



Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE)

Community Outreach Subcommittee Team | August 13, 2024, | 4:00-5:00 pm

Minutes

1: Welcome to the Community Outreach meeting – Marsha

Meeting called to order by Marsha at 4:02 pm. Welcome all.

2: Roll Call & intros – Marsha

Present: Emily Heike, Elaine Stefanowicz, Elizabeth Gordon, Staff

Members: Steven McCray (welcome), Susan Matt, Marsha Cutting (Chair), Matt Nash, Ivyanne Van Der Peet, Damiana Harper (GCDE Chair), Dave Carl

Quorum: 5

3: Housekeeping rules – Marsha

Housekeeping items: State your name, speak slowly and 1 at a time, raise your hand.

4: Site selection & partners for the 2025 event (Spokane) – Marsha

Decision from last meeting to hold an event in Spokane next March in partnership with the locals recapped – to help with revitalizing the ACAC and connecting with other PWD (after discussion with Steven M).

a. Items needed from scouting team (restaurant/hotel/catering/transportation) – Marsha

Local scouting team will need to find an accessible restaurant to debrief, and a hotel for the evening, breakfast catering, and research on transportation options for those coming from the west side. Steven and Damiana can be the point people on this if possible. We are hoping to use the Commissioners or Council Chambers for the events – Steven is familiar with 2 of the Commissioner's (Amber Waldorf and Chris Jordan) personally and will reach out to them for Thursday evening/Friday morning conflicts in March. He has already let them know about the event via email but hasn't heard back. He is not as familiar with the other 3 Commissioners. We may need to pick a date to assist – we are looking at March. Meetings are Tuesdays at 2pm (likely not a good option). Typically we have held events on Thursday evenings and Friday mornings. It may be moveable. The reasoning was that people may be more available on Friday mornings. There are 4 weeks in March (6th, 13th, 21st, and 28th). Marsha is checking the calendar and is not seeing any holidays. She asked for other conflicts. Steven is not available on the 19th. End of March may run into Spring Break (actually April 7-11), but Easter isn't until 4/20, it still may be worth looking into (we could pick tentative dates to research in the community). Spring

Breaks may not change. The lilac festival is in May. The [Oxford Suites](#) is accessible in downtown and serves dinner and breakfast (we'd have to look into the hours). We will check the relative location (it may be 1-1.5 miles from the County Commissioner's office on West Broadway near the county courthouse if near the other hotels, it's 1.75 miles which is a bit far). Damiana will check other community events – city council and school board meetings. The City Council chambers are nearer down town, but has fixed seating, they do have other meeting rooms in the building (OK for Town Hall, not as much for breakfast, similar for the Commissioner's). There aren't any hotels near to the courthouse (they are across the bridge and the park – Davenport, Howard Johnson, and Oxford are all clustered there 1+ miles away). We might need to look at how people will get there (flights likely, trains depending on schedule, car etc.). Susan wants to fly, Elaine wants to drive, as does Matt (may be dependent on vehicles). Dave was thinking about the train but may fly depending on schedules (it may go from his area – would have to check). We may need a van for transport locally. Ivy can be flexible. Staff doesn't have wheelchair accessible vehicles aside from Elaine – she may be able to fit another chair but doesn't have tie downs, but Ivy volunteered to drive, if we rent one. Emily can be flexible also. We will need to revisit this. What about catering (the restaurant may need to wait until after we pick a hotel). Steven will research this – particularly PWD owned. We may have to just go with the Oxford if there isn't anything closer and we've been there (the Davenport might be, but not much). Susan wondered about an accessible hotel shuttle for downtown (Elaine is looking at their site and restaurant hours til 9:30 to debrief also). The Town Hall is usually 5:30-7:30. We might be able to move elsewhere if needed – we could let them know in advance. Folks will report back next time. They also have conference rooms (it may depend on size – it is 1365 sq. ft.) and catering at the hotel. More info was provided in chat – it may be too small and we'd have to look into how to reserve it. We may need to use the county building for both and find catering. The [Spokane Public library](#) is .5 miles from the Oxford, has free large conference rooms, and was just renovated with AV and access setup and they allow food (but hours might be an issue). Damiana will look into it. Steven was able to stay after hours (open til 7) for another event as long as there was a responsible party to put in the alarm code before leaving (for the breakfast). Marsha likes the idea of having the Town Hall at the chambers. It seemed to increase buy in from the county. We may not want to decide yet until further research is done. The library doesn't open until 10 on Friday so they'd have to let us in early. That's all on this topic for now. We do need to consider transport for attending also. The [Community Shuttle](#) is open to everyone. It runs from about 5:30am to 11:30pm. Paratransit is 6am-10pm. The buses go to the downtown plaza (Steven shared his screen with the relative location). There are elevators in the county building. The library and city council are near the plaza. The Grand Hotel is nearby and takes state rates (it also has restaurants). The city council might be better then – things would be closer. There are indoor pathways throughout. Steven can reach out to the city council and mayor for help with facilitating. Damiana feels it is also safer there at night since police and patrols are close. There is a large homeless population. The train station is a bit farther out. We may be able to work with public transit for times or routes. Steven will ask about a dedicated paratransit van. Marsha appreciates the input, we will pick it up in a month. Thank you to everyone. Meeting adjourned 5:02.

