



**GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON DISABILITY AFFAIRS**
OFFICE OF GOV. JEFF LANDRY

**Full Council Meeting
Wednesday, June 25, 2025
9:00 AM to 12:30 PM**

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Wednesday, June 25, 2025, GACDA's Full Council meeting was called to order at 9:12 AM. The meeting took place in the press room on the fourth floor of the state capitol and via the virtual platform Zoom.

Role was called by GACDA Chairperson - Julia Tanner. Quorum was reached.

GACDA Member	Present	Proxy	Proxy Name	Absent
Ashley Allen	X			
Rep. Rhonda Butler				X
Rikki David	X			
Jamar Ennis	X			
Sen Franklin Foil				X
Rocky Fuselier	X			
Barry Mele				X
Julia Tanner	X			
Attendees	Agency/Affiliate			
Sylvie Sullivan	ASL Interpreter			
Gayle Coronado	ASL Interpreter			
Denise Alcoser	Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities			
Gwendolyn Amelin	HSA Northeast Delta Human Services Authority			
Brenton Andrus	LaDDC- Deputy Director			
Melissa Bayham	LWC/LRS			
Rebecca Beaman	Louisiana Dept of Health			
Allie Boquet	LSU			
Dee Budgewater	Lighthouse Louisiana - CEO			
Omega Chopin	Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities			
Jancie Corie	GOSEPH			
Brenda Cosse'	Parent			
Amanda Daigre	Louisiana Dept of Health			
Dwayne Degeyter	Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities			
Magean Diggs				
Erin Downing	LDH – OCDD Senior Advisor			
Kathy Dwyer	LA Emergency Resources -Disabilities			
Melinda Elliott	Disability Advocate			
Diana Esordi	One Krewe			
Teresa Frank	Louisiana Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities			
Ben Grauer				
Robbie Gray	Rehabilitation Program Coordinator with LRS			

Dana Hubbard	Office of Public Health and Early Hearing Detection & Intervention
Holly Johnson	
Rosalun Johnson	
Meredith Jordan	LADOE
Kelli Kent	LDH - OCDD
Konstance	
Jazmyne Lemar	Louisiana Commission of the Deaf
Christina Martin	LaCAN Leader
Rachel McGreevy	State Exchange on Employment & Disability
Jim Mitchell	Louisiana Office of Technology Service
Sarah Mulhearn	
JC Paulsell	
Jackie Pierce	Bayou Land Families Helping Families
Tory Rocca	Disability Rights of LA
John Schweitzer	Self-Advocate
Sarah Scanlon	
ThinkFirst Ark-La-Tex	
Carolyn Wilkinson	LDOE
Staff	Title
Jamar Ennis	GODA Executive Director
Liam Doyle	GODA Assistant Director
Tillie Carrier	GODA Senior Coordinator

2. Approval of June 25, 2025 GACDA Meeting Agenda

Ashley Allen made a motion to approve the June 25, 2025 [meeting agenda](#). Rikki David seconded the motion. The motion to approve the June 25, 2025, meeting agenda passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

3. Approval of March 19, 2025 GACDA Meeting Minutes

Ashley Allen made a motion to approve the March 19, 2025 [meeting minutes](#). Rikki David seconded the motion. The motion to approve the March 19, 2025 meeting minutes passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

4. ACT 393

Rikki David made a motion to postpone discussions on ACT 393 till the September meeting due to the work in progress toward meeting law requirements. Ashley Allen seconded the motion. The motion to postpone discussions on ACT 393 passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

5. Proposed GACDA Bylaws and Amendments Discussion/Questions

Rikki David made a motion to postpone discussions on GACDA Bylaws and Amendments till the September meeting due to the work in progress toward meeting law requirements. Ashley Allen seconded the motion. The motion to postpone discussions on GACDA Bylaws and Amendments passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion.

6. Program Presentation – Louisiana Department of Education

Meredith Jordan gave a [presentation](#) from the Louisiana Department of Education celebrating improvements in special education's outcomes and what's on the horizon.

- LDOE just finished a weeklong professional development opportunity for leaders and educators from across the state. There were over 7,000 attendees.

