**DRAFT PROPOSED**

**NEVADA GOVERNOR’S COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES**

**Executive Summary Five Year State Plan Goals, Objectives & Activities**

**October 2026 – September 2031**

# Introduction

The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) is a self-governing organization authorized in the Federal I/DD Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and established under Nevada Revised Statute 232.320, housed within the Nevada Health Authority.

The Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) works to improve the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families by supporting systems change, building statewide capacity, and advancing self-advocacy. Guided by the DD Act, NGCDD is committed to ensuring that all Nevadans with I/DD have the opportunity to live self-determined lives, fully included in all aspects of community life. We serve as an independent educator to the Governor and legislature on public policy issues and engage in community advocacy, system’s change and capacity building activities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in order to promote equal opportunity, self-determination and community inclusion.

This 5-Year State Plan outlines the Council’s goals, objectives, and strategies for federal fiscal years 2027–2031. The goals reflect feedback from individuals with I/DD, family members, providers, and professionals across Nevada, as well as statewide data identifying persistent gaps in services and support systems. The plan is organized around three federally required goal areas: system change, capacity building, and self-advocacy. It aims to strengthen partnerships, improve service access, promote inclusive practices, and support leadership opportunities for people with disabilities.

# Council Mission

The NGCDD engages in advocacy, system’s change, and capacity building activities for people with developmental disabilities and their families to promote equal opportunity, self-determination, and community inclusion.

**Focus Areas: System Change, Capacity Building, Self-Advocacy**

# Summary of Identified Needs

In 2024 and 2025, the Nevada Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (NGCDD) hosted a series of Town Halls across the state, offering both in-person and virtual options to ensure accessibility. A total of 191 individuals participated in these events, including 35 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), 89 family members, and 67 professionals who serve the I/DD community. Alongside these listening sessions, NGCDD gathered input through statewide surveys, leveraged the expertise of Council members, and reviewed relevant data. This comprehensive process helped identify the most pressing needs affecting Nevadans with I/DD and their families. The DD Act has identified areas of emphasis as: Early Childhood Intervention, Education, Employment, Health, Housing, Quality Assurance, Recreation/Social, Transportation, and Other. The NGCDD has identified that all areas of emphasis are a major need in Nevada.

The NGCDD has identified the following priority needs across Nevada:

* **Long waitlists and workforce shortages in critical service areas**, including behavioral health, therapy, and direct support services.
* **Limited inclusive and accessible housing and transportation options**, particularly in rural and frontier areas.
* **Overburdened special education systems** and a **lack of effective transition planning** for youth with I/DD.
* **Insufficient access to mental and behavioral health care** for individuals with dual diagnoses.
* **Gaps in culturally and linguistically appropriate services,** including a shortage of ASL interpreters and deaf-blind resources.
* **Lack of preparedness for aging individuals with I/DD** and limited support for families navigating end-of-life planning.
* **Need for increased leadership and advocacy opportunities** for self-advocates, especially youth and people from diverse communities.
* **Insufficient community-based social and recreational opportunities,** leading to isolation and decreased quality of life.

These needs will guide the Council’s funding priorities, partnerships, and program development throughout the duration of this State Plan. Please note all goals, objectives, and activities, are subject to availability of funding.

# Key Activities

To achieve the goals outlined in this plan, NGCDD will:

* **Educate policymakers and program administrators** on issues affecting people with I/DD, including service waitlists, workforce shortages, inclusive education, housing, transportation, and healthcare disparities.
* **Collaborate with public agencies and community partners** to strengthen service coordination, address gaps in rural and underserved areas, and promote culturally and linguistically responsive systems.
* **Develop and support training programs** for professionals, families, and self-advocates, with an emphasis on person-centered practices, supported decision-making, and cross-disability inclusion.
* **Expand leadership opportunities** for individuals with I/DD by supporting peer mentorship, public speaking, advisory roles, and inclusive program design.
* **Produce accessible resources** in plain language, ASL, and Spanish to increase awareness of rights, available services, and advocacy tools.
* **Support community engagement efforts** that reduce isolation and foster inclusion through recreation, peer networks, and local resource centers.

All activities will include measurable outcomes, focus on underserved populations, and be informed by the lived experiences of individuals with disabilities and their families.