b. Site selection for 2026 event (Benton/Franklin) – Marsha

Decision from last meeting to target Benton/Franklin counties for an event in 2026 recapped – combining ACAC's – Benton isn't active (per Matt N). They have 2 sets of city council and county commissioners (tri-cities area). The biggest city is either Kennewick or Richland. Marsha will try to share her screen. They are both in Benton Co. Pasco is in Franklin. The outlying areas are small and are not

often serviced by transportation or paratransit which is a consideration. The county offices are in Kennewick and Pasco across the river from each other and may be the likely location (Matt may be able to think on this further and inquire with the 2 commissioner's chambers – March 2026 Thurs/Fri night). The area is spread out. Matt doesn't know many PWD locally (they tend to be quiet, hence the ACAC issues). It could be due to transportation also. Transit is OK in the bigger areas compared to the outlying areas. It is the same transit company in both counties.

5: Compiling a list of disability organizations with conventions we could attend – Marsha/Patti/Dave
Marsha and Patti recapped the work they have done on this task since the last team meeting in July. Patti could not be present.

6: Reaching out to other GCDE members who might be able to attend conventions with us – Marsha
Marsha shared that she will send an email asking members for ideas to participate in based on location.

7: Next Meeting date, time, and cadence to be decided – all – currently 2nd Tuesdays at 4pm monthly per poll until closer to the event. [*Next meeting date tentatively scheduled for 9/10 at 4pm*].

8: ACTION ITEMS:

- A. Steven and Damiana are local to Spokane and will assist as part of the scouting team for the March 2025 event. Steven will reach out to the City Council/Mayor (who has fixed seating for the Town Hall and other meeting rooms for the Leadership Breakfast along with walking paths and police patrols) for Thursday evening/Friday morning conflicts in March. Damiana will check for City Council and School Board conflicts.
- B. More research will need to be done on the Oxford Suites as a possible hotel/restaurant location (we may be able to let the hotel know in advance about our late arrival to the restaurant or relocate elsewhere after it closes). The Grand Hotel may also be an option – close by and takes state rates and has restaurants.
- C. Steven will research catering options for the morning breakfast (particularly PWD owned ones).
- D. The County Commissioners chambers to increase buy in (has elevators), public library, or Oxford Suites may be backup locations for one of the meetings if needed (the hotel also has conference rooms and catering). The library is close to the hotel and has free conference rooms and AV setup with flexible hours as long as someone can lock up (allows food – Damiana can double check).
- E. More research will need to be done into local transportation options for getting around town depending on how folks are getting to Spokane (i.e., flight, train – farther out and subject to schedule, car). For example, we may need an accessible vehicle to get folks around town (Ivy does not have one but can drive if rented). There may be a possibility of a hotel shuttle (would have to be accessible) or working with the local transit to adjust routes/hours. Steven will ask about a dedicated paratransit van.
- F. Matt will inquire with the Benton and Franklin County commissioner's chambers in Kennewick and Pasco about availability on Thursdays/Fridays in March 2026.
- G. Marsha will email members about ideas for conventions to participate in at their locations (Patti was not present to report on the list of disability organizations).
- H. Emily will schedule the next meeting for 9/10 at 4pm along with a leadership prep meeting beforehand.