Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

April 17, 2026 at 9:30AM, CDT

In-Person Meeting

Nebraska State Office Building
[Lower-Level Goldenrod Conference Room]
301 Centennial Mall South Street
Lincoln, NE

The agenda was mailed to Council members prior to the meeting. The meeting was chaired by Beth Libra and called to order at 9:32AM, CDT and the *Pledge of Allegiance* was recited. Quorum was present.

Present (In-Person): Amanda Anderson, Christopher Chambers, Diane Cochran, Quinton Corwin, Brent Hoffman, Shaistha Kiran Karipi, Seamus Kelly, Eddie Kraska, Beth Libra, Jacob McIver, Diana Meadors, Hannah Mercer, Angie Ohlrich. DJ Plautz, Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Dawn Sybrant, Judy Trent, Joe Valenti, Josh Whitfield, and Sadie Worthing.
Absent: Dr. Jamar Dorsey, Shauna Graham, Tony Green, Sasha Reeks and Mark Shriver.
Guests (In-Person): Lisa Bickford, Larry Cochran, Robin Hoffman, Candi Kraska, Linda Mercer, Shauna Paolini, and Kathy Rohwedder.
Staff: Kristen Larsen, Rachel Ward, and Nikki Krause.

Welcome and Introductions
Beth Libra welcomed everyone to today's meeting. Attendees had the opportunity to introduce themselves.

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

The Governor's Public Meeting Calendar referred members of the public and media to the Council's Meetings webpage for additional information (posted March 26, 2026.).

Public Comment Period #1
Beth mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on their agenda for people who are not on the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented.

Shauna Paolini – Director of Enable Savings Plan –1445 K Street, Room 2027 Lincoln, NE
Some highlights are:

- The ABLE Age Adjustment Act, effective January 1, 2026, raised the age of eligibility for Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts from 26 to 46. To clarify, the onset of the eligible disability must have occurred prior to the individual's 46th birthday.
- They are celebrating a historic record number of enrollments this quarter.
- $63.5M assets with over 5,000 accounts. Increase benefits to community as participation continues to increase.

- 70% of account holders are Nebraskans. Reminder that Nebraskans receive up to $10,000 tax deduction annual on Nebraska 1040N form.
- Submitted a letter of support for the Council's state plan to further strengthen partnership and collaboration with Enable as it relates to tools offered through the plan for financial management and independence, as well as the ABLE to work plan which allows for saving beyond the annual contribution limit.
- LB1240 passed on final reading 49-0 and was presented to the Governor for signing. Furthers protections from Nebraska Medicaid recovery to prevent claw back following the distribution of assets of funds from Enable accounts following the passing of the account owner.
- Federal grant opportunity with the Administration of Community Living announced this week and will be posted soon for applicants.
- **Everyone is invited to Enable's 10-year anniversary celebration June 9, 2026, at the Mahoney Inclusive Playground located at 7900 Adams Street here in Lincoln, 10:30am to noon. There will be giveaways, refreshments, games, activities and remarks around 11am. Celebrating 10 years of program implementation, empowering achievement of saving goals, and financial independence.**

Approval of Minutes
Eddie Kraska asked the Council members if there were any corrections to the *DRAFT* February 6, 2026, Council meeting minutes. There were no corrections. Council members were reminded to abstain from voting if they were not in attendance for the February 6th Council meeting. As there were no corrections, Joe Valenti made the motion to approve the minutes, and Brent Hoffman seconded.
A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 15, No – 0, Abstain – 3.*** Motion carried.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
As required by Council policy, at the first meeting of each federal fiscal year, members of the Council shall verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest of which they are aware. Council members, who had not already done so or had updates, were asked to verbally declare any potential conflicts of interest. They are noted below.

Shaistha Kiran Karipi PTI Nebraska

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

Kristen reviewed the Financial Report for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026, a handout at the meeting. At the August 15, 2025 Council meeting, the Council approved the budget of $372,718 for FFY2026 (October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026). The Year-to-Date Expenditures for the second quarter of FFY2026 (October 1, 2025 to March 31, 2025) were $192,660 – 51.6% of the FFY2026 budget.
NOTE: All DSA functions have been charged to the FFY2026 award, and Kristen will ask for correction to the $26,316.00 limit. Personnel costs include Edith Titamoh's payroll through January 14, 2026, which was paid on February 4, 2026. This report reflects an error in which Edith's payroll continued to be charged to NCDD instead of Office of Rural Health. This issue will be corrected with a journal entry in April, and personnel costs are expected to decrease going forward.

The report reflects the balance of funds from FFY2024, FFY2025 and the partial award of FFY2026 as of March 31, 2026. Available Current Funds totaled $120,928.62. Expenditures (obligations) totaled $108,518.49. Balance of Current Funds Available was 12,410.13.

NCDD finally received our full FFY2026 award on April 10, 2026. Now that we have our full award, we can proceed to renew the following projects:

- Munroe-Meyer Institute's *Enhancing Quality of Life for Spanish-Speaking Families in the Hispanic/Latino Community through Comprehensive Support & Evidence-Based Treatments for Developmental Disabilities*
- EasterSeals Nebraska's *Employment First: Informed Choice Matters*
- Goodwill Industries' *EmployAbility Awareness Campaign*
- Munroe-Meyer Institute's *Increasing Access to Early Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder in Toddlers through an Intervention to Promote Community Knowledge of EarliPoint*

We can also set up a new project with Munroe-Meyer Institute addressing *HCBS Advocacy*.

