

**Governor's Council on Disability
Quarterly Council Meeting Minutes
August 15, 2025**

Council Members Present/Participating:

Steve Ahrens, Chuck Comstock, Wayne Crawford, Betty Davidson, Aaron Durso, Stacey Elster, Ron Hack, Katie Jones, Jennifer Meyer, Sue Orton, Andrew Sartorius, Jason Schott, Lesia Shelton

Council Members Absent/Not Participating:

Elijah Mayfield, Bob Wallace

Department Liaisons Present/Participating:

Kelli Kemna	Department of Mental Health (DMH/DD)
Phoenix Jenks	Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Raylene Douglas	Department of Correction (DOC)
Louis Gatewood	Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education/Vocational Rehabilitation (DESE/VR)
Chad John	Department of Conservation (MDC)
Luke Hawley	Attorney General's Office (AGO)
Joshua Shewmaker	Department of Revenue (DOR)
Chiquita Small	Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE/MSSD)
Shomari Rozier	Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS)

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 10:01 a.m. Roll call was taken. There was a quorum for the meeting with 13 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 May 2, 2025. The approved minutes will be posted on the GCD website.

Public Comment: None

Report from Council Chair – Ron Hack:

Ron welcomed the new Council members and 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:

- Kim Lackey resigned – August 10
- Congratulations to the reappointed Council members: Wayne Crawford, Betty Davidson, Ron Hack, Katie Jones, and Sue Orton
- Congratulations to the newly appointed Council members: Aaron Durso and Jennifer Meyer – new Council member orientation was held July 28

Presentations:

- Presented to Office on Administration on disability and accessibility considerations in all phases of Continuity Planning – May 21
- Participated in employer panel presentation at APSE Employment Summit – July 24

GCD programs/activities:

- Launched annual **NDEAM Poster Contest** – deadline for artwork entries is August 31
- **Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF)** was held July 14-19
- **GCD Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards** –presented awards at MRA conference on May 29

Budget Update:

FY26 budget – FY26 E&E operational budget is \$25,350, to date we have spent/encumbered \$1,560 or 6%.

FY25 budget – In FY25, GCD spent \$22,276.83 or 88% of our total E&E operational budget of \$25,283.

Laura

- The final issues of the Legislative Update were sent. The Legislative Priorities Poll will begin August 25 and end on November 3. Please share it with your networks. A few questions were added, while some that had been included for a few years were removed.
- The legislative day for the Youth Leadership Forum went well. Two legislative assistants and four representatives (Proudie, Laubinger, Steinhoff, and Jacobs) assisted with the mock bill hearing. All but one also assisted with the mock floor debate. Senator Bernskoetter and his legislative assistant were present for the Senate floor debate.
- The date for Disability Rights Legislative Day has been set. It will be February 25, 2026.
- Conducted one of the biannual new drivers' examiners disability awareness trainings and is preparing for a service animal laws presentation at the Daniel Boone Regional Library branch in Fulton on September 25.

Reece

Meetings/Outreach/Conferences:

- June 25–27 – Transition Training Institute
- July 30 – NDEAM Planning Committee

GCD programs/activities:

21st Annual **Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF)** from July 15-19. Reece provided a slideshow presentation about the program.

- 20 Delegates accepted from 14 Counties, 19 graduated from the program
- 433 alumni have gone through the program
- 16 alumni returned to serve as Facilitators or Team Leaders and Mentors.
 - 2nd year that delegate teams were exclusively led by alumni.
 - 2nd year that an alumni served as the keynote speaker (Colleen Young, Paralympic Athlete)
- Legislative Day
 - Legislators joined from Clay County, Cole County, Boone County, St. Louis County, and St. Francois County
- Community Service Project (WAGS Therapy Dog Program)
 - Collected a full-sized pickup truck's worth of donations to support the program efforts of the University of Missouri's Health Care Office of Volunteer Services

Jenn

Inclusion and Youth Leadership Award

- Made travel arrangements and handled logistics for the GCD Awards presentation at the MRA conference.

Youth Leadership Forum

- Handled communications with delegates and parents to prepare for MO-YLF.
- Served as logistics coordinator at YLF to make sure everything ran as smoothly as possible and necessary program materials supplies were available.

GCD Poster Contest for NDEAM

- Program outreach to the Special Education and Art Teachers in schools.

Presentations:

Katheryne Staeger-Wilson with the Missouri DD Council presented on the **Olmstead White Paper** prepared by the MO DD Council's Olmstead Subcommittee. The Olmstead Information Center can be found on the MO DD Council's website at <https://moddcouncil.org/our-work/current-projects/olmstead-sub-committee/>

Andre Alexander presented on the **Tabernacle Community Development Housing Program** in St. Louis which provides safe, affordable, and accessible housing and community centers to connect residents with resources.

State Liaison Reports:

Kelli Kemna (DMH/DD) announced HBCS Wait List Webpage - <https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/waiting-list>. Amendments to increase waiver slots were submitted to MHD. MHD submitted to CMS. Partnership for Hope- 500 slots (200 Supplemental, 300 FY26). Community Support Waiver- 1,544 slots (1,044 Supplemental, 500 FY26). Comprehensive Waiver- 636 slots (182 Supplemental, 454 FY 26). Missouri Children's with Developmental Disabilities- 50 slots. Family Flexible Assistance Program FY26 Funding for East and Northwest Autism Projects - <https://dmh.mo.gov/sites/dmh/files/media/pdf/2025/06/5300oa.pdf>.

