



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

Minutes of Meeting

September 29, 2025

One Stop, 120 Industrial Drive, Spearfish, SD and Zoom

Members Present

Val Husby
Anna Svenningsen
Makena Schultz
Jackson Greseth
Nichole Winckler

Megan Dornon
Cole Uecker
Elizabeth Tiger
Bernie Grimme
Amanda Roberson

Members Attending Via Zoom

Barb Ablen
Kevin Dunn
Kristy Jackson
Heather Kzmarzick
Nicole Meyer

Katie Armstrong
Toni Feist
Tania Kostal
Erick Kurtz
Wendy Trujilo

Others Attending in Spearfish

Jessica Lamb

INTRODUCTIONS

Val Husby, Chair, called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM, MT. 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 their favorite thing about fall/Halloween be, with many noting the candy, the cooler weather, the end of the bugs, and the spookiness of the season.

APPROVE AGENDA & MINUTES

Val brought forth the agenda and the meeting minutes of the June 23, 2025 meeting for approval. Cole Uecker made the motion to approve both the agenda and the meeting minutes of the prior meeting, seconded by Bernie Grimmer. Motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET UPDATE

Jessica reviewed the information budget update. Jessica shared that strong advocacy throughout the DD Network brought DD Councils and UCEDD, as well as some Protection & Advocacy funding, back into the budgets for FFY26. She also shared that Congress has not yet passed a budget as of the time of this meeting and it is reasonable to expect that a government shutdown will occur if a continuing resolution (otherwise known as a CR) cannot be negotiated. A member had asked what that meant for Councils. Jessica shared that in the short-term, the Council would operate “business as usual”, as we are currently operating of FFY25 funds and that if a shutdown continued long-term there might be a discussion about operations.

All FFY24 monies have been obligated and spent. The final funding amount for FFY25 was \$526,312.00, and after expenses through August 2025, the remainder of funds available was \$408,412.12.

Below is a small breakdown of budgetary item totals to be subtracted from that amount:

Obligations not on database:	\$ 15,889.38
Proposals approved at previous meeting:	\$430,966.51
Set aside for MH/IDD projects	\$ 40,000.00
Sponsorships: NAMI / ACT Early	\$ 4,000.00
OVEROBLIGATED on FFY25 Funds (\$ 42,443.77)	

It is expected that the Council will receive level funding for FFY26, or \$526,312.00. The Council has approved funding the website at \$53,250 for creation of the site and hosting for the first year. If the proposal that are being presented at today’s meeting are approved (noted in the breakdown below), the Council will have remaining funds for FFY26 of \$85,618.23.

Self-Advocacy & Leadership Development: \$210,000
Native American Advocacy & Leadership Yr 5: \$90,000
Activities-related to services for PwIDD & MH: \$40,000
Lifescape Mini-grant: \$5,000

RATIFICATION OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ACTION

The Executive Committee met via Zoom on 9/10/25 at 8:00 PM, CST. The purpose of this meeting for the Executive Committee to approve the annual Council member Stipend & Reimbursement Request Forms for the upcoming year and for a Council member’s Training Request to attend the Fall 2025 RehabACTion Conference in Sioux Falls, SD. On 9/17/25, the Executive Committee approved a sponsorship request for NAMI and for a self-advocate who requested last minute travel assistance with a request to for the Council to fund the Registration fee upfront.

Val had asked Jessica to discuss those actions, which she did. Val inquired about the voting process to Jessica about voting on each issue individually or separately and Jessica thought it would be fine to do all. Cole Uecker made a substitute motion to ratify the actions of the Executive Committee's 9/10/25 meeting, with Nicole Winckler seconding. Motion passed. Bernie asked about the Executive Minutes being on the Boards and Commissions site. Jessica noted that she had forgot to add them to the Boards and Commissions site as soon as possible.

