



Disability Advisory Council Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, December 10, 2025, 3 P.M. – 5 P.M.

Location: Dakota County Western Service Center, Room 106
14955 Galaxy Avenue, Apple Valley, MN, 55124

Attendance

Council Member	Representing	Attended
Linda Bailey	Lived experience	x
Aiden Kilgannon	Lived experience	
Amy Hunting	Lived experience	x
Sumukha Terakanambi	Lived experience	x
Michael Cashman	Lived experience	x
Lucianna Wolfstone	Lived experience	
David Shaw	Lived experience	x
Eva Johnson	Family member	x
Stephanie Thomas	Family member	x
Alison Niemi	Family member	x
Susan Pagnac	Service provider	
Ann Bailey	Service provider	x
Jodi Yanda	Service provider	x
Mike Welsh	Service provider	x
Toby Hearn	Service provider	
Michael Dahl	Service provider	
Bilan Arab	Faith community	
Sheila Hawthorne	Housing	x

Dakota County Staff in Attendance

Sky Jarvi, Dakota County Inclusion Diversity Equity Access (IDEA) Manager

Jessica Johnson, Dakota County Administrative Coordinator to the County Manager

Jessie Carlson, Dakota County Central Operations Division Deputy Director

Megan Zeilinger, Program Coordinator, Dakota County Social Services

DeAnn Prouty, Program Coordinator, Dakota County Social Services

Others in Attendance

None

Agenda

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Agenda

III. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

IV. Council Business

- Approval of 2026 Workplan
 - Jessica Johnson walked Council Members through the plan. The 2026 Workplan is based on discussions from prior meetings, DAC priorities, and the Council's goals and purpose.
 - Council members provided feedback about the work plan.
- Planning for the 2025 Annual Report to the County Board
 - Jessica Johnson, DAC Chair and DAC Co-chair, led the discussion on the content of the report, including outcomes from work over the previous year and plans for the coming year. DAC provided feedback on the report and messages that Council Members wanted the group to share with the board in their presentation.
- 2025 Reflections and Planning for 2026
 - DAC members shared their reflections on accomplishments and barriers in the Council's first year. They also shared their experiences and priorities for 2026.

V. Council Discussion

- 2026 Workplan – Council Member Input
 - Emphasized the need for an intentional and well-structured 2026 work plan that balances required annual work, planned departmental updates, and flexibility for emerging issues.
 - Requested meaningful, two-way engagement with county departments, including clear feedback loops showing how DAC input is incorporated into final decisions.
 - Highlighted the importance of measurable outcomes and evaluation to assess impact, guide improvements, and inform decisions about continuing or adjusting priorities.
 - Supported regular review and reporting to the County Board to ensure accountability and effective use of council time and resources.

- Recommended integrating ongoing legislative and policy updates into the work plan to keep members informed and strengthen the council’s advisory role.
- Stressed the importance of aligning DAC priorities with broader disability advocacy efforts and leveraging member involvement across systems.
- Recognized the value of lived experience and storytelling to inform policy, support advocacy, and strengthen recommendations.
- Affirmed DAC’s role as a communication bridge between county staff, community experiences, and County Board decision-making.
- Reflections and Input for Board Report – Council Member Input
 - Members identified significant barriers, including the ongoing PCA workforce shortage, HCBS and Medicaid service disruptions tied to fraud investigations, lack of new providers, funding constraints, transportation challenges, employment inequities, and broader accessibility and discrimination concerns.
 - The council emphasized the importance of being realistic about the current political and policy climate and its direct impact on people with disabilities.
 - A key 2025 accomplishment was building a collaborative, functional council structure, identifying shared priorities, and creating a foundation for future work.
 - Education was highlighted as both a major achievement and an ongoing priority—educating council members, county staff, and the community to reduce stereotypes and improve understanding of disability experiences.
 - Members noted their advisory role in providing lived-experience expertise on county initiatives and stressed the need for measurable outcomes and clear reporting on accomplishments.
 - The council requested stronger follow-up and accountability to ensure county leadership responds to DAC recommendations and communicates how feedback is used.

VI. County Updates (Dakota County Staff)

- Disability Resource Fair: The County hosted its first Disability Resource Fair since 2020 in November, drawing approximately 400 people with disabilities and 53 vendors, providers, advocacy groups, and state agencies. Due to strong turnout, the fair will now be held annually.
- HCBS Licensing Moratorium: A two-year statewide moratorium on new HCBS licenses and service expansions will begin in January 2026 due to fraud investigations, halting all licensing applications and service changes; while impacts in Dakota County are expected to be limited, the Planning and Analysis Department is identifying service gaps to support future exception requests, and DHS will host informational webinars starting in December.
- PCA Workforce Crisis / Career Pathway: Dakota County is partnering with MCIL through a Bush Foundation grant to develop a certified PCA career pathway program at DCTC and Inver Hills, similar to CNA training, to address workforce shortages and advocate for higher state reimbursement rates.
- Assistive Technology Grant: The County, in partnership with Breaking Barriers, is advancing an Assistive Technology initiative to expand access, training, and awareness, including free training opportunities and the development of a success-story video.

- Accessible Transportation Advocacy: Dakota County is supporting transportation legislation that would require rideshare companies such as Uber and Lyft to offer wheelchair-accessible vehicles, building on the success of the existing Lyft waiver program, which serves approximately 1,500 rides per month.
- Communities for All (CFA) Initiative: CFA funded 17 contracts focused on inclusion in public spaces and schools, using \$250,000 in state funds and \$375,000 in county funds over two years. The initiative, highly successful and currently under evaluation, was funded as a one-time pilot and is not included in future county budgets, prompting discussion about sustainability and council support moving forward.

VII. Council Member Announcements/Updates

VIII. Adjourn

Decisions Made

- Decision: Approval of Agenda
- Decision: Approval of October 8, 2025, meeting minutes.
- Decision: Approval of Disability Advisory Council 2026 Workplan
- Decision: Adjourn

Action Items

- Action: The 2026 schedule will be sent out in early January.
- Action: Committee members can attend the presentation to the Board on January 6th, 2026. The DAC presents its report and work plan to the General Government and Policy committee, which meets in Conference room 3A on the third floor following the full county board meeting, which begins at 9 am.
- Action: The Council will elect a new Chair and Co-Chair at the February meeting. If you are interested, submit your letter of interest to Jessica Johnson prior to the February meeting.
- Action: The Council will recruit new members to reach 25 members. Council members can recruit and share information with others, directing them to the application process to be considered for Council membership.
- Action: Review the bylaws in 2026. Consider changing to a “floating quorum.”

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026
 Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM
 Location: Dakota County Western Service Center, Apple Valley, MN

Minutes Prepared by: DeAnn Prouty

Date: 12/10/25