

South Dakota Council
on Developmental Disabilities



1501 S. Highline Ave, Ste 3C
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
57110
605.773.6369

Minutes of Meeting

January 7, 2026

Zoom

Members Present

Barb Ablen
Megan Dornan
Toni Feist
Jackson Greseth
Rebecca Jensen
Heather Krzmarzick
Keath Rick

Melanie Boetel
Kevin Dunn
Bernie Grimme
Kristy Jackson
Caryn Johnson
Eric Kurtz
Nicole Meyer

Wendy Trujilo
Cole Uecker
Nichole Winkler
Anna Svennungsen
Makena Schultz
Amanda Roberson

Others Attending

Jessica Lamb
Colette Wagner

INTRODUCTIONS

Makena Schultz, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:03, CST. Roll call was completed and a quorum established. The mission statement was read, and the meeting agreements were reviewed.

All members were asked to introduce themselves, their role on the Council and share what they were most looking forward to in 2026. Many members noted that they had vacations coming up, were looking forward to warmer weather, and finishing up important projects/activities for work.

APPROVE AGENDA & MINUTES

Makena brought forth the agenda and the meeting minutes of the September 29, 2025 meeting for approval. Jessica noted there was a slight amendment to the agenda – the Executive Committee was not able to meet to discuss a website accessibility and privacy policy prior, so that meeting did not occur as noted on the agenda. Bernie Grimme motioned to approved the amended agenda, with Keith Ricks seconding. Motion approved. Megan Dornan motioned to approve the minutes from the 9/29/25 meeting, with Wendy Trujilo seconding. Motion approved.

BUDGET UPDATE

Jessica reviewed the information budget update. The Council did not receive FFY26 federal funding on / near October 1, 2025, as anticipated due to the government shut down. There was impact to a couple of grantees, as contracts could not be created as there were not enough unobligated funds from FFY25 to carry over. On December 11, 2025, the Council received 1/3 of its federal award in the amount of \$176,250.00. Total FFY26 award is expected to be: \$528,750.00.

All FFY24 monies have been obligated and spent.

The final funding amount for FFY25 was \$526,312.00, and after expenses through November 2025, the remainder of FFY25 was \$48,429.81 (with \$30,000 that was set aside for mental health activities and a potential \$8,500 for a proposal the Council would hear at this meeting), leaving about \$9965.00 in funds. Jessica noted FFY 25 funds have to be obligated and activities completed by September 2026.

Jessica noted that there is \$103,500.00 of administrative and personnel costs due to come out of that award, in addition to an obligation of \$345,000 to include the Self-Advocacy and Family Leadership Development Grant, the Native American Advocacy and Leadership Grant, one current mini-grant, the Public Information grant, and grant activities for mental health and IDD. That would leave about \$77,812.00 in FFY 26 funds for opportunities.

RATIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION

The Executive Committee met via email correspondence on 11/21/25 for the purpose of reviewing a submitted proposal from South Dakota Parent Connection to amend the workplan on the Transition Success Grant. This would be the second amendment to this workplan. Jessica gave a brief overview of the rationale behind the request. Bernie asked for some verbal discussion on the request, which occurred. Bernie noted that this is a significant change in the original proposal, and we are now on the 3rd attempt to complete the project. There was a consensus that there was more information needed. There was question about how the state plan would be impacted if the Council decided not to accept the amendment. A substitute motion to have SDPC come present to the Council with a complete proposal at the next meeting by Bernie Grimme. Rebecca Jensen seconding. Motion passed.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Jessica noted that the annual Performance Progress Report was due to the Office of Intellectual Disabilities on December 30, 2025 and was submitted on time. Jessica discussed FFY24 By the Numbers to talk about Council impact and discussed tentative FFY25 numbers.

Federally, Jessica noted that the CR that was passed in November 2025 will expire on January 30, 2026 unless Congress passes a budget or another CR. She is keeping an eye on this and any impacts to the Council budget. Jessica discussed some updates

from the Administration on Community Living (ACL) and their desire to see more work done by the Councils at quicker pace and a potential chance to the obligation / activity / expend timelines around the Council grant. She also discussed the Impact Project, which aims to align the results of the ACL's priorities and highlight the value and importance of DD Council investments into the IDD community. The ACL is requesting that each Council submit at least one set of information on activities that have occurred within the last year and have highlighted the topics to connecting people to services; well-being, individual rights, and safety; and employment. There is an "open" category for each cycle, in case a Council isn't working on the targeted topics. Jessica plans to submit one for each cycle.

