



STATE OF WASHINGTON

GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT

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Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
General Membership Meeting
Friday, May 19, 2023
10:00am-3:00pm

Minutes

Action items:

- Elizabeth will update the draft EO 13-02 to include the policy office's suggestions.
- Elizabeth will work with partners to get the Universal Access & Belonging plan moved forward.
- The Coordinating Committee will follow up on next steps to appoint the LWG a subcommittee.
- Members, please share if you have ideas or want to help create a GCDE logo this June.
- Please check out the [Glossary of Ableist Terms to Avoid](#) by Lydia X.Z. Brown, as well as using the "[Oops, Ouch](#)" principle to respond to microaggressions. Other recommended readings on the subject include about the [Euphemistic Treadmill](#) by Dr. John McWhorter, and another on [Violence in Language Circling Back to Linguistic Ableism from Lydia XZ Brown](#), as well as Why DEI Trainings Fail from Harvard Business Review (pending). For more on using 'reclaimed language,' see guides on [Inclusive Language](#) and/or [Respectful Language](#) [editor's note].
- Members, please reach out to [Nathan](#), [Kristin](#), or [Elaine](#) if interested in volunteering at YLF or coordinating a donation (or needing more information), and share the [application packet](#).
- New members, please let [staff](#) know if you are interested in participating on the Awards subcommittee, and all - please forward the [nomination information](#) to your networks.
- Staff will consider inviting [Kirk](#) from SSA's colleague to a future meeting to discuss Medicaid.
- Members, please consider participating on or sharing the Office of Equity's [CAB](#).
- Members, please let [staff](#) know if you are interested in participating in the LWG (now subcommittee), or even if not, whether you have a bill of interest we should know about.
- Elizabeth will check on the [driver's license bill implementation](#) from last session.
- Members, please continue to advocate for the use of remote testimony during session.
- Members, please consider viewing the [calendar](#) and joining other subcommittee's meetings.
- Let [staff](#) know if you have any concerns with your subcommittee placements as time goes on

Next General Membership Meeting will be on Friday, November 17, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

10:00 a.m. **Welcome and Housekeeping** – Damiana Harper, *GCDE Chair* (5 minutes)

Damiana called the meeting to order at 10:02am after ensuring that everyone is setup with what they need to participate. Welcomed everyone to the meeting. Glad to see everyone. Reminder of housekeeping items – ASL and CART in use, please raise your hand prior to speaking, stay on mute when not speaking to minimize interruptions, and please turn on video when speaking if comfortable and able. Moving onto introductions (see below). Elaine will call on folks. Starting with members, followed by Associates, and then staff if time.

10:05 a.m. **Member introductions** – all members (1 hour)

Items to cover: 1) Share an important lesson you learned from a mentor that you want to teach someone else. 2) New members, give us your elevator speech on the most important things to know about you.

Members excused: Kristin DiBiase, Yvonne Bussler-White, Matt Nash. Possibly Christa Hewitt. Member Andy Song not present. Member Daniel Ledgett not present. Member Ivy Anne joining late.

Absent Member Kristin DiBiase shared in advance: to make sure to stop every so often and really look around and live in the moment—because time truly does move much faster than we realize, and if we don't pay attention as we go along, we won't have memories to enjoy when we look back.

Absent Member Matt Nash shared in advance: My parents warned me that kids, and some adults, are not always kind. My parents taught me at a very young age to have a "thick skin." I learned not to worry too much about rude or ignorant people making comments or name calling. They taught me that what people call you doesn't change who you are. I've also learned over the years, that most rude comments come from a place of ignorance rather than a place of meanness.

New Member Simon shared that he is a motivational speaker, author, and advocate. He enjoys Gandhi's words about being the change you wish to see in the world, and chooses to live his life in that way, participating in this group to make a difference.

New Member Dave started with a couple mentors, to include his parents, and a couple of colleagues in social work who encouraged his advocacy. He is a paraeducator in Clark County, has a bachelor's degree in social work, is an author who encourages folks to overcome obstacles in life, and a certified ADA planner.

New Member Leslie shared that one of their mentors is their grandma who taught them acceptance and to be the person who people can count on. They are a special needs advocate at the Port Gamble Tribe. They have a son. They have two brothers with disabilities who taught them advocacy and shaped their career.

New Member Kristina shared in the chat that their mentor was a former colleague at Puget Sound Transit who taught them advocacy and how to live with grace.

