



## Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council

### Council Meeting Minutes Thursday, December 11, 2025

#### **Present:**

Angie Auldridge, Damon Briggs, Carmen Brown, Kalani Brown, Meeka Caldwell, Sunny Cefaratti, Laura Paloma Chavez, Amanda Distefano, Bill Georg, Kay Han, Jarred Jones, Meghan Marsh, Kim McKay, Dee Sapp, Justin Stocker, Katelyn Szymanski, Maureen van Stone, Lauren Whiteman, Marcus Whitman

#### **Absent:**

Kevin Armstrong, Rich Bauernschub, Kathy Hargett, Marlana Hutchinson, Kareenna Jones, Tiffany Joseph, Theresa Kuhns

#### **Staff:**

Rachel London, Jenn Raulin, Chris Rogers

#### **Guests:**

- Marnie Brennan, Primary Care Coalition
- Sarah Christa Butts, Service Coordination Inc.
- Lisa Carr, Service Coordination Inc.
- Nova Evans, Developmental Disabilities Administration (representing Marlana Hutchinson)
- Wilber Gomez-Chicas, Community Options Inc.
- Chris Mason-Hale, Kennedy Krieger Institute
- Leah Saal, Loyola University Maryland

**The meeting was called to order by Dee Sapp, Council Chairperson.**

## **Welcome and Introductions – Dee Sapp**

- Dee Sapp welcomed everyone to the Council meeting.

## **Public Comments**

- No public comments.

## **Approval of Minutes**

- M/S/P to approve the September 11, 2025 minutes.

## **Council Chair Report – Dee Sapp**

- Dee discussed that currently, some members were appointed to finish someone else's term on the Council. After that partial term is done, they were then appointed to a full 5-year term. Other Council members were appointed to 5-year terms right away. Rachel has worked with the Governor's office to ensure that all members are appointed to 5-year terms when they join the Council. This means that all Council members can serve their full 10 years on the Council if they want.
  - M/S/P to amend the bylaws to say: "The governor appoints Council members. The governor appoints new Council members for five year terms. Members may be reappointed. Members may not serve more than 10 years in a row."

## **Executive Director Report – Rachel London**

- The Administration for Community Living (ACL) is back in the office full time, but some of their finance team was let go by the federal government. Councils were told they are level funded for FFY 2026 but have not received any money yet.
- The Maryland legislative session starts on January 14, 2026. There have been a lot of changes in the House and Senate.
  - House Speaker Adrienne Jones has stepped down from her role as Speaker. The House will vote on a new Speaker on Tuesday, December 16. Joseline Peña-Melnyk will likely be the new Speaker. She is a big supporter of the disability community.
  - Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary is stepping down from the House of Delegates. She is running for Howard County Executive. She has been a big supporter of the disability community too.

- The Council updated the 2026 Senate Guidelines in plain language. The plain language version is on the Senate website now.
- There will be more advocacy on the budget in this upcoming session. There is a projected \$1.4 billion deficit for the whole state. The Governor will release his proposed budget in January. The Council is talking with other state agencies and the Governor's office to discuss how to minimize harm to people with disabilities.
- Rachel asked Nova Evans to share about the work of the DDA's Maryland Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Sustainability and Equity Committee (MIDSEC). Nova talked about their work and said that MIDSEC will have a website soon.

### **2026 Public Policy Priorities – Rachel London**

- The Council's 2026 Public Policy Priorities are similar to the 2025 priorities. There are a few small changes. There is no need to approve these priorities because they are based on the State Plan. Next year, the Council will need to approve new policy priorities since it will be the first year of a new State Plan.

### **Council Budget – Rachel London**

- Rachel reviewed the FFY 2025 budget. We have not spent all of the FFY 2025 money. We are currently using FFY 2025 money to pay staff salaries until we get FFY 2026 money.
- The Executive Committee set aside \$50,000 in the FFY 2026 budget to go toward small grants. The Executive Committee reviewed 3 small grant applications at their November meeting. The Council has received 19 more grant applications since then.

### **Membership Committee – Meghan Marsh**

- The Council began recruiting new Council members in October. We received 7 applications from people with developmental disabilities. The Membership Committee invited 5 of those people to interview. The committee recommends that 2 of those candidates be appointed to the Council. Those candidates are Kimberly Hubscher and Sam Livingston.
- Motion from the Membership Committee to forward those 2 candidates to the Governor's office for appointment to the Council. S/P from the full Council.

### **Leading to Learn: Loyola University Maryland – Leah Saal**

- Leah Saal presented on Loyola University’s Leading to Learn program, funded by the Council to training correctional supervisors in Maryland in the Jessup Correctional Institute.
- Leah highlighted the LEAD Model. This is a three-part train-the-trainer community research partnership. It supports people with DD to serve as self-advocate educators. They helped develop and give the training for correctional supervisors.

### **State Plan Priority Recommendations – Jarred Jones and Jenn Raulin**

- Jarred and Jenn reviewed the 2027-31 State Plan priority recommendations from the State Plan Work Team.
- Motion from the State Plan Work team to adopt the recommendations. S/P from the full Council.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.**