and fall that the Council promotes with stakeholders and Council members. Council staff and interested Council members attend.</p> <p>DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH (DPH) EQUITY STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS The Council ED was invited in FFY23 to participate as an appointed member of the DPH internal Equity Steering Committee. This committee makes directional decisions on various organizational initiatives &amp; projects. The Council ED provides feedback stressing the importance of addressing health equity for people with DD &amp; other disabilities within the DPH &amp; the Office of Health Disparities.</p> <p>DIVISION OF DD NOTICE OF RIGHTS &amp; OBLIGATIONS WORKGROUP - The Council Program Specialist serves on this workgroup.</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
Council Chair to submit 18 letters to State Senators serving on various legislative committees to educate and inform them on the Council's positions on 18 legislative bills.	Yes

One Council member or staff member will provide oral testimony during a public hearing to educate and inform senators on the Council's position.	Yes
Mail Newline publication summarizing Council-selected legislative bills and status of bills during legislative session to 580 individuals & senators.	Yes
Council staff quarterly attendance at a minimum of three DD coalition/network/partnership meetings with Long Term Redesign Advisory Committee; Disability Stakeholder Olmstead Planning Advisory Council; Brain Injury Advisory Council; Brain Injury Oversight Committee; Behavioral Health Joint Advisory Committee; Title V Maternal Child Health Block Grant Steering Committee; Oral Health Advisory Committee; MMI's Community Advisory Board; and the Governor's Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (pertaining to state's DD waiver services).	Yes
Council staff quarterly attendance at a minimum of 10 gatherings of workgroups and statewide advisory committees, including: Disability Stakeholder Olmstead Advisory Council; the Governor's Developmental Disability Advisory Committee (pertaining to state's DD waiver services), Family Support Waiver Steering Committee, Assistive Technology Partnership (ATP) Advisory Council Meetings; Behavioral Health Joint Advisory Committee; Title V Maternal Child Health Block Grant Steering Committee; Living Well Program Partner Meetings. Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP); Nebraska Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (NCCD) meetings; HCBS DHHS Stakeholder meetings; and NE Special Education Advisory Council Meetings (SEAC).	Yes

10. The report should include the following:	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data</p>
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	collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)
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LEGISLATION During the Legislative 2023 Session, the Council provided either letters or testimony in support of 17 bills, provided information towards the opposition of three bills, & took a neutral position on five bills. Of these, the Council Executive Director testified in support of LB358, LB424, LB526, LB583, & LB601, and in opposition to LB811. The Council's Newsline publication, a summary of bills supported, opposed, or tracked, was mailed to over 580 individuals, families, professionals, & our 49 senators. This summary provided a status of the proposed 2023 bills & whether the Council supported or opposed the bill. The First Session of the 108th Legislature adjourned June 1, 2023. The legislature introduced 820 bills this session and 50 bills were approved by the Governor. It is the end of the 1st Session so bills that were not outright "killed" are carried over to the next session. Because of the long floor debates and filibustering of the 2023 First Session, many bills were not passed and there wasn't sufficient time for NCDD's selected priority bills to be discussed. Here are some updates on the Council's high-priority legislation. LB 39: Require "disability impact statements" for legislation assigned by the Executive Board. LB 39 had a public hearing but has not made it out of the Executive Board committee for floor debate. NCDD supported it. LB 46: Appropriate funds to the DHHS for a provider rate study of home health care skilled nursing services & private duty nursing services under Medicaid. Prior to retaining a consultant, the department will meet w/providers to receive input related to the specific services & rates subject to the rate study. The Council supported LB46 which had a public hearing, but it has not made it out of committee. LB 265: Provides each correctional officer with an individually fitted protective vest designed to protect against edged weapons and stabbings. Additionally, DHHS will not restrict, in any manner, a DHHS employee from exercising justified use of force to protect him/herself or others from serious bodily harm or death. NCDD opposed the bill's section that would pertain to DHHS employees who work at the Beatrice State Developmental Center (BSDC/ICF-IDD) & the Lincoln & Norfolk Regional Centers allowing the use of physical force on people in these settings. The section of the bill related to providing a protective vest for correctional officers at the Dept. of Correctional Services was amended into LB 50. LB 265 was indefinitely postponed. LB 278: Requires Division of Economic Development and the NE Investment Finance Authority to collaborate on seeking/obtaining grant funding for accessible, affordable, & safe housing for people w/disabilities. The Council supported LB 278 which faced no opposition at any stage of debate. LB 278 was amended into LB 92 which was passed and approved by the Governor. LB 358: This bill is the State intent to increase NE's dental service reimbursement rates by 25% under the Medical Assistance Act. This bill means a lot to the DD community as dental work and services are hard to come by in getting the right health care and follow-up care for people with I/DD. There are a limited number of dentists who currently accept dental Medicaid, so the increase would address capacity. LB 385 had a hearing but has not been debated yet on the Legislative floor. LB 385: Provides financial incentives to recruit & retain teachers in NE classrooms. Teachers may apply for one series of retention grants based on his/her eligibility. The grants are in the amount of \$5,000 each. Provisions & portions of LB385 were amended into LB705 by AM1468 to establish the NE Teacher Recruitment & Retention Act. LB705 was passed & signed by the Governor. LB 424: Creates state Housing and Urban Development agency to lead policy on state programs related to housing & homelessness. The bill sits in the Urban Affairs committee and has not made it to the Legislative floor for debate. NCDD supported it & shared that creating a state lead agency addressing affordable and accessible housing relates directly to NE's evolving Olmstead Plan. LB 583: This bill, introduced by Senator Sanders at the request of Governor Pillen, would increase funding for special education supplemental aid under the Tax Equity & Educational Opportunities Support Act. The Council testified in support of LB583 which



would expand State funding for special education & bring a historic extensive investment of funding to educate children w/disabilities to begin fulfilling promises made when Special Education was created. The bill passed & was approved by the Governor on 5/31/23. LB 601: This bill will implement an eight and seven-tenths percent increase on reimbursement rates to providers of developmental disability services. The Council ED testified in support since LB 601 provides a mechanism for the State of NE to address the critical workforce care crisis due to staff shortages among DD waiver service providers. Portions of LB 601 passed into the appropriations bill giving DD providers a 3% rate increase on July 1, 2023 and an additional 2% increase next July, 2024. The full 3% increase is across the board WITHOUT any ARPA step down (it was initially intended to step down over the 3 years). Also, providers were able to secure & maintain the full 9% rate increase from Legislative year 2022 for services that require staff. Establishing a legal framework for the state's new photo ID voting requirement was a priority for the Legislature this session. As a result, the Council took a neutral position on LB 70, LB 230, LB 535, LB 675, and LB 770 since they all related in some capacity to the voter approved mandate. Position letters highlighted NCDD's concerns related to voting access for people w/disabilities, & highlighted components that the Council wanted to be considered in any voter ID bill passage. Some comments from these letters are below: - The Council is pleased that LB70 will waive the fee for issuing an original, renewal, or state identification card to a resident of NE who does not have a valid NE driver's license, who is requesting the issuance of such card for voting purposes. LB70 also waives the fee for a certified copy of a birth record if the applicant does not have a current NE driver's license or state ID card & indicates in the application that the applicant needs a certified copy of the birth record to apply for a state ID card for voting. This will allow individuals, especially those w/disabilities, the opportunity to obtain a state ID card so their voices will be heard when they are able to participate in their constitutional right to vote. If we are going to have ID requirements, NCDD recommends utilizing the robust list of ID cards in LB675. - The issue of ADA compliance is fundamental in allowing individuals w/disabilities to exercise their constitutional right to vote. NCDD appreciates the effort in both LB675 and LB770 to require ADA compliance in the voting process. Polling sites can slip out of ADA compliance, so a repeated audit is essential. If we are going to require individuals to show ID when voting or registering, the least the state can do is to make the places to get an ID accessible, too. Access to the appropriate ID for no cost is essential & must be easily attained in ADA compliant facilities. This is best achieved by LB770. - As voting is a constitutional right, NCDD believes that all individuals regardless of ability or disability, have the right to early voting. Early voting should not be limited to military personnel & those living in a nursing home, or an assisted living facility as limited by LB228. If we are going to restrict who is allowed to participate in early voting, then polling sites will need to be further accommodated to account for longer wait times, which could include the need for extra chairs or extra bathroom accommodations. - Other voter ID comments are noted in #13 below. LB 770: Requires an audit of Dept. of Motor Vehicles, the election commissioners, & the county clerks & all polling places for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. LB 770 had a public hearing but has not made it out of committee for floor debate. LB 770 relates to the various voter ID bills proposed in 2023, and the Council took a neutral position on all voter ID related bills. LB 811: Changes Student Discipline Act to provide for physical intervention or classroom removal to manage student behavior. NCDD opposed this bill & the NCDD ED testified in person. Fortunately, this bill did not make it out of the Education Committee for discussion on the Legislative Floor in 2023. We will continue to monitor it closely in 2024. There are 110 bills held on General File, 14 bills held on Select File and 539 bills held in committee. These 663 bills will be carried over and added to the bills introduced in the beginning of the 108th Legislature 2nd Session (Jan. 2024). WORKGROUPS/COMMITTEES: The Council ED and other Council staff do their best to attend all the various state committees, advisory boards, & work groups that NCDD serves on year-round. The Council ED and other staff serve as engaged participants representing the public face

and voice for the Council in these meetings and workgroups. The Council ED strives to demonstrate patience and poise in these meetings, and when facing challenging problems or situations, she aims to help stakeholders or members reach consensus by offering or seeking out solutions or ideas to consider. Council staff are effective at communicating the DD Council mission, accomplishments, and goals to the public and within these settings, which helps the Council gain support from the community. NCDD staff involvement in the multiple work groups, committees, & councils requires that we stay abreast of changes while providing input to address system barriers and gaps while focusing on collaboration.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
Stakeholders and policymakers are educated on key legislation impacting individuals with developmental disabilities through letters of support/opposition and/or testimony.	Yes
Coalition/network/partnership meetings provide opportunities for stakeholder collaboration and coordination to promote systems change.	Yes
Council staff's active participation on state workgroups and statewide advisory committees brings the perspective of individuals with developmental disabilities to discussions and promotes system collaboration and advocacy efforts.	Yes
Improved systems within the State of Nebraska in relation to people with I/DD and their families.	Yes

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:

LEGISLATION As noted above in #10, NCDD followed multiple voter ID related proposed legislation and shared concerns and suggestions within our blanket neutral position letters. Additional voter ID comments included: - Requiring the use of notaries as dictated in LB535's amendment, which still has not dropped, will be a hardship not only those in the disability community, but all Nebraskans. There will be increased barriers of first finding a notary & then obtaining transportation to & from the notary. - Signatory requirements are also an issue for the disability community. Some individuals do not have the dexterity to comply with the signatory requirement. - An innovative Legislative bill such as LB535 will help educate voters on voter identification requirements & procedures by providing a public awareness campaign regarding the voter identification requirements & procedures through multiple mediums & in-person events. In addition to the generic outreach, NCDD recommends the need to have community specific outreach, for example the

disability community. The more educated a person is, the more likely they are to vote. - NCDD suggest that the legislature take the best pieces of each of the other bills noted and merge them into one comprehensive bill. Lawmakers ultimately passed LB514 to implement the provisions of an initiative petition approved by voters in 2022 establishing a photo ID requirement to vote in Nebraska. LB514, as originally introduced by Gordon Sen. Tom Brewer, would have served as the Government, Military and Veterans Affairs Committee's annual elections clean-up bill. The measure was gutted on general file and replaced with a committee voter ID proposal. Among other provisions, LB514 lays out the requirements for a valid form of photographic identification, which includes a document issued by the state of NE, an agency or a political subdivision of the state, the U.S. military, a NE postsecondary educational institution or a recognized Native American tribe or band. A hospital, assisted-living facility, nursing home or other skilled care facility record that includes a photo or digital image also will qualify. The secretary of state's office is required to provide a website dedicated to voter ID requirements and procedures and implement a public awareness campaign. No fee will be charged to NE residents for an original, renewal or duplicate state ID card for voting purposes. An individual without a photo ID may vote provisionally at the polls if they certify that they have a "reasonable impediment," including a religious objection to being photographed or a situation that prevents them from obtaining a valid photo ID such as a disability or illness, lack of a birth certificate or the inability to obtain other required documents. Ballots that do not meet the bill's requirements can be validated through the election commissioner or county clerk's office by providing missing information by the Tuesday following the election. Voters who request to have a ballot mailed to them must provide a NE driver's license number, state ID card number or a photocopy of another valid photo ID with their request. Lawmakers passed LB514 on a 38-1 vote and the measure took effect immediately. In addition to the 25 bills that the Council followed, NCDD also followed a few Legislative Resolutions (LR). A Legislative Resolution is a proposal to make a formal expression of opinion, intent or recognition; amend the state or federal constitution; or authorize an interim study of an issue. - Legislative Resolution 244: Interim study to examine guardianship in Nebraska (Senator Day). The Public Policy and Legal Advocacy Teams worked together to write LR 244. The interim study addresses a preference of plenary guardianships versus limited guardianships; Public policy and legal mechanisms that result in better outcomes for individuals under guardianship; alternatives to guardianship; and ways to ensure that guardianships are appropriate and tailored. LR 244 was referred to the Executive Board, and a hearing has not been held yet. -Legislative Resolution 196: Interim study to review ways to eliminate or reduce the current waiting list for services that adults with developmental disabilities experience (McDonnell). The Disability Rights NE Public Policy and Legal Advocacy Teams worked together to write LR 196. The interim study addresses characteristics of the waiting list (for example, individual demographics and waiting times), federal assistance available to address long developmental disability service waiting lists, other state best practices to reduce waiting lists. LR 196 was referred to the Health & Human Services Committee and a hearing was held on October 11, 2023. WORKGROUPS/COMMITTEES: Advocacy work is ongoing. Often the Council's EDs role on the various state work groups & statewide advisory committees & councils includes additional committee work to leverage advocacy efforts & systemic change. It is critical that she develop good interpersonal relationships in these settings. In 2023 this was evident since she coordinated the logistics to host the Supported Employment Summit on 9/20/23. Close to 100 people attended, including top leadership from key agencies (DD Division, Nebraska VR, Division of BH), NASP, Disability Rights Nebraska, MMI UCEDD, & over 40 providers who provide supported employment services. In August 2022 the Division of DD's leadership invited the Council ED to serve on the DDD Family Support Waiver (FSW) internal Steering Committee. She continued serving on it and two other FSW subcommittees in 2023. Within this role, she represented the stakeholder and NCDD viewpoint, & represented the Governor's DD Advisory Committee. Having a seat at the table during this critical

system change demonstrates that she has developed trust with DDD & outside stakeholders. She provided feedback to the Governor's DD Advisory Committee members about her perception of the FSW development process, and encouraged the membership to submit formal comments on the draft FSW service definitions. Formal comments were submitted, & DDD made significant changes to the FSW based on committee feedback throughout the FSW development. (By state statute, the Governor's DD Advisory Committee is supposed to have oversight in the FSW development process.) The waiver was submitted to CMS on 10/30/23, & it will hopefully launch in March 2024. DIVISION OF DD NOTICE OF RIGHTS & OBLIGATIONS WORKGROUP - DD Program Specialist along with NCDD Program Specialist, worked with five self-advocates and three Service Coordinators to update the Notice of Rights and Obligations for the State of Nebraska. This group met once every month from Nov 2022 - July 2023. The main goal being focused on was that the current NORO for Nebraska is very hard to look at, read, and understand. With this being something that many self-advocates must read and sign every year, this is a very important document that needed to be updated. -This workgroup reviewed the NORO from multiple other states including Arizona, Illinois, Minnesota, Ohio, and South Dakota. They looked at how the information was formatted and what pictures were included. This gave a clearer explanation of what this workgroup wanted to improve on. There were many discussions with self-advocates about what they think their rights are and what are the most important rights to them. They focused on the words first, what they were and how they were placed, then the pictures were gone thru and decided what made the most sense visually. Sizing and spacing were taken into consideration as well to help with anyone that is visually impaired. After many meetings and discussions were held, this workgroup finalized the draft of the new NORO for Nebraska.

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

NASP LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST, HCBS IDD PROVIDER RATES WERE PRIORITY: NASP hosted a Legislative Breakfast on March 1, 2023 for NASP members that the Council ED attended. NASP shared their legislative priorities with State Senators and/or their staff members who attended. The NASP legislative priority was to ensure a robust and high-quality service delivery by appropriating adequate funding to HCBS I/DD service providers. Background shared: There is a crisis of care due to staff shortages among I/DD providers. Unlike other industries, I/DD providers cannot adjust their prices or hours to offset costs in a highly competitive labor market; they are dependent upon rates set by the legislature. Despite a lifesaving rate increase in FY23, skyrocketing inflation, increased administrative burdens, and the recent passage of LB433 (\$15 minimum wage by 2006) continue to force I/DD service providers into an unending cycle of struggle. Rather than our current status quo in which thousands of Nebraskans with I/DD spend years waiting for strained services, funding should be sufficient to enable growth and innovation. Adequate funding must be regularly maintained to ensure dedicated staff receive competitive wages as well as the training and oversight necessary for high-quality service delivery. This is not an optional industry. This is not a partisan issue. Proposal: 1. Make FY23 temporary ARPA funding permanent (9% for services that require staff) 2. Mirror the SSI cost of living increase while also ensuring DSP (frontline staff) do not fall below 150% of the NE minimum wage by increasing I/DD provider rates by 8% in both FY2023-24 and FY2024-25. 3. When Nebraska minimum wage becomes tied to CPI index in 2026, do the same with HCBS I/DD service provider rates. The Council ED testified in support of two appropriation related bills

to address the provider rates (LB526 and LB601). Her testimony noted that legislation like LB526 and LB601 will help Nebraska implement a plan to address all relevant components that drive the DSP workforce crisis, including low wages and reimbursement rates, high turnover, and inadequate training. She shared that NCDD prioritizes advocating for access to community living & supports & noted that NCDD wanted to bring the DSP funding crisis & related inadequate provider rates to the Legislature's attention to encourage policymakers to have uncomfortable conversations resulting in adequate HCBS provider investments. OUTCOME: The HCBS DD provider rate increases for the biennium were approved at 3% July 1st, 2023, and 2% in July 2024. NASP plans to rally and request additional funding in 2024. NASP representatives focused on building a solid relationship with Governor Pillen's office in 2023 and the Governor's office has indicated that they are open to working with providers over the coming year to get their rates and payment problems addressed. NCDD SHARES INFO ABOUT DR. MILLS SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT REPORT AT NASP LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST The Council ED also shared the Dr. Lisa Mills supported employment report's Executive Summary and a related legislative handout at the NASP Legislative Breakfast. The handout was titled INVESTING IN UNTAPPED SOLUTIONS: FOCUSING ON NEBRASKANS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AS ONE SOLUTION TO THE STATE'S LABOR SHORTAGE. Information in this flyer: What's happening right now? - Many Nebraskan employers can't find the workers they need. - Many Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) are not yet working; but they have services available to them to support them to work. - These "Supported Employment" services are available to assist people with IDD to prepare for, find, get, learn and master jobs that Nebraskan employers need filled. - Unfortunately, "Supported Employment" services are being under-utilized by people with IDD. The good news is Nebraska can change this! How can the Nebraska Legislature help?

1. Propose/pass legislation to: - Ensure every working-age Nebraskan with IDD has routine chances to learn about the opportunities and benefits of working, and to make a truly informed choice about whether to pursue work with the help of "Supported Employment" services. - Make expanding the use of "Supported Employment" services by people with IDD a goal for state agencies who administer programs that include these services.
2. Support new, targeted appropriation of state funding to the Division of Developmental Disabilities, to: - Support implementation of the legislation with new targeted funding of "Supported Employment" services to increase the number of Nebraskans with IDD who are working or actively pursuing work. - Capture 178% federal match - \$2.78 for every \$1.00 Nebraska invests. Help Nebraskan employers and Nebraskans with IDD get connected and prosper! \*end of flyer

The Council's related industry partner membership in NASP has provided additional opportunities for the Council to have an impact during the Legislative Session. Securing increased HCBS DD provider rates and educating policymakers on the Council's supported employment work are impacting systemic challenges. DIVISION OF DD NOTICE OF RIGHTS & OBLIGATIONS WORKGROUP - -Next they wanted to get the word out and receive feedback from other self-advocates in other Nebraska regions, along with professionals who see this document every year as well. There were meetings in-person and over zoom with other organizations, self-advocates and Service Coordinators. After getting more feedback from their peers in Omaha, Kearney, Grand Island, Norfolk, and Seward, the workgroup felt confident in the updated NORO. There will be minor follow-ups and finalizations beginning 2024, and also discussions of a possible brochure and/or video explaining the Notice of Rights and Obligations for Nebraska.

5. *Objective 2: Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.*

3. This objective is:	System Change
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	No
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	Yes

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:	This objective meets the requirement of providing specific detail on how the Council will collaborate with the DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska [P&A] and Munroe-Meyer Institute [UCEDD]) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD. This collaboration includes the following: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the
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Supported Decision-Making Initiative. All four areas of collaboration were addressed throughout FFY2023. The DD Network Directors and staff collaboratively engage in a variety of advocacy efforts and communicate regularly on trends, concerns, and challenges to collaborate to bring systems change and improvements for Nebraskans with IDD. Nebraska takes pride in the strong collaborative relationships within the DD Network, and we are committed to continuing this legacy. DD Network collaboration is essential to bringing systems change and improvements to Nebraska. Collaborative activities between the Council, UCEDD, & Disability Rights NE (DRN) include monthly planning meetings with the Directors of each organization. Meetings are typically held in person, & occasionally virtual meetings are conducted. Welcoming Tania Diaz, the new CEO for DRN, has been a priority to continue fostering partnerships within the DD Network & allow for significant information sharing & collaboration activities. DD NETWORK TRI-BOARD MEETING Annually NE DD Network directors from MMI's UCEDD, DRN, & NCDD, identify at least one concern that affects people w/DD & hosts a daylong free training for the board, council, & staff members of these three entities. This annual training helps increase knowledge of resources, priorities, & projects, while providing an avenue for our members to network & build relationships. The gathering also helps the DD Network partners meet the DD Act mandate for collaboration. Often the Tri-Board meeting sets the foundation for additional DD Network collaboration on a particular issue. The June 9th Tri-Board meeting included members & staff from the UCEDD CAB, Council, & DRN. We also invited the directors & board members from the NE Statewide Independent Living Council & the board members of The Arc of NE. State leaders from the NE DHHS Division of DD & NE VR also attended. Participants were encouraged to attend in person, but a hybrid option was provided. This full day meeting from 8:30am-4:00pm was held in a conference area at MMI UCEDD, & we had 47 participating in person & 12 online via Zoom. The Tri-Board meeting topics included presentation of the outcomes of the National Core Indicator (NCI) Survey & the overall topic was on "Competitive Integrated Employment". The keynote speaker was Lisa Mills, PhD. The Council contracted with national subject matter expert Dr. Mills to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the history, outcomes, & perspective of various stakeholders about competitive integrated employment opportunities & supports for Nebraskans with IDD. The report was published in February