- LDOE is ensuring Louisiana's diverse learners have appropriate, individualized supports along the educational journey that's critical; through:
 - Diverse Learner instructional strategies
 - Intentional educator development
 - Strong partnerships through stakeholder engagement
 - Clarity on program compliance
- LDOE is celebrating the growth of our students:
 - Students with disabilities outperformed and outgrew students with disabilities across the nation.
 - Students with disabilities have shown increased mastery on LEAP for the past three years in a row.
 - Students with disabilities' growth surpass their nondisabled peers by 1%
 - Louisiana's most recent cohort graduation rate increased for students with disabilities.
 - Suspensions and expulsions have decreased for students with disabilities.
- Statewide Strategy to Improve outcomes for students with disabilities.
 - Updated assistive technology framework
 - Updates to every special education state policy
 - State special education ombudsman
 - Adoption of best instructional practices
 - Statewide compliance modules on 17 different topics for educators and support staff
 - Expanded SPED Fellows program
 - Expanded IDEA monitoring teach capacity
 - Dispute resolution processes
- The US Department of Education endorsed Louisiana's Special Education Playbook of their best educational practices guidance document for students with disabilities highlighting 3 best instructional practices: Focus on core instruction, extra time to learn, and content strong teachers
- What's next in 2025-2026
 - Continued implementation of the Playbook best practices
 - IEP writing that supports best instructional practice
 - Updated seclusion and restraint guidance in alignment with HB 684 and statewide behavior de-escalation training
 - SEAP discussed focus areas to also include early childhood literacy, continued Playbook implementation, behavior support
 - Lesson planning and teacher collaboration support between general education and special education teachers
 - High quality intervention support
- Special Education Parent Summit 2025 is set for July 21st, 2025, at Lod Cook Convention Center in Baton Rouge, LA.
- Questions and comments were received and answered.

7. Updates from the Governor's Advisory Council

Julia Tanner, Chairperson of GACDA, gave a council report.

- Disability Awareness Day at the Capitol- June 2, 2025, was a huge success. The event was co-sponsored with Split Second Foundation. We look forward to next year to be bigger and better.
- 2025 The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Annual Conference is set for July 22-23, 2025, in the Louisiana Purchase Room in the Claiborne Building in BTR. Two days will be in person with virtual options and the final day will be all virtual. Registration is open.
- There were no questions or comments.

8. Updates from the Louisiana Rehabilitation Services

A report was given for LRS [updates](#).

- Participants: As of June 20, 2025, LRS has 8,336 open cases in Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and 3,637 open cases in potentially eligible for students with disabilities only receiving Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

- Order of Selection: LRS currently has all three Order of Selection (OOS) categories open. All participants who apply and are determined eligible for VR services are being served currently.
- LRS Budget: LRS was appropriated \$4 million in additional state general funds this legislative session. This will allow LRS to draw an additional \$14.7 million in additional Federal funds, for a total increase of \$18.7 million for the vocational rehabilitation program.
- Vacancies/Job Appointments: LRS is currently in the process of filling several vacancies for rehabilitation counselor positions in both probational/permanent classified positions and job appointments.
- Louisiana Rehabilitation Council: The next quarterly meeting of the Louisiana Rehabilitation Council (LRC) quarterly meeting will be conducted on Thursday, July 24, 2025, at the Hampton Inn and Suites located at 11271 Reiger Rd., Baton Rouge, LA 70809. The Executive Committee will convene at 8:15 am and the General Committee meeting will commence at 9:00 am.
- House Bill 624: HB 624, known as the One Door to Work legislation, has passed. In Phase 1, the DCFS Workforce Development programs will transition to LWC, effective October 1, 2025. This includes employment and training programs currently tied to public assistance. LWC will also be renamed *Louisiana Works* in the fall.
- Questions and comments were received and answered.

9. Updates from the LA Developmental Disabilities Council

Brenton Andrus, LaDDC Deputy Director, gave a brief agency [update](#).

