# **FIELD NOTES, MARCH 2020**

## COMPLIANCE CORNER

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FFY 2020 Obligation and Project Period

The project period and budget period for FFY 2020 funds is 10/01/2019 – 9/30/2021. March marks the sixth month of the federal fiscal year and that means there are18 months left to obligate and perform the work with FFY 2020 funds.

In order to maximize the amount of time available to perform the work, we recommend a Council obligate FFY 2020 funds as quickly as possible to ensure there is the maximum time available to perform the work.

One of the frequently asked questions is about how to accomplish obligations in a timely manner. Some suggestions used by other Council staffs include:

* Assess the amount of time the obligation process takes in a state/territory (start to finish) and then use the information to inform the planning process for making obligations (see suggestion below). Common items considered include time for Council approval (based on Council meeting schedules), the time it takes to development sub-recipient agreements (sometimes called grants or contracts), the processing time through a Designated State Agency system or other system, and other process related items.
* Develop an obligation planning calendar when planning and organizing the obligation related work for Council members and staff.
* Consider streamlining internal Council approval processes to support the Council with approving project concepts and investment amounts for a fiscal year or quarter based on the Council’s annual work plan and then as the funding becomes available, the staff can move forward to develop proposals (if applicable), announce funding availability, and other related tasks. Changes to internal processes may support staff with getting state plan activities in process as early as possible, so formal agreements are ready for final processing when federal funds become available.

The Texas DD Council has a process called “Future Funding Priorities” that was featured in the 2019 Promising Practices showcase. Please see **page 5** of the following [link](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/FY20191.pdf).

**State plan amendments**

Is your Council considering adding, deleting, or significantly changing a current State plan goal? If yes, this type of change is considered a State plan **amendment** and must be submitted by August 15, 2020 in the ACL Reporting System.

You may be wondering why we are including information about state plan amendments in the March edition of the TA newsletter. There are several items that need to be taken care of when making a state plan amendment. Please remember to gain Council approval for goal changes, implement the required 45-day public comment period, have the Council consider public feedback, and contact your assigned ACL Program Specialist to review the amendment and gain access to the ACL Reporting System.

We recommend Council staff review the Council meeting schedule to determine when to present potential amendments to the Council for approval. Factor the 45-day public comment period and time to respond to comments received when planning for the amendment.

Please see the [State plan update/amendment guidance](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/State-Plan-Update-Amendment-Guidance-Document-FY-2020.pdf) document for further instructions.

# **WEBSITE UPDATES**

﻿Federal Reporting & Resources Page

***Five-Year State Plan Page***

**2022-2026 State Plan Resources**

[State Plan Instruction Resource](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL_-2022-2026-State-plan-Instruction-RESOURCE.docx): Provides guidance from ACL, AOD and OIDD. Use in conjunction with the ITACC State plan Development Guide, and the ACL Reporting User Guide to develop and enter the 5-Year State Plan into the ACL Reporting System.

**Five Year Goals**

[5 Year State Plan Goals & Objectives Brief (2020)](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL_ITACC-State-Plan-goals-and-objectives-brief_2020.pdf) – Information about how to write good 5‐year goals with examples and a 5‐year goals checklist. In addition, this document includes information about writing SMART objectives with examples and a SMART objectives checklist.

[Targeted Disparity Brief (2020)](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL_TD_Info_Brief_PDF_2_26_2020.pdf)

**Five-Year State Plan Review**

[2022-2026 State Plan Checklist](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/FINAL_2022_2026_State_plan_checklist.docx)

The Five Year State Plan page is being revamped for the new State Plan cycle. If you are looking for a resource and cannot find it on the page, contact Angela at

[acastillo-epps@nacdd.org](mailto:acastillo-epps@nacdd.org) or call 202-506-5813, ext. 100.

# **2022-2026 State Plan Development**

SAVE-THE-DATE: May 21, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. or 4 p.m. Eastern for the Five Year State Plan Goals, Objectives and Expected Outcomes webinar. The same content will be covered at each webinar. This webinar will provide guidance for DD Council staff to develop goals, objectives and expected outcomes as well as review the requirement and guidance for developing the rationale element and more.

Things to keep in mind for the next 5-Year State Plan

The plan is due on August 15, 2021 in the ACL reporting system for all DD Councils.

