



Governor's Committee for People with Disabilities

GCPD Quarterly Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 13, 2024, from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM

GCPD Members Present:

- Rhonda Staats, Ben Barrett, Tiffany Payne, Ramsey Lee, Ashley Mathy, Margaret Kristan, Dan Witt, Cindy Bentley, David Morstad, and Justin Koestler.

GCPD Members Absent:

- Dan Laatsch, Dan Idzikowski, Patty Zallar, Julie Blasky, Stacy Stone, Pearl Fessenden, Nancy Leipzig, and BJ Ermenc.

GPD Liaisons Present:

- Sarah Kuehn, and Elizabeth Watson.

DHS Support Staff Present:

- Zachary Davenport, and Angela Brenna.

ASL Interpreters Present:

- Carly Bieri, and Nicole Keeler.

Call to Order and Welcome

- Dan Laatsch, GCPD Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:35 AM. Dan Laatsch handed over Chairing the meeting to Vice Chair Rhonda Staats. The meeting was made available via Zoom and phone at (669) 254-5252 with Meeting ID: 161 1786 1716.

Review and Approve November 13, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting Agenda

- Ben Barret made a motion to approve the Quarterly Meeting Agenda. David Morstad seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Review and Approve July 31, 2024, Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

- Margaret Kristan made a motion to approve the Quarterly Meeting Minutes from July 31, 2024. Tiffany Payne seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Public Comment on Issues Affecting People with Disabilities (9:45 AM – 9:35 AM)

- No public comment received.

Nominations and Elections, Vice Chair

- Rhonda Staats term as Vice Chair ends on December 31, 2024. Rhonda shared that she will not be up for reelection. Ben Barrett's term as Executive Committee Member is also up on December 31, 2024. GCPD Members requested DHS Support request nominations for both positions to be received by November 29, 2024.



GCPD Issue Statement on WI ILC Funding

- Members discussed issuing a statement of support for increasing the funding for the [Wisconsin Independent Living Centers](#). The Executive Committee shared the request from Jason Glozier, Executive Director, WI Coalition of Independent Living Centers. See attached.
- ***Ben Barrett made a motion to issue a statement of support to increase the baseline funding for the WI Independent Living Centers. David Morstad seconded the motion. Motion carried.***

Update from GCPD Transportation Workgroup

- Ramsey Lee provided updates from the Transportation Workgroup.
- WisDOT has requested GCPD members watch the WisDOT video presentation on Blended Transitions and provide feedback to <mailto:van.walling@dot.wi.gov>.
- Ramsey Lee shared information about the Wisconsin Statutes [s.85.21/s.85.215](#) that provide funding for [specialized transportation](#) services across WI. The annual 85.21 allocation has not increased in the last five years. From 2000 to 2022 the 60+ population increased from 909,367 to 1,519,222, a 67% increase. This trend means that the demand for specialized transportation will continue to grow.
- ***Ramsey Lee made a motion to issue a statement of support to increase funding for specialized transportation services under the s.85.21/s.85.215 to ensure programs are not limiting or denying passenger rides to non-drivers in WI. Ben Barrett seconded the motion. Motion Carried.***

Discussion and Updates on 2024-2027 GCPD Workplan

- Members discussed creating another workgroup to tackle items from the GCPD State Plan including the direct care workforce shortage, access to Mental Health Services and availability of accessible, affordable housing. The group agreed that asking GCPD members to commit to multiple subcommittees and workgroups may be too much and that there may be an opportunity to combine meetings.
- DHS Support Staff will email members an invite to the following GCPD Workgroups in 2025:
 - Award Workgroup
 - United Councils Workgroup

Update from GPCD Opportunities and Access Committee

- David Morstad provided updates from the Opportunities and Access Committee. He said that he reached out to AT Council Chair, Jim Denham to collaborate on how to advise the state and local government leadership on ADA Title II digital accessibility rules. David also said that they are discussing how to promote broadband expansion. David mentioned that they are putting the Disability Panel goal on hiatus. Members requested that DHS Support edit the GCPD Workplan to reflect this change.



Liaison Updates

- Elizabeth Watson, UW-System Liaison
- Sarah Kuehn, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, shared:
 - DVR held an all-staff conference on Sept. 11 and 12. The focus of the conference was on staff wellness and provided an opportunity for professional development on current DVR policy and practice.
 - Comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). WIOA requires VR agencies to have a CSNA completed every 3 years. The purpose of the CSNA is to inform policy and programmatic decisions, state plans, and improve career development opportunities and outcomes for individuals with disabilities. WI DVR has contracted with Public Consulting Group LLC. The first DRAFT of the CSNA is due to DVR on Dec. 31st. I can share any findings/recommendations that the report may contain in the future with GCPD.
 - Update on new Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Grants -DVR is supporting a DIF grant that was awarded to DPI to address Justice-Involved youth with disabilities-early intervention and workforce integration from the Juvenile Justice System in the community Resulting in CIE. DVR will partner with DPI to provide services to youth involved in juvenile justice.