- Upcoming Meetings:
 - Nominating Committee meeting at the LaDDC Office – July 2, 2025 – 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
 - Quarterly Council & Committees meeting at the Bluebonnet Library, Baton Rouge – July 30-31, 2025
 - Five-Year Planning Ad-Hoc meeting at the LaDDC Office – August 5-6, 2025 – 9:00 am – 4:00 pm.
 - Meetings are open to the public and can be attended virtually. Visit the [LaDDC's website](#) for more information and sign up for meeting announcements at www.laddc.org/news
- Advocacy
 - The Council and its advocacy network, LaCAN, focused its advocacy during the 2025 Legislative Session on three big issues:
 - Protecting Services for people with disabilities
 - Restoring funding for their Families Helping Families Centers
 - Making policies better around schools' use of seclusion and restraint practices.
 - All goals were achieved this session:
 - No disability services were cut from the state budget ([HB1](#))
 - \$500,000 was added back to the Council's budget to fund FHF Centers across the state. Half was added to HB! And the remaining half was added to [HB460](#) (supplemental bill).
 - [HB684](#) was passed ensuring seclusion and restraint in schools are used safely and only when needed. More information about changes to seclusion and restraint can be found at www.laddc.org/news
 - All legislation monitored by LaDDC, and their outcomes can be found at <http://www.tinyurl.com/Legis2025>
 - LaCAN will host Community Input Meetings later this summer to get ideas for the 2026 Legislative Advocacy Agenda. More information will be forthcoming.
- General Information:
 - Council's Five-Year Planning for FFY 2027-2031 is underway.
 - Community Input Forums were held in Monroe and BTR (May 2025)
 - Public input request was sent out on June 2nd
 - Help them by completing this survey by July 18th . <http://www.tinyurl.com/5YRSurvey>
 - Council approved [Fiscal Year 2026](#) action plan at its April meeting. It begins October 1, 2025, and ends September 30, 2026
 - More information on projects and how to submit proposals - <http://www.tinyurl.com/FFY26SOP>
 - Signup to receive communications and alerts from the Council and LaCann via their website <http://www.laddc.org/> or visit their Facebook and X pages.
- Questions and comments were received and answered.

10. Updates from the Office of Public Health - Bureau of Family Health

Dana Hubbard gave a presentation on the agency's 6 different programs. The [power point presentation](#) included:

- Children with Special Health Care Needs Services: Clinical Services continues to provide direct specialist care clinics for children and youth with special health care needs in all Louisiana Department of Health regions (except 1 and 7) to meet specialty care needs in provider shortage areas. More information may be found [here](#).
- Transportation assistance provides needed medical appointment transportation assistance for eligible families. They must request transportation assistance through their Managed Care Organization before requesting assistance through Children's Special Health Care Clinical Services. Families may contact the Family Resource Center (BFH-FamilyResourceCenter@la.gov) or their local Families Helping Families Center for more information.
- Family Resource Centers can connect you to Physical and Mental Health, Care Coordination, Early Childhood Education, and Insurance and Finances, Monday – Friday from 8:00 am – 4:00 pm.
- Title V Pediatric Medical Home
 - It is a family-centered and team-based approach to providing comprehensive, coordinated primary care and is considered the gold standard for organizing and delivering pediatric health care services.
 - Receiving care in a medical home is recommended for all children but is essential to ensuring optimal outcomes for children and youth with special healthcare needs.
 - Implementation training and support for Louisiana providers (at no charge) to expand clinic capacity to deliver high quality, efficient pediatric medical home care is provided.
 - Resources, training and implementation support focuses on three key elements:
 - Universal Developmental Screening
 - Holistic Care Coordination
 - Youth Health Transition: Adolescent Well-Care
 - More information: Julie.emory@la.gov
- Provider Medical Home Took Kits:
 - [Developmental Screening Toolkit](#)
 - [Care Coordination Toolkit](#)
 - [Youth Health Transition Toolkit](#) (Just Released!)
- Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program
 - It is to ensure that children who are deaf or hard of hearing are identified through hearing screening by one month of age; have received diagnosis by three months of age; and are enrolled in early intervention by six months of age to optimize language, literacy, cognitive, social and emotional development.
 - The support care ensures that all babies receive hearing screenings, that all children who are deaf or hard of hearing receive timely diagnosis, early intervention and family to family support, and that all children who are deaf or hard of hearing receive appropriate early intervention to optimize language, cognition, literacy, and social-emotional development.
 - Recent activities:
 - Hosted free 10 session "Working with Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing and Their Families: They had 91 participants, 24 completed all 10 sessions.
 - Completed second cycle of regional collaborative; third cycle begins in Region 1 in June and will focus on: Achievement of EHDI 1 -3 – 6 goals, providing an opportunity for families/providers to work together and improving early intervention and language outcomes for children who are deaf and hard of hearing.
 - Upcoming Advisory Council for Early Identification of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants is scheduled for July 25, 2025, from 12:00 pm – 2:30 pm at the Benson Tower in NOLA.
 - To learn more about Early Hearing Detection and Intervention Program:
 - ldh.la.gov/page/LouisianaEHDI
 - partnersforfamilyhealth.org/louisiana-early-hearing-detection-and-intervention-program-la-ehdi-2/
 - [infanthearing.org/nhstc/docs/Year%202019%20JCIH%20Position%20 Statement](http://infanthearing.org/nhstc/docs/Year%202019%20JCIH%20Position%20Statement).
 - Contact info:

- laehdi@la.gov
- [Louisiana EHDI Program](#)
- [Partners for Family Health](#)
- [Infant Hearing.org](#)
- [Louisiana Hands & Voices](#) (H&V) is a statewide parent-driven organization that supports families of children who are deaf or hard of hearing.
 - H&V advocates for families, shares information, and creates space and time for people to come together and help one another.
 - H&V recognizes and supports families in their choice to choose how to communicate with their child (ASL, spoken English, cued speech, or a mixture of different forms.)
- [Guide By Your Side \(GBYS\)](#) is a program from Hands & Voices that provides emotional support and unbiased information to families. They give parents the opportunity to ask questions and receive answers.
 - Parent Guides are available to support families by listening to and sharing stories about their own experiences raising a child who D/HH; share compassion and practical knowledge as parents who have a D/HH child; and are trained to support families without bias towards any particular communication approach (e.g. spoken, sign, cued speech, combined methods, etc)
 - Deaf Guides: are specifically trained to provide support to families with invaluable perspectives that come from personal, lived experience; are uniquely qualified and provide parents with a positive, hopeful perspective from their day-to-day, real-life experiences; and give parents the opportunity to ask questions.
 - To learn more about Hands and Voices, their programs and to become active in Louisiana's state chapter, visit: <https://www.handsandvoices.org/>
- Recent Events
 - April 26: New Orleans area family event at NOLA Kidsground. A family event that had 42 attendees.
 - May 1st: Virtual parent chat featuring Jada Babcock, Parent Guide. She shared her story of raising a child who is Deaf+. Each attendee was given her book called *Our Exceptional Life*
 - June 5th: Monthly virtual parent chat. June's topic: "You're Not Alone."
- Upcoming Events: July 9th Lake Charles area family event at the Children's Museum of Southwest Louisiana at Port Wonder.
- **Louisiana Commission for the Deaf** – Presented by Jazyme Lamar
 - LCD's mission is to Engage, Empower, and Enrich the lives and opportunities of the Louisiana's Deaf, Deaf/Blind, and Hard of Hearing population. LCD provides people who are Deaf, Deaf/Blind, and Hard of Hearing with programs, services, and resources to ensure full communication access to the world around them.
 - Programs:
 - Hearing aid program- qualifying based on age and income
 - Assistive Technology- free for qualifying individuals free of charge
 - Support Service Providers (SSP)- to assist individuals to live within communities with independence for deaf- deaf/blind
 - Interpreting Program- support for those who use ASL & ASL interpreters, standards, services, oversight, and support for communication accessibility for individuals who use ASL and the American Sign Language interpreter workforce.
 - In May 2025, LCD released [Notices of Intent to announce proposed changes to the Louisiana Administrative Code \(LAC\)](#).
 - Proposed Amendments to [LAC Title 67:VIII.309](#) – Louisiana Commission for the Deaf Board of Commissioners: This amendment provides the necessary roles and responsibilities of the board of commissioners.
 - Proposed Repeal to [LAC Title 67:VII.1301](#) – State Sign Language Interpreter Certification Standards: The current rule regarding certification standards is proposed for full repeal as it no longer is applicable. New standards for sign language interpreters will be introduced to replace these.
 - Proposed Promulgation to [LAC Title 46:LXXII](#) – Professional and Occupational Standards for Sign Language Interpreters – This proposal establishes new requirements regarding minimum qualification standards, registration processes, and policies for grievances,

suspension, and revocation of registration for sign language interpreters working in Louisiana.

