

**Governor’s Council on Disability
Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2025**

Council Members Present/Participating:

Chuck Comstock, Wayne Crawford, Betty Davidson, Aaron Durso, Stacey Elster, Ron Hack, Katie Jones, Jennifer Meyer, Sue Orton, Andrew Sartorius

Council Members Absent/Not Participating:

Steve Ahrens, Elijah Mayfield, Jason Schott, Leisa Shelton, Bob Wallace

Department Liaisons Present/Participating:

Aly Bacon	Attorney General’s Office (AGO)
Kim Buckman	Department of Mental Health (DMH/DD)
Gregery Caine	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE/MSSD)
Elise Davenport	Department of Social Services (DSS/MFP)
Becky Davis	Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)
Raylene Douglas	Department of Correction (DOC)
Chad Hinkle	Department of Mental Health (DMH/BH)
Phoenix Jenks	Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Chad John	Department of Conservation (MDC)
Daid Ma	Office of State Courts Administrator (OSCA)
Joshua Shewmaker	Department of Revenue (DOR)
Kicia Vanzandt	Department of Social Services (DSS/FSD)
Venice Wood	Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)

Staff: Claudia Browner, Reece Ellis, Laura Mueth, Jenn Pettit

Guests: Kristal White, Office of Equal Opportunity

Call to Order/Introductions: Council Chair Ron Hack called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Roll call was taken. There was a quorum for the meeting with 10 Council members in attendance. The meeting was held in person and by WebEx. Introductions followed.

Approval of agenda: The agenda was unanimously approved by the Council.

Approval of meeting minutes: The Council members unanimously approved the meeting minutes for August 15, 2025. The approved minutes will be posted on the GCD website.

Public Comment: None

Report from Council Chair – Ron Hack:

Ron welcomed the new state liaisons.

Report from GCD Team: Council members received the full report by email prior to the meeting. Each team member provided highlights of their report.

Claudia

Council business:

- There are new state liaisons due to retirements and position changes in DESE/MSSD and DESE/VR, DSS/MFP, OSCA, and DSS. Welcome to all new state liaisons.

Presentations:

- Presented to members of the Capitol Commission on Wayfinding Technology – September 5
- Presented Wayfinding Technology for Accessibility Project to Capitol Commission – September 15
- Presented GCD Overview at DMH-DDD Lunch & Learn Series – September 23
- Attended Center for Disability Inclusion Annual Summit, Kansas City – September 24 – 25
- Attended and provided exhibit table at MACDDS Annual Conference, Columbia – October 16-17
- Attended Starkloff Disability Employment Summit, St. Louis – October 23
- Participated in Nacho Fundraiser for Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign (MSECC) – November 6
- Participated in Veterans Day celebration event, Jefferson City – November 13

GCD NDEAM Activities:

- **GCD Newsletter** – October issue – with focus on NDEAM, accessibility, inclusion
- **NDEAM Celebration Event** – October 10
 - Speakers: Seyoon Choi (RSB) and Brian Nevins (DOT)
 - Musical Performance by Kapitoll Kicks Jazz Band
 - Recognition of NDEAM poster contest winner – Evelyn Johnson, Wildwood
- **Annual self-disclosure survey** for all state employees launched October 1-20. Working on follow up with state agencies and on the 2025 Model Employer Annual report now.

GCD programs/activities:

- Launched annual GCD Awards Programs – nominations for the 2025 [Inclusion Award](#) and [Youth Leadership Award](#) are open now through January 31
- Jenn Pettit selected as OA CARES award recipient for October – awards ceremony October 16
- Laura's 15th work anniversary with GCD is next month
- She just celebrated her 20th anniversary with GCD.
- Reece was recognized with the Professional Leadership Development Award

Budget Update:

FY26 budget – To date, the GCD has expended/encumbered \$7,096 or 28% of the operating budget for FY26.

