



2023 Annual Report

**MOVING FORWARD
WITH INTEGRITY**

CONTENTS

WHO WE ARE	1
Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities	1
Agency Staff	3
Council Members	4
AUTHENTIC IMPACT	6
Reflection and Realignment	6
Past Impacts: Concluding 2022	6
Charting the LifeCourse	7
State Plan Consolidation	7
Financial Highlights	9
Red Road Ventures	10
An Upward Trajectory: 2023 Projects	11
Council IN Community: State Plan Consolidation	11
Next Level Self-Advocacy in Indiana	12
Indiana Civil Rights Commission Annual Conference: Humanity	13
MOVING FORWARD WITH INTEGRITY	14

WHO WE ARE

Governor's Council for People with Disabilities

The Indiana Governor's Council for People with Developmental Disabilities is an independent state agency established under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act) and Indiana Code 4-23-29. The Council receives an annual allotment from the Administration on Community Living (ACL), a division of Health and Human Services, of roughly \$1.5 million as an investment in the State to advance the rights and inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/DD) in the community.

The Council serves to engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change activities that advance the DD Act in the state. State Councils on Developmental Disabilities are federally funded, self-governing organizations charged with identifying the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities in their state or territory. Councils are committed to advancing public policy and systems change that help these individuals gain more control over their lives.

The fifty-six Councils across the United States and its territories work to address identified needs by conducting advocacy, systems change, and capacity building efforts that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion. Key activities include conducting outreach, providing training and technical assistance, removing barriers, developing coalitions, encouraging citizen participation, and keeping policymakers informed about disability issues.

The work of the Council should contribute to coordinated, consumer and family centered and directed systems of community services, individualized supports, and other assistance to help people with ID/DD exercise self-determination, independence, productivity, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life.

To meet its federal mandate, the Council develops a Five-Year State Plan that outlines how the Council will support advocacy, capacity building, and systems change for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their families. The State Plan serves as the road map for navigating the social, political, and economic environment. The State Plan is a living document predicated on the values, vision, and mission espoused in the DD Act and adopted by the Council, and serves to address the service gaps and needs identified by community members that prohibit the advancement of people with ID/DD.



Agency Staff



Kate Barrow
Executive Director



Robin Martínez
Office Coordinator



Desirea Island
Program and Policy Director



Ryan Revell
Systems Change Manager



Hayden McGough
Communications Specialist



Allison Wymer (with Apple Wymer)
Systems Change Manager

Council Members

LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE

Beth DeHoff

Chair, Parent of Person with ID/DD

Jennifer Noffsinger

Vice Chair, Parent of Person with ID/DD

Brandy Dickerson

Secretary, Person with ID/DD

Ledrena Girton

Parliamentarian, Parent of Person with ID/DD

Chris Ramey

Treasurer, Business

DD ACT PARTNERS

Melissa Keyes

Indiana Disability Rights

Derek Nord

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community

STATE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Kelly Mitchell

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Nancy Holsapple

Indiana Department of Education, Special Education

Kristi Linson

Indiana Department of Health, Maternal and Child Health Services

CITIZEN MEMBERS

Council Citizen Members are appointed by the Governor of the State of Indiana. Staff support the Council in soliciting recommendations, recruitment, and identification of eligible potential new members for consideration. After reviewing applications, the Council Leadership Committee interviews eligible applicants to fill open vacancies, selects applicants to be considered by the full Council, and the full Council votes through a consensus process to recommend the potential new members to the Governor for consideration for appointment. The Council and its staff do not have final appointment authority, and sometimes recommended candidates are not appointed.

Dominic Chase

Citizen Member

Casey DePriest

Citizen Member

Andrew Fenker

Citizen Member

Kevin McCracken

Citizen Member

Shawn Rector

Citizen Member

Ryan Steiner

Citizen Member

Traci Taylor

Citizen Member

Jessica Witherspoon

Citizen Member

AUTHENTIC IMPACT

In 2023, the Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities (GCPD) made a commitment to realign with the Developmental Disabilities Act (DD Act) and worked tirelessly to revive the agency, redefine its engagement strategies, rebuild community partnerships, and ultimately transform its operations to serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities more effectively and intentionally.