- To read more about Notices of Intent, visit the [Louisiana Commission for the Deaf news webpage](#).
- Statewide Mentorship Program - Goal: Increase the quality and quantity of American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters working in Louisiana. 2 opportunities available:
 - Current Opportunities 2025-2026 Cohort
 - Pre-certification Cohort 1
 - Pre- K Educational Interpreters Cohort 2
 - College Internship
 - Idaho State University Promoting Equity in Healthcare Interpreting Project (PEHI) Partnership - Cohort 3 with 5 participants
 - To learn more, visit [Interpreter Mentorship webpage](#)
 - Outreach & Training Opportunities
 - Offers Deaf Sensitivity Training upon request to organizations to increase awareness of deafness as more than a medical condition, exposure to common barriers, awareness of sign language interpreters/communication strategies and group discussion scenarios and more
 - Customized training courses are available upon request. Contact them at LCD@la.gov
- Public Meetings dates scheduled are:
 - Friday, July 11, 2025
 - Friday, October 17, 2025
 - All meetings are live-streamed and open to the public.
 - Meeting times are 9 am – 1 pm
 - Location varies. Visit <https://lcd.la.gov/> for more information.
- Louisiana Commission for the Deaf contact information:
 - LCD@la.gov
 - <https://lcd.la.gov/>
- Questions and comments were received and answered.

11. Updates from the Office of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities

Erin Downing, Senior Advisor at OCDD gave an [agency update](#).

- OCDD continues to work on CMS-approved activities associated with Section 9817 of the American Rescue Plan Act. Some highlights from the past quarter include:
 - A pilot with the electronic assessment for waiver participants started in January. Evaluators are working with support coordinators and waiver beneficiaries to “test” the assessment tool.
 - OCDD is partnering with the Office of Behavioral Health and LSU to conduct trainings for professionals supporting people with I/DD and serious mental illness.
 - In-person surveys for National Core Indicators will be completed this year, working with a company called Qlarant to complete these.
 - Work to complete a rate study for all Home- and Community-Based Waiver Services (HCBS) continues, and it is projected that the final report will be out by August 2025.
- Value Based Payment:
 - CMS approved OCDD’s recommended value-based payment (VBP) program to give providers incentive payments for meeting predetermined value/performance indicators.
 - VBP incentive payments will be awarded to providers and support coordination agencies based on eight performance indicators including DSP certification, continuous employment of non-licensed staff, person-centered hiring practices, state employment leadership training, closing critical incidents within 30 days, completing National Core Indicator State of the Workforce surveys, and approved technology enhancements.
- Incontinence Supplies
 - OCDD is increasing the cost allowed for some incontinence supplies effective July 1 to ensure individuals and families can purchase quality products. The types of incontinence supplies will

not change, only the cost allowed for some of the products. The maximum budget for incontinence supplies will remain at \$2,500 a year.

- The floor was opened to comments and questions. There were none.

12. Updates from the Office of Elderly Affairs

There was no one to present an update from the Office of Elderly Affairs. Therefore, the updated report was dropped in the chat room and can be found [here](#).

13. Updates from the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

Jamar Ennis- GODA Executive Director, gave an update for GODA.

- GODA's first Disabilities Day at the Capitol June 2, 2025, with the Split-Second Foundation cosponsoring was a huge success. We are looking for more events in the future.
- GODA conference is set for July. Anyone interested should contact the GODA office.
- Disability Trust Fund is not receiving all funds that it should. GODA is working to attain more funds to continue our work.
- GODA is continuing to monitor the legislative session.
- GOLD Awards and art contest are in the works for the 2025 year. More to come soon.
- GODA would like to participate in any events in the state. Please contact the GODA office so that we can be included.
- The floor was open for comments and/or questions. There were no questions or comments.

14. Public Questions/Comments:

Madam Chairperson opened the floor for any public questions or comments. There were none.

15. Adjournment:

Ashley Allen made a motion to adjourn. Rikki David seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn the meeting passed without any objections, abstentions, or discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.