FY27 budget – Submitted budget request to Office of Administration – August 21

Laura

- Attended meetings of the MO Brain Injury Advisory Council, the Disability Policy Coalition, the Disability Rights Legislative Day planning committee, and the MO Disability and Health Collaborative (MO Disability and Health Program advisory council).
- The Legislative Priorities Poll closed on November 3. Three hundred forty-six (346) individuals completed it. This is one hundred fifty-one fewer responses than last year. Fifty-nine counties are represented. This is a decrease of twelve counties from 2024. Joe Gray from the Office of Administration's Office of Equal Opportunity created a new dashboard to display this year's data. The priorities for 2026 are:
 1. The State of Missouri updating websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties
 2. The Personal Care Attendant/Aide workforce providing critical services
 3. Funding needs
 4. Transportation needs

- Presented to a new class of MO State Highway Patrol Driver Examiners. Traveled to Fulton to present on service animal laws at the public library, but no attendees showed. Invited by DESE's adult education and literacy program to present Disability 101 to supervisors of their statewide programs in October.

Reece

Exhibits/Presentations:

- **October 28th:** Exhibited at the Hannibal Community Expo
- **November 4th:** Exhibited at the Transition Skills Day: My First Job- St. Joseph, MO
- **November 5th:** Exhibited at the TOOLS FOR LIFE TRANSITION SUMMIT- Joplin

Boards/Committees:

- **September 11th:** NDEAM Committee Meeting
- **September 16th:** Veteran's Day Committee Meeting
- **October 14th:** MITT Meeting (Missouri Interagency Transition Team)

Webinars/Trainings:

- **October 7th & 9th:** Attended **Generative AI Pilot**
- **November 15th:** Supported the Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) Day

GCD programs/activities:

- 22nd [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) scheduled for July 14-18, 2026
 - Applications opened on November 3rd, 2025
 - Planning Meetings started November 20th
- Webinars are **December 3, 2025, December 11, 2025, January 9, 2026, January 26, 2026, February 10, 2026, February 11, 2026, March 12, 2026**
- October 10th – Co-hosted **Statewide NDEAM celebration** at the Harry S Truman building in Jefferson City
- November 13th – Co-hosted **Statewide Veteran's Day Celebration** at the Truman building in Jefferson City

Jenn

Youth Leadership Forum

- Updated the applications, flyers and web pages for the upcoming YLF in 2026.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

- Assisted with the NDEAM Poster Contest.
- Participated and provided exhibit table at the NDEAM Event.

Veterans Day Event

- Helped OEO with the Veterans Day Event.

Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign

- Helped OEO with their "Nacho MSECC Fundraiser" that was held in the Truman Building.

Presentations:

Yvonne Rydman, MO Treasurer's Office presented on the **MO ABLE Program** Age Adjustment Act change: disability must occur before age 46 (previously 26), effective January 1, 2026. Elimination of the account maintenance fee for all partner state account holders, effective January 1, 2026. Discussion on Qualified Disability Expenses (QDEs). Comparison and complementarity of Special Needs Trusts and ABLE accounts.

Jessica Bateman, Director of Federal Programs, DMH/DDD presented on the **DMH Waiver Programs**. General Division Eligibility (ID before 18/DD before 22), explanation of Targeted Case Management (TCM) / Support Coordinator. **DD Waiver Eligibility Requirements** (95% below average in three life domains, ICF/IID level of care). List and description of the four DMH waivers (Partnership for Hope – PfH, Community Support – CSW, Comprehensive – Comp, and Missouri Children with Developmental Disabilities – MOCDD). Explanation of Prioritization of Need (PON) scale (1-5, crisis is 5) and Utilization Review (UR). Detailed explanation of the **MOCDD/Lopez Waiver** (for children whose parental income exceeds Medicaid limits; 50 new slots added). Introduction of the **DD Health Home** program (newer model of care/oversight for individuals with IDD and chronic health conditions, focusing on preventable health outcomes/fatal five).