Cole motioned to approve the actions from the Executive Committee meeting on 9-17-25 for the sponsorship of the NAMI conference, with Anna Svenningsen seconding. Cole Uecker asked for discussion and made reference to the Open Meeting Laws that Council would be discussing later in the agenda and noted that since several of these actions had money attached to them, it would be best to vote on each Executive Council meeting's actions separately. A vote was called and the motion was passed.

REVIEW OF STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA OPEN MEETING LAWS

Council Members were provided a copy of the document *Conducting the Public's Business in Public: A Guide to South Dakota's Open Meeting Laws (Revised 2025)* two weeks prior to this meeting to review. As required by Senate Bill 74, public bodies, such as the Council on Developmental Disabilities, must annually review and formally acknowledge their review, of the laws. Jessica presented a short overview of the Attorney General's informational brochure and there was some small discussion. The Open Meeting Laws will be reviewed annually at the Fall DD Council Meeting.

DIRECTORS REPORT

The DD Council had a booth at the ADA Festival in July – we had several people stop by to pick up materials and inquire about our work. It appeared to be extremely well attended.

The 2025 SD Conference on DD was held in late August – this was a DD Council sponsored event. We are awaiting official reports from USD, but it appeared to be a successful, well-attended event. Jessica shared that she heard incredibly positive feedback from the attendees she spoke to.

Jessica also attended two more meetings of the CSP Interim Summer study, where three recommendations were issues from the Committee, including:

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.

Dab Habib: National Disability Leadership Series Sponsorship Opportunity

The DD Council has an opportunity to sponsor two or more individuals to attend these virtual trainings. Potential to partner with Center for Disabilities to serve even more individuals. Sponsoring two individuals would cost \$5000. Discussion centered on making sure it wasn't duplicative of our current projects (Partners in Policymaking), the cost per person. Consensus from the Council was they would like to have a Zoom session with Dan Habib to learn more / ask questions before making a decision. Jessica will get it scheduled for those that would like to attend and a decision could be made at a special meeting of the Council or at our January 2026 meeting.

October has a lot of travel for Council Staff. Jessica will be headed to the SOAR Conference: SOAR stands for Seeking Opportunities for an Advocacy Revolution. This event brings together self-advocates with disabilities from around the Midwest to exchange ideas and learn from each other about advocacy. At the SOAR Conference, self-advocates from Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming have opportunities to grow their advocacy skills by attending presentations and connecting with other advocates.

The event is hosted by Nebraska's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at the Munroe-Meyer Institute for Genetics and Rehabilitation, and People First of Nebraska. **Conference Dates:** Oct. 3-5, 2025

Fall 2025 RehabACTION Conference, Sioux Falls: Oct 14-16

NAMI Conference, Huron, SD: Oct 16-17

Executive Director Leadership Summit, Hershey PA, Oct 19-22

Jessica also shared that Christopher Nye has a relative at Northern Hills Training and they worked together to create a short film titled, "Dominique":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ksK2RDTMjeQ> It currently is in the works to be shown on PBS around Thanksgiving. He is inquiring about a sponsorship, however, while the film was made in SD about a SD resident, he currently lives overseas. I will be having a meeting with him soon to find out exactly the amount he is seeking, the specifics of the use of the money and to see exactly how this could potentially fit into our state plan goals. Bernie Grimme noted that he thought the Council may have funded the development of this. Jessica stated that she would investigate that as well and report back to the Council.

ELECTIONS OF OFFICERS

Jessica reviewed the officers, terms and who is eligible. Val has served one term as Chair, and is eligible to serve another term, but does term off the Council in June, 2026. Cole Uecker enthusiastically nominated Val to continue in the Chair position until the end of her term as a Council Member, with Amanda Roberson seconding. Motion passed.

The Vice-Chair position has been vacant since June 30, 2025 when the person holding that position termed off the Council. Makena Schultz expressed interest in the position and asked a few questions. Elizabeth Tiger nominated Makena Schultz to serve as Vice-Chair, Bernie Grimme seconded. Motion passed.