2023 & shared with our stakeholders & partners. The study was undertaken to identify strategic recommendations that the State of NE & other key stakeholders can consider for implementation to improve employment opportunities & outcomes for Nebraskans with I/DD. Dr. Mills presented her findings & recommendations. Mills also led a panel of representatives from 4 other states (Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, & Indiana) who have good systems in place to support competitive employment. Panelists included: -

Beth Swedeen, Executive Director, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities - Iowa Panelist, LeAnn Moskowitz, LTSS Policy Specialist of Iowa Medicaid, Bureau of Long-Term Services & Supports within Iowa DHHS - Minnesota Panelists: Chris McVey, Deputy Director of Disability Employment Services for Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services & Ryan Merz, Employment Planning & Resource Coordinator, Minnesota Dept. of Human Services - Indiana Panelist: Teresa Grossi, PhD, Director of Strategic Developments, Indiana Institute on Disability & Community; UCEDD at Indiana University

The goal of the panel presentation was for attendees to learn about other states' successful strategies for supporting CIE for individuals with intellectual & developmental disabilities. Time was provided for questions & answers at the end of the panel discussions & presentations. Following lunch, we showed the first public showing of the video "Inclusive Economy" - an employment educational film produced in partnership with NE Public Media ([www.nebraskapublicmedia.org](http://www.nebraskapublicmedia.org)) & NASP - the NE Association of Service Providers. People First NE also collaborated with NASP on the video project, & the DD Council provided a mini grant to support production efforts. The 30-minute film focused on employment & was divided into three, 10-minute segments: 1) encouraging NE employers to hire people with intellectual & developmental disabilities (I/DD), 2) encouraging more Nebraskans with I/DD to seek competitive, integrated employment, & 3) encouraging neurotypical Nebraskans to consider a lifelong career in I/DD supported employment service provision. NASP Director, Alana Schriver, was featured as the first panelist & answered questions about the making of the "Inclusive Economy" video. Afterward, we had a panel of NE representatives that included 5 individuals with developmental disabilities who were successfully employed & a local employer who has demonstrated success supporting CIE for individuals with disabilities.

DISABILITY RIGHTS NEBRASKA SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING INITIATIVE During FFY 2023 the Developmental Disabilities



	<p>Network Partners (DRN, NCDD, and MMI UCEDD) continued collaboration to support DRN's initiative to establish Supported Decision-Making (SDM) as an alternative to guardianship and conservatorship in Nebraska. Disability Rights Nebraska initiated the full scale Supported Decision Making Initiative in FFY2022. In FFY 2023, DRN continued to contract with SDM national subject matter expert, Jonathan Martinis, from Syracuse University, to serve as their primary expert and consultant to help implement the SDM initiative. DRN established a Steering Committee consisting of 12 organizations who have expressed interest in creating SDM as an alternative to guardianship in Nebraska, and they continued meeting throughout FFY2023. The Council Executive Director and UCEDD Director serve on the Steering Committee. DRN also established a larger group, the SDM Task Force, to assist with the actual implementation of the activities that are developed through the initiative. The Task Force consists of approximately 26 members (including those serving on the Steering Committee) which continued meeting quarterly throughout FFY2023. DRN Subaward - The goal of the project is to raise awareness of Supported Decision Making as a tool to increase or maintain self-determination for persons with disabilities (or other conditions where an individual's competency/ability to make decisions may be compromised-- such as aging adults). DRN also wanted to raise awareness of the predominance of "plenary" guardianships over limited guardianships and how Supported Decision Making can be an alternative to overbroad or undue "plenary" guardianships. -DRN reported no Demographics for this year, and only a few Key Performance Indicators. -This has been discussed with DRN in hopes there will be more data collected for FFY24. IFA1.2-25, IFA1.3-462, SC1.4-462, and CR03-73. -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
Minimum of 10 monthly DD Network Partner CEO meetings.	Yes
1 DD Network Tri-Board Training event (annually), with at least 25 people attending.	Yes

Minimum of 10 NASP and NCCD meetings attended annually.	Yes
DD Network Partners participate in at least three advisory boards or stakeholder group meetings throughout the year.	Yes
300 people will be educated about Supported Decision Making.	Yes
DRN will continue 6 SDM Steering Committee and 6 SDM Taskforce meetings throughout the year. 26 organizations will be educated and participate in this structure.	Yes
DRN will create a video series so that 60 people can be educated about Supported Decision Making.	Yes
DRN will establish SDM Ambassadors to educate 20 people about Supported Decision Making.	NO
DRN will obtain and maintain a SDM web-based clearinghouse of information to educate 60 people and/or help 5 families establish Supported Decision Making arrangements.	Yes

10. The report should include the following:	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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DD NETWORK TRI-BOARD MEETING Participants reacted positively to the Tri-Board meeting subject content. The day concluded with breakout sessions in which members of our boards engaged with each other to create action steps of what we could do to help support recommendations from Dr. Mills report to facilitate competitive integrated employment for individuals with DD in Nebraska. Surveys were sent to the 31 DD Network Partner Board members who attended the meeting in person. We had 18 respond to the survey (58% return rate) and over 95% indicated somewhat or extremely satisfied with the meeting, speakers, content, and format of the Tri-Board meeting. DRN SUBAWARD SUPPORTED DECISION MAKING SUBAWARD -Objective 1: Continue 6 Steering Committee and 6 Task Force meetings; 26 organizations will be educated and participate. DRN held 4 meetings of the project's Steering Committee and Task Force workgroups. Each group met in February, April, July,

and August. The membership of the Steering Committee included 14 organizations and the Task Force included the Steering Committee members plus two additional organizations. These meetings produced significant collaboration and input. The meetings were instrumental to identify new audiences for educational presentations, to identify topics for the educational brochures, to review the educational materials, and to provide outlets to promote the "clearinghouse" as well as the project overall. -Objective 2: Hold a Statewide Summit to educate the public about Supported Decision Making DRN did NOT hold a Statewide Summit on Supported Decision Making. They decided to postpone until early Fiscal Year 2024 to have more time to plan the event. Hosting a substantial event such as the Summit was not feasible given the amount of work needed to get the other pieces "off the ground". -Objective 3: Create a series of educational videos about Supported Decision Making DRN produced a video animation explaining the concept and benefits of Supported Decision Making. The video is catalogued on the Clearinghouse website. More videos are planned for FFY24. -Objective 4: Establish "Ambassadors" to educate people about Supported Decision Making DRN identified two potential Ambassadors, one of which is a new participant on the Task Force. They have contracted with Mary Phillips to consult and work with us on the project. In addition to her role as consultant, she has acted as an ambassador. Mary presented to Educational Service Unit 6 about Supported Decision Making, sharing her family's experience with Supported Decision Making. Even when presenting with Jonathan Martinis or Brad Meurrens, Mary talks about her family's experience implementing Supported Decision Making as an alternative to guardianship (which is the intent of the Ambassadors-to give lived experience and empirical examples of Supported Decision Making). DRN will approach the two potential ambassadors in the beginning of Fiscal Year 2024. -Objective 5: Work with 2 schools or Center for Independent Living to act as pilot educational projects to educate people or help families develop Supported Decision-Making arrangements. DRN has identified 2 potential schools to approach. Independence Rising has expressed interest in learning more about and promoting Supported Decision Making. DRN will approach all these organizations and have further discussions in early FY 24. -Objective 6: Obtain and maintain website as resource Clearinghouse to educate 60 people and/or help 5 families establish Supported Decision-Making arrangements. A webpage on the Disability Rights Nebraska website is dedicated to Supported Decision Making and serves as the web-based Clearinghouse for the grant. The Clearinghouse contains a wealth of resources on a variety of topics related to Supported Decision Making: videos, slideshows, and research literature addressing Supported Decision Making in general, for persons with mental illness, the aging community, policy language/legislation, etc. In addition to the Clearinghouse, 5 brochures were produced in FY 23 covering these topics relative to Supported Decision Making: - guardianship - independent living/transition students - special education - personal finance - healthcare The brochures were developed by Jonathan Martinis and reviewed by both the Steering Committee and Task Force. The brochures on guardianship, independent living and special education were printed early in the project timeline and we only have a few remaining. The brochures on finance and healthcare have been created, been reviewed by Steering Committee and Task Force, and are at the printshop at the University of Nebraska Medical Center MMI's UCEDD. Johnathan Martinis has researched and produced a slideshow on legislative language and policy options in other states regarding Supported Decision Making. This will be presented to the Steering Committee and Task Force. A portion of the 2024 Summit will be dedicated to Supported Decision-Making policy and legislative options for Nebraska. One of the other strategies employed in this grant project is continuing to conduct educational presentations to a variety of audiences. - August 16, 2023: Jonathan and Brad presented at the Elder Justice Training event held at and broadcast by Nebraska Public Broadcasting. The topic was Supported Decision Making and the Aging Community. We discussed Supported Decision-Making concepts, application of Supported Decision Making to the aging community, and an introduction to our plans for FY 2024. Attendees (both in-person and

virtual/broadcast): 400 people - August 3, 2023: Mary staffed a vendor table and spoke to transition staff at ESU #6 "Family Resources Night" event. Attendees: 25 transition staff - September 6, 2023: Mary and Brad presented to a statewide audience of transition coordinators. Attendees: 6 coordinator staff - March 15, 2023: Jonathan, Mary, and Brad present to Vocational Rehabilitation staff at "Vocational Rehabilitation University" conference. Attendees: 50 staff -The application of Supported Decision Making, and the number of interested/affected communities can be overwhelming. DRN could not educate all communities during the span of the project so we utilized our Steering Committee and Task Force to help identify areas/groups of primary importance. They indicated these should focus on educating families and individuals, but also focus the year on the link between the education system (especially transition) and guardianships: focus on reaching special education teachers, administrators, school staff handling transition services/education, transition staff in state systems (e.g., developmental disability regions, transition coordinators, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Department of Education). This would address those places where students are funneled into guardianships. DRN wanted to focus attention of their educational activities in this year of the project to education and human service groups/staff. In FY 24, DRN will expand the attention to the legal field, another area where guardianships are created (seemingly milled) and Supported Decision Making can be employed. The DRN consultant has produced a presentation for the Steering Committee and Task Force members about policy options and examples from other states who have legislation implementing Supported Decision. -Another barrier was getting the word out about DRN's project and audiences for presentations. They utilized their Steering Committee and Task Force members to identify and connect to groups that DRN could present to. Most of the audiences came from the Steering Committee or Task Force member recommendations and connection. For example, they were able to get in front of Developmental Disability staff and Vocational Rehabilitation University upon the recommendation of those agency directors (who are on the Steering Committee). We were able to utilize Mary Phillips' relationships with special education and district administrators and our committee member from the Department of Education to present in front of school and state special education staff/transition staff. -Another barrier DRN faced was social attitude toward guardianship and Supported Decision Making. Johnathan admonished that some families and/or professionals who may immediately reject the idea of any alternatives to guardianship given it's "not what we have always done". DRN altered their approach in presentations to not emphasize a zero-sum, binary relationship between Supported Decision Making and guardianship, but rather Supported Decision Making is one tool for self-determination. They stressed that their presentation is not "anti-guardian always" or that there is never a need for more restrictive methods. Rather DRN wanted the audiences to understand self-determination on a spectrum from guardianship (most restrictive) to no restriction and people should be accurately placed on this spectrum and not given a guardianship "just because". People came up to DRN team members after their presentations and indicated they appreciated the "spectrum perspective" and had not thought of it that way before.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
Tri-Board Training leads to additional DD Network collaboration on potential project, legislative action, or outreach. It also strengthens DD Network relationships.	Yes
Serve as cross-agency representatives on advisory boards or stakeholder	Yes

groups facilitated by DD Network Partners throughout the year. Cross agency representation within DD Network role models and facilitates collaboration between three entities.	
Collaborate on system changes, trends, concerns, and challenges.	Yes
Improved systems within the State of Nebraska in relation to people with I/DD and their families.	Yes
Provide input/feedback on DD Network Partner annual goals and objectives.	Yes
Families and organizations will become more familiar with Supported Decision Making as an alternative to full Guardianship.	Yes
Organizations will develop a better understanding of Supported Decision Making's applicability, especially from other parents.	Yes
Families have documents and materials to help support them in the process of developing their own Supported Decision Making arrangements.	Yes
The DRN SDM Project will develop a targeted set of policy areas, agencies, organizations, or individuals that are significant drivers of guardianship or who have direct contact with families likely to experience a need for guardianship and educate them first about SDM as an alternative, resulting in fewer Guardianships for people with I/DD.	Yes
Successful completion of the DRN SDM project will advance the Supported Decision Making objective of the State Plan.	Yes