2027-2031 Five-Year State Plan Development and Public Comments Update
The Draft 2027-2031 Five-Year State Plan Goals and Objectives were open for a second public comment period February 19, 2026 to April 3, 2026. The Planning Committee met on April 7, 2026, to review the public comments that were received.

Kristen explained that two public comments were received. One from State Treasurer Joey Spellerberg (Enable Savings Plan) and the other from Director Tony Green. To address Director Green's concerns, Kristen sought technical assistance from iTACC. Director Green and NCDD have differing perspectives on the State Plan. Director Green views the State Plan through a state/governor-aligned, government lens. While NCDD operates with community-driven priorities and is not required to align with the Governor in the same way. Additionally, federal requirements shape the Council's work. ACL/OIDD set expectations for SMART measures (increase/decrease/improve/reduce). Councils do not provide direct services, so outcomes are measured differently. NCDD is also funded with federal DD Act dollars, not state funds. Our funding is not contingent on annual state approval. State Plan approval is federal and based on our data and needs assessment. When it comes to monitoring the State Plan, staff, not Council members, are responsible for monitoring and reporting progress. Council members govern, but they are not part of management. Sheryl Matney, iTACC, expects our goals and objectives will be approved, but reviewers may question whether they're realistic for a minimum-allotment state with a small staff.
NOTE: Included in the day of handouts are two handouts that clarified ACL's guidance on goals and objectives as well as Key Performance Indicators.

Judy Trent, the Planning Committee Chair, reported that based on the public comments received, minor clarifying edits were made to the objectives.
NOTE: The edits are in red or strike throughs.

Goal 1

By September 30, 2031, Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and guardians will experience measurable increases in opportunities for self-determination, independence, productivity, safety, and inclusion in community life, as a result of systemic changes at the state, regional, and/or local level.

Objective A - Housing:

Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will advocate for and monitor the progress of Nebraska's 2026-2031 Olmstead Plan goals to expand access to safe, affordable, and accessible housing in the communities where Nebraskans with disabilities choose to live. This will be accomplished through NCDD staff participation in the Olmstead Advisory Committee and the Olmstead Housing Workgroup, which meet regularly throughout the year to monitor and document progress on the Olmstead Plan housing goals and associated data measures.

Objective B - HCBS Services:
By September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will monitor and advocate for systemic changes that strengthen, improve the quality of, and expand access to Home and Community Based Services, such as person-centered community connection assistance and intermittent service alternatives, that increase the independence of Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities in their communities.

Objective C - Employment:
Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will, in collaboration with related state agencies and organizations, monitor and advocate for systemic changes that increase the number of Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities who engage in competitive integrated employment (CIE). ~~and for the collection and sharing of data to measure the desired increase.~~ NCDD will also support the improvement, collection, and sharing of employment data necessary to measure progress toward achieving this increase.

Objective D - Access and Use of Medicaid Services:
By September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will monitor and advocate for systemic improvements in Medicaid navigation—defined as the ability of individuals with IDD and their families and guardians to understand, access, and effectively use Medicaid services. ~~This includes increasing access to qualified providers, behavioral health services, and specialist care. These efforts aim to measurably enhance the health, wellbeing, and safety of Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.~~ These efforts will include supporting strategies that increase access to qualified providers, behavioral health services, and specialist care, all with the goal of measurably enhancing the health, wellbeing, and safety of Nebraskans with IDD.

Objective E - Training Opportunities:
Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will support at least three high-quality, person-centered training opportunities for professionals who provide support to individuals with IDD. These trainings will focus on enhancing skills that promote the self-determination, independence, productivity, safety, and inclusion of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in community life and educational settings.

Objective F - Emergency Events:
Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities, in collaboration with related stakeholders and organizations, will monitor and respond to the needs of Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families and guardians that result from manmade, natural, or environmental events.

Objective G - Policy Advocacy:
Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will serve as a trusted policy advisor to the Nebraska Legislature, the Governor, and other policymakers; track key legislative activity; collaborate with state and local stakeholders; and equip allies, self-advocates, families and guardians with tools to engage in advocacy. These efforts will ensure that policies across all areas of

community life reflect the rights, needs, and voices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, promoting full inclusion and meaningful participation in decision-making.

Goal 2

By September 30, 2031, Nebraskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families, caregivers, and guardians will have increased access to information, tools, and supports that empower them to make personally meaningful and appropriate choices about their services, education, employment, decision-making needs, healthcare, living situation, and relationships—leading to more self-determined lives.

Objective A - Self-Advocacy:

Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will increase the influence of self-advocates and leaders with disabilities by strengthening, supporting, and funding at least one self-advocacy organization led by people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

- By September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will support opportunities for transition-age youth (14–21) with intellectual and developmental disabilities to form self-advocacy groups that build leadership and self-determination skills, promoting their inclusion in age-appropriate community clubs and activities.
- By September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will increase opportunities for self-advocate leaders to train others with disabilities to increase their personal, civic, and/or collaborative leadership roles.
- By September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will expand self-advocate participation in cross-disability and culturally diverse coalitions.