Jessica discussed attending the Community Service Providers – State and Federal Efficiencies Interim Summer Study and reviewed the draft goals that came from the Committee -

1. Recommend that the Department of Human Services collaborate with community support providers, case management organizations, families, and other stakeholders to update the guidance document CHOICES Case Managers & Community Support Providers Roles & Responsibilities.
2. Recommend that the Department of Human Services work with community support providers, case management organizations, families, and other stakeholders to address and reduce overlaps and redundancies between state policy reviews and Council of Quality and Leadership (CQL) accreditation.
3. Recommend that the Department of Human Services include, either through a waiver amendment or during the next renewal cycle for the CHOICES waiver, a day rate for day services in addition to the current fifteen-minute billing rate option.

Jessica also noted that this Committee had published a draft letter to the South Dakota Congressional delegation, asking for a reexamination/reopening of the HCBS Settings Rule for public review to develop "more practical, scalable solutions that reflect current economic and staff realities" and to urge "delaying or reconsideration of the Medicaid Access Rule to allow for more practical, sustainable options." She noted she was not aware if this had reached the delegation or not, and other members noted they were not aware, as well. There was some general discussion about the potential implications of such a letter – how hard-fought these rules were and how important they are to the quality of life for people with IDD and their families and the concern that this is a "slippery slope".

Jessica also discussed that DHS received a letter in March from the Joint Appropriations Committee that they were seeking information from DHS on a breakdown of the funding provided by the state to each Community Service Provider in the state for the last five fiscal years. There were 8 other questions that were the Community Service Providers were tasked with answering. In the November 2025 meeting of the Joint Appropriations Committee, and Jessica shared some information with Council:

- Over the last five fiscal years, the CHOICES waiver funding has seen an increase of almost \$100 million dollars, from \$137,589,391.77 in FY21 to \$236,851,079.49 in FY25. After some research, Jessica was able to note that the FS360 Waiver had seen an increase of \$4.6 million dollars in funding.
- The number of individuals receiving services from CSPs was 2402 in FY 20 and was 2437 in FY 24, an increase of about 35 individuals or 1.4%. While it appears that funding increases haven't necessarily resulted in significantly more individuals served, it was positive to note that average direct support professional wages have rises from \$13.91 in FY20 to \$20.39 in FY24.
- Staffing shortages remain an ongoing issue across CSPs, some with greater amounts of open positions than others. CSP's noted that over 80% of their funding / budgets go to wages and benefits.
- Jessica noted to the Council that some of the questions directed to the CSPs lacked specificity that made it hard to draw real data to draw conclusions from.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S PROPOSAL TO HIRE

Jessica presented a proposal to hire 1 FTE position to the SD Council on Developmental Disabilities to facilitate and manage the Supporting Family Community of Practice and other State Plan Activities. There was discussion that our Council is the only one of 56 Councils that have only 1 staff and as such, we have typically had to grant out all state plan activity work. Discussed how, due to changes within the Division of Developmental Disabilities, they no longer have capacity to do the facilitation as needed to support the endeavor. The desire to carry on the incredible work of the Division Developmental Disabilities and other stakeholders was noted, as well how it's benefit to those involved.

The Council had further discussion on the scope of the anticipated responsibilities of the position (facilitating the Supporting Families Community of Practice with the potential of some other state plan activities with a small amount of administrative work), details around where the position would be located (remote, Sioux Falls), and qualifications (perhaps a person who is a family member, familiar with the Charting the LifeCourse, etc).

Cole Uecker offered a motion to approve the proposal to initiate a search for a position within the DD Council for the purpose stated in the discussion, with Megan Dornan seconding. During the roll call vote, there was some discussion that maybe some state employees should abstain due to the appearance of conflict of interest. The vote passed with 11 voting aye and 5 members abstaining.

GRANT APPLICATION – TOGETHER IN TWO WORLDS NAVIGATING DUAL DIAGNOSIS

Jennifer Walker from Linking the Gap Submitted a proposal with goal of establishing a structured peer support designed for caregivers of individuals with co-occurring mental health concerns and developmental disabilities – to strengthen family resilience by providing education, skill development, and supporting community in which parents better understand their child’s needs and enhance their capacity navigate complex behavioral and emotional challenges. There was discussion after the presentation about request for funds being solicited or unsolicited and Jessica noted she had let Jennifer know that there were opportunities for funding available to mental health and dual diagnosis. There was noted concern about this not necessarily being offered to people on the western part of the state. There was discussion about the curriculum, its ability to be replicated, and insurance/Medicaid building.