New Member Autumn shared that a colleague reminded them to stop, pause, and evaluate your approach, consider your role, and what you are being asked to do. She appreciates that and still uses it today. Sometimes it makes you take a different direction. They work as an ADA Coordinator for the City of Seattle. On Saturdays, they coach youth flag football. It is a great group, and it is rewarding.

New Member Steve shared that Warren is their mentor at NWAFF (not only on GCDE). They make loans for assistive technology together there. He has served as co-chair of the Seattle Disability Commission, serves on the board in Kirkland, and at the Disability Empowerment Center. He has 2 grandchildren. He just returned from a safari in Kenya and will share a [link to some photos](#) in the chat. There is a company that does accessible safaris.

Associate Member Bek from [WASILC](#) shared that an elder in Alaska shared that it is not just the outcome, we care about each other along the way. They are the new Executive Director for the State Independent Living Council. They have a background in disability studies and have a few invisible disabilities. They are also a caretaker and family member of people with disabilities. They love technical accessibility and event accessibility.

Associate Member Allison shared that she has learned a lot from various people throughout their life. They work for the ADA Coordinator team at [DOT](#).

Associate Member Lucy from the [SOS](#) office shared that one of their mentors was in college after taking a break to work for a bit. Wherever you go, if you don't feel like you fit in, create a space was their advice. You may be able to invite others into it. They have been trying to do that throughout their career and ensure people feel like they belong.

All other "seasoned" members and staff shared as well. [Emily has documented their responses](#).

We are a bit ahead of schedule. We can even learn from those who aren't trying to teach us, such as about perseverance and picking our battles, per Damiana.

Elizabeth gave a few updates about what she is working on. She was out on FMLA at the end of the session and is just getting back to things. One project is the rewrite of [EO 13-02](#) about employing people with disabilities in state govt. It is being reviewed by the policy office, who have returned it with some helpful questions and feedback. It establishes the Disability Advisory Committee, the role of which is to ensure that there is a voice for PWD within the equity work in state govt. One of their recommendations was to add a timeline, milestones, and deadline to assess effectiveness. We have had this EO since 2013, and was missing some accountability pieces, and needed to be updated to reflect the current equity efforts.

The other thing is the Office of Equity's [Universal Access and Belonging](#) Plan. The office was established a couple years ago. GCDE was part of the steering committee, and has continued to partner closely with them. They are tasked with creating a statewide plan to ensure that people can get what they need to be able to do their work, including PWD. They have asked us and a few others to help them. Elizabeth will be ensuring that the work gets moved forward soon.

Announcements from Damiana included that at our last Coordinating Committee (executive team) meeting, we **voted to make the LWG an official subcommittee of GCDE**. It may need a new name. This is exciting. The work has been meaningful to GCDE and beyond, and we thought that now was the time to move forward with this.

We are also working on **drafting a logo**. If you have **ideas**, or want to **participate**, please share. We are wanting to increase our name and visual recognition. This work will happen in June.

11:05 a.m. **Break** (10 minutes) We can come back at 11:10. We can loop back to introductions if needed before Marsha's presentation.

Damiana welcomed folks back at 11:10. She asked new member Ivy Anne to do an introduction. Ivy Anne shared that they are a mental health therapist at Seattle Children's Hospital as well as privately, specializing in anxiety, depression, intellectual disabilities, and trauma. They are excited to be here and love to learn. One thing that a current mentor has taught them is how important it is to separate work from life. It can be challenging. We can only support others as much as we support ourselves. They try to practice this. We can all benefit from this. Hearing no one else, moving on to our next presentation.

11:15 a.m. **Ableist Language and Why It Matters** – Marsha Cutting, GCDE Member (45 minutes)

Marsha conducted a poll with the following questions as a temperature check, because it is not the first time she's talked about this, and she has spent time trying to convince people it is important – when really they mostly already knew that and wanted to know how to deal with it. Thank you for your participation, it is good to have a sense of where people are. Hopefully this can be a conversation. Please let us know if you want to contribute. If someone can help notify of hands raised, it would be great, just in case. Elaine will help.

1) Are you concerned about Ableist Language?

—No, we have more important things to worry about. (1/22 5%)

—Yes, it's important. (21/22 yes – 95%)

2) Are you clear about what language is ableist?

—yes (13/22 – 59%)

—no (9/22 – 41%)

3) Are you concerned about ableist language but finding it hard to stop using it?

