

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council

Draft Public Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

January 15, 2026

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Attendance: Julie Clark (Chair), Riley Daugherty, Tayshia Farra, Melissa Dodge, Leigh Spruce, Sandi Gruberg, Monica Burke (DOH), Mark Harniss (UCEDD), Noah Seidel (DRW)

Staff: Emily Rogers, Brandi Monts, Christie Chiles

Meeting overview

The Public Policy Committee met on January 15, 2026, during the afternoon session of the Council's January meeting. The meeting included committee business, a review of Council advocacy materials, and a panel discussion with partner organizations about the 2026 legislative session.

Welcome and introductions

Committee members, Council members, staff, and guests joined the meeting. Because some people were new or attending only for the panel discussion, participants briefly shared their names and where they were from. Staff reviewed the agenda and explained how the meeting would move forward.

Approval of October 2025 meeting minutes

The Committee reviewed the October 2025 Public Policy Committee meeting minutes. Leigh Spruce made a motion to approve the minutes. Riley Daugherty seconded and approved by the Committee. There were no objections or abstentions.

Review of the 2026 legislative priorities video

Staff shared the Council's completed 2026 Legislative Priorities video. The video explains the issues the Council will focus on during

the legislative session and includes Council members speaking about why advocacy is important to them. Committee members thanked staff for their work and shared positive feedback. A few small captioning errors were noted, and staff shared that they would continue working to correct them. Members were reminded that the video is available on the Council website and may be shared with others.

Legislative panel discussion

The Committee hosted a panel discussion with organizations that work closely with the Council on advocacy and public policy. The panel presentation was recorded so it could be shared later with the full Council.

Panelists represented Self Advocates in Leadership (SAIL), The Arc of Washington and the Advocacy Partnership Project, and Open Doors for Multicultural Families. Each panelist talked about their organization and shared their priorities for the 2026 legislative session.

Topics discussed included protecting Medicaid and essential services, helping people with developmental disabilities live in the community, increasing housing options, improving transportation access, ending highly restrictive programs, preserving historical records from institutions, expanding language access, reducing restraint and isolation, and improving access to mental and behavioral health services. Panelists also shared advocacy tools and resources that Council members and community members can use during the legislative session.

Questions and discussion

After the recorded panel ended, Committee members asked questions and shared comments. Discussion included mental health access, updates on legislation related to the Community Protection Program, preserving historical records, and strategies for advocacy

during a challenging budget year. No motions or votes were taken during this discussion.

Advocacy day information

Staff shared information about upcoming Advocacy Days, including schedules, travel and reimbursement details, hotel arrangements, and options for meeting with legislators. Committee members asked questions to clarify logistics and participation.

Break and conclusion

The Committee completed its work early to allow time for a break before the full Council meeting resumed. The Public Policy Committee meeting concluded at approximately 3:00 PM, with members scheduled to reconvene for the full Council meeting at 3:15 PM.