

Washington State Developmental Disabilities Council 2026–2031 State Plan (Plain Language Version)

Introduction

This is the plain language version of the Council’s 2027–2031 State Plan.

It explains what the Council will do over the next five years and how progress will be measured.

The plan is based on community input, data, and Council discussion. It reflects a clear shift from learning to action.

Across all goals, the Council is focused on:

- Reducing silos between systems
- Strengthening coordination across partners
- Turning coordination into clear, meaningful results for people with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families

Goal 1: Advocacy – Helping People Speak Up and Be Heard

The Council will support people with DD and their families to build skills, share experiences, and influence decisions that affect their lives.

Objective 1.1 — Strengthen Self-Advocacy and Peer Leadership

Activities

- Support self-advocacy groups and peer-led efforts statewide
- Provide training in leadership, advocacy, and civic engagement
- Create plain-language tools about rights and self-advocacy
- Promote assistive technology and communication supports

- Strengthen connections across advocacy organizations

How will we know this is working?

- More people feel confident speaking up
- More people understand their rights
- More people serve in leadership roles
- Advocacy efforts lead to visible outcomes

Objective 1.2 — Build Diverse Leadership

Activities

- Partner with community organizations for culturally relevant leadership programs
- Provide grants to support family-led and IDD-led leadership
- Expand outreach to Tribal, rural, and underserved communities
- Support youth and emerging leaders

How will we know this is working?

- More diverse leaders participate
- More families influence decisions
- Leadership networks grow stronger

Objective 1.3 — Reduce Institutionalization and Justice-System Involvement

Activities

- Support diversion efforts in crisis and justice systems
- Provide training on disability rights and de-escalation
- Promote policies that reduce restrictive practices

- Support transitions back to community living

How will we know this is working?

- Fewer people are placed in restrictive settings
- More people receive community-based supports
- Systems respond more effectively during crises

Objective 1.4 — Improve Information and Navigation

Activities

- Expand Informing Families as a statewide resource
- Create accessible and multilingual materials
- Conduct outreach across communities
- Improve coordination of shared information

How will we know this is working?

- People better understand services
- Easier navigation across systems
- Increased use of trusted resources

Objective 1.5 — Strengthen Coordinated Advocacy

Activities

- Support the Community Advocacy Coalition (CAC)
- Align training, outreach, and policy efforts
- Create plain-language policy materials
- Promote shared advocacy priorities

How will we know this is working?

- Stronger collaboration across organizations

- More inclusive advocacy participation
- Policy reflects lived experience

Goal 2: Systems Change – Making Programs Work Better

The Council will improve how systems work together so people receive coordinated, person-centered support.

Objective 2.1 — Improve Coordination Across Systems

Activities

- Bring together partners across DD, behavioral health, and aging systems
- Improve communication tools for families and providers
- Support prevention and early intervention strategies
- Strengthen coordination during key life transitions

How will we know this is working?

- Systems coordinate more effectively
- Fewer people experience crisis
- Families find services easier to use

Objective 2.2 — Promote Inclusion and Policy Reform

Activities

- Review policies using equity and inclusion principles
- Work with partners to influence legislation
- Promote culturally responsive navigation supports
- Monitor rights protections across systems

How will we know this is working?

- Policies better reflect fairness and access
- Improved experiences across systems

Objective 2.3 — Strengthen Tribal and Community Partnerships

Activities

- Partner with Tribal Nations and community organizations
- Support rural and local solutions
- Fund community-led initiatives
- Collaborate with DD Network partners

How will we know this is working?

- Stronger partnerships
- Local solutions influence statewide work

Objective 2.4 — Build Evaluation and Data Systems

Activities

- Create a shared evaluation framework
- Use data to guide decisions and funding
- Publish summaries of outcomes and trends

How will we know this is working?

- Better decision-making
- Increased transparency and accountability

Goal 3: Capacity Building – Strengthening Communities and the Council

The Council will invest in innovation, leadership, and long-term community capacity to improve quality of life.

Objective 3.1 — Support Innovation

Activities

- Fund community-led projects in housing, employment, health, and technology
- Provide technical assistance and evaluation support
- Share lessons learned across communities

How will we know this is working?

- Successful projects expand
- Communities build long-term capacity

Objective 3.2 — Dan Thompson Memorial Trust (DTMT)

Activities

- Support innovative projects that improve inclusion and access
- Provide outreach and technical assistance
- Prioritize underserved and rural communities
- Share learning across funded projects

How will we know this is working?

- Projects show improved outcomes
- Effective models expand statewide

Objective 3.3 — Strengthen Leadership and Transparency

Activities

- Provide leadership development for Council members
- Improve communication and public reporting
- Engage communities through outreach and listening

How will we know this is working?

- Increased trust and engagement
- Stronger leadership across the Council

Objective 3.4 — Promote Autonomy and Safety

Activities

- Support education on autonomy, consent, and relationships
- Promote supported decision-making tools
- Strengthen systems that protect rights

How will we know this is working?

- People feel more confident making choices
- Improved safety and autonomy supports

Objective 3.5 — Support Aging Individuals and Caregivers

Activities

- Develop pilot projects for aging supports
- Provide planning tools for families
- Improve coordination across aging and DD systems

How will we know this is working?

- Smoother transitions for aging individuals

- Better support for caregivers

Objective 3.6 — Build Civic Engagement

Activities

- Provide training on how systems and government work
- Offer mentoring and advocacy opportunities
- Connect individuals with policymakers and organizations

How will we know this is working?

- More people participate in advocacy
- Stronger and more connected networks

Cross-Cutting Priorities

- Expansion and inclusion across all communities
- Strong Tribal partnerships and government-to-government relationships
- Protection of rights and personal safety
- Health and support across the lifespan
- Use of data for learning and improvement
- Innovation with long-term sustainability

Looking Ahead

This plan reflects a commitment to inclusion, coordination, and meaningful outcomes.

It emphasizes action — turning ideas into real, measurable improvements in people's lives.

The Council will continue to listen, adapt, and work with partners to create lasting change across Washington.