—yes (12/22 – 55%)

—no (10/22 – 45%)

Marsha won't spend much time on why this is important, since most of us are on the same page, but briefly from another point of view for folks – [Rachel Cohen-Rottenberg says](#) that it promotes negative and disempowering views about PWD that wind their ways into most other

things, and that the culture will therefore not see that group as fully entitled to things as those from other groups.

There are a variety of definitions for ableist language. A straightforward one is any language that takes a term that actually applies to PWD, or a slang term, and uses it as an insult. For example, if you disagree with a politician, you will say 'oh he's crazy, he's insane, he's a moron, etc.' Those terms have historically been used for people with disabilities (pejoratively). So, it contributes to that negative image of PWD. It's hard to overestimate how ingrained into our language these are. They can be automatic.

Marsha asked for questions or comments. [Emily has documented them.](#)

Marsha thanked everyone for their comments, questions, and participation. Damiana thanked Marsha for leading.

12:00 p.m. **Just Imagine** – Kevin Frankeberger, GCDE Member (15 minutes)

Kevin to share a cross-disability topic. He thanked Damiana for having him. His material is from [Carl Jarvis and his research.](#)

Kevin asked us all to just imagine this. That we have our feet in the shoes of the people that we serve. If we imagine this, we can understand people's frustrations. Kevin asked if people had any questions before lunch. Damiana said this resonated with her, and that often we don't think about things that don't directly impact us. This week was [global accessibility awareness day.](#) Experiences even among groups can be so individualized.

Amy appreciated that for a lot of reasons. It is hard to put yourself in the place of someone else who has a difference of experience. Once you can and develop that empathy, it makes a huge difference. She appreciates the message, reminder, and timeliness. Our reality is not anyone else's, but we all come together and influence each other.

Patti said that people may have been digesting. It painted such a picture of what life is like for others. You can apply it to a number of scenarios. It can be an opportunity to check your privilege. Sometimes you still aren't aware until it happens to you. It is a very poignant message that Kevin wanted to pass along. It is a lot to absorb and take in. Thank you for sharing. Kevin is glad to be here.

Lucy was processing, too. It made her realize that it hit home. As a child of immigrants, the language barrier they felt was described perfectly. They also have a disability, so she can understand the scenario and complexity that it has in all aspects of life. Kevin has a lot of experiences to back that up as well. Even access to education can be impacted, for example.

Damiana thanked Kevin for the presentation. Many of our members are willing to share their different perspectives. We collectively represent and advocate for so many different disabilities. It's important that we understand both where we are coming from, as well as others. It's so important to hear other's experiences.

12:15 p.m. **Lunch break** (30 minutes)

12:45 p.m. **Youth Leadership Forum** – Nathan Hoston, GCDE Member (10 minutes)

Nathan explained that YLF is a weeklong overnight conference for students with disabilities who want to be or are leaders in their schools or communities, and includes classes on finance, building leadership skills, a college tour, field day, and other social activities. These are rare programs, especially for students with disabilities in his view, that are designed to build leaders. YLF is happening on July 30-August 5, 2023. High School Juniors or Seniors or those receiving transition services from ages 16-21 are eligible to apply to attend. 3 asks, things to think about, or volunteer opportunities. First is sending out the application to your networks who would be eligible or interested. The [link](#) is in your meeting packets. The event is free to the students with support from DVR and others.

The next request is for volunteers. If this sounds interesting, please reach out to Nathan, Kristin, or Elaine and they can get you more information.

The last request is for SWAG (or “Stuff We All Get”). Students get to be recognized with donations from different organizations of small, cool items, that the students can enjoy (such as branded mugs, pens, lanyards etc.) If you know of anyone interested in donating, please let us know, and we can coordinate. Are there any questions?

Amy wondered if the event is the only time you need volunteers, or for example, could you put together swag bags or follow up with people who agreed to donate, etc.

All of the above, says Nathan, at the event, putting SWAG bags together, revising the curriculum, etc. We can work together to find something that fits your schedule and capacity. There is always something folks can help with.

Damiana wondered the application deadline. It is coming up. Elaine confirmed that it is May 31, but may be extended. We can be pretty flexible and open to receiving more apps. One challenge that we faced last summer, and may face again this year, is not getting enough students. So, we will do whatever we can to get students to participate in this extraordinary event. We can introduce the members of the subcommittee if helpful. Nathan is Vice Chair, Kristin is Chair. Nathan asked folks to raise their hands or let us know if they participate in YLF. Autumn, Kevin, and Marsha, all raised their hands. We have a list. Elaine mentioned the other volunteers, Christa, Andy, Simon, and Lucas. Let us know if you have any questions or need any more information, it is a life changing experience for everyone involved.