Objective B - Leadership for Those with Lived Experience:

Through September 30, 2031, the Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities will support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families and guardians, and Council staff to increase leadership and participation in policymaking through active participation in statewide advisory committees, cross-disability workgroups, public advocacy, and cross-system dialogue.

Objective C - Youth Transition:

By September 30, 2031, transition-aged youth (ages 14–21) with intellectual and developmental disabilities, along with their families and guardians, will have increased access to person-centered planning — grounded in the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework — through education and training that support informed choice and successful transitions to inclusive, meaningful employment and adult services. This will be achieved through collaboration with the Developmental Disabilities Network, state agencies, and community partners.

Objective D - Information Access:

By September 30, 2031, as the result of Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities efforts, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, guardians, professionals, related organizations, policymakers, and the public will have greater access to information about disability issues, services, and supports, and will assist individuals, their families, and guardians, to obtain needed supports and advocate effectively for themselves and for systems change.

The Planning Committee recommended to edit the Draft Goals and Objectives as indicated above and to submit them to the Administration of Community Living.
A roll call vote was taken: **Yes – 18, No – 0, Abstain – 0.*** Motion carried.

Request for Proposals (RFA) Process for FFY2026/FFY2027 and Impact on Planning and Grant Review Committee

Since we will not have a full Notice of Award (NoA) by October 1, 2026 to launch FFY2027 projects, timelines will need to be adjusted. Instead of a RFAs being released in early June and the Council's Grant Review and NCDD vote on proposals at the August meeting, we will release the RFAs in September and the Grant Review will score applications for full Council approval at the November meeting, with projects launching on January 1, 2027. The Planning Committee will meet on August 20, 2026 to decide on RFA focus areas.

2026 Tri-Board Meeting Update

The Tri-Board consists of the DD Network Partners (the DD Council, Disability Rights Nebraska, and the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)/University of Nebraska Medical Center). The 2026 Tri-Board meeting will be on Friday – June 12th. The topic will be Strengthening Disability Advocacy through Resilience and Collaboration. The meeting will be held at MMI (located near the UNO Scott Campus at 6902 Pine Street). MMI is working on securing a hotel room block.

NOTE: You will need to register with Council staff by May 31, 2026 for the meeting. To register, please contact Nikki Krause at 402-471-2330 or nikki.krause@nebraska.gov.
NOTE: MMI is working on a hotel room block. A few of the hotel rooms are being held for the Council. Please let Nikki Krause know as soon as possible if you will be attending in-person and will need accommodations.

Upcoming Election of Council Officers & Applying for Reappointment to the Council with the Governor

Officer elections for FFY2027 will be conducted at the August 21, 2026 Council meeting. This includes the offices of Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary. If you are interested in any of these offices or would like more information, please contact Kristen Larsen at 402-471-0143 or kristen.larsen@nebraska.gov. Elections for Committee Chairs will be held during the November 2026 Council meeting.

Eligible Council members whose term expire on October 1, 2026, and are interested in continuing to serve on the Council, are encouraged to reapply with the Governor. Applications can be submitted either online at the Boards & Commissions – Application for Executive Appointment webpage at https://governor.nebraska.gov/board-comm-req or by mailing a **completed** Executive Appointment Application to Pat Selk at the Office of the Governor. Council members eligible to apply for reappointment are:

Brent Hoffman (Individual)
Shaistha Kiran Karipi (Family)
Seamus Kelly (Protection & Advocacy Agency – Disability Rights Nebraska)
Joe Valenti (Family with Relative at ICF/IID)

NOTE: Shaistha was appointed to serve the remainder of Erin Phillip's term. The By-Laws indicate she is eligible to serve an additional three-year term.

The following Council members have terms that will expire October 1, 2026 and are ineligible for reappointment due to term limits:

Quinton Corwin (Individual)
Judy Trent (Family)

Quinton and Judy were reminded that they will serve on the Council until the replacements are appointed.

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

NCDD Public Comments

Kristen reviewed the NCDD Public Comments that were submitted since the last Council meeting.

- Round Two of the A&D Renewal Application
- HCBS CDD & Adult Day Waiver Amendment regarding removal of the consultative assessment and change in meeting frequency
- Medicaid Section 1115 Waiver to end retroactive coverage

NOTE: Copies of the above NCDD Public Comments were included in the meeting packet.

Council Member Conference Report Summary

Eddie Kraska and Diane Cochran both attended the 2026 Nebraska Association of Service Providers (NASP) Conference March 31 and April 1, 2026, in Lincoln, Nebraska. Eddie learned about making good decisions and how hard it can be, dealing with behaviors, and he attended an improv session. He enjoyed connecting with new people and was awarded a prize for "having the most fun". Diane learned about Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and how IQ will get the job, but EQ will maintain the job. She recommended that all Council members implement the practices of Emotional Intelligence as we interact with each other and those in the field. She also learned about the "sandwich approach" when providing corrective feedback, especially for sensitive issues, and that relationships and encouragement are foundational to grow and for behavioral improvement.

