

**Governor's Council on Disability
Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes
February 21, 2025**

Council Members Present/Participating:

Steve Ahrens, Chuck Comstock, Wayne Crawford, Betty Davidson, Stacey Elster, Ron Hack, Chip Hailey, Katie Jones, Kim Lackey, Elijah Mayfield, Sue Orton, Jason Schott, Lesia Shelton, Bob Wallace

Council Members Absent/Not Participating:

Andrew Sartorius

Department Liaisons Present/Participating:

Ashley Anderson	Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD)
Shawn Brice	Department of Social Services (DSS/MFP)
Kim Buckman	Department of Mental Health (DMH/DD)
Becky Davis	Missouri Commission for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (MCDHH)
Louis Gatewood	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE)
Tom Green	Missouri Department of Economic Development (MDEC/MHDC)
Andria Hendricks	Missouri Department of Transportation (MODOT)
Chad Hinkle	Department of Mental Health (DMH/BH)
Chad John	Department of Conservation (MDC)
Forest Luck	Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Joshua Shewmaker	Department of Revenue (DOR)
Chiquita Small	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE/MSSD)

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

Guests: None

Call to Order/Introductions: Council Chair Ron Hack called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Roll call was taken. There was a quorum for the meeting with 14 Council members in attendance. The meeting was held by WebEx. Introductions followed.

Approval of agenda: The invited presenter was unable to attend the meeting. The agenda was amended and unanimously approved by the Council.

Approval of meeting minutes: The Council members unanimously approved the meeting minutes for November 15, 2024. The approved minutes will be posted on the GCD website.

Public Comment: None

Report from Council Chair – Ron Hack:

Ron stated that Joshua Shewmaker is a new state liaison for the Department of Revenue (DOR).

Ron would like to table a discussion about the governor's executive order announcement about DEI until the May meeting. Perhaps by then we will have some clarification and better insight on the potential impact of state and federal administrative changes on the disability community.

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

- Completed and submitted [2024 GCD Annual Report](#)

- Council member Rosemary Hendon has resigned effective February 1. The Council recognized her with a plaque and a letter thanking her for her service on the Council.
- Advocacy Committee and Employment Subcommittee meetings were held February 5
- Programs Committee meeting was held February 7
- Model Employer initiative
 - Completed [2024 Model Employer Initiative Annual Report](#)
 - The work of the OA Model Employer workgroup and NEON Work Group (Employment First/Model Employer) is continuing in 2025.
 - Provided presentation to State of Missouri HR directors on Model Employer initiative
 - ADA Coordinator Network Meeting was held February 11
- Outreach/Collaboration:
 - National Governor's Association – Provided update on Model Employer initiative and disability inclusive workforce policy in Missouri on December 4
 - Worked with Missouri Assistive Technology to update Capitol Access Guide with information on accessible bathroom (Hoyer lift) and the new Hall of Governors
- Published December and February issues of the GCD Newsletter

Budget Update:

FY26 budget request – submitted to OA. House budget hearing - February 3 and 4, Senate budget hearing - February 12

FY25 budget – To date, we have spent/encumbered 59% of our total E&E operational budget for FY25.

Laura

- Attended meetings of the MO Brain Injury Advisory Council, the Disability Rights Legislative Day planning committee, the Disability Policy Coalition, and the Long-Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) for the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled. The final meeting of the LRPAC is Monday. The MO Disability and Health Collaborative (MO Disability and Health Program advisory council) met in January. I did not attend the meeting due to the LRPAC meeting being the same day. Disability Rights Legislative Day is next Wednesday, February 26. I also attended the Advocacy committee meeting chaired by Katie.
- Two Legislative Education Project webinars have been held. Between the two, 67 people have attended. Another one is next Thursday, February 27.