There was a motion made by Heather Kzmarzick to not accept the proposal from Linking the Gap at this time, seconded by Rebecca Jensen. Motion passed with 14 ayes and 3 abstaining.

From this discussion, a motion was made to create an RFP to issue statewide to center on mental health and IDD activities by Rebecca Jensen. It was seconded by Megan Dornan. Three Council Members (Rebecca Jensen, Melanie Boetel, and Nichole Winkler) volunteered to be on a sub-committee to help create that RFP. It was noted we want to get this out as soon as possible. Motion passed unanimously.

GRANT APPLICATION – PUBLIC INFORMATION

Kendra Gottsleben from USD Center for Disabilities presented the proposal to continue working with the Council on the creation of consumer-friendly information dissemination for parents, self-advocates, professionals, and stakeholders. This has been a partnership between the Council and USD Center for Disabilities for several years. After the presentation from Kendra, the Council a bit of discussion on the information Kendra might be looking for the South Dakota Possibilities Magazine. A motion to approve the Public Information grant was given by Megan Dornan and seconded by Kevin Dunn. Motion passed with 16 ayes and 1 abstaining.

NATIONAL DISABILITY LEADERSHIP SERIES

During the last two Council meetings, the Council had been discussion the possibility of sponsoring some stakeholders (self-advocates, family members, professionals) to attend this opportunity. The Council continued some discussions about the potential benefit of sending stakeholders, an application process, how candidates would be chosen, and a partnership with Center for Disabilities to match Council funds. Kevin Dunn made a motion to sponsor two individuals with Council funds (\$5,000), matched by the Center for USD to sponsor two people for a total of 4 individuals. This was seconded by Keath Rick. 17 votes aye, motion passed.

STATE PLAN 2027-31 PLANNING CONTINUED

Jessica began with a brief review of survey data that had been gathered since previous meeting. Discussion then went to required goals for DD Council state plans – the self-advocacy goal and DD Network Collaboration. Current wording and activities for our current goal were shared, previous state plan goal wording and activities and potential for new possibilities was discussed.

There was discussion about how the Council approved the Advocacy and Leadership for Native Americans with Disabilities and Their Families Yr 5 with USD Center for Disabilities at a previous meeting and this remains an unmet need for people in South Dakota. The Council felt that this an objective to keep within our self-advocacy goal, ensuring that we work within federal guidance to ensure there are no funding disruptions.

The Council has supported Partners in Policymaking and SD Advocates for Change for many years. Many Council members felt its important to keep working on these activities/projects for self-advocates and to keep on our current trajectory as families still say these are important needs.

There was some discussion about objectives that could be added this goal, such as train-the-trainer model for self-advocates. Jessica said she would bring draft goals to our next meeting in this area that center on objectives the Council would like to move forward with. She will find more information that was requested on train-the-trainer model for advocates to share with the Council. There was also some discussion on how to build our self-advocates and their reach.

Discussion then moved on to current activities that the Council has previous voted on that center on our community supports and information goal (including activities like the Supporting Families Community of Practice – since the Council approved voting to hire a facilitator to grow and continue the work, we will need to fit this in our state plan; the Public Information grant, etc).

It was noted it would be important to have an objective within our state plan that allows us to be nimble and respond to needs for people with IDD and their families as they arise. One member noted that is a real the strength of the Council to have the ability to be flexible in responding to needs.

There was discussion that the work for Goal 2: Mental Health did not see the intended progress the Council had wanted to see, and that could be carried over.

The Council decided there was a need to carry on much of the work from our current Goal 1: Community Supports and Information and Goal 3: Self-Advocacy, while wanting a bit more time to review data from other organizations to see what they are working on / what other needs are there that we are hearing from professionals before deciding further.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Colette Wagner, from the Statewide Independent Living Council, noted she appreciated the opportunity to listen in. She is staff support for the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and Statewide Independent Living Council. For consideration, she offered comment about making consideration for funding the support person to attend along with individuals with IDD.

NEXT MEETING

The Council discussed that next meeting will be held on April 24, 2026 in Sioux Falls, in conjunction with the Partners in Policymaking, unless it is determined that meeting is need prior to that for state planning and/or activities.

FINAL ROUND

Council members shared what they liked and appreciated or would change about today's meeting. A special thank you was given to Makena Schultz, as Vice-Chair, who chaired this meeting. She did a fantastic job of chairing her first meeting and the Council appreciated her efforts.

ADJOURN

Kevin Dunn made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Toni Feist, to adjourn the meeting at 4:55 PM. Motion passed.