



**GOVERNOR'S  
COUNCIL FOR  
PEOPLE WITH  
DISABILITIES**

**Council IN Community: We're Here All Year!**

Virtual Engagement Summary

# *COUNCIL IN COMMUNITY: WE'RE HERE ALL YEAR*

Summary of Council **IN** Community

Virtual Engagement Session

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

## **Abstract**

The Council IN Community Virtual Engagement Session, hosted by the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, provided an overview of the Council's mission, State Plan, and the DD act. Participants shared personal strengths and challenges, highlighting the need for greater community education, accessible services, and advocacy. Input from this session will help guide the Council's future State Plan and engagement efforts.

Kate Barrow, Executive Director

[kbarrow@gcpd.in.gov](mailto:kbarrow@gcpd.in.gov)





## Why Was Council IN Community (CINC) held?

The Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities (GCPD) hosted a virtual training session titled *Council IN Community: We're Here All Year!* This session was designed to inform participants about the Council's mission, vision, activities, and the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Act. It further sought to create a space for dialogue on personal strengths, community inclusion, advocacy, and barriers experienced by people with disabilities and their families in Indiana.

## Developing a Shared Vision for Indiana

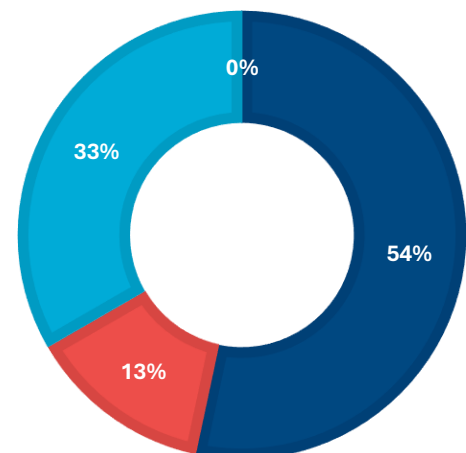
The information collected from every CINC will be summarized and shared with attendees, posted on the Council's website, and shared with the attendees to make sure GCPD staff have accurately captured the themes, ideas, and outcomes from the learning journey.

The Council will use this information to help shape the goals and objectives for the 2027-2032 State Plan, identify program areas, and develop strategies to increase community capacity so that every Hoosier with ID/DD across the lifespan has the freedom and opportunity to live, work, play, learn, and contribute to this great state.

## Who Attended?

### REGISTERED ATTENDEES

- Person with ID/DD
- Parent, Immediate Family Member or Guardian of a Person with ID/DD
- Professional in the ID/DD Field
- Community Supporter





## What Happened at **CINC**?

### Objectives

- Introduce participants to the Council's mission, vision, and current five-year state plan.
- Provide an overview of the DD Act and its significance in Indiana.
- Encourage participant dialogue about personal and community strengths, barriers, and opportunities for inclusion.
- Gather input to inform Council reports, advocacy priorities, and community engagement strategies.

### Participant Engagement and Input

Participants actively contributed to discussions exploring personal strengths, community relationships, barriers, and opportunities for advocacy. Highlights of participant input include:

#### Personal Strengths, Accomplishments, and Sources of Joy

Participants shared that their strengths include resilience, independence, and creativity. One participant expressed pride in owning a home, achieved through persistence and support, emphasizing that "earning it" provided a sense of confidence and happiness.

Sources of joy mentioned included spending time with pets, photographing details in nature (such as "rain gems" on leaves), walking in the neighborhood, and sharing accomplishments like raising a family or pursuing further education.

### Challenges and Barriers

*Participants identified several key barriers:*

- **Systemic and Structural Barriers:** Limited access to assistive technology, affordable internet, and transportation; low societal expectations; and difficulty navigating complex service systems.
- **Knowledge and Education Gaps:** A need for greater education within communities about disability, rights, and resources. Participants noted that discovering essential services, such as vocational rehabilitation or vision rehabilitation (e.g., Bosma Enterprises), often required self-directed research.





- *Social Barriers:* Smaller social networks compared to non-disabled peers, challenges in building relationships, and difficulty finding inclusive, welcoming spaces.
- *Personal and Environmental Barriers:* Energy limitations (noted in relation to “spoon theory”), difficulty coordinating social activities, and feeling isolated due to societal attitudes.

## Community Relationships

Participants shared that they value relationships with those who make them feel included, supported, and respected, including family members, close friends, and neighbors. One participant highlighted that online friendships provide vital connection, especially when physical or cognitive energy is limited.

Participants also noted that people with disabilities may want to prioritize relationships with intimate partners, friends, or chosen family, but face logistical and societal barriers in doing so.

## Reflections on Advocacy and Opportunity

Several participants discussed the importance of person-centered planning and shifting from a focus on meeting only basic needs to supporting people in achieving their goals and dreams.

Participants emphasized that disability should not define a person's entire identity and that broader community education is critical to fostering inclusion.

Advocacy was described as both empowering and intimidating, with participants noting the importance of learning how to ask for help, assert needs, and advocate for systemic change.

## Connect & Contribute

To continue to foster community input and collaboration into Council work; the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities frequently hosts virtual and in-person learning and discussion opportunities across the state. Participants are encouraged to read and share this Council **IN** Community session summary and, if interested, connect with Council Members and staff for more information about other Council funded programs and activities.