Rebecca Jensen served one term as the Member-at-Large and asked Jessica Lamb to note her interest in remaining in the position in her absence for today's meeting. Amanda Roberson also expressed interest in the position. Bernie Grimme nominated Amanda Roberson to the Member-at-Large position, and Cole Uecker seconded. Motion passed.

COUNCIL MEMBER CONFERENCE REPORT

Makena Schultz gave a brief overview to the Council of the things she learned while attending the SD Conference on Developmental Disabilities. Makena really appreciated the opportunity to attend Meg Zucker's presentation and is currently reading her book. She also participated on a panel with South Dakota Advocates for Change.

GRANT APPLICATION – ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR NATIVE AMERICANS AND THEIR FAMILIES – YR 5

Jim Warne from the Oyate Circle, USD Center for Disabilities presented. Discussion included: progress of Year 4 of the grant and the current application, goals, and objectives for Year 5.

Bernie Grimme made a motion to fund \$83,093.00 for this project, with Cole Uecker seconding. Motion passed 18-0, with Dr. Eric Kurtz abstaining.

GRANT APPLICATION - LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR SELF-ADVOCATES AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Devin Labbe-Darling from Disability Rights South Dakota presented the grant application. Discussion included: Year 35 of Partners in Policymaking plans and applicants, commitment to recruitment of Year 36, working to find ways to help graduates recommit to Continuing Education and South Dakota Advocates for Change upcoming ideas including a podcast/newsletter, talking to students in schools, and holding sessions in libraries.

Megan Dornon made a motion to fund \$210,000.00 for this project, with Elizabeth Tiger seconding. Motion passed 16-0, with Makena Schultz and Cole Uecker abstaining.

MINI-GRANT APPLICATION – ENHANCING TRAINING & CAREGIVER EDUCATION THROUGH MEDBRIDGE

Monica Christensen and Jessica Wells from LifeScape presented their proposal to build consistency in staff training and to provide easy-to-use educational tools for the families they serve. Discussion included the program, licensing, use for families, how this goal might fit or not fit into our current state plan goals and objectives, and how it can help meet the care for those in rural settings.

Cole Uecker made a motion to fund \$5,000.00 for this project, with Anna Svennungsen seconding. Motion passed 17-1, with Dr. Eric Kurtz and Toni Feist abstaining.

The Council recessed for lunch until 1:05 PM.

STATE PLAN 2027-31 PLANNING CONTINUED

The planning process for the upcoming state plan for 2027-2031, which will be due in August, 2026, began with Jessica resuming the conversation by reviewing the timeline of State Planning activities, Jessica noted that we are the time-frame of reviewing the Comprehensive Review and Analysis, reviewing the data and public survey information, and by our Winter 2026 meeting, we will want to be drafting goals, objectives and our rationale for. In February – May of 2026, the Council will release goals and objectives for public comment, June-August 2026 would be times to make any final revisions, get Council approval on goals and objectives, with August 2026 being when we would submit our new state plan.

Initially, the survey has been shared on the Council's Facebook page, at the Lighting the Way conference, with stakeholders such as the SILC, some Conflict-Free Case Managers, the Family Support Manager with the Division of DD, to a local disability advocacy coalition, and other small groups.

Jessica reviewed some of demographic information of those who had taken the survey (i.e. 96.3% identified as white individuals, 3.7% identified as Native American, and 1.85% identified as Hispanic; 86.71% of respondents thus far identified as female; 46.3% identified as a family member or caregiver while 7% as identified as a person with a disability. Respondents noted they came from across the state, but representation from reservations was very small.

The top ten areas of focus for respondents included: quality of services, available and access to community, disability law and policies affecting people with disabilities, recreation/leisure activities/socialization, housing, transportation, employment, mental health issues in people with I/DD, supported decision

making/guardianship/, and self-advocacy/self-determination. Discussion moved into specific feedback that respondents took the time to write about.