**Things to keep in mind for the next 5-Year State Plan**

*The plan is due on August 15, 2021 in the ACL reporting system for all DD Councils.*

**Prioritizing**

In developing the State plan goals, a first important step is to identify priority areas. There are a number of considerations for DD Councils to explore in identifying priority areas and determining focus, goals, objectives, related areas of emphasis (see below), and use of funds, including the following:

* Information from the needs assessment.
* Staffing levels and funding amounts in relation to the breadth of the State plan.
* Current agency efforts, especially those the agency is particularly invested in to avoid overlap
* Trends (demographic, political, social, and economic) that impact the priorities.
* Areas of emphasis related to the greatest unmet needs

Areas of Emphasis DD Act – Section 102 (2) State Plan Development \* DD Act Sec. 102 25 Section 102 (2)

* Quality assurance
* Employment
* Child care
* Health and healthcare
* Education and early intervention
* Housing
* Transportation
* Recreation
* Other formal and informal community supports

DD Councils use a variety of strategies to assist with setting priorities, including:

* Checklists to clarify important criteria for decision-making.
* DD Council members to point out restrictions on resources.
* Public input on priorities once the needs assessment is completed.
* DD Council Committees will develop information and present priorities.
* Brainstorming sessions on priority areas with the DD Council, and further researching those areas.

For more information, click below on the [State Plan Development Resource](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PDF_ACCESSIBLE_State-Plan-Development-Guide_2_25.pdf).

# DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE (DICLC)

**The Missouri DD Council uses SEEDS Grants to Impact Targeted Disparity!**

The MO DD Council invested in two small SEEDS grants to assess barriers to services and measure the needs of the Latinx community in rural Missouri. From the SEEDS grants, a larger, one-year project was developed to meet the needs and barriers that were identified in the southwest region of Missouri, the Latino Leadership and Advocacy Project. The foundation of the project was essentially a Partners in Policymaking program provided entirely in Spanish and facilitated by cultural brokers. The program hosted Spanish speaking subject matter experts from two different UCEDDs, who happened to be parents of children with I/DD.

**Strategies Used:**

* Adapted the Partners in Policymaking curriculum to culturally meet the needs of the participants.
* Utilized cultural brokers who were well known and respected in the Latinx community to facilitate the program, one of which was a MO Partners in Policymaking graduate. *Lesson learned: The cultural barriers and stigma of disability were so great in the region of Missouri that families would only reach out and obtain services/supports through a cultural broker. Families would only follow through if the “professional/expert” could be validated by a cultural broker whom the community knew well and respected.*
* Included the entire immediate/extended family in the program. Partnered with a Latinx community group to provide onsite childcare to maximize participation.

**Outcomes:**

* Graduates of the program earned the title of “Community Navigators” (CN). CNs support their community to inform others regarding their rights, services, and how to advocate for what they want and need. CNs plan to meet regularly at the local cultural center, while their children take art classes on-site.
* Invited a local provider agency to one of their meetings to share with the provider how important it is to have culturally competent and responsive employees. CNs convinced the provider to hire one of their own graduates to serve as a bi-lingual service coordinator. This staff person provides outreach, education and support to the Latinx community as well as informs the rest of the provider agency staff on cultural and linguistic competency issues.
* A group of CNs attended a school board meeting to advocate for Spanish interpreters at IEP meetings and to have the IEP translated into Spanish. Others met with the Principal of the school directly.
* Two CNs contacted their state legislators on several different occasions to address issues that personally concerned them.
* 100% of the CNs reported increasing their advocacy due to the project.
* 100% of the CNs report they are better able to say what they want or say what services and support they want or say what is important to them.

For more information regarding the project, you are welcome to contact Katheryne Staeger-Wilson, [Kstaeger-wilson@moddcouncil.org](mailto:Kstaeger-wilson@moddcouncil.org).

For more information about cultural brokers or cultural liaisons, click on the [Cultural Brokering TAI Presentation](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/MASTER_Culture-Brokering-for-website.pdf).

If you have similar strategies to share or if you have State/Territory specific questions related to DICLC, contact Angela Castillo-Epps at [acastillo-epps@nacdd.org](mailto:acastillo-epps@nacdd.org) or 202-506-5813 ext. 100.

# DD Act Education

What does the DD Act say?

PLAN GOALS.—The plan shall focus on Council efforts to bring about the purpose of this subtitle, by— (A) 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...(Section 124(c)(4)(A)).

As DD Councils gather data and solicit public input to inform the Comprehensive Review and Analysis, they eventually will determine a focus for their five-year goals. The goals will guide the work of the DD Council and lay the foundation for the strategies used to implement the plan and the objectives that describe how the goals will be met.

For additional information on developing "good" five-year goals and writing **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-phased objectives (SMART), click below on the 5 Year State Plan Goals & Objectives brief. Additional information can be found in the [State Plan Development Resource](https://itacchelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/PDF_ACCESSIBLE_State-Plan-Development-Guide_2_25.pdf), Appendix D.

# DATA NUGGET - NCI

What do NCI® Data Tell Us About the Friendships of People With IDD?

National Core Indicators is a collaborative effort between the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities and the Human Services Research Institute.

In the 2017-2018 data collection cycle, 78% of participants reported having friends who were not staff or family. States ranged from 92% to 62% participants reporting they had friends who were not staff or family.

Why does it matter?