# GOAL 1: SYSTEM CHANGE

**Advance inclusive policies, practices, and systems that improve access to services and supports for individuals with I/DD and their families across Nevada.**

**Objective 1.1:** Reduce service waitlists and improve system coordination statewide.

1. Provide education, testimony, or presentation to State legislators, Member of Congress, service providers, and program representatives about disability related topics including but not limited to how proposed legislative, programmatic, or policy changes uniquely impact people with I/DD and their families.
2. Convene a statewide cross-agency taskforce to explore best practices in service coordination and case management.
3. Provide technical assistance to streamline eligibility and referral processes across systems.
4. Launch a statewide family and self-advocate feedback initiative to identify barriers in service navigation and waitlist experiences, using the data to inform policy recommendations.

**Objective 1.2:** Improve inclusive education systems and transition services.

1. Educate school administrators, legislators, families, individuals with I/DD, and other policymakers about the importance of early and meaningful transition planning beginning at age 14.
2. Collaborate with school districts to share strategies for addressing special education workforce shortages and overcrowded classrooms.
3. Disseminate data on graduation, inclusion, and post-secondary outcomes to improve accountability.
4. Develop and disseminate statewide transition resources for students with I/DD, families, and educators, including timelines, checklists, and resources tailored to Nevada’s systems.

**Objective 1.3:** Expand housing, transportation, and general access across the lifespan.

1. Provide education to housing agencies and local governments on the need for inclusive, accessible, and affordable housing options for people with I/DD.
2. Partner with regional transit authorities to explore coordinated, accessible transportation in urban and rural communities.
3. Raise awareness among municipalities about the benefits of installing universal accessibility features such as universal changing tables, ramps, doors, and other accessibility features in public facilities.
4. Conduct a statewide needs assessment on housing and transportation accessibility for people with I/DD, with an emphasis on underserved rural and tribal communities.

**Objective 1.4:** Enhance emergency preparedness and systems’ cultural responsiveness.

1. Collaborate with emergency management agencies to integrate disability-inclusive practices into preparedness plans.
2. Educate providers and policymakers about end-of-life planning and the needs of older adults with I/DD.
3. Support training initiatives to improve cultural and linguistic responsiveness across service systems.
4. Support the continued development of plain language and culturally tailored emergency preparedness materials for individuals with I/DD and their families, including video and multilingual formats.

# GOAL 2: CAPACITY BUILDING

**Strengthen Nevada’s service infrastructure by expanding access to resources, workforce development and access, and innovation across disability service systems.**

**Objective 2.1:** Expand provider availability, training, and compensation infrastructure.

1. Provide education to policymakers on the impacts on service providers leading to a shortage of available providers. This includes providing data and personal stories to illustrate the workforce crisis, promote wage increases, and advocate for rate reform tied to direct care staffing stability.
2. Support the development of training curricula for providers serving individuals with complex and profound disabilities.
3. Partner with rural health coalitions to promote the use of mobile and telehealth services to address workforce shortages.
4. Launch initiatives in educational institutions, workforce boards, and provider associations to recruit, retain, train, and recognize disability service professionals to build pipelines into the field through career fairs, internships, and awareness campaigns. Advocate for incentive programs such as loan forgiveness, tuition reimbursement, certification bonuses, and DSP career ladders. Recognize outstanding service professionals through statewide awards and public campaigns to elevate the profession.

**Objective 2.2:** Improve access to mental and behavioral health services for individuals with I/DD.

1. Collaborate with mental health agencies to expand services inclusive of individuals with I/DD.
2. Support mobile crisis programs and community education on suicide prevention in the I/DD population.
3. Provide education to legislators and public mental health systems on the barriers to care for individuals with dual diagnoses to raise awareness about the unique barriers individuals with dual diagnoses face, including diagnostic overshadowing, limited provider training, and lack of coordinated care models.
4. Increase provider competency through training, technical assistance, and cross-system collaboration by developing and delivering ongoing professional development opportunities for mental and behavioral health providers, educators, and direct support professionals on topics such as dual diagnosis, trauma-informed care for individuals with I/DD, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services. Partnering with the DD Network partners to facilitate and collaborate on the trainings, assistance and opportunities.

**Objective 2.3:** Build capacity to serve underserved populations within the I/DD community.

1. Educate decision-makers and school boards on the need for regional deaf schools and resource centers.
2. Support the development of ASL training and interpreter certification programs in higher education.
3. Share data on service disparities for blind/visually impaired individuals and support targeted outreach.
4. Collaborate with statewide coalitions and task forces to integrate I/DD perspectives into emergency preparedness, housing, behavioral health, and all other related planning bodies.

