



Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment
Coordinating Committee Meeting
September 19, 2025, 10:00am-12:00pm

Minutes

10:00am: Welcome, call to order, roll call, housekeeping – Yvonne Bussler-White, GCDE Chair

Meeting called to order by presiding Chair Yvonne Bussler-White at 10:02am. Welcome, everyone. Standard housekeeping rules reviewed.

Members present: Yvonne Bussler-White, Cullynn Foxlee, Nancy Zellers, Amy Cloud, Patti Dailey-Shives, Steve Lewis, Kristin DiBiase, Marsha Cutting (quorum met)

Members absent: Dave Carl, Steven McCray

Staff present: Emily Spears, Elizabeth Gordon, Elaine Stefanowicz

One addition to the agenda: Data privacy. Elizabeth shared that the Office of Equity is considering a data set across agencies, and the types of data that should be collected, i.e., around disability (such as self-identification and type of disability). This information could be used for assessing the services people with disabilities receive, and any systems issues. Given the current climate around Federal data collection, she asked for thoughts from the group, and whether this is something to present at GM. Folks were generally concerned with data visibility, though it could ensure representation. They suggested disaggregating data and not accumulating it or attaching it, and ensuring general boundaries. We will discuss further for GM.

2: Leadership/succession planning discussion – all/Cullynn Foxlee/Elizabeth Gordon

Items to discuss: Cullynn has notes that they will share and we can continue the discussion as needed.

- **# of openings:** Anticipating 9 openings. Folks leaving for a variety of reasons (2 terms ending, geographic changes, job commitments, right fit, unfilled positions).
 - **Age representation** may play a factor around turnover for folks balancing being early in career trajectory vs. bandwidth. This is an important voice to have represented on GCDE.
 - **CONSIDERATION:** We may need to consider recruiting/marketing changes, ongoing restructuring to support engagement/approaches as needed, and overall volunteerism trends.
 - **CONSIDERATION:** Could shorter (1-year) terms, projects, feedback opportunities, or task forces – subset of the membership subcommittee (lower commitments) help as a new outreach/networking (similar to ACAC survey) opportunity (esp. for the younger demographic)?
 - **What about a junior council?** Distinguish between future and current members.

- **ACTION:** Current folks considering leaving are encouraged to reach out to Elizabeth/Yvonne for an open discussion re: concerns, adjustments, and participation barriers influencing their decision if needed.
- **Leadership opportunities:** Members leaving were shared in chat. Who can step up in their place? Membership recruitment is in progress. **Note:** we are still in a freeze with no fundraising arm, though allowable, but involved (various considerations on that, govt. agencies not in position to donate, private corps may not donate to govt, may not be eligible for grants except for specific projects, need to consider optics/conflicts of interest). It can be disheartening when an event is created and there is low participation. It's important to be transparent on this. Consider timing of events.
 - **Accessible Communities:** Steve is staying, Cullynn considering vice-chair position.
 - **Employment workgroup:** Yvonne is staying (2026), Steven reconsidering vice-chair role.
 - **Youth Empowerment:** All current leadership is staying (Kristin, Autumn, and Lucas).
 - **Membership:** Dave is staying, the subcommittee does not typically have a vice-chair.
 - **Legislative:** Current leadership (Patti, Nancy) are staying.
 - **Community Outreach:** Marsha is leaving (term). Unsure who at this time can step up, perhaps Lyn Sowdon (newer member). Dave, Patti, and Steven all chair or vice-chair other subcommittees. Daniel is also leaving.
 - **CONSIDERATION:** Separate out grant funding portion (conflicts of interest) and combine AC and Community Outreach.

3: Mentorship update – mentors/Yvonne Bussler-White

Nancy's mentorship experience with Jaida as a mentor was positive overall, grew as people (sadly, not reapplying).

Amy had good conversations with Napal, but didn't hear more after their initial meetings. Though she answered her initial questions, she feels remiss in not reaching out more proactively for any additional needs.

4: Whiteboard training – Cullynn: This discussion was tabled until the next meeting due time constraints.

5: Visitor procedures – Elizabeth

Elizabeth quickly reviewed the visitor procedures. Anyone can come to our meetings, without telling us their name, or anything about themselves. They won't be allowed to chat, rename themselves, unmute, or start video. Chairs should not engage them. Members and guests have different participation standards. For Community Outreach, community members may need to be invited. We need to balance security and compliance with OPMA. Zoom bombing are on the rise. Staff can alert chairs of guests.

6: Elevator pitch for GCDE – staff/all: This discussion was tabled due to time constraints; however, Yvonne has started a draft (below).

Mission

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment provides state level advocacy and leadership with the disability community to obtain equity in economic opportunity and community inclusion.

Vision

An equitable Washington where people with disabilities experience full inclusion, full participation and economic vibrancy.

What we do

We promote equality, opportunity, independence and full participation in life for people with disabilities. Our members represent a wide range of constituent groups, geographical perspectives, ethnic origins and cultural heritage. Together, we:

- Advise the governor, legislature and state agencies on policies that affect people with disabilities.
- Monitor legislation to assure equal opportunity and access for employment, education, healthcare and public services.
- Promote understanding of the needs and potential of people with disabilities, offering information and awareness training to the public.
- Recognize employers who demonstrate leadership in employing people with disabilities.
- Provide training and technical assistance to the business community to promote employment opportunities and awareness of disability issues.
- Conduct our activities in barrier-free environments and use appropriate auxiliary aids and services to ensure effective communication.

Examples:

GCDE Elevator Pitch (60-90 seconds):

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment (GCDE) serves as a state-level advocate and leader for disability equity in Washington. Our mission is to promote equal opportunity, economic independence, and full community inclusion for people with disabilities.

We advise the Governor, Legislature, and state agencies on policies impacting the disability community, monitor legislation for equity in employment, education, and healthcare, and provide technical assistance and training to businesses. Our committee members reflect the diversity of our state, culturally, geographically, and experientially, ensuring we center real voices in everything we do.

At its core, GCDE envisions a truly equitable Washington, one where people with disabilities experience full inclusion, full participation, and economic vibrancy. Whether it's recognizing inclusive employers, training communities, or shaping policy, GCDE is driving forward a more accessible and inclusive future for all.

Short Version (30-45 seconds)

GCDE, the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues & Employment, is Washington's statewide advocate for disability equity. We advise government, support businesses, and educate communities to ensure people with disabilities can fully participate in society and the economy. Our vision is simple but powerful: an equitable Washington where people with disabilities are fully included and economically empowered.

7: Break – all: Be back at 11:26.

8: Planning for Oct. GM meeting – all. The next meeting is from 10am-3:00pm on Friday, October 31st.

Suggested topics included:

- Data collection conversation.
- Look ahead for leg. priorities.
- Revisit grant writing discussion. (hold)
- Address happenings at national level (diverse membership) – separate listening session on impacts to the disability community. (hold)
- Beyond the Book author - fee (Marsha to send).
- Report out from Kristin on supreme court disability justice task force symposium.
- Nominations for MAL.
- Possible budget presentation – Medicaid/SNAP changes (AG).
- Recognizing folks completing their terms (Marsha/Daniel).
- EO 24-05 update.

Please reach out to Elizabeth or Yvonne with any other ideas.

9: Overall recap, vision and next steps – Yvonne Bussler-White, GCDE Chair

Yvonne and Cullynn will send their notes on GM topics and succession planning, and we will get the GM meeting agenda put together. Please reach out to Yvonne or Elizabeth with any questions. Thank you for the space.

12:00: Adjourn.

Next Coordinating Committee meeting will be from 10am-12 noon on Friday, November 21, 2025.