



DIVISION OF
**DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES**

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

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Letter From the Assistant Director

The mission of Arizona's Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) is to empower Arizonans with developmental disabilities to live self-directed, healthy, and meaningful lives. At the core of that statement is a commitment to ensuring people with disabilities have the opportunity to live their best lives. Repeatedly over the years, the people of Arizona, including family members, service providers, DDD employees, advocates, elected officials, and DDD members themselves, have stood by that commitment. This commitment has never faltered and is why Arizona continues to be considered one of the top states in the country for supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. It is also why DDD and its dedicated employees will continue to do whatever possible to meet that responsibility and strive to achieve our mission.

I am excited to share the Division's 5-year Strategic Plan. As a Division within the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES), in recent years, DDD has supported the DES Strategic Plan and engaged in distinct strategic initiatives - most notably the Current 2 Future initiative which spanned 2020-2024 and included various projects that contributed to significant improvements in the Division's internal operations and external workforce capacity. The work over the last five years has solidified a foundation to continue providing high quality services and support to more than 60,000 Arizonans with developmental disabilities. With that said, we recognize there remain opportunities for improvement and areas we need to focus on to meet the DDD mission and the expectations of the Arizonans we serve.

The planning started within the Division itself as all staff members were invited to share their feelings and input on what they believed were the most critical priorities facing the Division over the next five years. The next stage of planning involved going to those directly impacted by the DDD program including, most importantly, the individuals supported by the program. In developing this plan, DDD spoke directly with Arizonans with developmental disabilities served by the Division and asked what was important to them. Additionally, as referenced above, there is a vibrant community of passionate, knowledgeable, and engaged groups within Arizona that support and drive this program forward. For that reason, it was critical to seek input from multiple stakeholder groups representing different aspects of the DDD system as we developed this plan. In the course of its development, DDD met with over 20 different advocacy groups and received over 1,000 survey responses. This stakeholder feedback included recommendations for where the Division should focus its efforts over the next five years and where there are specific opportunities for improvement. Those recommendations guided what is included in the 5-year Strategic Plan.

In the pages that follow, you will see the focus areas, goals, and objectives that the Division will pursue over the next 5 years. This plan will be updated annually, with the intent to publish periodic updates as new data or information becomes available.

If you are reading this, it likely means you are part of the incredible DDD system in Arizona. I would like to take the opportunity to say Thank You. Thank You for everything you have done in support of the individuals we serve and Thank You for everything you will do to support this community as it continues to grow and evolve. Finally, Thank You for everything you do to support Arizonans with developmental disabilities to live self-directed, healthy, and meaningful lives.

Zane Garcia Ramadan, Assistant Director



Program Overview

As of July 2025, the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) provides services and supports to approximately 61,000 Arizonans with a developmental disability. This includes individuals with autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, cognitive/intellectual disability, Down Syndrome, and those at risk of having a developmental disability. DDD provides flexible, high quality, and person-centered services and supports to individuals, or “members”, and their families. The Division’s program supports members to live, work and participate in the community.

All members receive case management and connection to community resources through a Support Coordinator. Members eligible for the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) with an assessed need receive medically necessary Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). They also receive physical and behavioral health services from a DDD Health Plan or the Tribal Health Program. Targeted Support Coordination (TSC) is available to members with developmental disabilities who are eligible for the Title XIX and Title XXI acute care programs, but do not meet the functional requirements of the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS). DD-only offers case management services to members who do not meet the eligibility or functional requirements for either ALTCS or TSC.

Most members eligible for DD/ALTCS receive services and support in their homes. Home and Community Based Services are primarily provided by contracted service providers (Qualified Vendors). The array of services provided by DDD Qualified Vendors includes attendant care, habilitation, day and employment

