NGCDD Action Plan for the Development of the 2027-2031 FIVE YEAR State Plan

Adapted from the Information and Technical Assistance Center for Councils on Developmental Disabilities (ITACC) website: [www.itacchelp.org](http://www.itacchelp.org)

Throughout the process for developing the State Plan, DD Councils should keep in mind three key concepts:

1. DD Council member engagement in the planning process: The DD Act empowers DD Council members to be the driving force behind the State plan. Throughout the planning process, strategies should be used to fully support and involve members in all aspects of developing the plan.
2. Collaboration with the DD Network and other partners: DD Councils understand and appreciate the importance of partnering with others in all aspects of their work, including the development of the State plan. Such collaboration allows for DD Councils to ensure various perspectives, needs, and priorities are included in the State plan.
3. Stakeholder input on state needs and the proposed plan: Stakeholder input on state needs and the proposed plan: DD Councils should solicit and consider the public's view on service gaps and priorities, as well as how well the DD Council's proposed plan addresses state needs.

# What Does the DD Act Say?

The DD Act requires DD Councils to develop their state plan based on data-driven strategic planning. The DD Act does not mandate one form of strategic planning over another.

Three basic components of strategic planning:

1. Review of progress
2. Identification of needs based on data analysis and review
3. Development of goals based on the data

Strategic planning steps:

1. Evaluate current work and initiatives
2. Discover current needs
3. Reach agreement on vision for the future that provides a framework for the goals and results to be achieved
4. Conduct review of current and projected resources for addressing needs to achieve results
5. Reach agreement on goals, objectives, activities, and opportunities for achieving desired outcomes and results.

Full DD Act requirements for the State Plan can be found [on the Administration for Community Living website](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/about-acl/2016-12/dd_act_2000.pdf).

# Developing the State Plan

## Step 1: Generating a Timeline and Reviewing Progress

Depending on the structure and resources of each Council, a timeline of approximately 12 to 18 months has been drafted to develop a new five-year State plan. However, some Councils reported the planning process to be longer. Due to the timing of our Council Meetings, our process will begin in 2024 and will be complete in 2026.

### Reviewing Progress and "Where are we now?”

As the current 5-year State plan is closing, it is important to evaluate the status of progress towards current goals and objectives. For each goal and objective that has not been fully addressed, DD Councils will want to ask: "Should we consider continuing this goal/objective in our next Five-Year Plan?"

## Step 2: Data Collection and Analysis

Look at:

* Services, supports, and other assistance available to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
* There are unmet needs for services, supports, and other assistance for those individuals and their families.
* How Council members and members of the public provided input into the development of the plan and how their feedback was used to develop the goals and objectives.
* Un-served and under-served populations. The needs of people who are un-served and under-served can be also analyzed based on geographic location of your State/Territory; type of disability; age group within a specific disability group or other criteria a DD Council may choose to identify.
* How the P&A, UCEDD and other key stakeholders will collaborate with the DD Council in the State/Territory to achieve the DD Act purpose.
* DD Council Member Involvement. DD Council members should be involved with the data collection process in developing the State Plan. Some strategies are listed below.

1. Attending meetings in their geographic areas to share input and data collection surveys
2. Attend scheduled "listening sessions" to receive comments
3. Ask organizations and groups they are involved with to share DD Council input surveys with their contacts

## Step 3: Developing the Plan

Once the data has been collected and reviewed, DD Council staff are responsible for translating the information into materials that the DD Council can use to develop goals for the plan. Federal law allows Council’s to choose which Areas of Emphasis to focus on based on capacity and identified needs while also mandating certain objectives the Council must address in their plan. The plan is developed by determining specific goals, objectives and activities to address the needs and gaps in services while considering priorities from information from the needs assessment, staffing levels and funding amounts in relation to the breadth of the State plan.

### A) Developing the Goals

The goals will focus on advocacy, capacity building and systemic change related to the areas of emphasis that are derived from the unmet needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The DD Council is required to have at least one goal related to self-advocacy and leadership development of people with development disabilities.

The self-advocacy goal has three components. All three components must be addressed each year of the 5 Year State Plan cycle.

* specifying 5-year goals, as developed through data driven strategic planning, for advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change related to the areas of emphasis, to be undertaken by the Council, that-
* are derived from the unmet needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families
* include a goal, for each year of the grant, to:

(I) establish or strengthen a program for the direct funding of a State self-advocacy organization led by individuals with developmental disabilities;

(II) support opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities who are considered leaders to provide leadership training to individuals with developmental disabilities who may become leaders; and

(III) support and expand participation of individuals with developmental disabilities in cross-disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions;

Other State Plan Considerations:

(A) IN GENERAL. -The Council shall implement the State plan by conducting and supporting advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities. Federal law allows Council’s to choose which Areas of Emphasis to focus on based on capacity and identified needs while also mandating certain objectives the Council must address in their plan, which are noted in the Draft Plan as DD Act Mandate.