Reece

Meetings/Outreach:

- February 10 – Meeting with Leadership from “The Transition Academy”

Exhibits/Presentations

- December 16 – YLF Informational Webinar
- January 15 – YLF Informational Webinar

Webinars/Trainings:

- MRHA Webinar: Missouri AgrAbility - Helping Farmers and Ranchers with Chronic Health Conditions Succeed
- Lean Six Sigma – Yellow belt
- Missouri Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training

GCD programs/activities:

- Sponsorship Requests: Veteran's United, MOCIL, MCDHH, Finck Supported Living Services, MACDDS, Home State Health
- MO-YLF Applications are live on the GCD website. Several staff applications have already been received. We have received two delegate applications and expect more interest as we approach the application deadline.

For reference, on this day in 2023 there was one delegate application and an eventual cohort of 36 delegates.

- Dates for MO-YLF are July 15 – July 19 with staff orientation on July 14
- Colleen Young, YLF Alumni and Medal Winning Swimmer on the United States Paralympic Team, has agreed to return as Keynote Speaker.
- Additional Contracts and Coordination are pending.
- Upcoming Outreach for YLF is planned for Kirksville, Jefferson City, Farmington, Rolla, Kansas City, and additional regions in March and April.

Jenn

Inclusion and Youth Leadership Award

- Assisted with the Inclusion and Youth Leadership Award program.
- Sent e-mail to the volunteer judges to determine winners. Thank you to Wayne, Bob, Kim Lackey, Kim Buckman, Lesia, Rachael, and Stacey for volunteering to judge the nominations.
- We are currently determining the winners and finalizing logistics for the awards presentation. An e-mail announcing the winners will be sent in the next couple of weeks.

Conferences

- Will be providing an exhibit table at the Disability Awareness Convention (DAC) in Chesterfield MO on Sunday, February 23.

State Liaison Reports:

Shawn Brice (DSS/MFP) stated that the department does not anticipate any changes or cuts in the funding for the Money Follows the Person/Show Me Home program. They currently have no correspondence with CMS. The department has a lot of new program initiatives that they are going to submit for funding. The Show Me Home program is geared for individuals that are in a nursing facility, receive Missouri Medicaid, and have been in the facilities for more than 60 days. If they are interested in and capable of living on their own, the department will assist them with moving into their home or apartment and receive services in the community, which will save the state lots of money per person.

Becky Davidson (MCDHH) stated there are three new programs coming from MCDHH. The first one is the [Deaf Education Symposium](#), which will be held at the Capitol Plaza Hotel in Jefferson City on April 5th from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. It will have two tracks: One will focus on professionals working with deaf students and their families: Teachers, Paras, Parents, etc. and the other one will focus on educational interpreting.

The second one is Missouri Deaf Youth Leadership Lock-In, <https://mcdhh.mo.gov/deaf-youth-programs/> being held at the Missouri School for the Deaf in Fulton on Friday, April 25th. This is for middle school and high school students focusing on leadership/social networking skills.

The third program is a Deaf and Hard of Hearing Family Camp, partnering with Missouri State Parks on June 13-15th at Camp Derricotte in Cuiver State Park. There will be more to come on this one.

Joshua Shewmaker (DOR) stated there are two bills, HB127 and HB775 that would extend the requirement for physician statements from four years to eight years to align with the renewal of disabled placards.

Louis Gatewood (DESE) stated that VR will be hosting virtual public hearings next month talking about services currently being offered by the VR program. The division is asking for public comment on the goals and strategies currently being used to serve persons with disability. The dates are March 18th from 10 am to 12 pm and March 19th from 1 pm to 3 pm.

Chad Hinkle (DMH/BH) stated the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) offers selected states the ability to access national subject matter experts to help the state advance competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. This year Missouri chose to continue work on advancing the Missouri Employment First Act as well as the State as a Model Employer Initiative. Regarding Missouri's Employment First Act, currently they are in the process of finalizing a MOU that describes how each state agencies will collaboratively work together to advance competitive integrated employment.

Forrest Luck (DNR) stated that the agency received ADA information about additional ways to improve awareness. They are discussing ideas to share information on the website about available accommodations and how many are provided annually. They are talking about developing and implementing a new training about accessibility features everyone is using.