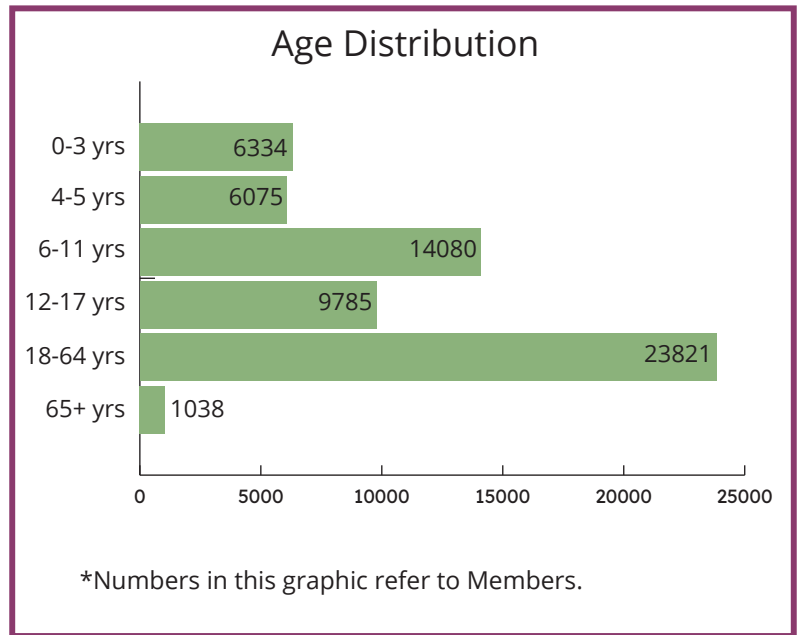
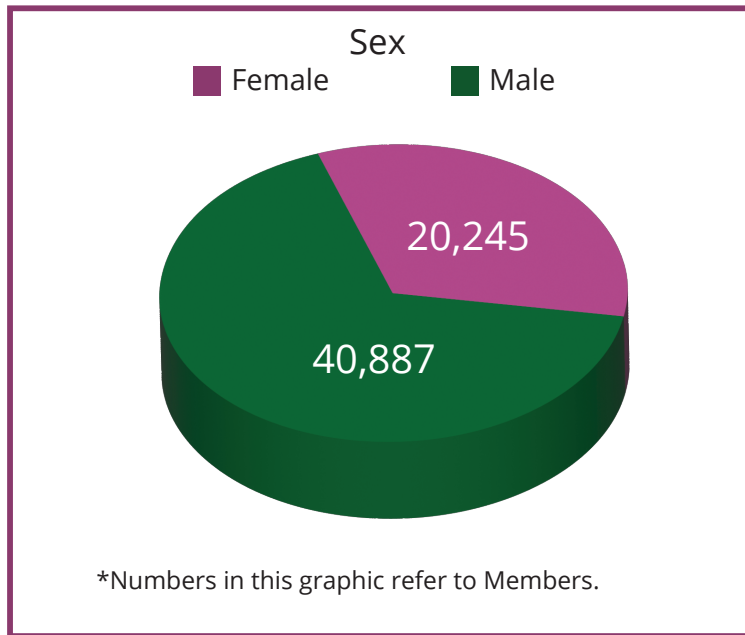
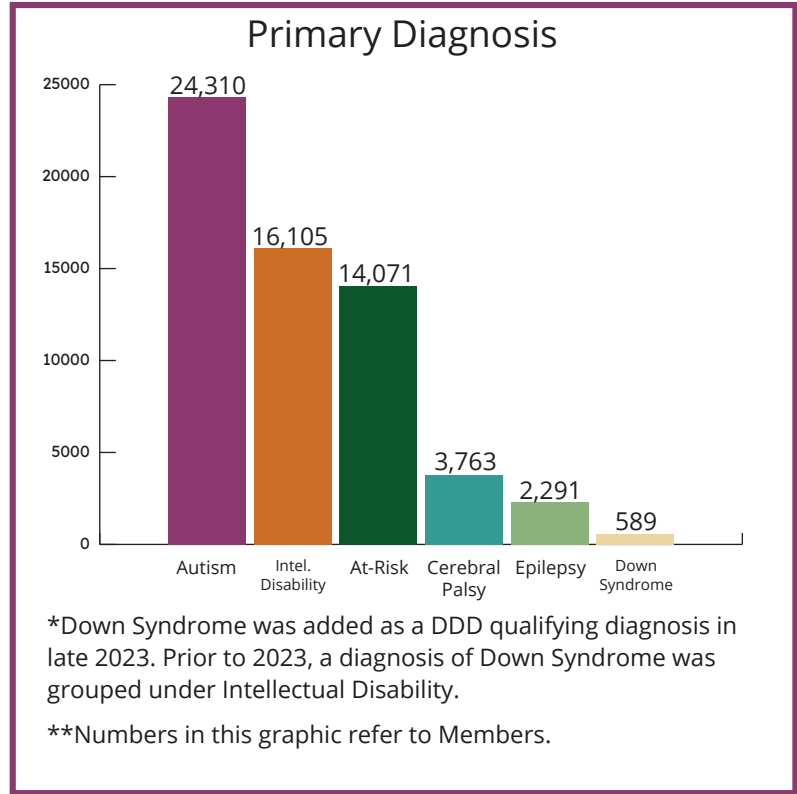
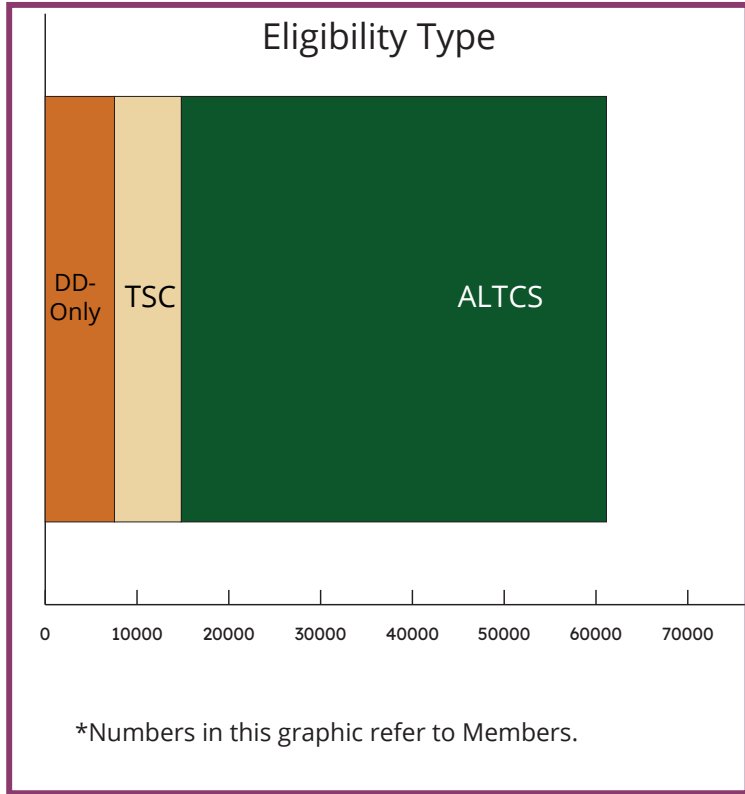