State Liaison Reports:

Kim Buckman (DMH/DD) announced the launch of the Employment First pilot program with three agencies. The Employment First Advisory Council is seeking a self-advocate for the advisory committee. The DSP apprenticeship program has over 400 active apprentices. The Division is now sending out weekly email blasts with agency information, links to upcoming events and webinars.

Gregory Caine (DESE/MSSD) stated the consolidation and permanent closure of twelve MSSD schools and reported on plans to auction excess specialized equipment in the spring.

Elise Davenport (DSS/MFP) stated that the program has facilitated 51 transitions of Medicaid eligible individuals into the community this year. Reported a significant concern that the program may not be reauthorized by the federal government beyond September 30, 2027.

Becky Davis (MCDHH) stated that they are pursuing legislative goals to update language and establish a communication accessibility program to cover the costs of assistive tools.

Chad Hinkle (DMH/BH) stated the multi-agency MOU developed by the NEON/Employment First interagency workgroup to increase competitive integrated employment is currently under final review.

Chad John (MDC) stated MDC is assisting hunters with mobility disabilities via special use permits, website resources, track chairs, and managed hunts.

Joshua Shewmaker (DOR) announced upcoming legislation to extend the disabled placard duration from 4 to 8 years. DOR is overhauling its systems to enhance online processing for items like disabled placards.

Kicia Vanzandt (DSS/FSD) stated there has been significant improvement in application timeliness (MAGI apps oldest 5 days; aged/blind/disabled apps oldest 16 days) and implementation of automation for spend-down.

Venice Wood (DHSS) stated new appointments to the Missouri Brain Injury Advisory Council and updates to the council's website. Collaboration on the inter-agency HCBS Grievance Process related to the Access Rule (soft launch planned for spring, full launch by July). Updates on No Wrong Door initiative (web page redesign on the DHSS website) and offer to invite UMKC-IHD to provide an update to the Council.

Show Me Home program contract extension and RFP update (anticipated spring/summer 2026/2027); Suggestion for Steven Wright (former resident/current staff) to present on the Show Me Home program.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Claudia proposed dates for next year's Council Meetings. The Council approved the dates for the 2026 meetings: February 20, May 1, August 21, and November 20.

The Council discussed and confirmed the slate of Committee Chairs for the upcoming year. Jennifer Meyer was chosen to replace Bob Wallace as member at large on the Executive Committee.

Aaron Durso volunteered to chair the **Healthcare Committee** (previously vacant).

Ron reminded Council members that committees must comply with the state's open meetings law for any scheduled meetings and asked committee chairs to work with Claudia to schedule committee meetings.

Committee Reports:

- Executive (Ron Hack)** – No report.
- Finance (Bob Wallace)** – No report.
- Personnel (Sue Orton)** – No report.
- Advocacy (Katie Jones)** – No report.
- Housing (Sue Orton)** – No report.
- Education (Betty Davidson)** – No report.
- Employment (Katie Jones)** – No report.
- Transportation (Steve Ahrens)** – No report.
- Programs (Betty Davidson)** – No report.
- Healthcare (Vacant)** – No report.

Council Member Reports:

Ron Hack reported on organizing a "Happy 250 Party" Flag March in Sunset Hills/Crestwood on June 13th, inviting the "wheelie division" (wheelchairs, strollers, golf carts).

Betty Davidson reported on the Limelight video contest (independence/life stories of people with disabilities) and encouraged voting for former Youth Leadership Award winner Seyoon Choi's entry.

Jennifer Meyer suggested a presentation on the issue of rural hospitals being used as drop-off points for people with disabilities or psychosis.

Katie Jones requested a future presentation on how different taxes (income, property, real estate) impact services, especially concerning SB3 and county board funding.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held **Friday, February 20, 2026**, at 10 AM by WebEx.

Minutes by Jenn Pettit
11/25/2025

Approved by Council
2/20/2026