

Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities

Five-Year State Plan DRAFT for Public Comment

INTRODUCTION

Every five years, the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities is required by federal law to develop a five-year strategic plan, outlining goals and objectives that will be implemented over the five-year period. With public input and guidance from the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, the state plan is developed in accordance with requirements of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act).

The 2022 - 2026 State Plan covers the time period from October 1, 2021 (the beginning of the 2022 federal fiscal year), to September 30, 2026 (the end of the 2026 federal fiscal year). It addresses specific information required by the federal Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and includes the Council's determination of areas of emphasis and resulting goals and objectives for the five-year time period. The Council must spend a minimum of 70 percent of its federal funding to address the Plan goals and objectives. All programs and projects of the Council are to be conducted in a manner that respects individual differences and cultural diversity. All Council programs and projects will be done in accordance with the Council Mission and Vision Statements, which are:

Mission: The Mission of the Indiana's Governor's Council for People with Disabilities is to advance social and policy changes that lead to respect for and meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities and their families.

Vision: Hoosier communities will be accessible, inclusive, and respectful of all people with disabilities.

STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The DD Act, which provides the framework for how goals and objectives are developed, requires that state plans:

- Be developed through data-driven strategic planning.
- Be derived from the unmet needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Focus on advocacy, capacity building, and systems change.
- Reflect the diversity of the state.
- Address the needs of populations who are considered unserved and underserved. According to the DD Act, this includes populations such as individuals from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, disadvantaged individuals, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals from underserved geographic areas (rural or urban), and other specific groups of individuals within the population of individuals with developmental disabilities.

In addition, the State Plan must include annual activities that:

- Establish or strengthen a program for the direct funding of a state self-advocacy organization led by individuals with developmental disabilities.

- Support opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities who are considered leaders to provide leadership training to individuals with developmental disabilities who may become leaders.
- Support and expand participation of individuals with developmental disabilities in cross-disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions.

The Council has prepared this plan for public consideration and comment.

The draft State Plan we are sharing with you was developed in several key steps:

- A statewide survey, in both English and Spanish, of areas of need done in 2020 with Council constituents and stakeholders and the results shared with the Council Board. We received 585 responses total.
 - Of those 585,
 - 124 were People with Disabilities
 - 184 were Parents, Family Members, or Guardians
 - 277 were Disability Professionals or Other Stakeholders
 - Of the 585 responses, 580 gave us racial and ethnic background information.
 - 510 respondents identified as White or Caucasian
 - 17 identified as Black or African American
 - 17 identified as Hispanic or Latino
 - 5 identified as Asian
 - 2 identified as American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 9 identified as Two or More Races
 - 16 preferred not to answer
 - 4 identified as other
 - Of the 585 respondents, 573 gave us gender demographic information.
 - 186 were men
 - 374 were women
 - 1 was a transgender woman
 - 2 were gender variant or non-conforming
 - 6 preferred not to answer
 - 4 preferred to self-describe
- A series of statewide Listening Sessions conducted virtually in 2020 due to the pandemic. The results were shared with the Council Board.
 - A total of 333 people signed up to attend over the 8 events; 2 events were held per day.
 - November 17th, Central Indiana: 130 people
 - November 19th, Southern Indiana: 60 People
 - December 1st, Northeastern Indiana: 84 people
 - December 3rd, Northwestern Indiana: 59 people
 - Of those 333,
 - 89 people answered that they were a parent or family member
 - 117 people answered that they were a community stakeholder
 - 83 people answered that they were a person with a disability
 - 31 people answered that they were a person with a disability as well as a parent or family member
 - 38 people chose not to answer

- A series of six virtual meetings were held from January 2021 – June 2021 of the Board focusing on the specific development of goals and priority objectives in response to topic area data, the survey, listening sessions, and discussions within the Board.

We should take special note that the COVID-19 Pandemic took a hard toll on people with disabilities, their families, and the people who support them. The Council moved quickly to find ways to continue our work, gather input, and develop this plan. We thank everyone for their participation and look forward to your comments on the Draft Plan. We are particularly interested in comments made by people with disabilities and those from unserved and underserved populations.

DRAFT 2022-2026 STATE PLAN

The plan is organized into the following key areas that reflect the needs in Indiana and the work projected over the next five years. The goal areas are:

1. Intersectionality and Diversity
2. Leadership and Advocacy
3. Employment
4. Home and Community Supports and Health
5. Community Inclusion

You will see that some goals intersect with more than one goal area. The next stage of the plan is developing annual work plans with more specific activities based on the approved goals and objectives. Work plans for each year of the state plan will be developed based on the outcomes achieved during the previous year and next steps needed to implement the plan.

GOAL ONE: INTERSECTIONALITY AND DIVERSITY

The issues around disparity and inequality in our field intersect in many areas. While attacking these problems, we must realize that diverse characteristics such ethnicity/race, income, gender identity, and sexual orientation all impact people with disabilities. This intersection means that while we may work on a specific area—for example, the disparity affecting people who live in rural versus urban areas of Indiana—people are impacted in many ways including the overarching areas above. This intersectionality will be key in developing strategies in approaching the objectives in targeted disparity, as well as implementation of all Council goals and objectives.