services, therapies, in-home nursing services, and residential services provided in licensed group homes and developmental homes.

The population’s age demographic and primary diagnosis has shifted since the last strategic plan was developed in 2015. At that time, the most common primary diagnosis was a cognitive/intellectual disability. In 2024 the most common primary diagnosis was autism. Autism continues to outpace all other qualifying diagnoses. Over half of members served are under age 18.



Data 2025



Strategic Planning Process

The Division used an inclusive process to develop its Strategic Plan. The process included gathering input from internal and external stakeholders. In September 2024, DDD began its planning process by assessing its performance, and analyzing strengths and challenges. This began with a review of existing performance data. DDD staff members then completed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) exercise. Virtual discussion forums were held with over 20 stakeholder groups. These included DDD staff members, self-advocates, Qualified Vendors, family members and others. This was done to ensure there was awareness and buy-in from the DDD community. Input was collected in these sessions. The Division also collected survey responses from internal and external stakeholders. All feedback helped inform the focus areas, goals and objectives. DDD reviewed data and analyzed trends as part of the goal and objective creation. Throughout the plan's development, updates were presented to the stakeholder groups to encourage and collect additional feedback.

Common Themes



There were several topics of interest to the stakeholders. General examples included:

- Quality of Care
- Independence for DDD members
- Self-Direction, Choice, Control
- Communication from DDD
- Person-Centered Practices
- Transitions for DDD members
- Employment Opportunities
- Community Involvement
- DDD Employee Retention
- Health Care Options
- Health & Safety Considerations
- Financial Assistance
- Volunteer Opportunities

After review, there were common themes that were identified as priorities. The most significant amount of feedback reflected an interest in:

1. Increasing the number and quality of Support Coordinators and providers/vendors,
2. Ensuring consistency in services and supports
3. Technology improvements
4. Member independence, self-direction and control.

These themes served to inform the focus areas, goals, and objectives in the strategic plan.

Plan Introduction

This Strategic Plan is designed to guide the Division of Developmental Disabilities' program for the next five years. It specifies the Division's vision and mission.

- **Vision - Arizonans with developmental disabilities lead the lives they choose**
- **Mission - The Division of Developmental Disabilities empowers Arizonans with developmental disabilities to lead self-directed, healthy and meaningful lives.**

DDD's new Vision was developed as part of the Strategic Plan with input from members, families, providers, and DDD staff members.

The Strategic Plan's goals and objectives align with both the Vision and Mission. They focus on program improvement and member success. Key benefits include:

- Improved access to quality services
- Continuity of person-centered care
- Members making more choices in their lives (self-direction).
- Members expanding their social support system
- More members pursuing employment options
- Enhanced Support Coordination
- Improved tools and technology
- Improved stakeholder satisfaction
- Opportunities for providers to expand knowledge
- Improved communication and transparency
- Maintain staffing with growth of the program

Strategic Focus Areas, Goals and Objectives



1: Develop Support Coordination Program Excellence

Goal: The Division has the knowledge and resources to effectively support members and families.

