

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**2025 ANNUAL REPORT**

**DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ADVISORY COUNCIL  
MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**

Update October 30, 2025

Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council (DDAC)  
Arizona Revised Statutes § 36-553

To contact the DDAC, you may email [DDDDDAC@azdes.gov](mailto:DDDDDAC@azdes.gov)  
or call 1-844-770-9500, Option 1

<b>NAME</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY</b>	<b>TERM EXPIRATION</b>
Erin Carr-Jordan (Vice Chair)	(1) Parent/Guardian of a Child under 18 with a Developmental Disability	01.01.2023
Stacy Beard	(2) Parent/Guardian of a Child 18 years or older with a Developmental Disability	01.01.2026
Kara Karlson	(3) Parent of a Child Served through the Arizona Early Intervention Program (AzEIP)	01.01.2023
Hilari Howard	(4) Private Sector Agency Provider of In-Home Services	01.01.2027
Angela Levin	(5a) One of two members of the Private Sector: Provider of Residential Services Representative	01.01.2028
Christopher McNamara	(5b) One of two members of the Private Sector: Provider of Adult Day Services Representative	01.01.2028
(VACANT)	(6a) One of two Members with a Developmental Disability who Receive Services from the Division	
(VACANT)	(6b) One of two Members with a Developmental Disability who Receive Services from the Division	
Sam Shepherd	(7a) One of two Members, each representing a Different Developmental Disability Advocacy Organization	01.01.2028
Peter Schwarz	(7b) One of two Members, each representing a Different Developmental Disability Advocacy Organization	01.01.2028
Amanda Glass (Chair)	(8) Designated Protection and Advocacy Organization Representative	01.01.2023
(VACANT)	(9) Nonprofit Providing Direct Advocacy Representative	
Helen Rasho	(10) Director (or designee) of the AZ Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)	Non-Voting
Zane Garcia Ramadan	(11) Assistant Director of the Division of Developmental Disabilities	Non-Voting
CJ Loiselle	(12) Developmental Disabilities Planning Council Member (DDPC)	01.01.2028
(VACANT)	(13) Foster Parent Representative	
Kin Chung-Counts	(14) Independent Oversight Committees (IOC), Previously Known as Human Rights Committee (HRC)	01.01.2027

**ARS § 36-553. Developmental disabilities advisory council; membership; duties**

- A. The developmental disabilities advisory council is established consisting of the following members:
1. One parent or guardian of a child who is under the age of eighteen years and who is developmentally disabled.
  2. One parent or guardian of a child who is eighteen years of age or older and who is developmentally disabled.
  3. One parent of a child who is served through the Arizona early intervention program.
  4. One member of the private sector who represents an agency that is certified to provide in-home services to persons with developmental disabilities.
  5. Two members of the private sector who are contracted with the division to deliver services to persons with developmental disabilities, one who represents a provider of residential services and one who represents a provider of adult day services including employment services.
  6. Two members with a developmental disability who receive services from the division.
  7. Two members each representing a different developmental disability advocacy organization.
  8. One member from the designated protection and advocacy organization.
  9. A member representing a nonprofit organization providing direct advocacy to families with developmentally disabled children.
  10. The director of the Arizona health care cost containment system administration or the director's designee. This person is a nonvoting member.
  11. The assistant director of the division of developmental disabilities. This person is a nonvoting member.
  12. One member from the developmental disabilities planning council.
  13. One member representing foster parents of children with developmental disabilities.
  14. One member from the human rights committee on the developmentally disabled established by section 41-3801.
- B. The governor shall appoint all voting members. Voting members and their families shall not be employees of the department of economic security. In making these appointments the governor shall select at least five members who are clients or guardians, parents or other family members of persons with developmental disabilities. One of these five voting members shall represent a person who is eligible for long-term care services pursuant to chapter 29, article 2 of this title. The governor shall also consider geographic representation in making these appointments.
- C. Council members appointed pursuant to subsection A, paragraphs 1 through 9 and 13 and 14 of this section shall serve staggered three-year terms. No members may serve more than two full terms. A vacancy occurring on the council shall be filled by the governor appointing another qualified person to serve the remainder of the term.