Rachael Robinett (DSS/FSD) stated that they have a new Director, Jessica Bax.

Chiquita Small (DESE/MSSD) stated the Long-Term Planning Committee has been meeting to provide recommendations to the board about the future of Missouri's Schools for the Severely Disabled. The agency is currently working on planning its yearly professional development day for MSSD staff in mid-August so she might reach out to the council on being a vendor or finding speakers.

SEMA is hosting the annual [Earthquake Summit 2025](#) on March 18 in Cape Girardeau; it is a free event.

SEMA is leading efforts to develop a general emergency plan that includes individuals with access and functional needs. There will be a [Children and Youth in Disasters Conference](#) on May 28 at the Capital West Event Center in Jefferson City.

Venice Wood (DHSS) submitted an update for DHSS, sharing that they have received a new electronic case management system now named Fusion which is set to launch May 5. Go live was postponed allowing more time for migration efforts and data validation from the legacy system. Currently working closely with staff, providers, and other stakeholders to have comprehensive training opportunities over the coming months.

The division is working closely with providers to develop the online Direct Service Worker (DSW) training. The training will ensure each DSW gets consistent training no matter what provider they are employed with. It also allows them to carry their training along the way and have advanced training options that could promote a career ladder opportunity. The curriculum build of the basic train is really coming along. Appreciative to have the provider community's expertise in selecting and developing the curriculum. Met with the Direct Service Worker Panel to discuss training and they were excited about the opportunities the new learning management system will present.

The division is closely monitoring federal level activity to determine potential trickle impacts to the HCBS program.

Work continues establishing Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care (PPEC) as a state plan service. PPEC licensure will be required effective 8/28 for any facility providing PPEC services. One-pager and PP presentation which is in the newly added [PPEC information](#) on the [HCY Program webpage](#)

New Business: In the future, the winter (February) Council meeting will only be held virtually due to potentially hazardous weather.

Unfinished Business:
None

Committee Reports:

Executive (Ron Hack) – No report.

Finance (Bob Wallace) – No report.

Personnel (Sue Orton) – No report.

Advocacy (Katie Jones) The Committee met on February 5. They reviewed the Legislative Update and discussed the record registration numbers for the Legislative Education Project webinars, Disability Rights Legislative Day, and the impact of Federal Funding freezes on disability programs and services.

Housing (Sue Orton) The Universal Design Code that the County Commission on Disabilities has been working diligently on with Lisa Clancy is moving along but they are still looking at having a meeting with the Home Builders Association to verify some of the items that are in there, but they did add Townhouses to the list. The other discussion is about the tax freeze, there has been misinformation about it. The Older Adult Commission Chair has been diligent in coordinating a home repair list, so hopefully that will be integrated into the Master Plan on Aging.

Education (Betty Davidson) The committee is keeping track of all the bills regarding education.

Employment (Katie Jones) The subcommittee meet on February 5 and reviewed the pending bills related to employment and discussed a little bit about the concerns for all the tax bills that have been proposed and how that can impact the SB 40 Boards. Claudia provided an update on the Model Employer initiative activities.

Transportation (Steve Ahrens) – No report

Programs (Betty Davidson) The committee met to discuss presentations for the remaining Council Meetings in 2025. Recommended topics include transportation solutions and housing development projects. Betty asked Council members to contact her with additional ideas for program presentations.

Healthcare (Kim Lackey) – No report.

Council Member Reports:

Chip Hailey reported there is a new organization that he is a part of called Blind & Low Vision Community of Missouri, blindlowvisionmo.org.

Lesia Shelton reported she is helping with recruiting both participants and exhibitors for the Deaf Ed Symposium that the Missouri Commission for the Deaf is hosting. She asked for recommendations for exhibitors.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held **Friday, May 2, 2025**, at 10 AM at the Compass Health Center Administrative Office, Dogwood Room, 3515 Amazonas Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65101 or by WebEx.

Minutes by Jenn Pettit
2/28/2025

Approved by Council
5/2/2025