2: Deliver High Quality Service

Goal: Providers consistently deliver person-centered care guided by best practices, and focused on member outcomes, satisfaction, safety, and wellbeing.

3: Empower Individual Success

Goal: Members achieve their definition of success.

4: Maintain Trust and Confidence

Goal: The Division continues clear, open communication with all stakeholders expanding trust and collaboration to achieve shared goals.

System-Wide Objective: Technological Innovation

Focus Area 1: Develop Support Coordination Program Excellence

Goal: The Division has the knowledge and resources to effectively support members and families.

This means: *The Division has the knowledge of information and understanding of resources to support the members and families.*

- **Objective 1:** By 2030, the Division will have a qualified Support Coordination workforce that keeps up with program growth.

This means: *By 2030, the Division will have enough well trained Support Coordinators to keep up with the number of members DDD serves.*

- **Objective 2:** By 2030, the Division will improve the member and provider experience using stakeholder insights and evidence-based standards.

This means: *By 2030, the Division will improve the member and provider service experience by directly asking participants how services can be improved.*



Focus Area 2: Deliver High Quality Service

Goal: Providers consistently deliver person-centered care guided by best practices, and focused on member outcomes, satisfaction, safety, and wellbeing.

This means: Providers or people who are paid to help members will focus on what the members say they need and want, respect their choices and help them reach their goals, while making sure they are safe and happy.

- **Objective 1:** By 2030, the Division will maintain a provider workforce that keeps up with program growth.
This means: By 2030, the Division will have enough well trained providers or paid supports to keep up with the number of members DDD serves.
- **Objective 2:** Beginning July 2026, the Division will review all Qualified Vendor's Quality Management Plans at least once every 3 years to support quality service delivery.
This means: Beginning July 2026, the Division will look at their provider agency service plans to review their best care practices. This will happen at least once every 3 years to support quality and good service delivery.
- **Objective 3:** By 2030, the Division will create a training program for Health Plan providers to deliver comprehensive care for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities.
This means: By 2030, the Division will create a training program for Health Plan providers that focuses on the whole person to give complete care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Objective 4:** By 2030, the Division will publish quality indicators about Qualified Vendors so members can make self-directed choices about their services.
This means: By 2030, the Division will share the results of how well their provider agencies or Qualified Vendors are successful in meeting member's needs so members can make their own choices about their services.



Focus Area 3: Empower Individual Success

Goal: Members achieve their definition of success.

This means: Members will choose their goals and tell the Division what success looks like to them.

- **Objective 1:** By 2030, the Division will increase the percentage of members who report making decisions in their daily schedules from 76% to 86% (based on National Core Indicators [NCI] data).
This means: By 2030, the Division will show a 10% increase in the number of members who are deciding their daily schedules based on National Core Indicators [NCI] data.
- **Objective 2:** Through 2030, the Division continues to ensure all members live in the least restrictive, most appropriate community setting of their choice.
This means: Through 2030, the Division continues to guarantee all members live where they choose as directed in their plan. They will help decide the number of supports needed. The goal is for all members to have the same community freedoms.
- **Objective 3:** By 2030, the Division will increase the percentage of members who report having friends who are not staff or family members from 55% to 79% by supporting participation in community activities that align with their interests and abilities (based on National Core Indicators [NCI] data).
This means: By 2030, the Division will support their members to increase the number of friends by at least 24% based on National Core Indicators [NCI] data. The Division says friends are not paid staff or family members. The Division will encourage community activities by investing in services that will increase opportunities through the member's interested activities.
- **Objective 4:** By 2027, the Division will develop baseline data to measure the number of members who are competitively employed. By 2030, the Division will increase the number of members who are competitively employed by 3%.
This means: By 2030, the Division will encourage and support their members to find community jobs that pay at least minimum wage by 3%.



Focus Area 4: Maintain Trust and Confidence

Goal: The Division continues clear, open communication with all stakeholders expanding trust and collaboration to achieve shared goals.

This means: *The Division continues clear, open communication with all Division participants expanding trust and will work together to achieve shared goals.*

- **Objective 1:** Through July 2030, the Division will use innovative and accessible modes of communication to expand stakeholder engagement.

This means: *Through July 2030, the Division will use accessible ways to reach all audiences to expand Division participants' involvement.*

- **Objective 2:** Through July 2030, the Division will publish relevant data about the DDD program to better inform stakeholders.