Council members were reminded that due to the tight fiscal budget, it was voted to freeze all out of state travel to national conferences. Council members still qualify to attend up to two in-state disability-related conferences each federal fiscal year. Members must notify Nikki Krause if they are interested in attending an in-state conference at least 2 weeks in advance. Upon their return from the conference, they will need to submit the Council Member Conference Report Summary and report on the conference at the Council meeting following the conference.

Disability Advocacy Day, The Arc of Nebraska's 57th Annual Senatorial Dinner, and DD Awareness Month (DDAM)

The Governor's Proclamation for Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month was on March 3, 2026. NCDD staff attended along with DD Division staff. NCDD did their best to collaborate and provided a list of possible attendees. Unfortunately, there were no self-advocates or representatives from other disability advocacy organizations at the Proclamation Signing event. NCDD Staff attended the Lincoln DDAM event coordinated by The Arc of Lincoln on March 6, 2026. It was a very well attended event and had news coverage. Kristen presented on a Division of Public Health Fireside Chat about the Council and DDAM. NCDD staff nominated Beth Libra and Braxton Siffring for DDD's DDAM awards. Beth sent a DDAM message that was blasted out incorporating the theme *We're Here: Then, Now, Always*. Beth also has been posting 31 days of DDAM facts on social media.

The Arc of Nebraska Senatorial Dinner was on March 3, 2026 and Disability Advocacy Day was March 24, 2026. Both had a Council presence. On March 10, 2026, there was a Disability Employment Technical Assistance Center (DETAC) webinar and Kristen and Becki Koeher presented on *The Evolving Role of DD Councils in Employment*.

Updates from State Agency Representatives

NOTE: Agency representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports are attached at the end of the minutes and Council members are encouraged to read the written reports in their entirety. (Tony Green was absent and not able to present his report.) [Christopher Chambers, Department of Education – Office of Special Education; Tony Green, Division of Developmental Disabilities; Diana Meadors, Division of Behavioral Health; Jennifer Severe-Oforah, Division of Public Health – Maternal and Child Health; DJ Plautz, Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation; Dawn Sybrant, Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging]

Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)
DBH continues to work on the Rural Health Transformation Initiatives. DBH's initiative is Rural Emergency Behavioral Health: 5.1 to 5.4,

- 5.1 – Integration of Behavioral Health Services in rural communities with a focus on specialty healthcare clinics.
- 5.2 – Telehealth Crisis responders for law enforcement and crisis training for officers.
- 5.3 – RFA for crisis centers for minor items such as furniture, ADA accessible doors, generators and/or crisis vans.
- 5.4 – Behavioral Health nursing home pilot program.

A save the date will go out soon for recovery month activities and the pony express event that are being planned.

Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) – Office of Special Education (OSE)
OSE is submitting its FFY2026 IDEA Part B and Part C applications, which fund services for children with disabilities across the state. Part B is services for children from diagnosis through age 21. Part C is early intervention for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3). The review period is March 20-May 20, 2026 and the public comment period is April 20 – May 20, 2026.

Nebraska has rapidly expanded use of high-quality instructional materials, but students with disabilities still lag behind grade-level expectations. Access alone is not enough; educators need support to use these materials effectively. With funding from CCSSO, Nebraska launched Materials Matter for All, a pilot that provides targeted professional learning for general and special educators. The pilot is measuring changes in teacher confidence, mindsets, and instructional practices to inform future statewide expansion.

The 2026 NEMTSS Summit- Destination Impact is October 8-9, 2026 at the Younes Conference center in Kearney, Nebraska.

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
Nebraska VR is funding six Summer Transition Programs designed to offer meaningful work-based learning experiences for students between the ages of 14 and 21. Nebraska VR continues to provide technical assistance to agency providers in an effort of improving the quality-of-service delivery. As of today, there have been 134 successful Supported Employment/Customized Employment (SE/CE) outcomes for Program Year 2025 which began July 1, 2025. They are on track to increase the number of outcomes from last year.

Nebraska VR and ATP continue to be actively engaged in the development and implementation of Nebraska's Olmstead Plan. The VR Director leads the employment workgroup and the ATP Director is

the chair of the housing workgroup. The agency's involvement in this critical planning helps to ensure employment and accessibility remain a priority for Nebraskans with disabilities.

Division of Public Health – Maternal and Child Health (DPH-MCH)
The Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) continues to be a focal point for the Division of Public Health. The last quarter was primarily focused on establishing internal infrastructure for implementing the grant, hiring staff, and beginning to release funding opportunities. One significant component of RHTP is the ability to increase the number of Community Health Workers (CHW) in the workforce. Each Local Health Department can apply for the funding to hire up to 10 CHWs. Funds are now being released and CHWs are being hired. MCH has two other RHTP programs: Perinatal Regionalization and Maternal Mobile Health Clinic.

Medicaid and Long-Term Care and Aging (MLTC)
MLTC is submitting State Plan Amendment (SPA) NE 26-0004: Targeted Case Management (TCM) for Aged, Blind, and Disabled and Aid to Families with Dependent Children eligibility. Effective July 1, 2026, this SPA will specify which providers can provide TCM services to these groups by aligning it with the 1915(b)(4) waiver that was approved by CMS last year. Public comments may be submitted until April 24, 2026.

