



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

Council IN Community: We're Here All Year!

Fuse Summary

COUNCIL IN COMMUNITY: WE'RE HERE ALL YEAR

Summary of Council IN Community – Fuse
Greenfield, IN
Thursday, June 19, 2025

Abstract

This Council IN Community 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





Why Was Council IN Community (CINC) held?

The Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities (GCPD) hosted a virtual training session titled Council and Community. 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

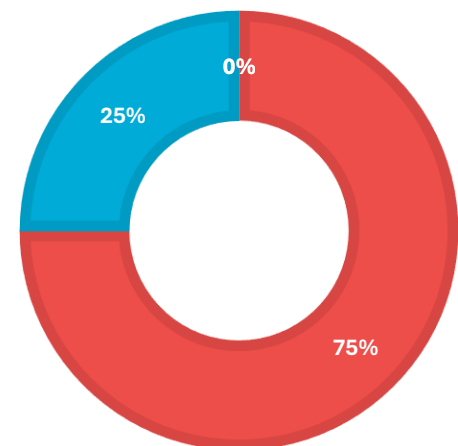
The information collected from every *Council IN Community: We're Here All Year!* will be summarized and shared with attendees, posted on the Council's website, and shared with the attendees to make sure GCPD staff have accurately captured the themes, ideas, and outcomes from the learning journey.

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 contributed valuable insights related to relationships, personal strengths, and barriers experienced in daily life and within systems of support. Highlights of participant input include:

Personal Strengths, Relationships, and Social Connectivity

Personal Strengths

Participants named individual and family strengths that contribute to resilience and advocacy:

Advocacy and Knowledge

- "Strong advocate, informed on issues important to family and impact on others."
- "Strong self-advocacy skills."

Leadership and Positivity

- "Educate, serve as positive."
- "Loving, advocate, fun personality."

Personal Interests: "Lots of hobbies, interests – theater (Civic Theatre)."

Empathy and Open-Mindedness: "Compassionate for others' needs, approaches with curiosity."

Relationships and Social Connectivity

Participants emphasized that relationships play a vital role in quality of life and inclusion.

Friendships and Community Participation

- Participants highlighted the importance of spending time with friends and being actively involved in the community.





Sibling Relationships in Adolescence

- The need for connection among siblings, particularly during adolescence, was raised as a specific area for attention.
- “Being with other siblings, especially for teen years.”
- A note indicated that further research is needed to support these relationships.

Challenges and Barriers

In addition to interpersonal and systemic challenges, participants identified several key barriers that impacted their well-being, advocacy, and access:

Community Access and Relationships

- **Basic Needs and Well-Being:** “Self-care, sleep, basic needs become a barrier.”
- **Emotional Support and Community Resources:** “No support groups.”
- **System Navigation:** “Systems navigation after school.”
- **Limited Support Networks:** “Support networks.”
- **Information Credibility:** “No vetting system for speakers.”

Parent and Family Relationships Outside the Disability Community

Personal and Environmental Barriers

- A significant theme was the need to explain or defend parenting approaches to others: “Justify parenting to other parents, professionals.”
- Participants recognized the value of building friendships and support systems outside of disability-focused environments. However, participants noted during the discussion: “Boundaries (or lack of)” and “Harder to connect with people outside.”

Reflections on Service Quality and Workforce Support (“Parking Lot” Themes)

Several participants discussed the importance of quality of services and the importance of a well-trained, valued workforce. Topic raised for further consideration included service standards, recognition of Direct Support Professionals (DSP’s), training improvements, and quality accountability.

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.

