NCCDD
North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities





Progress Through Partnership

Impact Report FFY 2026

Message from the Council

Our 2026 federal fiscal year was another year of challenges, opportunities, and advocacy for North Carolina's intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) community.

NCCDD successfully developed its next Five-Year State Plan, guided by input from individuals with I/DD, family members, and stakeholders across the state.

The year brought concerns about proposed state Medicaid cuts. Although those cuts were reversed, Medicaid funding remains at risk at both the federal and state levels.

A major success came at year's end when the legislature and Governor increased funding for Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) and other caregivers serving people through the Innovations Waiver, CAP-DA, CAP-C, and Personal Care Services. However, a similar increase has not yet been made for 1915(i) services.

We are especially grateful to everyone who participated in the I/DD Legislative Day on April 29, 2026. We believe the community's advocacy, alongside the leadership of the Legislative I/DD Caucus, helped make these workforce funding increases possible.

Throughout the year, NCCDD advanced its work in advocacy and leadership, community and belonging, financial security and independence, communications, and policy education.

Despite the challenges, we achieved meaningful progress thanks to the dedication of our extraordinary Council, staff, and most importantly, the I/DD community.



Jonathan D'Angelo,
NCCDD Council Chair



Talley Wells, NCCDD
Executive Director



NCCDD Council members and staff celebrated with Gov. Josh Stein and NCDHHS representatives during National Disability Employment Awareness Month at the Executive Mansion in Raleigh.

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD), a 40-member body appointed by the Governor, is made up of:

- People with intellectual and/or other developmental disabilities (I/DD)
- Parent/Family member/Guardians
- Representatives of State agencies
- State legislators
- Representatives from Disability Rights NC and the Carolina Institute for Developmental Disabilities
- Provider and Local Management Entities/Managed Care Organization representatives (LME/MCO)

The Council represents people across North Carolina and is responsible for carrying out the provisions of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). Staff make sure the Council is a member-driven, effective, efficient, and accountable organization. Sixty percent of the Council's members are people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD) or their family members. The rest are representatives from state agencies, nonprofits, the North Carolina General Assembly, and professional organizations. The Council directs all initiatives and contracts.

Learn more about the Council:

NCCDD Council Members

NCCDD Staff

DD Network Partners

Policy Education to Inform Advocates

FFY 2026 Public Policy Priorities

NCCDD's policy education efforts are guided by its public policy priorities. For 2026, the Council identified these focus areas:

- Protect Medicaid and I/DD services during ongoing federal and state budget challenges
- End the waiting list by developing and funding a plan to serve the more than 20,000 individuals currently waiting for services
- Increase direct support professional (DSP) wages to strengthen the workforce

Additional priorities included:

- Expanding housing and transportation options
- Increasing Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE)
- Ensuring the success and effectiveness of I/DD services.



Read the Public Priorities Sheet

Keeping the I/DD Community Informed

NCCDD's monthly Capital & Community Policy Education Meeting provides an opportunity for people with I/DD, family members, and leaders to engage in discussions on key policy issues impacting North Carolina's I/DD community. A monthly Public Policy Update featuring state and federal updates is also posted on NCCDD's Public Policy Blog.

Policy Education Meetings Attendance for the Fiscal Year



965 combined attendees (includes duplicates)



324 combined attendees for Children's Policy Meetings

Learn more about the Policy Education Meetings

Read the Public Policy Blog

Sharing Community Input on Impact of Medicaid Cuts

In October 2025, NCCDD surveyed North Carolina's I/DD community to understand the impact of drastic Medicaid cuts announced in September. The survey received 345 responses from people with disabilities, family caregivers, Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), and service providers.



Executive Director Talley and Council Chair Jonathan D'Angelo Discuss Survey Results on Spetrum News (April 30, 2026)

Responses showed a system under strain, with families concerned about losing essential services, DSPs facing wage reductions, and providers struggling to maintain operations. The overwhelming majority expressed anxiety, frustration, and a sense of abandonment.

View Spectrum Interview

NCCDD compiled these first-hand accounts into a report documenting the impact of the cuts. The report was shared with the I/DD community and policymakers to bring awareness of the impact these cuts would have.

Read the report

I/DD Caucus Brings Voices to the General Assembly



Twenty-six legislators and more than 200 advocates, self-advocates, family members, and partners gathered on April 29, 2026, at the North Carolina Legislative Building in Raleigh for the 2026 I/DD Caucus. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and family members shared their experiences and priorities directly with lawmakers.