Louis Gatewood (DESE/VR) stated there is currently a waitlist of around 300 people. The Program Year Accomplishments for 2024 were: VR served 27,155 individuals statewide, they had 3,774 successful outcomes for employment within 90 days or greater. They had 2,309 potentially eligible students served by VR Counselors that had an IEP or four or five medical conditions and the Median Hourly Wages were \$15.00 per hour, 4,585 individuals received a Measurable Skill Gains (MSG), and over 1,833 individuals either graduated with a secondary diploma or post-secondary degree.

Chad John (MDC) stated that MDC just received an accessibility audit, so they have a few items to address. Most of the structures existed before the ADA was passed and the department is doing a very good job of prioritizing the time and money to address those on an ongoing basis. MDC is in the process of creating an online ADA training for their staff that will be available through their LMS system on an ongoing basis.

Joshua Shewmaker (DOR) stated that he had a legislator reach out to ask why individuals with disabilities must apply for a disabled placard every 8 years and provide medical documentation verifying their disability instead of submitting documentation only once. Ron offered to provide information on the topic to the legislator if needed.

Chiquita Small (DESE/MSSD) stated the State Board of Education approved the reorganization of locations of Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled.

Shomari Rozier (DHSS) stated that Prescribed Pediatric Extended Care (PPEC) is being established as a state plan service for children with medical complexities to receive multidisciplinary care through an integrated day

program setting. PPEC licensure will be required by August 28 for any facility providing PPEC services. However, MHD system work to allow for PPEC claims payments is still ongoing with full implementation expected February 2026. DSDS and MHD are working diligently to establish an alternative claims payment option to pay providers until then.

DSDS will be launching another year of the National Care Indicator Aging and Disability Consumer Survey in October. This survey is operated by HCBS participants Human Services Research Institute. The indicator in the survey helps states understand how the DSDS publicly funded services and supports impact their quality of life. The indicators go beyond simple measures of health and safety; they also address important personal outcomes such as community engagement, independence, decision-making, self-direction and other person-centered components of a quality life. This survey was historically optional however with the implementation of the Access Rule it is now a requirement of states to have a valid sample of consumer completing the survey. Any support in raising awareness about the importance of participation would be appreciated.

DSDS will also be releasing another round of the National Core Indicator State of the Workforce Survey in September. The survey captures information about wages, benefits, and turnover of the direct care professional workforce, hired by agencies. These metrics will help DSDS identify and understand the factors that influence service delivery, which helps inform policy and fiscal initiatives.

Home and Community Based Services Provider Information Webpage Update - The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) is undertaking a department-wide initiative to update its website. The initiative aims to increase user navigation and accessibility.

Show-Me Home (SMH)/MFP:

The bidding and evaluation process to select SMH contractors for regions 1, 2 & 4 for the remainder of 2025, have been completed, and awards should be announced soon.

The SMH program will be hiring a new DSDS SMH Services Specialist for the vacant Region 5 position (Mid-Missouri)

The SMH program will be continuing its collaboration with the UMKC Institute for Human Development for the foreseeable future, as we work towards a highly anticipated in-depth training program for SMH contractors and DSDS/DSS SMH staff, that will benefit all aspects of the program. This will also include the development of a SMH Peer Mentor position that will interact with residents, family and friends, to determine what's right for the resident, in addition to other duties. Past studies have shown that this position is better served being outside the confines of policy and regulatory interactions with residents

The Show Me Home Program was awarded two new contracts to NEILS and Circle of Care, the third contract is pending.

Phoenix Jenks (DNR) stated DNR is focusing on raising awareness of available ADA campsites, Track Chairs, and Beach Chairs in State Parks. While DNR has 6 track chairs and 18 beach chairs available, they are rarely being used. The idea is that when someone requests an ADA accessible campsite, the system will automatically send information on all the available accessibility information/equipment that is available at that specific park.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: Ron recommended inviting legislators to the February Council meeting.

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) – Betty will be setting up a meeting for the committee.

Employment (Katie Jones) – No report.

Transportation (Steve Ahrens) – No report.

Programs (Betty Davidson) – Asked Council members to let her know if they are interested in a presentation on a particular topic at the 2026 Council meetings.

Healthcare (Vacant) – No report.

Council Member Reports:

Betty Davidson shared information about the upcoming screening of Soul on Fire, a movie based on a true story about the life John O’Leary.

Katie Jones reported that new eligibility criteria for MoABLE accounts will be effective in January 2026 which will allow additional individuals to qualify for program participation.

Jennifer Meyer reported that she has been reaching out to people in her area to inform them about MO-YLF.

Lesia Shelton reported she has been working on several projects with Vocational Rehabilitation and Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, addressing concerns related to education, accessibility, and language deprivation of Missouri's DHH students.

She is working on a project with NASA, that will give Missouri students opportunity to ask an astronaut a question - live from the International Space Station, on November 10th and will share additional information when it becomes available.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

The next regular Council meeting will be held **Friday, November 21, 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
8/19/2025

Approved by Council
11/21/2025