Nebraska Medicaid will begin enforcing work requirements on May 1, 2026. Medicaid members enrolled under Medicaid adult expansion must complete Work Requirements. Medicaid expansion includes people who are aged 19-64, have a low income, and get their health insurance through Nebraska Medicaid (also known as Heritage Health). They cannot get Medicare, and they cannot be pregnant or be eligible based on a disability. There are multiple reasons that an adult expansion member can be exempt especially related to disabilities. Visit https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/WorkRequirments.aspx for a list of exemptions. Please note that if Nebraska Medicaid requests additional information from a member, the member must submit the requested information within 30 days of receipt, or they may lose their Medicaid coverage.

Updates from the DD Network Representatives
NOTE: DD Network representatives were asked to briefly touch on any pressing issues or important updates the Council needed to be informed of. The written reports are attached at the end of the minutes and Council members are encouraged to read the written reports in their entirety. (Mark Shriver was absent and not able to present his report.) [Seamus Kelly, Disability Rights Nebraska; Mark Shriver, Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI)/University Center of Excellence for Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD)]

Disability Rights Nebraska
LB985 passed. It limits the number of people an individual guardian can serve to 20 people, it makes it possible for people under guardianship or proposed to be under guardianship to attend their own court hearings by video call, and requires guardians to physically visit their person at least once every quarter so they can see for themselves how the person is doing.

Disability Rights Nebraska's updated version of their report *Guarding from the Guardians* resulted in more opportunities to do public education about guardianship and the need for supported decision making. The guardianship reform work flows directly out of their monitoring work because active and appropriate guardians do not tolerate inhumane residential conditions.

Council Chair and Staff Updates

Beth mentioned that Kristen's performance evaluation is completed. This has been a busy legislative session. Good news is that LB958 passed this morning. Norfolk is a busy community with Buddy Baseball in full swing and a new fitness class for all started.

Kristen had a few updates to share.

- 2026 DD Council Training and Technical Assistance Institute is coming up, and Council members can listen in to the various sessions. (Registration is required first.)
- There is a lot taking place in the Olmstead Work Group around Supported Employment.
- Nebraska was not selected for the NEON Core State Technical Assistance.
- She and Becky presented for DETAC - *The Evolving Role of DD Councils in Employment*. A recording of the presentation is on the DETAC website.
- A lot of parental concerns were raised with the Governor's DD Advisory Committee regarding the interRAI.
- She had a request to present to the Office of Health Disparities regarding an overview of NCDD's role in state government and how the Council promotes systems change, advocacy, and outreach efforts on April 14, 2026.
- She was asked to be on a panel at the ALL(Advocacy, Leadership, and Lived Experience) Training (a specific training MMI conducts) on the National Perspective.
- A summary of the 2025 Annual Program Performance Report was included in your day of handouts for your review.

Rachel Ward had a few updates to share.

- She attended the Eastern Transition Conference with Kristen, and she attended the Central Transition Conference.
- The TransCen project with Sean Roy will be finishing up towards the end of June. Sean has made numerous connections in Nebraska. He started the project focusing on families, then moved to providers, and will be ending with educators.
- Disability Pride Lincoln will be on July 25, 2026 at Antelope Park.
- Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) is going well. The Community of Practice may be small, but it is mighty. They are figuring out what the needs of Nebraska are.
- Council staff will be working with Joyful Stoves, from the DD Division, to get the *Along the Way* guides updated.

Nikki mentioned that the following bills had action taken on them today.

- LB737 – Require a joint public hearing to evaluate the progress of the Olmstead plan for individuals with disabilities – Approved by the Governor.
- LB839 – Change reporting requirements under the Municipal Density and Missing Middle Housing Act – Vetoed by the Governor.
- LB912 – Adopt the Community Health Worker Training Endorsement Act – Approved by the Governor.
- LB958 – Provide a requirement for the Department of Health and Human Services relating to 1915(c) waivers and define nursing facility level of care under the Medical Assistance Act – Approved by the Governor. The amendments address interRAI assessment concerns.
- LB985 – Provide a limitation on the number of individuals for which a guardian or conservator may accept appointment – Approved by the Governor.

Council Member Updates

Judy mentioned that they have been busy with Special Olympics. She got to coach Justine's team this year.

Diane mentioned that she made lots of connections at the NASP Conference which will help her with her self-determination outreach.

Shaista Kiran Karipi attended the Transition Conference and her daughter is keeping her very busy.

Joe told everyone to check out Beth's posts.

Sadie Worthing's advocacy has shifted to helping the community of Lexington with the closing of the Tyson company.

Brent went to the Senatorial Dinner and he also placed 1st in bowling.

Hannah Mercer mentioned she was in a bowling tournament and got 1st place. She also participates in People First of Kearney.

Angie Olrich mentioned that her daughter is keeping the family busy. She has been going to MMI for Spring Mornings and has a dance recital coming up. Angie has also been working to get more inclusive and accessible playground at the school and is running for Elkhorn school board.

Amanda Anderson was at the NASP Conference. She attended a session by DHHS. DHHS left about half the time to ask questions. There was a lot of questions around the interRAI Assessment. If you have natural supports, the trend is to see your services go down.

Josh is a CtLC Ambassador. He created a CtLC page on Facebook. At church he has been helping to get shelving set up for neurodiverse tools.