13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:

OLMSTEAD PLAN: Since 2019, A key collaborative of the DD Network Partners & disability advocates has been the legislative achievement focused on developing a comprehensive NE Olmstead Plan. In

Dec. 2019, the NE DHHS submitted NE's initial Olmstead Plan (the Plan) to the Legislature as directed by LB570. NE's Olmstead Plan is intended to be an evolving roadmap that ensures that the state's laws, regulations, & future planning are consistent with the principles of the 1999 Supreme Court Olmstead decision. The Plan is intended to be an evolving document, refined as implementation proceeds in order to reflect changes in the needs and desires of Nebraskans with disabilities, as well as shifts in the resources & supports available to assist individuals to live as integrated members of their communities. The Plan's vision, core values, guiding principles, & goals were expected to remain constant over time, whereas strategies, programs, activities, policies, & indicators of progress were expected to be updated to reflect changes in law or regulation, new opportunities, & new challenges. NE's Olmstead Plan reflects the following fundamental beliefs in supporting individuals with disabilities. NE is committed to:

- Person- and family-centered approaches.
- Ensuring the safety of, & an improved quality of life for, people with disabilities.
- Services that are readily available, at locations accessible to individuals in need and their families.
- Supporting individuals to live a meaningful life in the community they choose.

In addition to these Core Values, the following Guiding Principles serve as a foundation for NE's Olmstead Plan:

- Self Determination and Choice: Individuals with disabilities & their families will be supported in controlling decisions about their lives, selecting from an array of services, supports, and providers.
- Independence and Least Restrictive: Individuals will receive services that maximize their full potential, in the least coercive manner and in the most natural settings possible to meet their needs.
- Use of Respectful Language: Including "People First" Language: Individuals w/disabilities & their families will be treated with dignity & as individuals who have their own unique strengths, wishes, & desires.
- Evidence-Based Strategies: Individuals w/disabilities & their families will have access to services & supports that adhere to evidence-based practices, in order to achieve the best outcomes.
- Services Across the Life Span: Nebraskans w/disabilities will have access to age-appropriate services & supports from birth to end of life.
- Safety: Nebraskans with disabilities will be served in environments that are free from abuse and neglect, & that meet ADA compliance standards for health and well-being.
- Diversity: Services will honor the geographical differences, race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic, and gender identities of all individuals with disabilities.
- Inclusion: All individuals with any type of disability will have the opportunity to live, learn, work and socialize with members of their community who do not have disabilities.
- Integration: Services and supports will afford individuals with disabilities the opportunity to live as neighbors in, and to participate as active members of, their communities.
- Accountability: The systems and services that support individuals with disabilities will be accountable to Nebraska's state administration, legislature, taxpaying citizens, and most importantly, to those they serve.

NE structured the Plan around the following over-arching Olmstead goals:

1. Increasing access to community-based long-term services and supports.
2. Expanding access to affordable, accessible housing with supports.
3. Diverting avoidable admissions to, reducing lengths of stay in, and facilitating transitions from segregated settings.
4. Promoting community-integrated education and employment of people with disabilities.
5. Investing in accessible transportation for individuals with disabilities.
6. Using data to inform decisions and to promote quality improvement.
7. Investing in human resources.

The goals, strategies, and outcome measures within the Plan were intended to incrementally address existing system challenges to community integration, considering Nebraska's finite resources, with a sincere hope for better services and programs moving forward. DHHS has workgroups to look at Housing, Education and Employment, Data, & Transportation. Workgroups include people w/disabilities who can share lived experience in these areas. The Employment and Education workgroup, the Housing workgroup, and the Transportation workgroup were formed to promote cross-system collaboration. The Data workgroup was formed to promote DHHS cross division collaboration. The Olmstead Steering Group developed a comprehensive strategic plan for providing services to people with disabilities in

integrated community-based settings. They monitor the implementation of the plan and the impact the plan has on the lives of people with disabilities. Representatives from the Council, Disability Rights NE (P&A), the UCEDD serve on the Olmstead Planning Advisory Committee, & the UCEDD CEO serves on the Olmstead Steering Group. The Olmstead Advisory Committee Council ED & other UCEDD designee members also serve as appointed advocates on the Olmstead Steering Committee. The UCEDD Olmstead Advisory Committee member, Mark Smith, continued serving as the Olmstead co-chair in FFY23. Collectively the DD Network Olmstead Plan representatives advocate & push DHHS & the other Steering Committee members to strengthen the evolving Plan by capturing data to inform the development of measurable goals & benchmarks, identify priority populations currently facing or at risk of unnecessary segregation, & quantify the level of unmet need so that meaningful targets for improvement can be established. Throughout FFY 2023, DHHS divisions and sister agencies on the Steering Committee continued to work with the Olmstead Plan work groups & the Olmstead Advisory Committee to adjust the current goals and strategies that will follow the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) format. The Olmstead Advisory met on June 29, 2023, and voted to recommend the updated Olmstead Plan Goals be shared with DHHS CEO Smith for approval. The revised strategies and updates to the Olmstead Plan were accepted in a draft format in June 2023, but the newly released plan has not been published yet. DHHS leadership also agreed to seek overt support from the new Governor & his office. Olmstead should be the lens through DHHS, and all agencies view their efforts to serve and support Nebraskans with disabilities. During FFY23, the Olmstead Advisory group also discussed aspects of following Nebraska's Open Meetings Act requirements, & a committee was formed to create Olmstead Advisory Committee by-laws.

DRN SDM SUBAWARD: The project and activities are solid and DRN is very satisfied overall. The design and strategy work well when assembling a variety of representatives from communities affected and the organizations (disability/advocacy/state agencies) involved in guardianship or otherwise. The project has benefitted from this comprehensive approach (e.g., using the Steering Committee and Task Force for presentation referrals). The quality of the deliverables is very strong and DRN has almost run out of the general "Supported Decision Making and Guardianship" brochure. This project has benefitted both from the expertise of Jonathan and Mary. -Changes would be minimal and extensively internal.

1. Merge the Steering Committee and Task Force groups. Two groups require two meetings during the period, with little unique information to report. Additionally, 14 of the members of the Steering Committee are also members of the 16-member Task Force.
2. Distribute responsibility for project deliverables and other pieces (e.g., arranging / scheduling / soliciting presentations, keeping track of data, agenda setting for meetings, etc.) among the project management personnel and/or committee members.
3. Increase the meetings between Brad Meurrens, Jonathan Martinis, and Mary Phillips to have more communication about project management, operation, direction, momentum, etc. -It is unclear at this point how the project will continue post Council funding. Disability Rights Nebraska have received funding to continue the project through Fiscal Year 2024. This will continue with the educational and awareness activities, adding a focus on stakeholders in the legal arena including judges and attorneys, as well as in policymaking and legislation fields. They will include work for Fiscal Year 2025 a discussion of organizations interested in continuing this work and the shape that will take place. Pieces that will need to continue after FY 2024 will likely be any public policy/legislative work to implement a legal framework to support Supported Decision Making in Nebraska and the education of parents, families, individuals, and organizations involved in guardianship and issues relevant to Supported Decision Making. There are a variety of forms this continuance could take such as contracting curriculum development and training (e.g., Disability Rights Nebraska and Wellbeing Initiative contracts); the development of a dynamic curriculum or toolkit for individuals, families, and other stakeholders to use in developing and/or implementing Supported Decision Making. Jonathan Martinis mentioned that other states have organized coalitions or other arrangements to continue

work on Supported Decision Making, so there are other models. Additional funding would depend on scope and nature of the work and memberships but would likely include costs associated with producing materials such as printed brochures and toolkits as well as videos; stipends to ambassadors for presentations to stakeholders; travel for presentations.

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

DRN Subaward - Many people approached the Supported Decision-Making team members after the presentations were over wanting more information. Many people have said that they were unaware of any alternatives to guardianship and that they appreciated bringing Supported Decision Making as an alternative to overbroad guardianships. The demand for this information is substantial and DRN only has a handful of the original brochures remaining. They have received additional requests for information and presentations. These requests include: referrals directly from people who attended the SDM presentations, received materials, or had heard of DRN's educational campaign. DRN and UCEDD Updates at NCDD Quarterly Meetings: DRN and the MMI's UCEDD member representatives shared other updates about their work at quarterly Council meetings. Some of these updates are noted below. DRN provided updates related to their efforts to monitor settings where people with disabilities are segregated, isolated, and congregated. Regular updates were shared on the progress of the Supported Decision-Making Project, including the places DRN has provided SDM presentations as being an alternative to guardianship. DRN shared that in late FFY2023, the SDM policy piece was worked on by studying other states and seeing what is working and what is not working. DRN also highlighted their Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program which seeks to engage interested people in lay advocacy for students with disabilities and their families. Lay advocates will be provided with education and training to support families in the mastery of educational information, the understanding and implementation of legal rights, and the effective navigation of educational systems to secure inclusive educational opportunities for students with disabilities. The Council provided initial seed money years ago to launch this program. DRN reported that their 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. During the Legislative Session, DRN staff worked with the three externs they have through their collaboration with the Community Learning and Leadership Program at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. Two externs were focused on public policy and disability, building public policy skills to apply to their field in the future, and starting to build their network of advocates. The third extern chose to work on developing infographics on disability issues that can be used in the future. This intern was also interested in understanding how policies define "restraint" and how those definitions could be compared to or applied in her field, Physical Therapy. The DRN 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 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. The UCEDD director shared regular updates about transition in leadership with several of the MMI departments throughout FFY23. They had national searches in place for the Director of Psychology, Director of Speech/Language, Director of Physical Therapy, and the Director of Genetics. Within the UCEDD Program, Georgia Ryba was hired as a Respite Care Associate to direct the Respite Employer Engagement Initiative. Kim Falk moved to a position as a Program Manager with the Family Care



Enhancement Project (FCE). Updates were provided about the UCEDD's FCE Project, and how MMI is establishing itself as A Community Health Workers (CHW) Training Site I. Reports noted that ACL's PHWF from the UCEDD and the Council is being used to formalize the Parent Resource Coordinators (PRC) and CHW Workers training Program. In April 2023 the UCEDD reported that MMI had 24 complete applications for the 2023-24 MMI-University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO) Trailblazers Program cohort. Four new Trailblazers students will start in fall 2023. The Trailblazers Program is a two-year program that offers individuals with I/DD an inclusive, challenging, and exciting college program that prepares them for employment. Students select courses relevant to their career interests, explore career opportunities, participate in advocacy and skills training, and get connected to mentors and internships. Employment is the goal, and this inclusive program is a key to integrated, competitive employment and overall wellbeing. Nebraska's DHHS contracts with the UCEDD to conduct the National Core Indicators surveys. In 2023, in collaboration with DHHS, the NCI data dashboard was completed. The dashboard will allow for a visual representation of NCI data, will be more accessible for the public at large, and shows the strengths of what Nebraska is doing. The dashboard was also shared at the June 9 Tri-Board meeting. MMI has a new contract with DHHS' Child and Family Services Division Title V to identify all mental/behavior health education related resources throughout Nebraska and to identify gaps in resources and improve accessibility of information for families. In August 2023, MMI hosted the Building Bridges Conference for persons with Cerebral Palsy and related disorders. There were 34 attendees, and the conference provided a nice opportunity for people with Cerebral Palsy to connect. MMI also co-hosted the SOAR Conference October 27-29, 2023, in Kansas City. SOAR is a regional conference planned by and for self-advocates. SOAR stands for Seeking Opportunities for an Advocacy Revolution and 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. Additional UCEDD updates included information about their Project Search Program, the UCEDD's college-based transition services, and work with the Omaha Public Schools contractual partners to provide transition services related to independent living and employment skills training.