The Caucus highlighted critical issues facing the I/DD community, including the waiting list for services, the direct support workforce, and funding for essential supports. People with I/DD and their families emphasized the importance of community living, independence, and full inclusion.

The event included remarks from state leaders and self-advocates, a discussion between 10 legislators and more than 50 advocates and family members, and personal stories from people and families across North Carolina. Legislators from both parties and both chambers participated.

The Caucus increased awareness of the need for strong I/DD services and supports, strengthened connections between advocates and policymakers, and generated media attention. The following day, Representative Sarah Crawford highlighted the event during the signing of 2026 Medicaid funding at the Governor's Mansion with the Governor and bipartisan legislative leaders.

Press Coverage



Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Caucus Day (EdNC)

Read the article

IDD Caucus on Podcast (WPTF Afternoon News)

Read the article

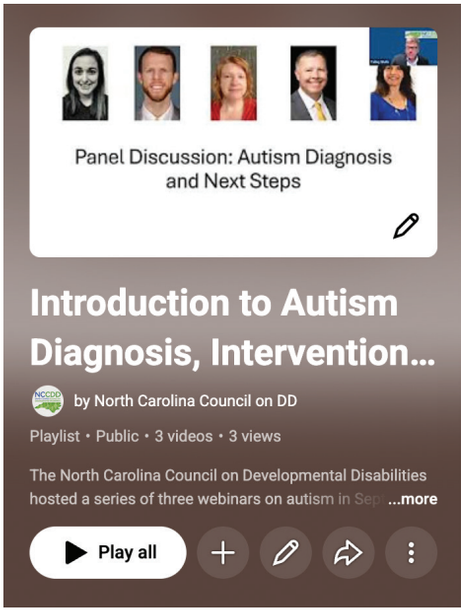
Autism Webinar Series Educates and Informs Families and Policymakers

NCCDD launched a three-part webinar series in September 2026 to help families and professionals better understand autism diagnoses, interventions, and available supports. The first two webinars were held in September, and the third one was scheduled for the next fiscal year in October.

Fourteen presenters, including clinicians, researchers, self-advocates, and other experts, shared information with 180 attendees about the diagnostic process, reliable resources, and evidence-informed intervention approaches.

The series helped families understand their options, ask informed questions, and explore supports that meet their children's individual needs. It also increased awareness among professionals and policymakers about the importance of timely access to information, services, and a range of support options.

The webinars were recorded and are available on NCCDD's YouTube channel.



Watch the Webinar Series

Engaging, Empowering and Recognizing Advocates

Self-Advocate Discussion Series

NCCDD hosts a monthly webinar series that aims to keep North Carolina self-advocates informed and engaged in discussion on topics of social and systems change. Series sessions are a time to connect with others with lived experience and common interests, develop impact strategies for telling personal stories, and stay connected with the NCCDD community.

Topics included coordinated advocacy, post-secondary options after high school (IPSE programs), developing healthy relationships, transportation, voting rights, assistive technology, and more.

Learn More About the Discussion Series

12 webinars

363 attendees (includes duplicates)

219 people with I/DD registered

The Council Presents

NCCDD offers The Council Presents webinar series to keep the I/DD community informed and connected. It features expert insights, community updates, and a way to engage with community stakeholders, professionals, and individuals with I/DD.

In 2026, 522 advocates (includes duplicates), providers, stakeholders, family members, and individuals with I/DD attended. Topics included:

- Housing
- ABLE Accounts
- Registered Apprenticeship
- Plain Language
- ADA 36th Anniversary
- Olmstead 101
- Work Together NC
- And more

Learn More About the Council Presents

"To me, Olmstead is more than a Supreme Court decision. It is a promise that every person with a disability belongs in the community and deserves the services, relationships, freedom and opportunities needed to build a life of their own choosing."

- Comment from Brian Dooley, Self-Advocate, during the Olmstead 101 Webinar

Advocacy & Leadership Awards

Every year, NCCDD honors individuals whose work has advanced opportunities and access for people with I/DD with its annual Advocacy and Leadership Awards. At the November 2025 Council meeting, these award recipients were celebrated:

- **Kerri Eaker Mountain Mover Award:** Lauren Howard and LaDonna Huffaker
- **North Carolina Leadership Achievement Award:** Laura Newell
- **Jack B. Hefner Memorial Award:** Ray Hemachandra
- **Helen C. "Holly" Riddle Distinguished Service Award:** Pat Keul

Meet the Winners



Lauren Howard & LaDonna Huffaker



Laura Newell



Ray Hemachandra



Pat Kuel









Initiative Highlights

ALP-NC: Building a New Generation of Leaders

The Advancing Leadership Program of North Carolina (ALP-NC) continued to develop leaders with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). A total of 28 leaders graduated, bringing the program's total number of graduates to 126 since its launch. The program accepted 22 leaders for its September–November 2026 cohort, with 11 people with I/DD serving among the 18 facilitators.