This means: *Through July 2030, the Division will share useful Division program results to better inform Division participants.*



System-Wide Objective: Technological Innovation

Note: this objective applies to all focus areas and goals

Objective 1: By 2030, the Division will use approved tools and supportive technologies that meet current industry standards of security and integrity to improve program efficiency and effectiveness.

This means: *By 2030, the Division will use current, safe and secure accessible technology to help all participants to understand how to use the resources for programs well.*



Next Steps/Work in Progress

Over the next five years, the Division will implement activities that support the strategic plan's goals and objectives. More information is available on the DES/DDD website.

DDD is finishing projects whose final outcomes will contribute to the success of each strategic goal and objective.

Focus Area 1: Develop Support Coordination Program Excellence

- Pursuit of accreditation through the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA) for Case Management for Long-Term Services and Supports has resulted in changes to policies, processes, and training that will improve the quality of support provided by DDD.
- Dedicated nurse Support Coordination units designed to better support members with significant medical needs have been created.
- Workforce recruitment and retention efforts and caseload ratio adjustments are enabling DDD to identify, hire, train and retain high quality staff long term.
- Changes to the DDD Person-Centered Service Plan (PSCP) schedule reduce administrative burden and are more flexible to member/family needs. This enables more time for quality interactions between members, families and Support Coordinators.

Focus Area 2: Deliver High Quality Service

- Multiple workforce initiatives are underway to increase the knowledge and expertise of DDD staff members, Direct Support Professionals (DSP), and health plan providers. These new and revised trainings include Positive Behavior Support, Care Coordination, Needs Assessment process, Prevention and Support, and the Dual Diagnosis Training Plan.
- Other efforts include the Behavior Plan Improvement Project to ensure that all members that require a behavior plan have

a high quality and up to date plan in place; and the expansion of the provider network to include ten (10) behavioral supported group homes.

- Initiatives from DDD's Workforce Development Plan include the Provider Workforce Development Toolkit which helps providers strengthen their workforce recruitment strategies by connecting with local and statewide resources that help identify and engage job seekers interested in direct care roles.

Focus Area 3: Empower Individual Success

- Efforts in 2025 have already resulted in the expansion of National Core Indicators (NCI) Survey utilization by members and families. Sufficient participation for all member and family surveys will allow Arizona data to be included in the national survey report for the first time in several years. Enhanced efforts will support expanded participation year over year.
- Support Coordinators have recently completed training on the Needs Assessment process and are better able to understand and document each member's unique goals, strengths, and support needs. This leads to more meaningful planning conversations, allowing members to define what success looks like for themselves and receive services that align with their vision of the future.

Focus Area 4: Maintain Trust and Confidence

- Presently, the Division engages stakeholders through the DDD system on a regular basis including a monthly public Town Hall meeting and other monthly and quarterly advisory committee meetings, and stakeholder meetings. The Division publishes e-newsletters addressing members and families (monthly), Qualified Vendors and providers (monthly), and internal staff (bi-weekly).
- Changes to the Arizona law have prompted revisions to the Parents as Paid Caregiver model. Regular communication has occurred to encourage open communication between DDD and stakeholders. Regular updates will continue to occur as DDD and the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) develop training to assist Support Coordinators, support families, and prepare for final implementation in October 2025.

Appendices

Glossary of Terms

- **Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS)** - Arizona's Medicaid program, a federal health care program jointly funded by the federal and state governments for individuals and families who qualify based on income level.
- **Member** - means a person receiving developmental disabilities services from the Division.
- **National Core Indicators (NCI)** - a national effort to measure and improve the performance of public developmental disabilities agencies.
- **National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA)** - is a private, 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving health care quality through accreditation of care standards for organizations that provide managed health care services.
- **Stakeholders** - are Members and their families, Qualified Vendors, DDD health plans, and Division Staff.

Acknowledgements

The Division expresses heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in the creation of the strategic plan. This includes members, families, vendors, and Division staff members who completed surveys and provided feedback. The Division would also like to give special thanks to all those who joined the strategic planning meetings held at the following locations and organizations:

- GANE
- Encircling Families (formerly Raising Special Kids)
- Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC)
- Northern Arizona University Institute for Human Development (NAU-IHD)
- The ARC
- Southern Arizona University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
- Ability 360
- Arizona Association of Providers for People with Disabilities (AAPPD)
- Tribal Forum
- Governance Committee
- Member Advisory Council (MAC)
- Developmental Disabilities Advisory Council (DDAC)
- Self-Advocates
- District Town Halls
- Employee Town Halls
- DDD Independent Oversight Committees

The Division would like to thank People First of Arizona for their work in developing the plain language versions of the Goals and Objectives.