Reflection and Realignment

Past Impacts: Concluding 2022

The Council successfully concluded several projects from 2022 and earlier, including ADA Indiana, Back Home in Indiana Alliance, Employment First, the Indiana Disability History Project, and others. These initiatives left a lasting impact, informing the Council’s future work. As these programs concluded, the Council is applying applied the lessons learned to continue to prioritize people with ID/DD disabilities and their families.

Charting the LifeCourse

Over the past year, staff have both improved administrative processes and shaped an affirming, success-oriented agency culture to enhance the Council's operations and relationships, internally and externally, in its work to serve the developmental disability community.

A pivotal source of guidance and inspiration throughout this development has been Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC). Its focus on individual needs and goals to empower people with ID/DD and its organizational framework have yielded powerful collaborations with self-advocates, families, and other agencies and organizations across Indiana. CtLC's trajectory exercises have been a particularly positive tool for engaging with stakeholders, have given the Council a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Hoosiers with ID/DD, and have enabled Council members and staff to strategize and develop targeted work plans and goals to address the needs of the community more authentically and directly.

Ultimately, the CtLC philosophy has helped the Council envision and model a person-centered culture that prioritizes personhood and self-determination to transform the way it connects with the people it serves.

State Plan Consolidation

While the Five-Year State Plan submitted in fiscal year 2020 highlighted successes in advancing access to services for people with ID/DD, the wide array of goals and objectives in nearly every life domain posed a challenge. The Council must effectively invest in strategic initiatives that meet the identified goals and objectives, address service gaps, and meet needs in those domains.

To refocus on strategic investments, the Council partnered with the Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) to identify opportunities for improvement. One of ITACC's key recommendations was to reduce the number of goals and objectives in the Five-Year State Plan. The Council and staff then set forward with a plan to engage with people with ID/DD, their family members, and other community stakeholders to consolidate the State Plan. The result of those efforts led the Council to move from five goal areas to just two, and fewer, more comprehensive objectives for each goal area. With two goal areas and few objectives, the Council's Five-Year State Plan now allows for strategic investments and resources for each project, improved staff capacity, and a streamlined process for collecting project outcomes.

Through community stakeholder engagement, specifically with people with ID/DD and their families, the Council provided intentional training opportunities to its target population. It also clarified its role for other community members. These training and engagement opportunities, held on a hybrid platform, demonstrated how incorporating accessibility and universal design concepts from the planning phase contributes to inclusion from multiple perspectives. The Council collected vital information through these opportunities, which assisted in consolidating the Five-Year State Plan and expanding outreach to underserved communities.

The current consolidated State Plan contains the following goals and objectives:

Goal Area 1: Leadership and Advocacy

Increase leadership and advocacy among culturally and linguistically diverse people with ID/DD and families.

- ◆ Objective 1.1: Self-advocacy organization(s) led by people with ID/DD across Indiana have increased reach and capacity.
- ◆ Objective 1.2: Opportunities for skill building among people with ID/DD that is provided by others with ID/DD expand.
- ◆ Objective 1.3: More people with ID/DD are engaged in cross-disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions.
- ◆ Objective 1.4: There is an increase in families across the lifespan engaged in personal and systems level advocacy.

Goal Area 2: Community Inclusion and Belonging

Systemic barriers are addressed to facilitate increased community inclusion and belonging on the part of people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

- ◆ Objective 2.1: Improve policy, practice, and programs to support people with ID/DD at the intersection of Home and Community Based Services and Social Drivers of Health.
- ◆ Objective 2.2: Black/African Americans with ID/DD and those with the most significant support needs will see greater representation and equity within disability related services and organizations.
- ◆ Objective 2.3: Increase community capacity for understanding, inclusion and belonging.

