

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council
Full Council Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2026

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Present: Riley Daughtery, Tayshia Farra, Sydney Krebsbach, Julie Clark, Melissa Dodge, Leigh Spruce, Bridget Parkhill, Melanie Baker, Dana Floyd, Melanie Baker, Katie Nash, Sandy Grubert, Kris Pederson (HCLA), Megan DeSmet (DDCS), Angela Randal, HCA, Monica Burke (DOH), Cassie Martin (OSPI), Mark Harniss (UCEDD), Noah Seidel (DRW),

Staff: Brandi Monts, Brian Dahl, Kevin Vargas, Emily Rogers, Phil Rasmussen, Christie Chiles, Linda West

Guests: Heather Chappell (DDCS/HCLA), Tammy Bowen (Work Opportunities), AJ Roberts (RCS Training Unit), Cathy Murhashi (Arc of WA), Ayan Elmi (Informing Families Coordinator), Stacy Dym (Arc of WA), Christine Brelia (Dept. Of Commerce), Nichole Paulis (DDCS/HCLA), Kacie Smarjesse (DDCS/HCLA), Rachel Paquin (DDCS/HCLA), Nicole Jensen (DDCS/HCLA), Shawn Latham (Allies in Advocacy), Peter Musante (Open Doors for Multicultural Families)

Call to order and welcome

The Co-Chairs called the meeting was called to order. Members were reminded that this was the first fully virtual Full Council meeting in several years and that patience and flexibility were appreciated.

Introductions and icebreaker

Council members, staff, and guests introduced themselves and shared an item from their home or workspace that had personal meaning. New members were welcomed and encouraged to take their time learning how the Council works.

Tribal land acknowledgment

A Tribal Land Acknowledgment was read to recognize that the work of the Council takes place on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. The Council affirmed its commitment to learning from Tribal communities and to supporting equity, justice, and sovereignty in its work.

Approval of October 2025 meeting minutes

The Council reviewed the minutes from the October 2025 Full Council meeting.

Katie Nash moved and Sydney Krebsbach seconded to approve the October 2025 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

Co-chair reports

Council co-chairs shared updates on current work and priorities. One report focused on Tribal outreach efforts and the importance of building strong relationships with Native American communities. Ongoing challenges such as transportation, housing, and limited funding were acknowledged.

Advocacy updates included discussion of the upcoming legislative session, the importance of protecting Medicaid, and continued efforts related to institutional closure and records preservation. Members were encouraged to stay engaged in advocacy activities.

Executive Director report

The Executive Director shared updates on Council operations and priorities. Appreciation was expressed to Council members and staff for adapting to a fully virtual meeting format.

Updates included conflict mediation and resolution training opportunities, planning efforts, and an overview of the Governor's proposed budget. Concerns were shared about possible reductions to the Dan Thompson account and the potential impact on community services.

Brandi Monts also gave an update on the Council's 50th anniversary and upcoming history and visioning activities.

Dan Thompson account update

Staff from the Developmental Disabilities Community Services Division presented an update on the Dan Thompson account. They shared information about how funds have been used across the state, including projects related to housing, transportation, technology, recreation, and culturally responsive services.

They described the most recent grant round and noted that far more applications were received than funds available. Updates were also provided on the Governor's proposed budget and concerns about transferring funds out of the account. Council members asked questions and shared appreciation for the program.

Budget overview

Brandi Monts provided an overview of the Council's budget. The presentation explained how funds are divided between Council operations and state plan activities and described challenges related to federal funding delays and uncertainty.

Changes to the Informing Families program were discussed, including efforts to reduce costs and improve access.

State plan development

Brian Dahl and Kevin Vargas presented on the development of the next five-year State Plan. They explained how feedback from the October 2025 meeting shaped the draft plan and reviewed the three focus areas of advocacy, systems change, and capacity building.

Council members asked questions and shared reflections on the direction of the plan.

Breakout discussions

Council members joined breakout groups focused on the three State Plan goal areas. Each group discussed whether the draft goals matched the Council's vision and identified areas that could be strengthened. Staff collected notes from all groups to use in revising the draft State Plan.

Lunch break and committee meetings

The Council recessed for lunch. In the afternoon, members met in committees, including the Public Policy Committee and the Membership and Governance Committee.

Reconvened Full Council and committee reports

The Membership and Governance Committee reported on its work and brought the following policies to the full Council for a vote:

Policy 115 Training and Travel Reimbursements

Julie Clark moved and Tayshia Farra seconded to approve Policy 115 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Policy 301 Delegation to the Executive Director

Riley Daughtery moved and Mellissa Dodge seconded to approve Policy 301 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Policy 403 Council Agenda Development Process

Riley Daughtery moved and Julie Clark seconded to approve Policy 403 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Policy 414 Reimbursement for Non-Council Members

Sydney Krebsbach moved and Riley Daughtery seconded to approve Policy 414 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Policy 417 Equipment Purchases with Federal Funds

Mellisa Dodge moved and Riley Daughtery seconded to approve Policy 417 as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Policy 421 Chair and Vice-Chair Nomination Process

Riley moved and Julie seconded to approve Policy 421 as amended and with the additional of the executive order language.

The Public Policy Committee shared that they reviewed the Council's legislative priorities video, had a panel discussion with advocacy partners and updates related to Advocacy Days.

Agency reports

Partner agencies and state representatives shared brief updates. Topics included leadership changes, funding uncertainty, healthcare transition resources, research challenges, and Medicaid-related updates.

Public comment

No public comments were made.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.