6. *Objective 3: Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through leadership development and coalition participation by expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.*

3. This objective is:	Individual & Family Advocacy
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4. This objective is:	Ongoing
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5. This objective is:	
Fulfilling a Self-Advocacy DD Requirement	Yes
Targeted disparity	No
DD Network Collaboration	No

A demonstration project of New Approaches to Services and Supports	No
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A demonstration of projects or activities	No
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6. Stage of Implementation:	Implementation
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7. Provide an overall description of this effort:	<p>--People First of Nebraska (PFN) - State Advisor Project - The goals and activities of PFN toward the Advocacy and Self-Advocacy Goals are numerous and diverse. Their Growing Independence Seminar, the first pre-PFN convention training event ever offered, was hugely successful. Over 60 attendees, self-advocates and service providers together, participated in interactive sessions and discussions. Presenters from Vocational Rehab and provider agencies and the state DHHS, including Director Tony Green, presented on a variety of topics of interest to both groups. Survey responses from the Growing Independence Pre-Convention Seminar were overwhelmingly positive. 100% of respondents said that they had increased their advocacy skills and were satisfied with the training event. The PFN 2022 Convention kicked-off in October with the Growing Independence seminar and the PFN Board met in-person and via Zoom. Elections were held at the Membership Meeting, which also included very special keynote speakers, Kathy Lobb and Stephanie Sanford from the Self-Advocate Coalition. They discussed the paths each of their lives took and how very different they were due to their experiences with disability. Breakout sessions in the late morning and afternoon included: How to be an Effective Board or Committee Member with Melanie Davis, Advocate Mentor at the University Center for Excellence in Disabilities; Chair Yoga with Donna Montgomery; Teamwork Makes the Dream Work with four self-advocate staff from the Self-Advocacy Coalition of Kansas; Get Moving Again! with Morgan Carstens, People First of Norfolk, and Anna Carstens; Starting Your Own Business with Bailey Graham,</p>
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Self-Advocate and Founder of You Are Worth It; Person-Centered Planning with self-advocates Jennifer James and Erin Phillips, People First of Lincoln; Self-Determination-The Big Picture with the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council; If I Can Keep My Job, You Can Keep Your Job Too! With eight members of People First of Norfolk; How to Make an Impact by Using YOUR OWN Story with Aimee Folker, LEND Self-Advocate Trainee and Mary Angus, LEND Self-Advocate Faculty; The Sibling Network: Connecting with Others with Christi Crosby, Self-Advocate and Director of the Kolb Foundation and Mary Angus, LEND Self-Advocate Faculty; and Being a Volunteer Can Lead to a Job! presented by Jennifer James and Erin Phillips, People First of Lincoln. They also hosted two focus groups during the break-out times, including a discussion about what should be included in PFN's new Policies & Procedures, facilitated by Kathy Hoell, State Advisor and another to collect input from self-advocates and service providers about what they felt should be included and taught in a Disability Studies curriculum that was developed at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. PFN also presented a special award to Lynn Redding for her years of community and policy advocacy activities. Participants at the convention also enjoyed the vendor and sponsor's tables. -PFN recruited four Disability Policy Specialists (DPS) for the 2023 Unicameral session. Brooke Anderson and Sophie Kazmerski completed their second years as DPS. New DPS were Ida Woodden from Chadron, NE and Jakir Brown from the UNO Trailblazers program. The DRN trainer, Brad Meurrens, and the LEND trainer, Mary Angus, developed and piloted a training outline for the Specialists. Due to a number of challenges noted in Section 3 below, the Specialists were unable to educate legislators on specific legislation. Instead, the Specialists and mentors focused on more generalized policy skills and experiences, including the following: Learning to navigate the Unicameral Website and identifying their Senators, process for Bill introductions in the Nebraska Unicameral, practice writing 2-line summaries of various legislation, learning about the importance of Committees and Committee assignments, finding and following Hearing schedules, analyzing legislation for intent and identifying possible unintended consequences, reading and analyzing Fiscal Notes, developing a list of bills of interest to PFN, viewing floor debates and committee hearings via streaming service and analyzing those discussions, learning about filibusters and rules of the legislature, and learning about how and why bills are bundled. Specialists also developed impact statements on LB535, the voter ID bill, and LB811, the

restraint and seclusion bill. Because they did not expend all the in-kind funds provided by the LEND program to pay the contracts of the Specialists, they recruited a fifth Disability Policy Specialist that will have completed the 200-hour community-based traineeship from August-December. This self-advocate is completing coursework at UNO for a master's degree focusing on non-profit community agencies and policy advocacy. She also just attended the Building Bridges Conference for people with Cerebral Palsy. Although she is a woman on the autism spectrum and does not have Cerebral Palsy, she was absolutely thrilled to experience an event where people with disabilities are centered and celebrated. She has begun the Partners in Policymaking on-line course as a foundational training in disability history and advocacy and will attend the People First of Nebraska conference in Kearney in October, sponsored by the Nebraska LEND program. Another very positive outcome is that another of their DPS was accepted into the Nebraska LEND Advanced Leadership Interdisciplinary Training Program as a Self-Advocate trainee. She will complete a 600-hour paid traineeship over 10 months with a cohort of graduate students, fellows, and Family trainees at the Munroe-Meyer Institute. PFN is excited to have their DPS program serve as a pipeline to more advanced and PAID trainings for PFN members. -Jennifer James and Ida Woodden (PFN Board members) and Kellie Ellerbusch and Sherry Stansberry (PFN Coordinators) served on the regional SOAR planning committee, as well as Self-Advocate Melanie Davis. Ms. Ellerbusch served on the finance and fundraising committee, along with Mark Shriver, UCEDD Director of the Munroe-Meyer Institute. They worked with the regional group to identify speakers, sessions, and other activities. PFN submitted 2 breakout session proposals, one by a current Disability Policy Specialist on Emergency Planning for people with disabilities and another by a PFN Officer on how to use your personal story to develop a strong advocacy message and customize it to both legislative and community policy advocacy efforts. -- Disability Pride Planning Committee Meetings - The Disability Pride Planning Committee was a group effort from a few different organizations and self-advocates. This committee held a meeting approximately 10 times over the last year. The most important topics were accessibility, parking, and inclusive activities when planning for the 2023 event. It was decided to be at the same place, the Auld Pavilion building at Antelope Park here in Lincoln, NE. There were many organizations that wanted a vendor table and many that wanted to sponsor the event. NCDD Executive

	<p>Director and Program Specialist held a vendor table at the event talking about what the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities is all about and also had an interactive activity about disability. It was a great way to get out into the community, learn from others and enjoy the company! --Disability Pride Celebration Event - The 2023 Disability Pride Celebration Event was successful yet again. It was held at the beautiful Antelope Park in Lincoln, Nebraska. This event has grown even more since last year with over 800 people with disabilities, family members, and disability professionals in attendance.</p>
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Outputs Achieved	
8. Expected Outputs	9. Outputs Achieved
PFN will coordinate and host one leadership convention.	Yes
PFN Disability Policy Specialists will research proposed legislation and prepare testimony, letters of support/opposition, and other materials to educate and inform senators on the impact of the proposed legislation on people with disabilities.	Yes
PFN leadership will participate in regional and national conferences.	Yes

<p>10. The report should include the following:</p>	<p>(a) A narrative progress that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented toward achieving the objective, including how the identified strategy was used, how the activity was implemented, challenged to achieving the objective and unexpected benefits.</p> <p>(b) For system change activities, include a description of the stage of implementation (Planning, initiation, implementation, outcome/fully integrated) of the system change initiative.</p> <p>(c) All narratives must describe what numbers make up the performance measures number for the activities being reported in the narrative.</p> <p>(d) A summary of evaluation activities to monitor progress and impact of council supported activities for the objective; data collected during the year, data sources, and data collection methods; (logic model and evaluation plan may be attached to the report)</p>
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--PFN Subaward - Their Disability Policy Specialists were highly impactful in training other people with disabilities to advocate with elected officials and to make those policy makers aware of the needs of people with disabilities. Adriana David, the PFN Disability Policy Specialist, continued her training through the end of June. She attended the PFN April Board meeting in person in Columbus, where she

provided a legislative update to the Board. She continued to meet with self-advocates at the Munroe-Meyer Institute who have helped to mentor her DPS experience. Adriana is also involved in helping plan the Disability Pride event and the pre-conference training with NASP. Outcomes include a video on how to plan and make phone calls to elected officials. -Adriana has also worked with the DPS at Disability Rights Nebraska to educate elected officials on the Olmstead plan, how the lack of accessible housing affects people with disabilities, and the need for supports for families (LR 368) and participates in the Nebraska Disability Advocates' Education Series. Our DRN Disability Policy Specialists also worked through June 2023 to complete projects and products. Brooke Anderson and Sophia Kazmerski participated virtually in the Disability Policy Seminar and the National Disability Rights Network conference. Sophia, who is autistic, also participated in the National Council on Disability's quarterly meeting and the Autism Action Partnership conference. The DRN Specialists focused much of their time on Emergency Management policies for people with disabilities. They analyzed current federal and state legislation (LB1104) participated in a Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) workgroup to develop a strategic plan for the state. Mary Angus (LEND) and Brad Meurrens (DRN) met with the Specialists weekly for training, debriefs, and mentoring. This team developed a presentation on the need for emergency/disaster planning to be inclusive. They also developed a poster summary of the information. These activities highlighted that public policies are created in spaces other than the Legislature, and in meetings (sometimes several meetings, but all without pomp and circumstance) with agencies and people. -The 2023 Disability Pride event was a massive success! This year, the event was chaired by Gloria Eddins, a woman with a disability and an ADA Coordinator with the State of Nebraska. The Committee moved the event from a Friday to a Saturday to encourage more family participation. Activities included several speakers, a demonstration of service animals, and Belly Dancers, who got everyone in on the act! People First of Nebraska arranged for free hotdogs, water, chips, and cookies (donated by a People First of Nebraska Officer who works at a local grocery store bakery). They used leftover funds raised at the 2021 and 2022 Disability Pride event to pay for a free Snow Cone truck - a VERY popular spot on a VERY hot day! They hosted their own People First of Nebraska tent to create spin art using paper plates and salad spinners! They also handed out backpacks left over from their Oct 2022 convention along with informational cards about People First of Nebraska and their contact information. Crowd estimates were over 800 people and nearly 100 vendors/agencies provided great information, valuable resources, and assessable inclusive activities. Disability Pride has been a proven success, and the Committee is moving forward to make it its own entity with a Board of organizers, by-laws, and non-profit status. People First of Nebraska will continue to serve on the board of this organization and is considering efforts for 2024 to help other locations in the state plan their own Disability Pride events. -The Building Bridges conference was held in Omaha, NE for individuals with Cerebral Palsy (CP) and similar disabilities August 4-6 with over 30 participants from Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, and Minnesota. This was a collaborative activity with the Kolb Foundation for Disability Education and United Cerebral Palsy of Nebraska. This conference was held at the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) who hosted the event for free. The conference kicked-off with a Grand Rounds panel for health care and related professionals on Friday. The panel consisted of five individuals that represented many presentations of Cerebral Palsy and they all shared their experiences and the barriers they face getting quality health care. Candace Cunningham, a young woman of color who serves as a Community Inclusion Fellow at the Missouri UCEDD, was the keynote speaker. She shared her journey from a failing student to a successful professional advocate and public speaker. Attendees participated in one-on-one mentoring sessions with more experienced advocates sharing their experiences and "life hacks" with younger, newer advocates. Plenty of time was allotted for participants to discuss the barriers they face, share strategies and to also share their accomplishments and goals for the future. Much time was taken to discuss the future of the group, plan a social media campaign, and begin