Financial Highlights

In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council received formal notice that the Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Community Living (ACL), Administration on Disability (AoD), and ACL’s Fiscal Unit initiated a comprehensive desk audit review of the Indiana Governor’s Council for People with Disabilities. While an audit of financial and programmatic operations is not unusual to ensure quality, compliance with rules and regulations, and program integrity, the timing of ACL’s request coincided with the retirement of the Executive Director and transitioning staff members and roles.



Following the financial and programmatic audit from ACL, the Council began the work of realigning with its founding legislation: the Developmental Disabilities Bill of Rights and Assistance Act of 2000. To effectively realign, the Council and the agency identified and began addressing internal operations to improve its financial standing and rebuild trust with the State. Working in close conjunction with Indiana's State Budget Agency (SBA), staff reviewed and clarified the agency's budgets and outlined future financial goals. These efforts positioned the Council to continue its trajectory towards improvements in practices, policies and procedures for accountability and financial stewardship of federal dollars.

Nearly all Councils spending timelines across the United States were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and Indiana was not the exception. In 2023, Indiana's Council collaborated with the State Budget Agency (SBA) to reconcile its federal awards from fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022. During these award years, the Council worked with the Administration on Community Living to submit requests for an extension on its awards to more effectively invest its annual award dollars back into Indiana communities.

Red Road Ventures

To assist with consolidation and realignment with the DD Act, the Council contracted with Red Road Ventures, a consulting firm specializing in disability work. With their expertise, staff addressed compliance citations, consolidated the Five-Year State Plan, wrote a total of ten annual work plans for Federal Fiscal Years 2022 and 2022, and improved internal standard operational procedures.

Staff also collaborated with Red Road Ventures to address the Council By-Laws and Governance Process, engaged with people with ID/DD about the Five-Year State Plan and the annual work plans for Federal Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025, reviewed the state's enabling legislation to make sure it supports the direction and future of the Indiana's DD Council, and finally, prepared to address the forthcoming Audit Report from the Administration on Community Living, and enter into a Corrective Action Plan.

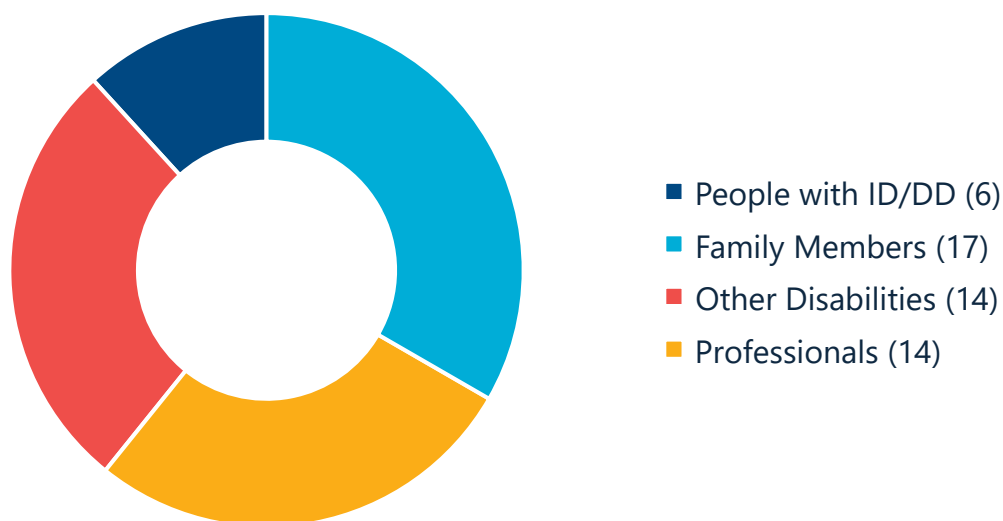
An Upward Trajectory: 2023 Projects

Council IN Community: State Plan Consolidation

In the third and fourth quarters of 2023, the Council spearheaded a community engagement initiative to educate Hoosiers about the DD Act, the Council’s Five-Year State Plan, and the need for greater advocacy for people with ID/DD and their families. Recognizing the importance of diversity, the Council made a concerted effort to reach underrepresented cultural and linguistic communities within the service delivery system.