(B) OUTREACH.-The Council may support and conduct outreach activities to identify individuals with developmental disabilities and their families who otherwise might not come to the attention of the Council and assist and enable the individuals and families to obtain services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance.

(C) TRAINING. -The Council may support and conduct training for persons who are individuals with develop-mental disabilities, their families, and personnel (including professionals, paraprofessionals, students, volunteers, and other community members) to enable such persons to obtain access to, or to provide, community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance, including special adaptation of generic community services or specialized services for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

(D) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. -The Council may support and conduct technical assistance activities to assist public and private entities to contribute to the achievement of the purpose of this subtitle.

(E) SUPPORTING AND EDUCATING COMMUNITIES. -The Council may support and conduct activities to assist neighborhoods and communities to respond positively to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families-

(F) INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION.- The Council may support and conduct activities to promote interagency collaboration and coordination to better serve, support, assist, or advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

(G) COORDINATION WITH RELATED COUNCILS, COMMITTEES, AND PROGRAMS. -The Council may support and conduct activities to enhance coordination of services.

(H) BARRIER ELIMINATION, SYSTEMS DESIGN AND REDESIGN. -The Council may support and conduct activities to eliminate barriers to access and use of community services by individuals with developmental disabilities, enhance systems design and redesign, and enhance citizen participation to address issues identified in the State plan.

(I) COALITION DEVELOPMENT AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION.- The Council may support and conduct activities to educate the public about the capabilities, preferences, and needs of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families and to develop and support coalitions that support the policy agenda of the Council, including training in self-advocacy, education of policymakers, and citizen leadership skills.

(J) INFORMING POLICYMAKERS. -The Council may support and conduct activities to provide information to policymakers by supporting and conducting studies and analyses, gathering information, and developing and disseminating model policies and procedures, information, approaches, strategies, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The Council may provide the information directly to Federal, State, and local policymakers, including Congress, the Federal executive branch, the Governors, State legislatures, and State agencies, in order to increase the ability of such policymakers to offer opportunities and to enhance or adapt generic services to meet the needs of, or provide specialized services to, individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

(K) DEMONSTRATION OF NEW APPROACHES TO SERVICES AND SUPPORTS.

(L) OTHER ACTIVITIES.-The Council may support and conduct other advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities to promote the development of a coordinated, consumer- and family-centered, consumer- and family-directed, comprehensive system of community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that contribute to the achievement of the purpose of this subtitle.

## Step 4: Developing the Evaluation Plan

The DD Council must identify an evaluation method (annual PPR and workplans) to determine if the goals have been achieved. In addition, the DD Act provides requirements with regard to the DD Council Annual Report and indicates the types of information that should be included as part of the DD Council's evaluation plan for measuring progress on goals.

## Step 5: Public Review

DD Councils must demonstrate that citizens in the State/Territory have had an opportunity to review the draft State Plan. The DD Act states that a DD Council shall consider and respond to significant comments. This is true for the first round of public review and any subsequent rounds of public review needed to address possible revisions. There is no Federal definition of a significant comment however, it should be viewed in the same terms as a substantive change.

It is up to the Council to determine if changes are needed.

* A substantive change is one that alters **the intent of a goal**. If the Council votes to include a substantive revision, the draft plan will go back out for another public comment period and then another Council review.
* Other changes can be made that don’t alter the intent of a goal. These include changes to an objective and/or activity. These changes do not need to go back out for public comment.

When considering whether there is a need to change the draft plan Council’s need to consider:

* Given that the DD Act provides a broad mandate to address needs in the State, it is essential that Councils prioritize their work. Therefore, not all the issues identified as a need can be addressed by the Council.
* Is the comment significant enough AND backed up by data from identified needs of the State?
* Does the Council have the current funding and staffing levels to adequately address the proposed changes? (see Budget below)

## Step 6: Budget

The DD Council should consider the resources available to implement the Plan. The DD Council will want to ensure that its plan can be implemented and achieved utilizing the funds available, either though the DD Act allotment or other sources.

# Assurances

DD Councils should obtain the appropriate signatures for the Assurances for the 5 Year State plan. Councils will keep a copy of the Assurances on file should OIDD request them. Assurances only have to be obtained and kept on file at the beginning of the 5 Year plan, unless there have been substantive changes to the plan or the Council Chairperson or Designated State Agency has changed since the assurances were last signed.

### Who exactly signs the assurances?

The Designated State Agency (DSA) signs the assurances since they receive the money for the DD Council. If a DD Council is operating as their own DSA, typically, the DD Council Chairperson signs the assurances.

### DSA Consultation

DD Act Section 124 (d)(2) references consultation with the Designated State Agency. This is only to ensure that the Council State Plan is consistent with State law. This is not to gain the DSA's "approval" of the Plan, including the goals and objectives.