discussions for the next conference. -People First of Nebraska said they were excited to take part in more local resource fairs and events to promote awareness of PFN and disability advocacy. They participated in the Fair-Tastic Resource Fair and Low-Sensory Carnival at the Nebraska State Fair in September. PFN wanted to project their image as a professional, a serious organization, and a disability partner and ally at these events. With funds raised through a Facebook Birthday fundraiser drive by Sherry Stansberry, they were able to purchase two 10 foot "feather flags" to promote their presence at vendor fairs and events. They also were able to purchase new promotional items, including an information card with a QR code and new People First of Nebraska vinyl stickers that direct people to their website. PFN were planning additional Facebook birthday fundraisers for the up-coming year to purchase more items for their display tables, including custom table coverings, tabletop signage, and a PR system that can double as a karaoke machine for their PFN Convention and other large events, such as the Disability Pride event. -Barriers: PFN planned a pre-convention training seminar that included direct support providers and people with disabilities interacting and learning with each other. Training activities were impeded by a number of factors. One of the PFN mentors, Mary Angus, experienced a health issue that wasn't resolved until months later, so recruitment and training were delayed. One of their DPS also had an unexpected surgery and her participation was limited. PFN along with everyone else experienced a very unique legislative session with a long filibuster and the bundling of legislation near the end of the session. This hindered the Specialists in their efforts to educate legislators on specific legislation. To stay focused and keep the education going, they worked on other policy advocacy skills and experiences for the Disability Policy Specialist. -Disability Pride 2023 Celebration Event - There were approximately 50 vendor tables of provider agencies, governmental departments, early childhood development, education, health care providers, police-fire and rescue, employment and other advocacy groups from Lincoln, NE and/or other regions of Nebraska. These included: Region V Services, Independence Rising, Total Health Care, People First of Nebraska, The Arc of Nebraska and of Lincoln, Lincoln Parks Department, League of Human Dignity, SILC, Disability Rights Nebraska, UCEDD, Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and the Blind and Visually Impaired, County Health Department, United Health Care, ATP, Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, Hands of Heartland, Goodwill Job Connection, Vocational Rehab of Nebraska, and Special Olympics.

Expected Outcomes Achieved	
11. Expected Outcomes	12. Outcomes Achieved
A minimum of 80 attendees at the PFN convention will hear a keynote presentation and attend breakout sessions on how to practice and improve their self-advocacy and self-determination skills.	Yes
Self-advocates will play major role in conference planning and breakout session presentations.	Yes
A minimum of two self-advocates will be hired and trained to be Disability Policy Specialists.	Yes

Leaders who attend regional and national conferences will increase their knowledge and advocacy skills.	Yes
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13. Progress towards achieving outcomes for overall objective:	
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--PFN Subaward - They are highly satisfied with the outcomes of these programs and activities, also with promoting the profile of PFN and ensuring that people with disabilities are involved in all levels of policy making and program development. They realize that Disability Pride has grown to a level that requires more workers to be successful at that larger scale. Organizers also need to better promote this very positive event with all types of media and prepare more people with disabilities to serve as media spokespersons. -PFN also struggle with how to collect participant satisfaction data at these festival-type events. PFN has spoken with NCDD staff and brainstormed some ideas that they will test out at next year's event, including giving out raffle tickets to those who complete a satisfaction form and having drawings every 15 minutes or so to encourage more people to fill out surveys. Survey responses from the Growing Independence Pre-Convention Seminar were overwhelmingly positive, they want to continue this with future events and conferences. -Our Disability Policy Specialists are now supported 100% from matching funds and in-kind support from the Nebraska LEND program. They support the Specialist's contract payments and the supervision and mentoring provided by Mary Angus, LEND Self-Advocate Faculty, and Brad Meurrens, Policy Specialist for Disability Rights Nebraska. Development of Disability Pride is supported by NCDD through the hours paid to the PFN coordinators, but as stated earlier, future events will require more support from collaborating agencies. Disability Pride has a separate account with PFN that includes sponsorship funds. The Committee has had discussions this year with the collaboration as a whole about making Disability Pride it's own stand-alone organizational Board. This can hopefully keep the focus going towards public awareness and valuable resources for people with disabilities, beyond the annual Disability Pride event itself. Currently, Disability Pride has sufficient funding to pay for food, supplies, entertainment, etc. for a year or two without additional funds. -PFN has commitments from NASP and Hands of Heartland to continue their collaboration and shared financial support for continuing the Growing Independence training with ideas to offer this training to service providers and self-advocates in other parts of the state for FFY24. Also, the UCEDD and LEND programs at MMI are interested in supporting this training activity. In addition, this training could also become a regional activity through connections with the Heartland Regional Self Advocate Resource Network. Finally, PFN submitted a presentation proposal to use the Kahhot quiz on Civil Rights at the SOAR and/or SACK conferences in Oct 2023. This is a great tool to use and keep participants interested in learning while making this activity fun for everyone. -NDDC funds are needed to support the hours of planning and preparation in which the PFN coordinators take a lead, as well as hours spent supporting the other activities of PFN and to support the travel of the PFN Board to quarterly meetings, which are often scheduled at the same time as events such as Disability Pride, to increase the number of people with disabilities at these events. -PFN wrapped up their collaboration with NASP on the Inclusive Economy Film. It was finalized and NASP hosted a public viewing at a theatre in Lincoln in July. The video was also presented at the Nebraska DD Tri-Board meeting and at the Nebraska Employment Summit. People First of Nebraska will also show this video during their full membership meeting at the PFN convention in Oct 2023. In addition, most of the self-advocates attending the SOAR conference in October has already volunteered to be interviewed for a video being produced in Kansas to promote Competitive Employment for people with disabilities. They got to share their personal stories and



experiences, about getting and keeping meaningful and inclusive employment. -PFN continues to collaborate with the Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) and the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at the UNMC Munroe-Meyer Institute to develop an accredited Disability Studies program and other intersectional trainings for service providers and self-advocates. The development of this project is a multi-year timetable with implementation scheduled for FFY24-25. They have started developing a Micro-course format that allows individuals to choose from a variety of modules to fit their educational needs and earn certificates for each module completed. Courses will be taught by MMI, UNMC faculty, disability professionals from the community, and individuals with disabilities. --Disability Pride 2023 Celebration Event - Food was donated by local grocery stores and there were also 5 different and very good food trucks to try out from the local community including free snow cones for everyone as it was very hot outside that day. Several organizations and agencies donated their time for planning and staffing the event, also sponsoring activities through in-kind and cash donations. The local news did a very fun, inspiring and positive story on this event, and many were able to watch on tv or view online. The Disability Pride Celebration committee increased accessibility to the event by providing an ASL interpreter and a private and accessible changing station. -PFN did not collect any Demographics but did have some Key Performance Indicators. IFA1.1-247, IFA2.1-182, IFA2.3IND-155, IFA3.1-199, IFA3.1B-4 -Subrecipients struggled w/getting completed surveys from activity participants. Some of the subaward projects didn't indicate how many surveys they collected, instead they provided #'s in DD Suite for the KPI, so it's been impossible to get an accurate %. Other Subrecipients provided numbers in place of their percentages and the #'s are noted in Section IV-B

14. Additionally, include stories of culturally diverse people with developmental disabilities whose lives are better because of Council work on this activity (e.g., became better advocates for themselves and others, became more connected to the community).

--PFN Subaward - The leadership in this statewide collaborative event has promoted the profile of People First to other agencies and groups that were not familiar with us and has expanded our network and contact list of other disability organizations, agencies, and advocates. During and after the first Disability Pride event, we were contacted by several organizations who were not aware of PFN who wanted to continue participating in the Disability Pride event and did return in our second year. -The success with the Disability Pride event led to conversations with some of their partners about creating training experiences for disability professionals and self-advocates they would participate in together as equals. This resulted in a pre-PFN convention training seminar that focused on promoted the civil rights of people with disabilities and presenting information and resources on how people with disabilities can be better supported to live independent lives. They planned on 40 local people attending but ended up with over 60 people from across the state ((38% urban and 62% rural) in attendance, with about a 55%/45% split between professionals and people with disabilities! This collaboration included Hands of Heartland, the Nebraska Association of Service Providers, The Assistive Technology Network, and Disability Rights Nebraska. 100% of survey responders said that after the training they were better able to say what is important to them and that they know more about the topics presented. 98% said they felt more connected to people like themselves and that they learned more about resources and supports. 99% said they felt the speakers were knowledgeable and 100% were satisfied with the space presenters created for participants to share their stories and comments. In addition, they hosted two focus groups at the convention to assist the Nebraska UCEDD in developing a self-advocate mentoring program and the Nebraska LEND programs

in developing a Disability Studies program. We provided our opinions and experiences to them to help them develop programs that are focused on our needs and what we want supports to look like for us. PFN will continue to be involved in these projects as they are developed. The trivia quiz on civil rights exposed a startling lack of knowledge about the civil right of individuals, both from self-advocates and service providers. This was the impetus for the state-wide training activities we have planned for the 2023-2024 grant year. -They strengthened the connections to other self-advocates in the region by inviting four self-advocates from the Self Advocate Coalition of Kansas as our keynote speakers at our 2022 convention. We are also collaborating with self-advocates across the region now including Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota and Wyoming to coordinate the 2023 SOAR convention and for Nebraska to take the lead for the 2025 SOAR convention in Omaha. These regional events provide invaluable experiences for self-advocates to improve their advocacy skills and gain leadership mentoring and experiences. -The 2023 Building Bridges Conference had a special impact in the disability community, as people with "only" physical disabilities tend to be much less isolated from each other in the large community and have far fewer opportunities to spend time networking with others with similar life experiences. While the conference was a bit smaller than anticipated (32 people vs. the 40 anticipated), it was the larger to date in Nebraska. Participants stated throughout the conference weekend how much they valued the opportunity to meet other people who faced the same barriers and challenges and learn from and encourage each other. The planning committee is already looking toward 2025 and the next Building Bridges CP conference. --Disability Pride Celebration Event - The many collaborations with local disability organizations and agencies have continued to grow exponentially over the past few years. Plans are already in the works for next year, the date is set for July 27th, 2024. This event will be at the same location; because of this event continuing there and being a huge success for the community, there will be another side-walk added for the park to be more accessible.