Through a partnership with day service programs, the Council delivered four targeted training sessions, ensuring inclusivity by offering two virtually through Zoom. Leveraging the Charting the LifeCourse trajectory exercise, the Council gathered invaluable feedback from people with ID/DD and their families, gaining insight into their needs and aspirations. These proactive efforts yielded tangible results. The Council successfully expanded access pathways for community members and streamlined its Five-Year State Plan. This consolidation enabled the strategic investment of the Council's allocation, ultimately strengthening support for people with ID/DD and their families across Indiana.

Council IN Community Participants



Next Level Self-Advocacy in Indiana

In 2023, the Council revisited the self-advocacy requirements of the DD Act and expanded its grant with the Self-Advocates of Indiana (SAI). Designed to be more robust and mirror the requirements of the DD Act, the new grant agreement increased the contract amount to provide SAI with the necessary resources to amplify their impact. Staff strategized with members of SAI on the following objectives:

- ◆ Strengthening the organization by increasing membership;
- ◆ Broadening outreach efforts to connect with a more diverse range of members within the ID/DD community;
- ◆ Promoting inclusive leadership by increasing the participation of people with ID/DD in training opportunities;
- ◆ Empowering self-advocates by developing targeted leadership training programs within the community.

While SAI hit several highpoints this year, from earning recognition by the Obama Foundation for its leadership to successfully organizing numerous statewide disability resource fairs that targeted underserved rural communities, the Council will continue to work closely with them to amend and refine the grant agreement so that it best supports their mission and objectives. These changes will provide additional flexibilities to SAI, allowing them to complete the proposed activities during year two (federal fiscal year 2024) in their work. Through enhanced collaboration with staff on the data collection and reporting process, SAI will be able to measure their progress, identify areas for improvement, and demonstrate the value of their work.





Indiana Civil Rights Commission Annual Conference: Humanity

In 2023, the Council collaborated with the Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC) on their annual conference to support disability inclusion in civil and human rights work. Launching with a celebration of Juneteenth, the conference brought together a diverse group of attendees from across the state to share in critical conversations about race, disability, and their powerful intersections. The Council leveraged funds to shape the conference's inclusive design and expand its hybrid and virtual offerings, provided over a dozen scholarships to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and family members to be able to attend, and sponsored sessions that centered developmental disability:

- ◆ Developing a Playbook for Disability Inclusion in HR Practices
- ◆ Disrupting Attitudinal and Structural Barriers: Disability Rights and Etiquette
- ◆ Disability GPS: How to Navigate the Education System
- ◆ Olmstead, the ADA, and Disability History in Indiana
- ◆ Supported Decision-Making: Alternatives to Guardianship
- ◆ Intersectional Identities and Disability Justice

The outcomes of the Council's investment were markedly positive. By connecting with over three hundred conference attendees, and nearly 2,200 livestream viewers, the Council improved awareness and understanding of the priorities of developmental disability rights.

MOVING FORWARD WITH INTEGRITY

Rooted in the principles of the Developmental Disabilities Act, the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities reaffirms its belief that all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, regardless of severity, are capable of and have the right to self-determination, agency, choice, and the necessary supports to be the experts of their vision of a good life. From daily routines to major milestones, it is essential that they are regarded as and enabled to be the experts of their own lives.

The Council recognizes that the progress made in 2023 is just the beginning; meaningful, lasting change for Hoosiers with intellectual and developmental disabilities calls for an unfaltering dedication to the core principles of the DD Act, to invest time, energy, and resources in purposeful engagement and action. Collaboration is at the heart of this work as well, and this year of growth would not have been possible without the leadership, wisdom, and resilience of self-advocates and their families, whose contributions to this agency and the state of Indiana are immeasurable.

Reflecting on the past year and looking toward the future, it continues to be a privilege to support, uplift, and empower people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to live lives that are authentic to who they are and who they aspire to be.