People with I/DD, like all of us, want and need friendships. In addition to companionship, friendships relieve loneliness and diminish isolation (Amado, 2013).

Isolation is linked to potential vulnerability to abuse and neglect and is also associated with negative health outcomes (MA DDS, 2013). Friends can help people reduce the stress of being surrounded by paid staff -- who may turnover frequently -- by providing stable relationships. A circle of friends can help people to become involved in social and cultural activities in their communities, to find jobs, and to provide support at critical decision points. Finally, the presence of friends in a person’s life can reduce reliance on staff and reduce staff burnout.

Things to think about:

Through Council related activities or advocacy initiatives, the Council may be able support the case managers and other service professionals to receive training to incorporate relationship-building skills for people the people they serve with I/DD.

There are many strategies that can be used to connect people with I/DD to the community. Does your Council support training activities for people with I/DD that includes information on how to safely connect to others through social and cultural events, the internet or by joining self-advocacy organizations?

Councils could explore how the issue of combating loneliness and fostering friendships is being addressed through the LifeCourse Framework.

Advocates in your State/Territory could use this brief to educate policymakers about the many benefits of friendship and tell their own personal stories about how their life would or does suffer from being isolated in communities.

Want to know more? Click on the [Friendship Brief](https://www.nationalcoreindicators.org/upload/aidd/NCI_Data_Highlight_Friendship03.03.201.pdf) for additional data sources, articles and reports.

# DD AWARENESS MONTH KICKS OFF!

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM) - #DDawareness2020The DDAM Resource Guide is now available! Check it out to find the DDAM logos, links to resources you can use as posting content, and even some messaging guidance and advice that we’ve gathered from past campaigns. Don’t forget to send NACDD resources, events, or links to your organization’s social media so that they can be added to the guide and get more people to share your content.

You can find the resource guide and other news and information related to the campaign by clicking on the [DDAM Webpage](https://www.nacdd.org/ddam1/)

# DD COUNCIL HIGHLIGHT – VERMONT

**Building the Capacity of Self-Advocacy/Advocacy in Vermont**

*Kirsten Murphy, Executive Director*

The Vermont DD Council places a priority on building the capacity for advocacy in partner organizations. As a minimum contribution state, the Council relies heavily on its partner’s organizations, so it’s critical that they be well run and highly trained. We won’t always agree, but the Council would much rather navigate hard issues with a well-informed partner. In fact, the Council often learns as much from them as the other way around. This is especially true of the Council's relationship with Green Mountain Self-Advocates (GMSA), an independent non-profit that supports 23-plus self-advocacy groups statewide. Here are some ways that the Vermont Council builds up GMSA.

* **The Self-Advocacy Project:** Council provides a core grant of $60,000 to GMSA each year to ensure that each local group receives technical assistance and training twice a year. These visits ensure that GMSA’s 600 members are continuously learning about how to speak up for themselves and for the rights of people with I/DD. The grant also supports GMSA in building up the ability of its Board, which is composed almost entirely of self-advocates, to operate a successful non-profit, including training in strategic planning and basic financial oversight.
* **Pay for Participation:** The Council contracts with GMSA to ensure that they can take the lead in several of the Council’s most important State Plan activities. For example, the Council pays GMSA to be a trainer and recruiter for Vermont’s Leadership Series, ensuring that half the trainees each year are self-advocates and the curriculum is accessible to all participants. The Council also supports two self-advocates from GMSA – an African American and a person who identifies as gay -- to participate in the Vermont Community of Practice (CoP) for Cultural and Linguistic Competence. Vermont’s CoP benefits from the perspectives of people living these important inter sectional experiences. Each contract is a modest $5000.
* **Attracting Other Investments:** When the DD Act directs that Councils support self-advocacy, the resources do not necessarily have to come from the Council. For example, the Council has successfully brokered investments in GMSA that were under-written by the Vermont Department of Health to train public health providers in disability awareness. It not only improves the delivery of public health programs, but it is bolstering GMSA to be the go-to resource for this kind of training, and helps ensure the long-term sustainability of this partner.
* **Advocating for change:** The result of all this work has been a close working relationship. The Council and GMSA are ready to combine forces when a legislative opportunity arises. For example, Vermont may be the only State still unsure how it will comply with the CMS rule about conflict of interest free case management. GMSA and the Council are advocating as a united front for more checks and balances in the system, including an Ombudsperson Program for Developmental Services. The Council has the policy expertise to force the issue, and GMSA can amplify the voice of people receiving services to make it clear that the current system compromises the quality of people’s lives.

To learn more about the Vermont Council’s work, see their mid-term report by clicking on the [VT DD Council Mid-Term Report](https://ddc.vermont.gov/sites/ddc/files/documents/mediaandoutreach/vtddc%20pub_2019report.pdf)

To reach NACDD/ITACC staff, please feel free to contact:

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