



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT  
*Employment Security Department ■ P.O. Box 9046 ■ MS: 6000 ■ Olympia, Washington ■ 98507-9046*  
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## **Youth Empowerment Program Minutes**

Friday, December 5, 2025

10:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Attendees: Kristin DiBiase, Chair; Lucas Doelman, Co-Vice Chair; Autumn Harris, Co-Vice Chair; Jaida Barrows, Lyn Snowdon, Napal Tesfai, and Nancy Zellers.  
Staff: Elizabeth Gordon and Elaine Stefanowicz

1. Approve agenda and minutes. Minutes: Lucas made a motion to approve the minutes, and Lyn seconded the motion. None opposed. Minutes approved as written. Agenda: Lyn made a motion to approve the minutes, and Lucas seconded the motion. None opposed. Minutes approved as written.
2. Discussion of future Youth Empowerment event.
  - Do we want to consider a junior GCDE council?
  - Suggested Purpose: to give youth with disabilities a voice in legislation
  - We heard from the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) and the LGBTQ Commission. What did we like or didn't like? What were the takeaways?
  - Who do we want to partner with? The GCDE Legislative Subcommittee? Others?
  - How will we do outreach to youth? ESD communications office can help with press releases but how else can we get the word out?
  - Possibly 2-3 meeting per year?
3. These ideas were suggested for the Junior GCDE Council:
  - Provide legislative training
  - How are bills passed

- Mock testimonies

**Other Comments/Ideas:**

- Would there be an application?
- Train youth in legislative process.
- Youth learn policy process.
- Civic education training.
- Good practice for young people to get experience in putting together an application and interview experience.
- Have we considered asking the youth? It will create a space where the youth have their voices/perspectives being valued AND uplifted. By giving the youth real influence and opportunities to lead, the council can promote dignity, inclusion, and a culture where their experience guides meaningful change (this is where we can easily teach/educate them about GCDE processes).
- Applications would increase the quality of applicants.
- Can we get press releases from the Governor's office?
- If we do an application, we should list a few topics like bill analysis, committee meetings etc., and get their interest around the topics.
- Make applications accessible to all. I.E: some youth might feel like they are not qualified but they are more than enough. We should consider varying application formats (not just limited to forms). So, if we had an official press release, it might intimidate some youth. Video or phone applications. If they need support with an application. Some people aren't able to fill out an application.
- Survey: ask what folks with disabilities, what the young people are wanting to advocate for? The issues or areas? What do you want to see change?

- Goal: gather voices of people with disabilities. Focus on legislation and making sure we have a youth voice at the table.
  - Can we have a focus group? Advertise for youth with disabilities to be on a focus group.
  - Sunshine Cheng's (formerly with Disability Rights Washington) did an advocacy presentation that had a Star Wars theme.
  - Invite (former GCDE member) Nathan Hoston to a planning meeting.
  - Social media is best way to advertise to youth. TikTok video on Canva.
  - *“Learning about the legislative process/advocating empowered me to make the changes I wanted to see.”*
  - It is good to focus the application on learning how to advocate for yourself and your needs, which might be less intimidating to youth.
3. Action items: Next meeting, talk about what would be we want focus group to look like. Look for sources to get students for focus group (not previous delegates since they are used to the previous YLF format). What do students with disabilities want?

**Next Meeting: January 2026 Meeting TBD**