Damiana wondered if the [video](#) from last year is available. It is not audio described yet, but it does have captions. They are working on it. Hearing no other questions, moving to Awards.

12:55 p.m. **Awards Subcommittee** – Ryan Bondroff, GCDE Staff (10 minutes)

Ryan filling in for Matt and Yvonne. He shared that he is staff to the committee. The chairs are not able to be here today. Awards is an annual event in the Fall to celebrate employers. This

year will be the 31st annual event. It will be on October 6, 2023. It will be held at the Wenatchee Conference Center this year, outside of Western WA. We encourage employers to nominate themselves for hiring workers with disabilities. There are a variety of categories. Categories include: Small, medium, large private, non-profit, direct support professional, Youth, Toby Olson Award, and Governor's Trophy. Individuals are recognized for systems change work, advocacy on legal protections, etc. as well. Each has specific criteria. We encourage people to look at the criteria and determine which category they'd like to nominate for. Nominations are currently open until July 28th. The deadline may be extended slightly depending on the number of nominations received. There are various workgroups tasked on different activities, such as the judging panelists, etc. All nominees and employers are invited to attend the event. Traditionally it is a luncheon. The Award recipients are announced during the luncheon. That is the report. Amy noted we have been recovering from the change due to virtual and then back to in-person last year due to COVID. We have received a lot of sponsorship (\$23k) this year, and also worked hard to adjust our nomination packet since last year, so we are off to a good start thanks to Ryan and the amazing work of the subcommittee team. Anyone present on the subcommittee please raise your hand. Amy, Kevin, Lucas, Clarence, and Cullynn chimed in. No one was forgotten, just perhaps not here. Daniel Ledgett, for example. Ryan wondered if we have any new members. Damiana has not appointed anyone yet. If you are interested, we'd welcome you. Ryan can forward the [nomination information](#) to folks and asked that they please share it with their networks to solicit nominees as much as possible.

1:05 p.m. **Benefits and Their Effect on Employment Outcomes for People with Disabilities** (45 minutes) People are likely aware of this concern. Elizabeth will facilitate.

Speakers: Kirk Larson, Social Security Administration Region 10 – (KL) Been with SSA for about 30 years in various roles, taken claims, approved claims, disability branch, in CA and WA. Currently represents public affairs in WA. Often does presentations like this to help people understand benefits.

Michael Mackillop, Washington State Department of Services for the Blind – (MM) Executive Director. Video is not working, described himself. Role today is more high level than feet on the ground, will be relying on Cassie for the daily experience.

Cassie Tafoya, Washington State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation – (CT) Certified benefits planner. Meets with customers daily to discuss how working will impact all of their various benefits.

Thank you for your time, if panelists could turn their cameras on that would help. Please introduce yourself and your role before we get into the discussion questions (above). Perhaps our members will have some questions as well. [Emily has documented the discussion.](#)

Thank you panelists for starting this conversation and talking about benefits and the impact on work. You are welcome to stay and join us at any time. Kirk wondered if we could explore more

about Medicare, Medicaid, what's covered and not, and how they interact. His counterpart in that area for Medicare can get in touch if desired. Thanks for your time on this big topic.

2 p.m. Break (10 minutes) *Starting on time per Pat (former chair's) example.*

(2pm presentation from Office of Equity dropped out at the last minute)

Elizabeth will share information on what they were planning to speak about briefly. They sent their regrets, they had to attend to some things going on in their office. The OOE is currently recruiting for their [Community Advisory Board](#). When the taskforce first convened, this was stipulated as a part of the work, so that it was always driven by the needs of the community, and those most likely to be harmed if equity is not achieved in our work and services. That is what they had come to talk to us about. It is important for that committee to have PWD in the group. It is easy for equity work to get siloed, for example working on anti-racism work in one corner, and anti-ableism in another. Its important to have representation from a number of different perspectives and lived experiences of our community. 1 lived experience isn't enough to capture the diversity that impacts our lives. Elizabeth will share the flyer. Even though the OOE couldn't be here, Elizabeth wanted to share this important opportunity. If anyone is interested in participating in the opportunity, or wants to pass it on, please do so. We did not want to wait until the next GM meeting to share. That is all we have to share on that. Do we have a schedule or expectation of participation? That is not known yet, but typically has been very flexible, and worked with the group to drive that. It may be on the flyer which we will share. They are committed to this work and ensuring that people have the tools to participate well, but they need our input to do that. There are stipends available per statue.