**Objective 2.4:** Identify and respond to emerging and unmet needs of individuals with I/DD and their families through data, outreach, and cross-agency collaboration.

1. Conduct an annual review of State needs using public input, surveys, and service data to identify emerging needs. This includes assessments and studies (as needed) to identify and better understand existing barriers and service gaps affecting individuals with I/DD and their families. Track, evaluate, and report the effectiveness of responses to emerging needs to inform future Council priorities.
2. Host targeted listening sessions with underserved and underrepresented communities, including aging adults with I/DD and those with complex medical or behavioral health needs.
3. Develop and share issue briefs or recommendations with policymakers and partner agencies to address urgent or emerging challenges.
4. Facilitate regular coordination meetings and shared planning efforts with DD Network partners to align strategies, share data, and jointly address complex or cross-cutting issues affecting individuals with I/DD and their families. Prioritize unified responses in areas such as service navigation, workforce shortages, transition supports, and equitable access to services.

# GOAL 3: SELF-ADVOCACY

**Increase opportunities for individuals with I/DD to lead, advocate, and make informed choices about their lives.**

**Objective 3.1:** Support leadership development and civic engagement of self-advocates.

1. Deliver self-advocacy and leadership training through programs like Partners in Policymaking and youth-led initiatives.
2. Fund mentorship and speaking opportunities for self-advocates to participate in public forums and advisory bodies to strengthen self-advocacy organizations statewide.
3. Encourage public agencies and boards to include individuals with I/DD in decision-making processes.
4. Host a bi-annual statewide self-advocacy conference to amplify self-advocate voices, showcase leadership, and promote peer learning.

**Objective 3.2:** Promote education about rights, decision-making options, resources, and support services.

1. Develop and disseminate plain language materials on legal rights, services, resources, and decision-making tools.
2. Expand public education campaigns in English, Spanish, Braille, American Sign Language, and digitally accessible documents.
3. Provide training on various topics related to the needs of the disability community, including but not limited to supported decision-making agreements and educate agencies and providers on their legal and practical use, ABLE accounts and special needs trusts, available services and programs, and other available resources.
4. Host learning opportunities and webinars on various disability related topics and resources. Provide opportunities for self-advocates and their families to learn about living a healthy lifestyle including mental, physical, and emotional health. Promote financial literacy and economic self-sufficiency among self-advocates. Develop and deliver accessible financial education information that include topics such as budgeting, saving, understanding public benefits and work incentives (e.g., SSI/SSDI, Medicaid Buy-In, and ABLE accounts), building credit, and planning for long-term financial independence. Partner with financial institutions, benefits counselors, and disability service providers to ensure materials are culturally responsive, available in plain language and multiple formats, and tailored to individuals with I/DD entering or currently in the workforce.

**Objective 3.3:** Foster inclusive recreational and social opportunities across the state.

1. Partner with community organizations to expand education on available inclusive recreation and social engagement programs.
2. Support one-stop-shop resource centers that integrate social activities with service navigation.
3. Provide leadership opportunities for self-advocates to design and implement peer-led community programs and self-advocacy organizations.
4. Promote or facilitate inclusive wellness events and peer-led recreation programs that promote physical activity, stress reduction, and community connection for self-advocates and their families.

**Objective 3.4:** Promoteemployment, economic empowerment, and career development for self-advocates.

1. Establish paid internship opportunities, in partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation, through the Council to offer internships to self-advocates in policy, program planning, outreach, and communications to build skills, networks, and experience in the disability advocacy field.
2. Partner with businesses, state agencies, and disability-serving organizations to develop employment pathways and create inclusive job opportunities for individuals with I/DD, particularly in underserved and rural areas.
3. Partner with community organizations to host career readiness workshops and job fairs for self-advocates to provide employment based education to self-advocates that includes information on resume-building, interview preparation, workplace rights education, and direct connections to inclusive employers.
4. Support the development of peer-led employment networks where self-advocates can share job opportunities, provide mutual encouragement, and offer guidance on navigating workplace challenges. These networks will serve as sustainable, community-based spaces for skill-building, leadership development, and long-term career support.