Eddie went to the Senatorial Dinner and the NASP Conference. He finished acting in the play *Descendents* through Circle Theater. He is getting ready to audition for another play.

Public Comment Period #2
Beth mentioned that all public meetings must allow time on their agenda for people who are not on the Council to comment. Members of the public, who wanted to address the Council, were instructed to identify himself or herself, including an address and the name of any organization represented. No public comments were made.

Adjourn
The meeting adjourned at 1:46PM, CDT.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2026, and will be in-person. The Planning Committee will meet the afternoon of August 20, 2026.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

Mission

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

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Christopher Chambers, Part B Specialist

Agency: Nebraska Department of Education- Office of Special Education

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

- Finishing up Focused Monitoring Meeting with Districts; explaining timelines for potential Corrective Action Plans and addressing induvial student files of noncompliance
- Indicator 13 Transition Follow Up on Corrective Action Plans for Districts; including file reviews to ensure noncompliance was corrected

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

The Nebraska Department of Education's Office of Special Education is submitting its **FFY 2026 IDEA Part B and Part C applications**, which fund services for children with disabilities across the state.

- **Part B**: Services for children from diagnosis through age 21
- **Part C**: Early intervention for infants and toddlers (birth to age 3)

Applications are available online at https://www.education.ne.gov/sped/ and in person at the Nebraska Department of Education in Lincoln.
Review period: March 20 – May 20, 2026
Public comment period: April 20 – May 20, 2026

High Quality Instructional Materials
Nebraska has rapidly expanded use of high-quality instructional materials (from 5% to 80% of districts), but students with disabilities still lag, behind grade-level expectations. Access alone isn't enough; educators need support to use these materials effectively.
With funding from CCSSO, Nebraska launched **Materials Matter for All**, a pilot that provides targeted professional learning for general and special educators. In partnership with ESU 8, NeMTSS Region 3, and SPED Strategies, the project delivers a three-part training series using Amplify CKLA (K–2) and HMH Into Reading (4–5).
The pilot is measuring changes in teacher confidence, mindsets, and instructional practices to inform future statewide expansion.

See links below for more information:
Materials Matter, Nebraska Literacy Project, and Journey to Inclusion. and SPED Strategies Amplify CKLA (grades K-2) and HMH Into Reading (grades 4-5).

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

- Nebraska Young Childhood Institute- June 16 and 17 2026, Younes Conference Center NorthKearney, NE
- 2026 NeMTSS Summit- Destination Impact- October 8-9, Younes Conference Center North Kearney, NE

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative Report to Council Members

April 17, 2026

Representative: Tony Green, Director

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

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

Waiver Renewal and Amendments:

- On March 31, 2026, the Division submitted the AD Waiver 5-year renewal along with amendments to the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Waiver, Comprehensive DD Waiver, and Adult Day Waiver with a requested implementation date of July 1, 2026.
- In the review of public comments received regarding the AD and TBI waivers, the Division chose to update the exception process outlined in Appendix C-4 to allow for an exception to be considered and approved any time the personal care needs of the individual exceeded 150% of NF costs when they are necessary to the personals health and safety including when they are provided by live-in or family caregivers.
- No changes were made to the CDD or DDAD waivers prior to submission.
- Over the next 90 days, the Division will work collaboratively with our partners at CMS to address any questions or concerns that they have before approval of the waivers.
- Additional information and summary of proposed changes can be found on the public comment website: https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Public-Comment.aspx

League of Human Dignity A&D waiver transition of Service Coordination to the State of Nebraska as of April 1, 2026:

- Division is currently in process of on-boarding/hiring AD Service Coordinators.
- All Aged and Disabled waiver people that experienced a change are being contacted directly with new contact & contact information.

National Core Indicators (NCI):

- The DDD Quality Team has completed all DD in-person survey's and has begun AD in-person survey's.
- Additional information about NCI, links to the dashboard, and State & National reports can be found on the DHHS Quality Assurance for HCBS Waiver website: https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/DD-Quality-Assurance.aspx

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

All Information available on DD Calendar of Events page on DD Homepage

- Monthly DHHS Stakeholder Meeting – Monday, May 4, 2026
- DD Advisory Committee Meeting – Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: DJ Plautz

Agency: Nebraska VR

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

- Nebraska VR is funding six Summer Transition Programs designed to offer meaningful work-based learning experiences for students between the ages of 14 and 21.

- Nebraska VR continues to provide technical assistance to agency providers in an effort of improving the quality of service delivery.

- Successful SE/CE outcomes for PY 2025 = 134

- Nebraska VR and ATP continue to be actively engaged in the development and implementation of Nebraska's Olmstead Plan. The VR Director leads the employment workgroup and the ATP Director is the chair of the housing workgroup. The agency's involvement in this critical planning helps to ensure employment and accessibility remain a priority for Nebraskans with disabilities.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Jennifer Severe-Oforah

Agency: Division of Public Health, DHHS

The Rural Health Transformation Program continues to be a focal point for Division on Public Health. The last quarter was primarily focused on establishing internal infrastructure for implementing the grant, hiring staff, and beginning to release funding opportunities.

One significant component of RHTP is the ability to increase the number of Community Health Workers (CHW) in the workforce. Each Local Health Department can apply for the funding to hire up to 10 CHWS. Funds are now being released and CHWs are being hired.