Read more about this initiative

ALP-NC graduates are making an impact across North Carolina by serving on advisory boards, mentoring others in employment settings, and speaking at statewide advocacy events. The ALP-NC Alumni Network, launched January 1, 2026, provides ongoing opportunities for graduates to connect, learn, and grow through monthly continuing education and networking sessions.

ALP-NC goes national! Centered Resources is bringing North Carolina's ALP model to Kentucky, with its first cohort of leaders graduating in November 2026.

Expanding Training to Ensure the Safety of the I/DD Community

During this initiative's second year, training for law enforcement officers and first responders and community safety education programs for people with I/DD and their families were held in Granville, Guilford, and New Hanover counties. Other key activities included training 475 Raleigh Police Department officers, presenting at the RISE Back to School Safety Summit held in Greenville, and supporting the launch of the Blue Envelope Program in Knightdale. People with I/DD and family members also helped deliver trainings, bringing valuable firsthand perspectives to community safety efforts.



Read more about this initiative

Read an article from Spectrum News 1

Building a Foundation for Inclusive Education

Winston-Salem State University began its third year of Council funding to develop PILLARS, one of the first inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) programs at a historically Black university in North Carolina. The program drafted staff, student, and peer mentor handbooks and developed its course curriculum. Plans also include internships and work-based learning opportunities with mentors and community partners to support employment outcomes. Recruitment is expected to begin in late fall 2026, with classes starting in August 2027. A bilingual informational pamphlet is being prepared to support recruitment.

Read more about this initiative

Planning for the Next Five Years

Work continued from the previous fiscal year to develop and finalize NCCDD's Five-Year State Plan for 2027–2031. The Plan establishes the Council's priorities and guides funding decisions to improve services, supports, and opportunities for North Carolinians with I/DD.

In 2026, NCCDD developed draft goals and objectives based on comments gathered through public surveys and listening sessions during the previous year. People with I/DD, family members, and community stakeholders reviewed the draft and provided feedback to help strengthen and refine the Plan. The Plan was finalized in August 2026, with implementation beginning October 1, 2026.

2027-2031 Five-Year State Plan



Goal 1: Increase Advocacy and Leadership

- Objective A: Increase Advocacy
- Objective B: Educate and Engage I/DD Community
- Objective C: Raise Awareness with Policy Leaders and Citizens



Goal 2: Increase Belonging and Community

- Objective A: More Housing Choices and Better Transportation
- Objective B: Better Prepare for and Respond to Emergencies
- Objective C: Increase Access to Supports and Services



Goal 3: Increase Financial Security and Independence

- Objective A: Increase Competitive Integrated Employment
- Objective B: Increase Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Leading to Work and Independence
- Objective C: Build Financial Knowledge

Media Relations and Outreach

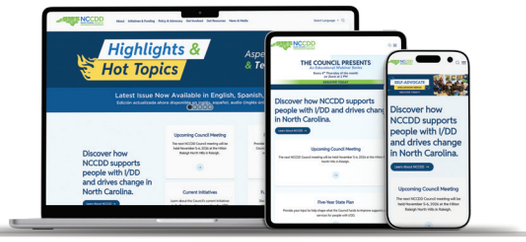
NCCDD shares news and updates with people in North Carolina's I/DD community through its website, email, social media, and news stories. This includes information about NCCDD projects, important I/DD news from other groups, and special campaigns.

Website

During this fiscal year,

35,688 website visits

2.7% increase in returning users



Email Marketing

125 emails sent

6,700 subscribers

35% open rate

206 new subscribers

Social Media

VIEWS

108% increase vs previous year

FOLLOWER GROWTH

84% increase vs previous year

ENGAGEMENT RATE

109% increase vs previous year

Media Coverage

88 mentions

$13.3 million in publicity value

PRESS MENTION:

NCCDD Joins Governor Stein to Honor National Disability Employment Awareness Month

View the article

Budget for FFY October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026

Budget	Amount	%
Goal 1: Financial Asset Development	$512,534	24%
Goal 2: Community Living	$ 521,960	24%
Goal 3: Advocacy Development	$606,960	28%
Operations Staffing & Administration	$521,068	24%
Total Budget	$2,162,522	100%

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Read the report online

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