- D. The council chairman shall be chosen annually by a majority vote of the council. A majority of voting council members constitutes a quorum.
- E. The council shall meet in each district at least once a year.
- F. The division must allow the council to review new policies and major policy changes before the division submits the policies or changes for public comment.
- G. The council shall review auditor general reports regarding the division and services provided by the department of health services.
- H. Council members are not eligible to receive compensation, but council members appointed pursuant to subsection A, paragraphs 1 through 9 and 13 and 14 of this section are eligible to receive reimbursement of expenses pursuant to title 38, chapter 4, article 2.
- I. The council shall review and make recommendations to the division regarding:
  - 1. Coordinating and integrating services provided by state agencies and providers that have contracted with state agencies to provide developmental disability programs.
  - 2. The health, safety, welfare and legal rights of persons with developmental disabilities.
  - 3. The division's plan for service delivery and improvement.
  - 4. Establishing and reviewing division policies and programs.
  - 5. The cost-effectiveness of division services.
  - 6. Assessing the division's annual needs.
  - 7. Selecting the assistant director of the division.
  - 8. Monitoring the division's annual budget.
  - 9. The sale or lease of the real property and improvements on the real property formerly used by the department of economic security for the Arizona training program in Phoenix.
- J. The council shall oversee and approve expenditures of monies from the developmentally disabled client services trust fund established in section 36-572 following expenditure guidelines established by the council.
- K. The council shall provide the public with an opportunity to address the council at regularly publicized meetings.
- L. The council shall submit an annual report of activities to the director, the governor, the president of the senate and the speaker of the House of Representatives by December 31 of each year.
- M. The department shall make meeting space available to the developmental disabilities advisory council at locations and times convenient to the council and shall provide secretarial and other staff support.

# Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council

## Annual Report

2025

The Annual Report is generated and based upon the DDAC Meeting Minutes for the 2025 year. Each member of the Advisory Council has a unique perspective, based upon the Council Member's Area of Representation. The following report is a brief summary of accomplishments made throughout the year by the Council.

Throughout 2025, the Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council (DDAC) carried out its statutory responsibilities pursuant to ARS §36-553, advising the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) on matters related to service coordination, policy implementation, system performance, and the health, safety, and welfare of members. The Council's work reflected a strong commitment to transparency, stakeholder engagement, and adaptive governance during a year characterized by fiscal uncertainty and significant programmatic change.

Early in the year, DDAC leadership engaged with the Governor's Office of Boards and Commissions to address long-standing vacancies on the Council. These outreach efforts resulted in measurable progress, including confirmation that interviews were scheduled for prospective members. Restoring full Council membership remained a priority to ensure diverse representation and effective advisory input. As of December 2025, the Council currently has four vacancies and is actively working to fill those positions. Some members whose membership may expire in 2026 have reapplied to their position and are awaiting that approval.

The Council also focused on continuing education opportunities with Open Meeting Law training and participating in a formal review of ARS §36-553. This training reaffirmed the Council's advisory role to the Assistant Director of DDD, including responsibilities related to coordination of services, budget monitoring, cost-effectiveness, and oversight of service delivery. DDAC reaffirmed its legal obligations related to transparency, including adoption of an annual master agenda, compliance with Open Meeting Law requirements, and preparation of an annual report. Further commitments were made to provide Open Meeting Law materials and DDAC bylaws to members of the public upon request and to circulate bylaws electronically to all Council members for review, noting that the bylaws had not been revised since 2016.

Significant efforts were made to expand public engagement and awareness of DDAC activities. For the first time, Council public forum announcements were embedded in the AHCCCS member newsletter, increasing visibility among members and families statewide. Additional outreach occurred through coordination with CARES, which incorporated DDAC forum reminders into DDD town hall slide decks. To assess the effectiveness of these outreach efforts, the Council established an evaluation plan with a mid-year checkpoint to review attendance following the March and May public forums.

In June, DDD leadership informed the Council that the state legislature had not yet finalized the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The potential impact of a delayed budget on DDD operations was discussed, underscoring the importance of continued monitoring and contingency planning. During this period, the Council also received updates on changes to the Parents as Paid Caregivers (PPCG) program and relayed this information in public forums.

In August, the Assistant Director announced the release of DDD's first five-year strategic plan in more than a decade. The Council reviewed the plan and endorsed its vision statement, "Arizonans with developmental disabilities lead the lives they choose," while recommending refinements to improve clarity, accessibility, and concept consistency. DDAC encouraged additional emphasis on process standardization within support coordination to enhance statewide consistency and service quality.

The Council finalized administrative refinements, including adopting a new agenda structure that makes the Declaration of Conflict of Interest a standing agenda item. This change aligns with guidance from the Attorney General's Office and reinforces transparency in Council deliberations.