A CHW is a trusted member of, or has good understanding of, the community they serve. They are able to build trusting relationships and are able to link individuals with the systems of care in the communities they serve. A CHW also builds individual and community capacity by increasing health knowledge and self-sufficiency through a range of activities such as outreach, community education, informal counseling, social support and advocacy. CHW is an umbrella term used to define other professional titles.

A Parent Resource Coordinator or a Home Visitor are examples of a CHW.

MCH has two other RHTP programs. Perinatal Regionalization and Maternal Mobile Health Clinic.

More information is available at:

https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Rural-Health-Transformation.aspx

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Dawn Sybrant

Agency: MLTC

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

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

State Plan Amendment (SPA) NE 26-0004: Targeted Case Management (TCM) for Aged, Blind, and Disabled (ABD) and Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) eligibility groups.

Effective July 1, 2026, this SPA will specify which providers can provide TCM services to these groups by aligning it with the 1915(b)(4) waiver that was approved by CMS last year.

Providers allowed to provide TCM services for these groups include

- State staff employed by DHHS
- Entities awarded a contract through DHHS' competitive bid process to provide TCM services
- Entities for whom DHHS has entered into a sole source award for the provision of TCM

Public Comments may be submitted until April 24.

Medicaid Work Requirements:

Nebraska Medicaid will begin enforcing work requirements on May 1, 2026.

Who is required to complete work requirements?

Medicaid members enrolled under Medicaid adult expansion must complete Work Requirements. Medicaid expansion includes people who are aged 19-64, have a low income, and get their health insurance through Nebraska Medicaid (also known as Heritage Health). They cannot get Medicare, and they cannot be pregnant or be eligible on the basis of a disability.

Exemptions

There are multiple reasons that an adult expansion member can be exempt. Some notable exemptions include:

- Parents, caretakers or guardians of children 13 or younger or of an individual with disabilities
- Veterans with a total disability rating

- People who are medically frail or have special medical needs, including:
  - Blindness or disability
  - Substance use disorder
  - Disabling mental disorder
  - Or other significant physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities
  - (This is not a complete list of exemptions. To see all other exemptions, visit https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/WorkRequirements.aspx)

Reporting Work Requirements
Nebraska Medicaid will examine Medicaid expansion members' case information to determine if they have met work requirements or if they qualify for an exemption. If NE Medicaid does not have enough information to verify work requirements or an exemption, we will contact the individual and ask for more information.

Medicaid members should check their mail or email regularly in case DHHS requests more information from them. If a Medicaid member does not receive a request from DHHS, then they do not have to send additional information.

For more information:
More information on work requirement activities, exemptions, and reporting is available on the webpage: https://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/WorkRequirements.aspx

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

Disability Rights Nebraska
Report to Council Members
April 2026

Representative: Seamus Kelly/ Tania Diaz

Agency: Disability Rights Nebraska

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

Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy:

The Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Project held the spring training from February 17 through March 26. Seven new advocates were added bringing the total trained to 70 since the program started in the fall of 2019. Currently, 10 advocates fall within the 1-year commitment to help families with their IEP meetings.

Fifteen referrals were made to the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Program in the 2nd quarter. Six (6) of those referrals were assigned to advocates who assisted families with their IEPs. The Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Coordinator assisted families with information and support in their advocacy efforts. In addition, the Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Coordinator attended three (3) IEP meetings, two (2) 504 plan meetings, and an MDT meeting through virtual platforms during the 2nd quarter.

The Inclusive Education Lay Advocacy Coordinator presented information on the Program to three (3) community organizations. On January 7th, Pat Cottingham presented information to 20 members of different community organizations in the Hastings, NE area for a lunch and learn with CASA of South Central Nebraska. On January 28th, Pat Cottingham presented information about the program to eight (8) staff members at the Brain Injury Association of Nebraska. As a result, three (3) staff members registered for the spring training session. On February 16, Pat Cottingham spoke with eighteen (18) faculty members in the College of Education and Human Sciences at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln on the importance of inclusion for children receiving special education services.

Advocacy Example:

Parents of children with disabilities often find themselves frustrated with school administrators and uncertain about where to turn.

In one example, the parent of a 7-year-old boy diagnosed with multiple disabilities (Autism, Anxiety, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) became upset after a school official interfered with his son's disability evaluation.

The parent discovered after-the-fact that an assistant principal at his son's school had written directly to the child's medical provider about a diagnostic evaluation. The letter discussed diagnostic content, questioned medical findings, and requested changes to the wording of a medical diagnosis, the parent reported.

Medical evaluations are critical to identifying a child's disability-related needs and determining eligibility for services and potential accommodations. In this situation, the school administrator's interference risked minimizing, mischaracterizing and/or discounting the child's disability, the parent noted.

Parents have the right to meaningfully participate in matters affecting their child's disability evaluation and educational needs. Excluding parents from a substantive communication that directly affects diagnoses and potential eligibility undermines this parental right.

Furthermore, communicating without including the parents in the loop opens the door to potential disability discrimination and can lead to chilling effect on future parental advocacy.

Our Inclusive Lay Advocacy Coordinator spoke with the parent, reviewed the documents involved, suggested that she file a state complaint, and provided information about that process.