2: 15 Legislative Session Wrap Up – Amy Cloud (AC) and Elizabeth Gordon (EG), GCDE
Legislative Workgroup (30 minutes) Thank you for the decision to make the workgroup a subcommittee. Part of the work of making change happen in our community is through legislation. We prioritized the bills that we felt we could realistically, meaningfully participate in making a difference on, not just Elizabeth and Kristin - but all of us. Elizabeth will share our [top priorities](#) shortly. We also wanted to make ourselves better advocates. Even today, we saw how everyone has their own story, and power through their lived experiences to make a difference by sharing. We had a 3-part training on legislative advocacy. We have some folks who are seasoned at this, and some who did not yet have the experience prior to this past session.

Members are Kristin, Amy, (leads), Patti, Lucas, Clarence, Cullyn, Kevin, Damiana, Christa, Nathan, Steve, Megan, and Warren. Anyone with an interest is welcome, you don't necessarily need to join, you can let us know about a bill you are following or want more information about advocacy.

Any questions or input? Ryan asked for clarification on the last bill. There are 267 bills on the larger list. We put bills specific to PWD as tier 1. If it just had an impact, it was tier 2. We can share that out if desired. We do have some incredible longstanding advocates, as well as some great new strong voices in this arena, particularly for PWD. Rep. Orwall from Kent does a lot with mental and behavioral health. We

have to keep showing up and talking about our diversity of needs. 1 person with disabilities is not every person with disabilities. We all have different experiences. Last time there was a bill on [drivers licenses and disabilities](#) (voluntary designation). That was last session, and it did pass. People can self-identify if they are deaf, deafblind, or have a developmental disability. A workgroup met to talk about the design and system for that. Elizabeth will look, it might be implemented this July, she will check. We have to keep in mind that perhaps we can be in person at the Capitol campus in the future, so that would take some more training, coordination perhaps, and deference to Elizabeth. Kevin looks forward to getting back to normal and supporting Elizabeth on that. Has Elizabeth heard more on that? They did not decide officially on that until close to the beginning of session this time. She hopes they continue because some people are able to testify that way who may not be able to otherwise. We should keep fighting for that. Elizabeth and others will do so. She doesn't know about next session yet. Elizabeth isn't sure if there is additional work involved in that, or if there is a barrier to that.

That concludes the report.

2:45 p.m. Wrap Up and Next Steps - Damiana Harper, GCDE Chair (15 minutes)

Damiana is with Elizabeth about the remote testimony. She hopes that they understand the value of that now that they know it is possible. Down to the last few minutes, Damiana doesn't have any action steps. Emily will compile and share out some information in the minutes that was referenced today but wasn't in the packet (from Marsha, Kirk, and the advisory board for example). The nomination packet was in the packet. YLF as well. We had a request for a hard copy from Kevin (editor's note: staff will work together to get that to Kevin shortly). Damiana has been meeting with new members and has made most subcommittee appointments. She has been encouraging folks to attend as many meetings as possible. There are a few things you can't do if you're not a member, such as voting, but it's a great way to understand the work of GCDE. Everyone is encouraged to do so. The calendar lists all meetings. It is a great learning opportunity to pitch in where you can. We do a lot of work outside of these meetings, and it's hard to do with only a few hands. Is there an annual opportunity or elsewhere to change our subcommittee assignments? That is a great question, and is something that Damiana has talked about with new members. It can be a bit scary to decide where you want to focus your efforts with only a short time on the committee. Appointments are generally ongoing, but there is a lot of value in fresh perspectives, and learning about all of our different work. There isn't a formal process for that, but if you are interested, please reach out to Damiana and she will be happy to discuss it and we can figure out where your talents, interest, and support may be needed. Do we have a date on the logo work? During Coordinating Committee, Cully expressed interest in leading that project, but prosed that we hold off until June during school break. That's the timeframe we're looking at for getting started. It is not a huge rush. See top of these notes for action items otherwise.

3:00 p.m. Meeting adjourned. Have a great weekend and stay cool.

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