Employment Workgroup Updates, Nancy Leipzig

- Nancy shared they are in the process of identifying the appropriate legislator to support the [State Use Program](#).

Draft Next GCPD Quarterly Meeting Agenda

- Members discussed items to include on the next GCPD agenda. They suggested agenda items be sent to DHS Support closer to the next meeting.

Adjourn

- Margaret Kristan made a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM.

Notice of Accessibility

The GCPD is administratively attached to the Department of Health Services. If you need an interpreter, alternate formats, or other accommodations to participate, please contact Angela Brenna at 608-266-0128 or by email at angelag.brenna@dhs.wisconsin.gov.

Request from Coalition of Independent Living Centers

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) have been providing services to Wisconsinites of all disabilities for nearly 50 years, and during that time have only seen an increase in State funding once in 1999. This means Wisconsin ILCs have significant funding barriers to providing these unique services.

We are requesting that you include a funding increase of \$2,645,455 in your executive budget for the 25-27 biennium for the state's eight Independent Living Centers. IL Services are funded statewide at a level of \$2,992,145 through a combination of Federal and State funding which averages out to



approximately \$374,018 for each of Wisconsin's 8 ILCs for the provision of core IL Services. If included in the budget, this funding increase would provide significant opportunities to expand IL Services in the state. We support the state's Independent Living Network assessment that a base funding level of \$626,400 would be necessary for each center to provide IL Services in their respective multi-county regions. The requested increase also includes an additional \$626,400 which would be provided to the Centers to support the state's most underserved areas.

Independent Living Services are unique as the only statewide services that are not directly associated with Family Care, IRIS, or other LTCSS programs. They are not means tested and are available to the entirety of the disabled population, often providing in depth services which help people maintain their independence and delay their reliance on Long Term Care Services. Independent Living Centers are also the only organizations to provide cross disability services to people at any age, assisting in bridging the transition from children's services to adult services. ILCs are vital partners, not only to the Department of Health Services but, to the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Public Instruction. These partnerships ensure that youth with disabilities can have access to the best possible equal education and equal employment outcomes.

Federal Legislative Updates

HR 2708 LaTonya Reeves Act

Summary

Seeks to protect individuals with disabilities who require long-term services and supports (LTSS) by strengthening their rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Tracking:

- On November 13, a motion to discharge petition was filed to bring this legislation to the House floor.
- A discharge petition is a way for members of Congress to force a vote on a bill that has been stuck in committee. It helps break deadlock and forces a bill to the floor.
- If 218 Representatives sign the discharge petition, the House of Representatives will debate and vote on the Latonya Reeves Freedom Act.
- [Current List of Representatives who have signed as of December 2, 2024:](#)
- 65 Representatives have signed on petition.
- None of the 8 Wisconsin Representatives have signed.

[HR 7480 Disabled Veterans Housing Support Act](#)

Summary

Would require the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to exclude all service-connected disability compensation from income when calculating eligibility for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

**Tracking:**

- On September 9, 2024, placed on the Union Calendar No. 549
- The Union Calendar is a separate calendar in the United States House of Representatives that schedules bills involving money issues.

State Legislative Updates**[HR 6249 - Think Differently About Emergencies Act](#)****Summary:**

This bill requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to report to Congress regarding assistance and resources provided by FEMA to persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the families of such individuals who are impacted by major disasters.

Tracking:

- On November 25, 2024, Became Public Law No. 118-123.

[SB1097: Pedestrian Safety](#)**Summary:**

This bill requires a vehicle operator to stop their vehicle and remain stopped until a pedestrian crossing at a crosswalk has completed crossing the roadway.

Tracking:

- Under current law, the operator of a vehicle is required to yield the right-of-way to a pedestrian-meaning that the operator of a vehicle must reduce speed or stop if necessary.
- Introduced on March 27, 2024, by:
- Senators [Larson](#), [Agard](#) and [Spreitzer](#); and Cosponsored by Representatives: [Shelton](#), [Snodgrass](#), [Andraca](#), [Clancy](#), [Conley](#), [Considine](#), [Moore Omokunde](#), [Palmeri](#), [Ratcliff](#), [Sinicki](#), [Stubbs](#), [Subeck](#), and [Neubauer](#).
- On April 15, 2024, SB 1097 did not pass a vote in the State Senate.