Public Policy Advocacy:

Bills Disability Rights Nebraska staff testified on in support.

LB737 (Senator Rountree)- Passed

The Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature and the Urban Affairs Committee of the Legislature shall: (i) Hold a joint public hearing to assess (A) the progress of the Olmstead plan during the previous calendar year in the areas of housing, employment, education, community supports,

and transportation, and (B) potential legislative solutions; and (ii) Electronically submit a report of the findings to the Clerk of the Legislature no later than December 31 of each year.

LB 839 (Senator Rountree)- Passed

·adds reporting requirements on accessible housing statewide

·mandates 5% of units are accessible for persons with mobility impairments and 2% of units are accessible for persons with hearing or vision impairments.

LB 985 (Senator DeBoer)- Passed

· limits the number of people an individual guardian can serve to 20 people,

· makes it possible for people under guardianship or proposed to be under guardianship to attend their own court hearings by video call, and

· requires guardians to physically visit their person at least once every quarter so they can see for themselves how the person is doing.

Aged and Disabled Waiver:

Disability Rights Nebraska submitted comments during the public comment period (December 5- January 5, 2025) and also during the second public comment period (February 2 to March 4, 2026).

Guarding the Guardians:

DRNE | Reports & Publications

Our updated version of our report "Guarding from the Guardians" resulted in more opportunities to do public education about guardianship and the need for supported decision making. The guardianship reform work flows directly out of our monitoring work because active and appropriate guardians do not tolerate inhumane residential conditions.

After the second report was released, we sent a copy of the report to every state senator, every county court judge, and to sister advocacy organizations. Senator Wendy DeBoer introduced two pieces of remedial legislation requiring regular in person visits by guardians, limiting the number of clients a guardian can have, and allowing the protected person to attend hearings in their case virtually to make it easier to share their voice directly. We organized coalition partners to share their lived experiences by

telling their story of indifferent or harmful guardians to state senators and testified at the public hearing on DeBoer's bills. There was excellent news coverage in statewide outlets and even an article in US News and World Report.

Some judges took our report very seriously and immediately began scheduling show cause hearings in the cases where the guardian who is facing criminal charges was still in position of power. During the next few months, that guardian was removed from most of the cases and a Guardian Ad Litem was appointed to examine her conduct. Gratifyingly, two of the people under guardianship used this chance to finally talk to someone who would listen to them and demonstrated their readiness to end the guardianship. In both cases, the judge granted their pro se motions and returned them to full independence.

Another happy development as a result of the report was in the individual case of an 82-year-old veteran who was evicted from his Lincoln apartment when his guardian failed to pay his bills. While the county court was on notice that he had been evicted, the judge took no further action and for months the veteran's status was unknown to anyone. On the day of our report's release, the judge appointed a GAL who was charged with locating the man—and she successfully did so. He is safe and residing at the Norfolk State Veteran's Home, though he lost all of his personal possessions during the eviction, including his photos and address book.

In order to continue expanding upon this work—but making sure it is not just focused on the single guardian who was arrested—we returned to examine the guardianship court files of the first professional for-profit guardian that was the subject of our 2024 report. By drilling down through the financial documents she submitted over a period of three years, we identified substantial concerns and decided to take one test case for a client under this woman's guardianship where we believe there are clear concerns about how the protected person's money was handled. That case is pending in North Platte: we have entered our appearance and the judge has ordered a full audit of our client's records that we are now awaiting.

Nebraska Council on Developmental Disabilities

State Agency Representative
Report to Council Members

Representative: Mark Shriver

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

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

We have completed the final activities, deliverables and report for our Nebraska Connecting Families project. Final report was submitted on April 15, 2026. This project's primary purpose was developing technical assistance to assist school districts connect families who had children or youth needing mental health services with those needed services. This involved bringing together state agencies such as Nebraska Department of Education, DHHS Division of Behavioral Health, Division of Medicaid, school districts, community mental health providers, and families to identify resources that were available, barriers to accessing resources, and identifying solutions. We are focused next on providing technical assistance and coordination to school districts in collaboration with NDE and others on effective family engagement and connection with mental health services for students in need.

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

Sarah Swanson and Jennifer Hansen have started their second course of Advocacy, Leadership, and Lived Experience (ALL) training. They had more applications than we had capacity. Purpose of the ALL training is for participants to:

- Meet other family leaders who want to be engaged in policy and leadership activities.
- Share 'lived experience' to improve systems.
- Learn about state and national programs and policy that impact children with disabilities.
- Receive mentorship and support
- Understand how policy impacts your family

Initial meeting was March 9th and a recent 6 hour in-person meeting was held April 10th. We appreciate the involvement of individuals from NE Council on Developmental Disabilities, Disability Rights Nebraska, NE DHHS Division of Developmental Disabilities for providing their expertise for the participants of this training.

Future/upcoming Agency activities:

The Munroe-Meyer Institute as part of UNMC has been working extensively to bring all public facing digital materials (websites, courses and course materials, even email signature lines) compliant with the American with Disabilities Act Title II requirements for accessibility. These are new, updated requirements that were introduced earlier this year, and this has been a tremendous effort requiring extensive time and technical consultation, but we expect to be compliant with ADA Title II by April 24, 2026!