Discussions included:

- Housing and transportation (lack of funding for options when they are available and lack of the options in general) are hard topics for the Council to handle – Jessica noted we are a minimum allotment state, and we need to make sure the projects we take on can affect the most change for people with I/DD. Our \$526,000+ doesn't greatly impact the lack of transportation of people with I/DD in our communities.
 - o Discussion about the waitlist on the CHOICES waiver – Kevin Dunn noted that we don't have people on the overall waitlist, but individual providers may have an internal waitlist – availability due to specific locations, high medical needs, or other issues cause wait times for people to have placements in homes.
 - o 20 providers provide residential services across the state and DDD is meeting with many of them to discuss the gaps in the network. Budgets available on any given year can contribute to need. Cole Uecker asked if there was any work being done to bring in other providers. DD and DHS has identified capacity issues and gaps in the continuum of care and Kevin said it's an ongoing effort to bring in new providers. With expansion and growth, he noted, there is funds that need to be allocated for that, and that can also be a challenge.
 - o Val Husby wondered if there was / would be an increase in Shared Living because families might not have other options. Kevin Dunn noted that the Division looks at the assessed need to help families determine what specifically is best for their loved one.
- A respondent to the survey noted that they would like to see a “roadmap” for families that helps them know what happens if they make certain decisions. The comment was brought up that something exactly like that doesn't already exist, but that Transition Services Liaison Project, Charting the LifeCourse opportunities, and SD Parent Connection have been discussing some things. There was discussion about how such a project would be impacted by the differences of districts, and Wendy Trujillo noted what is important is that schools know what services are available and share that within IEP transition pieces. Cole Uecker mentioned that there are different conversations going on around this conversation and that this might be a good resource for our website. Kevin Dunn noted that even when people consider guardianship, it's so individualized, that “roadmaps” become difficult.
- Training for community services providers / educators / families: Kevin Dunn noted that a lot of the comments from the survey and from what he hears goes back to training – would a good investment be some sort of training to educating parents/direct support professionals and other staff/medical staff/educational staff. Eric Kurtz noted that a strength of this Council is to lend a voice to the people who need it and supported the idea of training for people who live and work in those communities. There were noted challenges

in getting families to attend trainings for various reasons (i.e., time, transportation issues, lack of childcare, etc). Bernie Grimme noted that events like Catch the Wave seem to be able to draw quite a few families.

- Seniors with I/DD – including housing quality, options other than nursing homes.
- Childcare for children who have different abilities: Val noted that while some people receive Respite Care funds through Family Support 360, they cannot use that for work. Childcare for with disabilities is hard to come by and families having to chose between working and poverty for lack of childcare. Megan Dornon also discussed the difficulties of having to find childcare for children with disabilities – that even a bigger community like Watertown where she lives, there is nothing. Many families don't have FMLA like she does to rely on. She also noted how schools send children with different abilities home because of behaviors.
- Technology – barriers include lack of staff training for technology leads to no support for individuals, cost of technology.
- DD Network Input Assessments – Cole Uecker had mentioned that while each part of the DD Network is on a different cycle, but mentioned could an alignment between the DD Network and the common threads make the work come together better. Eric Kurtz acknowledged that we all need to be aware of where we all fit into the picture and work together in unison. Broad themes of the Protection and Advocacy include Community Integration, Special Education, Voting, Abuse/Neglect, Employment. Erick Kurtz noted the UCEED is about a year behind the Council's planning cycle, and Cole Uecker mentioned the P&A's is done yearly.
- Discussed that the Council must have a self-advocacy goal and came to an agreement that the Council would look at pursuing education/training and potentially self-advocacy in youth and will flush out full goals and objectives at later meetings.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No one from the public was present.

NEXT MEETING

The Council discussed that next meeting in January will take place via Zoom, Jessica will send out a Doodle Poll to select date/time, but that we are looking at the first week in January due to Legislative Session.

ADJOURN

Megan Dornon made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Makena Schultz, to adjourn the meeting at 3:10 PM. Motion passed.