*Section IV: B*

Individual & Family Advocacy Performance Measures

Race and Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	#	%
White alone	100	82.64%
Black or African American alone	0	0%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	8	6.61%
Hispanic/Latino	4	3.31%
Asian alone	0	0.83%
Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander alone	1	0.83%
Two or more races and Race unknown	8	6.61%
Gender	#	%
Male	200	24.63%
Female	612	75.37%
Other	0	0%
Category	#	%
Individual with DD	787	96.33%
Family Member	30	3.67%

Geographical	#	%
Urban	0	0%
Rural	0	0%

I. Output Measures

Objective	Performance Measure: IFA 1.1 People with DD who participated in activities	Performance Measure: IFA 1.2 Family members
Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.	-1	-1
Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.	462	25
Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through leadership development and coalition participation by expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates	116	5

to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.		
Total # of Output Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	180	5

II. Outcome Measures

Performance Measures	Percent (%)
IFA 2.1 Percent of people with DD	10
IFA 2.2 Percent of family members who increased advocacy	1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are better able to say what they want/say what is important to them.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.	-1	-1
Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.	-1	25
Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through	155	5

leadership development and coalition participation by expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.		
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	116	5

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are participating in advocacy activities.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.	-1	-1
Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.	-1	-1
Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through leadership development and coalition participation by	-1	-1

expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.		
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

Sub-Outcome Measures: The number (#) of people who are on cross disability coalitions, policy boards, advisory boards, governing bodies and/or serving in leadership positions.

Projects	# People with Developmental Disabilities	# Family Members
Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.	-1	-1
Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.	-1	-1
Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through leadership development and coalition participation by	-1	-1

expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.		
Total # of Sub-Outcome Respondents (The total number of respondents should be the number of people from each category that responded to a survey/evaluation)	-1	-1

## II. Outcome Measures

Satisfied	Percent (%)
IFA 3 The percent of people satisfied with a project activity	-1
IFA 3.1 Percent of people with DD satisfied with activity	2
IFA 3.2 Percent of family members satisfied with activity	1

## Section IV: C

### Systems Change Performance Measures

#### SC 1: Output Measures

Objective	
Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	8
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	2
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	-1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	2
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	-1
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	2

Objective	
Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting	

the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	-1
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	2
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	2
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	521
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	2

Objective	
Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through leadership development and coalition participation by expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.	
SC 1.1 Number of policy/procedures created/changed	0
SC 1.2 Number of statutes/regulations created/changed	-1
SC 1.3.1 Number of promising practices created	1
SC 1.3.2 Number of promising practices supported	1
SC 1.3.3 Number of best practices created	-1
SC 1.3.4 Number of best practices supported through Council activities	1
SC 1.3 Number of promising and/or best practices created and/or supported	2
SC 1.4 Number of people trained/educated	350
SC 1.5 Number of Systems Change activities with other organizations	2

Systems Change SC 2: Outcome Measures

Outcome Measures	Number (#)
SC 2.1 - Efforts that led to improvements	34
SC 2.2 - Efforts that were implemented	16



III. Sub-Outcome Measures

Objective	Number (#)
Annually, the DD Network and Nebraska DD Network Partners will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to increase their leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public policy advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	8
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	7
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	-1
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	-1

Objective	Number (#)
Annually collaborate amongst the Nebraska DD Network Partners (Disability Rights Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Medical Center Munroe-Meyer Institute - University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research and Services [UCEDD], and the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities) to advocate for positive systems change impacting the lives and health of individuals with I/DD by: 1. Conducting monthly planning meetings to discuss trends, concerns, and challenges with a goal of system changes and improvements for Nebraskans with I/DD. 2. Hosting training on a mutually selected emerging issue at the annual Nebraska DD Network Partners' Tri-Board Meeting. 3. Continue leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen and improve the newly developed Nebraska Olmstead Plan. 4. Leveraging joint advocacy efforts to strengthen the Supported Decision Making Initiative.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	-1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	2
SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	2

Objective	Number (#)
Annually strengthen the statewide advocacy cross-disability organization, People First of Nebraska, to increase self-advocate leadership development and participation through training by self-advocates so they can participate in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations. 1. Strengthen support for an increased number of self-advocates through leadership development and coalition participation by expanding efforts statewide to reach, educate, and engage younger self-advocates and their families in the self-determination movement. 2. Increase opportunities for self-advocates who are leaders to train other self-advocates to become leaders and increase opportunities for participation in cross-disability, culturally diverse organizations.	
SC 2.1.1 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation improvements	-1
SC 2.1.2 Policy, procedure, statute, regulation implemented	-1
SC 2.1.3 Number of improved promising or best practices	1

SC 2.1.4 Number of implemented promising or best practices	1
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**SECTION V: COUNCIL FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Council is its own DSA?	No
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1. Fiscal Year	2021
2. Reporting Period	10/01/2020 - 9/30/2021
3. Total Federal Fiscal Award for Reporting Year	\$539580
4. State Funds Contributing to Council State Plan Activities	\$0
5. Additional Council Funds Used for Other Activities	\$0
6. Federal Share of Expenditures	\$539580
7. Federal Share of Unliquidated Obligations	\$0
8. Unliquidated Balance of Federal Funds	\$0.00
9. Match Required	\$179860
10. Match Met	\$179860
11. Match Unmet	\$0.00

1. Fiscal Year	2022
2. Reporting Period	10/01/2021 - 9/30/2022
3. Total Federal Fiscal Award for Reporting Year	\$527570
4. State Funds Contributing to Council State Plan Activities	\$0
5. Additional Council Funds Used for Other Activities	\$0
6. Federal Share of Expenditures	\$342132.74
7. Federal Share of Unliquidated Obligations	\$143718.15
8. Unliquidated Balance of Federal Funds	\$41719.11
9. Match Required	\$59145.29
10. Match Met	\$59145.29
11. Match Unmet	\$0.00

1. Fiscal Year	2023
2. Reporting Period	10/01/2022 - 9/30/2023
3. Total Federal Fiscal Award for Reporting Year	\$527570
4. State Funds Contributing to Council State Plan Activities	\$0
5. Additional Council Funds Used for Other Activities	\$0
6. Federal Share of Expenditures	\$98
7. Federal Share of Unliquidated Obligations	\$339996.89
8. Unliquidated Balance of Federal Funds	\$187475.11
9. Match Required	\$131892.5
10. Match Met	\$0

11. Match Unmet	\$131892.50
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Dollars leveraged for the reporting year being reported	30900
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## SECTION VI: MEASURES OF COLLABORATION

7. Identify the critical issues or barriers affecting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families in your State that the Council and the PA, the Council and the UCEDD, the Council and other collaborators may have worked on during the reporting period.

The NE DD Network Partners have a rich history of collaboration & strong relationships, & their Directors & staff engage in a variety of advocacy efforts & communicate regularly on trends, concerns, & challenges to collaborate to bring systems change & improvements to Nebraskans with I/DD. Specific info related to NE's DD Network collaboration objective, under the Council's Advocacy goal, is provided in Section IV. This section highlights how the DD Network Partners, through membership in the NE Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (NCCD), a cross-disability coalition, leverages collaborative activities to address legislative priorities.

### LEGISLATIVE COLLABORATION

During NE's 2023 Legislative Session, the DD Network Partners collaborated to identify legislation that could impact individuals with I/DD, while taking opportunities to use a nonpartisan approach to educate & inform state Senators & other policymakers. This includes working together & sharing info on introduced bills or other Legislative concerns to strengthen our voice. The DD Network's community partner, The Arc of NE, also plays an instrumental role in this process, since The Arc of NE is very involved in legislative efforts & often contacts Senators directly to introduce legislation that will impact the I/DD population.

A major challenge is that the NE Legislature only allows bills to be introduced in the first 10 days of the session. This means 700 to 800 bills are introduced in a very short period & must be reviewed by the respective staff of the DD Network Partners, & a determination made as to the bills' relevance & impact to the I/DD community. By working together, the DD Network, The Arc of NE, & NCCD lessen the chance to miss bills that may impact the I/DD community & are able to share info on the potential impact prior to their respective Council/Boards taking positions on the bills.

The 1st Session of the 108th NE Legislature (Leg.) convened on 01/04/23. 820 Legislative Bills were introduced & Council staff (w/the assistance of the Council's Legislative & Advocacy [L&A] Committee Chair) reviewed all the introduced legislation to narrow down the number of bills that would be presented to the L&A Committee for Council action. Senator Arch, Speaker of the Legislature, sped up the hearing process on introduced legislative bills, with hearings starting on 1/23/23. Council staff & the L&A Committee had to expedite the process to decide which bills to follow as well as weigh in at some legislative hearings that were scheduled before the Council's Feb.6 meeting. Partnerships with the DD Network, The Arc of NE, & NCCD helped immensely. NCCD's Executive Committee met virtually to review & take positions on any relevant legislative bills that had a hearing between 1/23/23, & 2/6/23.

DD Network Partners are members of NCCD. This is a cross-disability coalition of organizations committed to advancing the rights of people w/disabilities & statewide policies that affect them. NCCD & its 15 member organizations monitor & respond to legislation & policies pertinent to Nebraskans w/disabilities & provide a resource for the Unicameral to call upon when developing legislation. Throughout 2023, Council staff attended the monthly NCCD virtual meetings where NCCD members stressed the importance of assisting our stakeholders to be engaged in the legislative process & with sharing information to citizens w/disabilities on pressing disability related topics, policy, & proposed legislation. NCCD members took turns providing legislative updates.

In 2023, NCCD continued to focus on seeking & securing accommodations for Nebraskans w/disabilities so they can engage in NE's Legislative Committee hearing process. The goal is to allow video accommodations for future Legislative Committee hearings, & to simplify the process for people w/disabilities to submit written testimony at committee hearings that are included in the official record or hearing meeting transcript. The rule to allow virtual testimony by citizens w/disabilities was not adopted in 2023. NCCD provided leadership by educating people w/disabilities about the new accommodation process including the new porthole for people w/disabilities to submit written testimony. As of 2023, only people w/disabilities are allowed to use the porthole, & parents & family members are not provided access. NCCD members will continue to advocate for their access as well in 2024.

#### PHWF Collaboration

The Council is partnering with MMI UCEDD by providing their Public Health Work Force funding to support the UCEDD's Family Care Enhancement Project by developing an advanced training program for Parent Resource Coordinators/Community Health Workers (PRCs/CHWs, are parent leaders who are parents of children w/disabilities w/specialized training) which aligns with the competencies for Community Health Workers in NE. These PRC/CHWs can be integrated into clinics/agencies across the state to serve as a trusted source of information & provide direct support for individuals w/disabilities & their families.

In the past five years, there have been many needs assessments &/or studies that have identified the need to increase supports to individuals w/disabilities & to families that have children w/disabilities. The NCDD 2020 needs assessment rated the need for informal & formal supports as the top priority for survey respondents. More recently, a study authorized by the NE's legislature through LB 376, indicate that families have trouble coordinating information between state agencies, there's a lack of trust of government, & families are exhausted due to burdensome processes full of barriers (Meyers & Stauffer, 2023). This aligns with the Maternal Child Health Bureau's 2020 National Survey for Child's Health which indicates that Children & Youth with Special Healthcare Needs (CYSHCN) were more than three times likely to experience an unmet need than children without special needs.

The FCEP training program aims to remediate these unmet needs to provide parent-to-parent mentoring & info to parents of children w/disabilities by training CHWs (who are also parents of children w/disabilities) who can offer this support. It is also important to note that within the new Family Support Medicaid Waiver being developed, family & peer to peer supports would be reimbursable services (NEDHHS, 2023).