To improve meeting effectiveness, the Council adopted procedural changes to public comment, including multiple calls to the public and allowing for public comments throughout meetings. For example after DDD's Assistant Director updates, a "Call to the Public" is open for non-council members on the call to ask questions for up to five minutes. This will encourage real time question and answer opportunities for all involved and provide clarity and understanding of topics and content provided to the public.

Looking ahead to 2026, DDAC began discussing consolidation of separate Public Forums into regular Council meetings which was found to be in alignment with statutory requirements which require six meetings per year. The goal of this consolidation is to allow for robust opportunities for public comment during all meetings. This model will run throughout quarter one of 2026 with an evaluation period at the end by the Council for effectiveness, meeting flow, and overall public engagement. The Council will vote again in March on how to proceed throughout the rest of 2026 in terms of frequency and time of day of remaining meetings. Public attendance will be tracked at each meeting in order to establish a baseline and gather data.

Additionally, the Council made a decision to adjust 2026 meetings to focus on geographical regions within DDD. District Central was invited for the January meeting and presentations were given by Program Managers, and various leadership positions within DDD. This model will roll out throughout 2026 with a focus on a new District each session. Members of the Council will be asked to suggest and invite individuals they know to attend and present at these meetings.

Collectively, the Council's work in 2025 reflects a sustained commitment to transparency, accountability, stakeholder collaboration, and continuous improvement in service to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families across Arizona.

## Review of 2020 through 2024

This report provides a consolidated summary of the work, priorities, and key themes addressed by the Developmental Disability Advisory Council from 2020 through 2024. The DDAC serves as an advisory body to the Division of Developmental Disabilities, providing input on policy, service delivery, and systemic issues impacting individuals with developmental disabilities and their families across Arizona.

This five-year period reflects a progression from crisis response during the COVID-19 pandemic to long-term system reform, workforce stabilization, behavioral health capacity building, and strategic planning for the future.

### **Year-by-Year Highlights**

#### **2020: Pandemic Response and System Stability**

The COVID-19 pandemic shaped the Council's work from 2020 through 2022, requiring rapid adaptation to protect health and safety while maintaining essential services. The DDAC monitored case trends, supported temporary service flexibilities, and emphasized continuity of care for members and families.

As emergency conditions eased, the Council supported a thoughtful transition back to in-person planning meetings and gradual unwinding of flexibilities, ensuring member voice and safety remained central.

#### **2021: Recovery, Investment, and Family Support**

The Paid Parent Provider Program emerged during the pandemic and continued as a major policy focus. The Council facilitated balanced discussion addressing access to care, oversight, equity, and sustainability. The Council ultimately supported continued advocacy for the program as one of several tools to stabilize services, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

Workforce stability remained a consistent focus across all years. Early shortages and high caseloads prompted targeted investments in recruitment, retention, and training. The creation of onboarding units, salary adjustments, and structured training resulted in measurable improvements in staffing levels and retention by 2023–2024. The Council emphasized that workforce stability is foundational to service quality and member outcomes.

#### **2022: Governance and Policy Transition**

Implementation of SB 1244; increased focus on policy review, EVV oversight, and public forum accessibility; transition planning beyond the public health emergency. The Council highlighted the impact of misinformation on families and providers. DDD responded by developing plain-language reference materials, expanding outreach, and partnering with trusted community messengers to improve clarity and trust.

#### **2023: System Reform and Capacity Building**

A major priority from 2023 onward was strengthening behavioral health services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Using ARPA funding, DDD expanded IDD-specific training for behavioral health professionals, launched incentive programs, and hosted statewide 'Bridging the Gap' conferences.

In parallel, DDD developed behavior-supported group home models to better serve individuals with complex needs, reinforcing the Council's long-standing advocacy for person-centered care.

## **2024: Implementation, Training at Scale, and Strategic Planning**

Positive Behavior Support training scaled statewide, reaching thousands of direct support professionals and hundreds of family members. These efforts focused on trauma-informed, evidence-based approaches to improve quality of life, reduce crises, and strengthen caregiver relationships.

DDD initiated a comprehensive five-year strategic planning process, with the DDAC playing a key advisory role in shaping priorities, identifying challenges, and aligning future investments.

Throughout these four years, the DDAC served as a consistent advisory voice during a period of unprecedented change and reform. The Council's work reflects a commitment to collaboration, equity, transparency, and continuous improvement. This multi-year summary is intended to inform the public, policymakers, and stakeholders of the DDAC's role and contributions, and to support ongoing dialogue about the future of Arizona's developmental disability service system.