Goal 1

Council programs and activities will be designed to target disparities, ableism, and inequality to address the needs of people with disabilities with diverse characteristics including ethnicity/race, type of disability or disabilities, income, rural/urban status, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

Objective 1

The Council will work to identify and address barriers that cause inequity and disparity in access to services and supports resulting from low income, rural/urban status, racial and ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity.

Objective 2

The Council will engage in efforts to ensure that people with disabilities, especially people with the most significant disabilities, have opportunities to make choices that lead to a good life.

Objective 3

The Council will undertake an initiative to improve the diversity of organizations providing advocacy, supports, and services, as well as internal and external Council programs, grants, and activities.

GOAL TWO: LEADERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Effective advocacy is the key component of all efforts to improve policies and supports for people with disabilities and their families. To be most successful, these efforts should be led and informed by people with disabilities and family members with lived experience with support from their allies as needed. To ensure that people with disabilities have the maximum opportunities for independence, inclusion, choice, and control, it is critical that people with disabilities and their families understand their civil rights and responsibilities and have the connections, skills, and knowledge to access supports and resources, to work with policy makers, to obtain leadership positions, and to be effective self-advocates.

Goal 2

The Council will address leadership development and advocacy through education and training on civil rights, the service delivery system, skills development, and other efforts to develop effective systems advocates and self-advocates who embrace the concepts of inclusion and self-direction.

Objective 1

The Council will provide opportunities for skills development and education to people with disabilities, their families, and allies that will improve access to inclusive supports and services and enhance efforts to work with policymakers to advocate for improvements in policies and programs.

Objective 2

The Council will support Self Advocates of Indiana (Indiana's statewide self-advocate-led organization) and work with them to develop leadership training and to promote self-advocates as respected leaders with influence and knowledge whose input is recognized as a critical resource for state and local organizations in multiple areas of responsibility.

GOAL THREE: EMPLOYMENT

The right to competitive, integrated employment is a crucial part of living a meaningful and inclusive life for all adults, including adults with disabilities. Although they have the desire and willingness to work, most people with disabilities—especially those with significant disabilities—are unemployed. Moreover, if they are employed, it is often part-time and for low, or even subminimum, wages. As an employment first state, Indiana and the Council are working to ensure state policies promote competitive, integrated employment as the first and preferred option for people with disabilities.

Goal 3

The Council will work to promote employment first in Indiana, including efforts to remove policy barriers and enhance the programs that support people with disabilities to obtain employment and advance in their careers; engaging people with disabilities as advocates for employment; and educating people with disabilities, families, service providers, educators, employers, and others about the benefits of competitive employment.

Objective 1

The Council will support changes in policy and practice that remove barriers to and promote the opportunity for people with disabilities to achieve competitive, integrated employment as the first and preferred outcome, regardless of the level of disability.

Objective 2

The Council will support programs to educate various audiences, remove barriers, and promote key concepts that support competitive, integrated employment, including career pathways, model employer policies, transition from school to work, work incentives, and options for self-employment and remote work.

GOAL FOUR: HOME AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS AND HEALTH

Many people with disabilities are forced to live in nursing homes or other segregated restrictive environments because of lack of access to the supports they need to live lives of their choosing at home in their communities with their friends and family. With the right supports—including home and community-based services and comprehensive health care, mental health, prevention, and wellness services—people with disabilities can have full and engaged lives in their communities. While people with disabilities can lead independent and healthy lives, they often encounter health professionals and providers who do not recognize individuals with disabilities as “experts” with respect to their own lives and choices.

Goal 4

The Council will advocate for changes in policy, supports, and services so people with disabilities have access to high-quality home and community-based supports as well as health, prevention, wellness, and mental health services that respect their choices and respond to their needs.

Objective 1

The Council will support changes in how services and supports are provided that ensure people with disabilities have choice and control over their lives and opportunities to access typical community options, explore their interests, and live the lives of their choosing.

Objective 2

The Council will work to improve health and mental health care services for people with disabilities including providing education on healthy lifestyles, healthcare decision-making, prevention, and wellness; enhancing health care literacy and system navigation; and improving the ability of health care providers to provide respectful services and effective treatment.

GOAL FIVE: COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Access, attitude, and infrastructure are critical elements to ensure that diverse people with disabilities can contribute to the richness of society and make a positive impact on their community while being valued and respected for their abilities and uniqueness. Civic engagement, participation in community activities, friendships, and connections are linked to the well-being of the community, as well as its members. Barriers to inclusion include attitudinal and societal barriers, as well as lack of physical and programmatic access to housing, transportation, information, civic and social activities, health care, shopping, recreation, and more.

Goal 5

The Council will work to improve public attitudes and cultural awareness to increase the availability of accessible affordable housing, transportation, information, activities, and infrastructure so that people with disabilities can participate in all aspects of community life.

Objective 1

The Council will conduct activities to promote the public's understanding and respect for people with disabilities through providing information, training, and outreach in order to combat ableism.

Objective 2

The Council will advocate to improve and expand transportation options for people with disabilities, including coordinating services that provide accessibility, reliability, affordability, timeliness, and accountability of transportation providers.

Objective 3

The Council will support public policy that leads to the expansion of accessible, affordable, housing options, including options for home modifications, home improvements, and smart home technology.

Objective 4

The Council will work to improve the ability of organizations and communities to provide accessible information including plain language and alternative formats, accessible buildings and infrastructure and accessible programs and services.