This program builds upon other grant-funded dollars. This includes funding from the Early Development Network, the state's Title V Medically Handicapped Children's Program (MHCP), & the

UCEDD Public Health supplement. The successful project is a result of blending & braiding to have more impact. NCDD's award of \$95,319 plus combined funding totals \$185,000 to support efforts.

MMI is offering a standardized online training program for PRCs - CHWs. This training program will increase the # of family leaders who have knowledge of the programs available to support individuals w/IDD & their families by offering resources that empower them to make informed decisions. Development of this training offers the opportunity for MMI to create an entirely new workforce who may be able to bill for their services (Medicaid Reimbursement). This in turn provides the catalyst for MMI to expand the peer-to-peer model greatly.

**NCDD COLLABORATION FUNDS**

NCDD sets aside limited collaboration funds each FFY that are available on a first come, first serve basis. These funds are intended to be used for small, one-time projects, usually providing "seed dollars" to provide indirect services (training opportunities, public awareness activities, provision of education regarding DD). They are not to cover ongoing operating expenses. The focus of any application must be persons w/DD, & requests are limited to \$2,500. Requests must fall within the Council's State Plan priority areas for persons with I/DD & their families. Collaboration funds must be used in a situation that benefits multiple DD stakeholders. These funds CANNOT BE utilized to pay for direct services or equipment, or for items such as office equipment, assistive technology, iPads, cell phones, goods or services for personal use, social memberships, entertainment costs, camperships, horseback riding, gift cards, or housing or personal living expenses.

**Examples of FFY23 Collaboration Funds:**

- Funds to support the keynote speaker, Candace Cunningham, at the Kolb Foundation 2023 "Building Bridges" Cerebral Palsy (CP) Conference. Hosted at the MMI UCEDD campus, the conference was targeted primarily for adults w/CP or similar disabilities. Family members & professionals were also invited. Presentations centered on building accessible & self-determined healthcare for individuals w/CP & related disabilities. Strategies were discussed to empower the individual w/the disability to be a co-equal member of their health care team.
- Funds to support the ACP (Association of Community Professionals) Fall 2023 Conference keynote speakers, Peter Leidy, & Molly Mackey. Leidy's presentation entitled "Touching the Heart of Our Work" highlighted that the heart of the work in the IDD field is in the relationships & valued social roles; helping people live a good life that has meaning; & what sharing your gifts & receiving others, brings to the relationships we have with others. His presentation was focused on building on person-centered principles which with those principles in practice will strengthen support in all areas of their lives; both through informal & formal avenues of support. The other keynote speaker was Molly Mackey. Her presentation, "High Conflict to Constructive Conflict," focused the topic of conflict resolution, & was targeted to assist/support frontline supervisors.
- Funds to support the NASP "Inclusive Economy" 30-minute educational film produced in partnership with NE Public Media.

Other collaborative strategies & activities from 2023 are covered in the following section below.

8. Area of Emphasis

Identify the Area of Emphasis collaboratively addressed by the DD Council and Collaborators

Area of Emphasis	Areas Addressed
Quality Assurance	Yes

Education and Early Intervention	Yes
Employment	Yes
Quality of Life	Yes
Other - Leadership	Yes
Other - PHWF funds	Yes

9. 3. The report should include a narrative progress report that cohesively describes the activities that were implemented by the Council and the P&A, the Council and the UCEDD, the Council and other collaborators DD Network. For at least one of the issues-barriers identified above describe:

NCDD demonstrated additional endeavors to strengthen community & cross systems relationships to improve the lives of individuals w/IDD & their families.

**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS (NEA) BIG READ EVENT**

Council family member, Beth Libra Plisek, partnered with Northeast Community College Library & submitted a grant proposal to the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) for the "Big Read". Only 62 libraries across the nation were awarded the grant, including Northeast Community College. Plisek was instrumental in securing the competitive NEA grant & organizing this unique opportunity in 2023.

The NEA Big Read Northeast NE event focused on disabilities & inclusion, featuring a shared reading experience of the book, *Sitting Pretty: The View from My Ordinary Resilient Disabled Body* by Rebekah Taussing. Beginning Feb. 1, 2023, copies of Taussing's book & companion titles, *Turtles All the Way Down* by John Green (grades 9-12) & *Can You See Me?* by Libby Scott & Rebecca Westcott (grades 5-8) were given away at the Northeast Library in Union 73 & at partnering locations throughout the community while supplies lasted. Copies of the books could be picked up at Norfolk Public Library, Norfolk Arts Center, & Elkhorn Valley Museum, and copies were also available for check out from the Norfolk Public Library & the Northeast Library. Multiple formats were available.

As part of the NEA Big Read in Northeast NE, over 64 events were held over the course of several months (Feb. - May) that focused on disability, disability services, accessibility, disability rights, & inclusion to promote open dialogue leading to a deeper understanding of how best to respect & serve one another. Events included a kick-off event, a read aloud event for children ages 3 through 3rd grade, listening sessions, educational series, theatre workshops, slam poetry events, art activities, museum exhibit, panel discussions, book clubs, & more. Partners from across the region came together to provide activities & events for people of all ages & abilities.

NCDD was invited to participate in the NEA Big Read in Northeast NE. On Feb. 23, 2023, NCDD ED attended the NEA Big Read kickoff Services Fair in Norfolk. She hosted an info table & gave away multiple hard copies of the Council's *Along the Way Series Guides*. NCDD was also displayed in an Online Services Fair at the NEA Big Read events website. The kickoff event also featured a disability historical keynote presentation from Edison McDonald, the Director from The Arc of NE.

Council staff had a staff retreat on 4/21/23, to Norfolk to attend the NEA Big Read's Professional Development Session for educators. The session featured keynote speaker Rebekah Taussig, the author of *Sitting Pretty*, the main title for the NEA Big Read event. NCDD staff were given hard copies of the book ahead of time to read, reflect upon, & discuss. NCDD also shared the event w/our listserv

to help generate interest with the following language:

Somewhere between 15-20% of our students have some kind of disability. The needs of our students can vary tremendously, & the number of students who need accommodations is only increasing. The passage of laws like the ADA & IDEA required schools to provide appropriate access & resources for these students, but many are still falling through the cracks. The task of catching all these students might feel daunting, but what would happen if we saw disability in our classrooms as more than a checklist of accommodation requirements? What if disability could be a source of innovation in our approach to teaching? With a lifetime of experience in a disabled body, experience as a student & a teacher, & an education in Disability Studies, Rebekah Taussig invites teachers to reframe our thinking from mere accommodation to deep & meaningful inclusion in our classrooms. Attendees will leave with a new lens for looking at disability as well as a range of ideas to apply to our own classrooms.

NCDD staff also visited the Elkhorn Valley Museum to see the disability historical display, featuring information from 1776 to present day. Highlights included local historical information about the Norfolk Opportunity Center & the beginnings of the local Arc chapter, national legislation such as the DD Act, IDEA, 1990 ADA, the 2002 Help America Vote Act, & more. Individuals w/disabilities submitted artwork that was displayed reflecting their abilities & perspectives. Scrapbooks full of local history included info about the Norfolk Opportunity Center & the first People First of NE convention.

#### NE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT

The Council's ED demonstrated leadership & high-level collaboration by setting up a second contract with Dr. Lisa Mills & planning the Sept. 2023 Supported Employment (SE) Summit. Within a very tight timeline, she was able to establish & secure a 2nd contract with Dr. Mills. This contract includes virtual consultation & technical assistance to the DHHS Divisions of DD & Behavioral Health (BH), & NE VR on agency-specific goals, issues, & challenges, as well as interactions between the agencies to advance competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcomes for Nebraskans with IDD & serious mental illness ("SMI"). Including the consultation & TA hours required additional outreach by NCDD's ED to each agency lead to guarantee participation & acceptance of & willingness to actively support & participate in the Sept. 20, 2023, SE Summit.

Conversations between Dr. Mills & Tony Green, Director of the Division of DD who also serves as the interim Director of BH, resulted in the focus of the SE summit addressing both the IDD & serious mental health & behavioral challenged populations. Director Green in committed to streamlining the SE process for both population groups. Thankfully Green had established a relationship w/Mills before the new Governor also appointed him to serve as the interim Director of BH. This coincidence expanded the focus & inevitable outcomes of the SE Summit.

Dr. Mills' new contract also includes virtual consultation hours with DD Network Partners (NCDD, DRN, MMI UCEDD) & NASP related to their roles in advancing CIE outcomes, again demonstrating the robust collaborative relationships with these partners.

This Supported Employment summit brought top SE leaders together from NE VR, NE DHHS Divisions of DD & BH, NASP, the DD Network partners, over 45 agency reps or independent contractors who provide SE supports to people with IDD, ABI, autism, & Behavioral Health needs, & other key stakeholders. The goal of the summit was to work in small break out groups to tackle pressing topics to provide feedback to help Mills develop a comprehensive action plan to advance CIE outcomes for Nebraskans.

Dr. Mills served as the SE Summit lead facilitator & planner, & the Council ED met frequently with Mills in July, Aug., & Sept. to coordinate the logistics & plan for the summit. Council staff created flyers & sent invitations to over 150 potential participants, gathering RSVPs & lunch orders. Since the summit was by invitation only, Council staff had to collaborate with NE VR & the Divisions of DD & BH to get a list of SE providers. NCDD & Mills worked with a SE consultant from NE who used to work for Goodwill Industries of Greater NE to assign attendees to breakout rooms for the event. This volunteer has experience with both DD & BH SE services & was able to share her personal knowledge to ensure that the breakout rooms were balanced across service provision areas.

The Council ED is fortunate that she has invested time to establish strong partnerships w/leadership from the entities noted above, in addition to key stakeholders such as The Arc of NE, NE APSE, NE SILC, NE EasterSeals, & PFN. The established partnerships are the results of years of her time spent in meetings, conversations, zoom calls, & providing oversight with the Feb. 2023 SE report written by Dr. Mills. These partnerships made the SE Summit possible.

The Council also leveraged & blended resources to bring top national subject matter experts in the SE field to the summit to assist Mills with breakout rooms. With guidance from Mills, the four SMEs facilitated break-out rooms during the summit helping attendees address topic specific questions. Scribes took detailed notes of each break out session which were shared with Mills to assist with the development of the comprehensive action plan. Significant contribution was also evident through staff from NCDD, MMI UCEDD, & Disability Rights NE who served as scribes.

Additional information about the SE Summit planning, collaboration, & success is highlighted in narrative under Section IV, Goal One.

Momentum & support in the SE movement was noticeable when Governor Jim Pillen hosted a press conference to celebrate October's Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) on Oct. 20, 2023. Governor Pillen proclaimed the month of October as Developmental Disabilities Employment Awareness Month & highlighted the contributions of capable & eager individuals who are ready to join the workforce & help the state's economy grow. Featured speakers at the press conference included:

- Director Tony Green from the DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities
- Lindy Foley, Director of Nebraska VR
- Codie Meehan, Lincoln Marriott Cornhusker Hodel Human Resources Director discussing the hotel's Project Search program.
- Hands of Heartland DD provider Employment Administrator Erin Ruskamp, with client Desi - a standout employee at the Stewart Seed Lab at UNL. Desi's UNL Seed Lab supervisor also spoke.

NCDD was encouraged to bring three Council members as invited guests to the press conference & proclamation. Chair Rachel Siffring, Grant Review Committee Chair Quinton Corwin, & MMI UCEDD Director Mark Schriver attended the event with the Council ED to represent NCDD. This DEAM event testifies to the collaboration & coordination focused on strengthening SE for Nebraskans with I/DD.



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