

CO Annual Planning Meeting

February 17, 2023, 2-5pm

Minutes

Welcome – Emily joined correct link at 2:05, apologies

Roll call – Emily, Ryan, interpreter Laurie, Marsha, Amy, Interpreter Abel, Damiana, Matt, Nathan, Patti, Warren, Daniel

Housekeeping –state your name, wait to be called on – practice stating name before speaking (Amy voicing a comment in agreement in the chat)

Recap of agenda in case folks did not see, there are two main topics, we will start with the primary one, condensed as questions 1) rethinking outreach structure so as not to contradict the spirit of Nothing About Us Without Us while still addressing immediate concerns and also empowering the people with disabilities to do so themselves (recognition that we may not be able to go back to in-person); and 2) list of disability organizations

Noted about 10-minute break at 3:30pm (Ryan to keep time)

PRE-DISCUSSION

Recap of context for historical structure (i.e., leaders being change agents in communities, hence the current structure with the LAP - correct), but this can allow for the needs of people with disabilities being overlooked in not being present and sharing their lived experiences

Question as to why the meetings are separated (“separate but equal” vs all at the same table – with large group and smaller groups, persons with disabilities in room too, present to hear commitments from leaders) – it could be hard to get into the level of detail we want in a larger group, harder to focus, the format is not necessarily transferrable in terms of allowing for focused discussions, there are reasons for the current structure. Some concurred with this idea, but there could be some difficulties in the various timings for which community members and leaders can participate, this is something to consider.

Background of Outreach evolution: Have been going on a long time, have changed over the years, originally very transportation focused and more of a listening session without the leadership action planning piece, more just information gathering the next day. After that, there was still the two-part format,

but in a different format than it is now. The current format occurred a number of years ago and has been in place since.

Its hard to come up with one structure that fits everything we're trying to do, depends on location as well, larger communities may lend themselves to Zoom, if it is more rural, then perhaps in-person has a higher value, but participation can also depend on differing communities and having key players at the table, many factors exist in different communities which are hard to generalize about*

Not necessarily currently a situation where people are deciding things without input from the disability community, that is the purpose of the Town Hall to bring forward those items, and GCDE members help facilitate that, it would still be ideal to have people with disabilities in the leadership meetings, but it is hard to know how to select those folks, people don't always have cross-disability knowledge

Challenged to step back, have a serious brainstorm session, maybe we do go back to the current structure with some tweaks, but we should still consider rethinking as well, noting that it's a strange feeling to have an outreach in your own community – feels as though folks are coming in from outside without knowing much about the community, and thus not always feeling heard (similar feelings expressed from others too)

Think about outreach in the broadest possible terms before getting into specifics, Damiana and Laurie started thinking about disability groups, whose names we have, what could we do if we can define community differently (i.e., the whole disability community, sectors of it, etc.), maybe we could address more needs this way

CO mission statement – in GCDE operations manual

RETHINKING OUTREACH – IDEAS:

- **Conduct advocacy workshops** to increase self-advocacy
- **Try to get back to in-person connections** if possible somehow (i.e., hybrid), more value added, no substitute
- **Incremental change favored to radical**, small improvements possible, such as going back to doing scouting trips to gather research and convince folks to attend, all of these issues with current structure can still be improved upon if not totally overcome

- **Allow for more networking between participants** to facilitate a higher level of trust and engagements (folks concurred) – it exposes people to a variety of issues that they may not have previously been aware of too
- **Trying to increase the number of counties that have ACAC's, work with Outreach** and this list of organizations in doing so, as it isn't always the county officials that are pushing for the formation of an ACAC – it can be community members with disability organizations behind them – focus on intersectionality of subcommittees and people groups such as the BIPOC community or different backgrounds otherwise in terms of marginalized communities, piggyback on their advertising efforts – how can we accomplish this?
- **Consider the needs of the various kinds of disability groups** (*of* people with disabilities, *servicing* people with disabilities, and *parents* of people with disabilities) – highlight them all, potentially prioritizing the viewpoint of people with disabilities – where are their leaders concentrated, active, and would they be willing to work with us? Then reach out to their community leaders, to more actively participate in setting the foundation for an ACAC ourselves.*
- **We have helped bring awareness and perhaps enthusiasm in the past for AC's**, but at the end of the day AC is about accessibility grants and maybe sometimes networking, not necessarily other issues faced by the disability community – so how do we connect the two, if not the above? (recap about ACAC program)
- **What if we took a year off from doing Outreaches in the current structure**, and made a point of somehow listening to the service organizations and parent organizations, what would we hear and how might it inform our work? Folks concurred
- **Could we consider a statewide conference format** as a start along the above lines (advocacy and leadership, etc. systemwide advocacy, invite leaders in this space to share their expertise to inform and empower those in local communities about how to gather and do so on their own behaves in their various areas of need) and then survey attendees afterwards to get feedback
- **Folks like the idea of self-advocacy, but there are challenges with differing levels of apathy** among the disability in terms of wanting to just air grievances versus actively being involved in fixing the issues they

identify and their desire to prioritize and stay in the work – how to we activate, mobilize, and create a sense of urgency for this population too? Something to consider.

- **In vein of taking time off to see how we move forward, what about doing listening sessions in different parts of the state, to ask people with disabilities what they want, what their needs are, to what extent they want to be involved, what groups are available, what do they want to do, not coming up with solutions – just information gathering what the needs are, what’s available, the lay of the land to know as we plan for the future (smaller, more informal “distributed conference” by geographic location – pick 5 to 6 different areas and get a feel for each – maybe there are higher concentrations of different needs or lack of services, etc.) Don’t just assume, ask. Folks concurred. If end goal is to be most effective and useful, we need to hear from the stakeholders about what that means, and learn about the differences in different areas, value in demonstrating an interest, who’s not at the table, who should be, define who we are, what role can we play, it likely won’t be a one size fits all solution. Thanks for this prompt.**
- **Think about partnerships** – GCDE is getting smaller, but we haven’t changed the work, so how can we leverage the partnerships we have to be more effective, such as the community needs assessment at WASILC, or the cross-disability network at DRW, whether disability related, geographically, or organizationally to share in the workload
- **Careful about statewide conference or listening sessions and our name** (GCDE), and interpretations of the public regarding our ability to discuss with the governor, actually solve problems, etc. – careful about intent and deliverables, smaller communities where issues are more identifiable or solvable, bite off only what we could chew, etc. distill so that progress can be made, being too broad, while good intentioned, may paralyze us, not accomplish anything, step on other agencies toes in the work they are already doing, etc. – not sure what it achieves for us to duplicate such work that’s being done already in various sectors – shouldn’t reinvent the wheel, can’t deliver much by way of solutions at the end of the day within the complex solutions and limited resources we have available, organizing these activities take longer than it seems, which is why we haven’t managed to do more than 2 per year despite wishes, regarding the various organizations – what is our value proposition – what are we offering these organizations that they can’t do by themselves, what does GCDE add by partnering with other

organizations (be careful not to paint everyone with the same brush though – ensure everyone is at the table with all their different needs and identities such as invisible illnesses, chronic illnesses, addiction, mental illness, veterans, who may not have the same support structures – don't lose their voices)

- **Partnership has been discussed already in terms of associate members**, redoing that process in terms of selection, appointment, etc. (choose who we want versus those who are currently appointed who may or may not actively participate or be involved arbitrarily, etc.)
- **Consider partnering with senior groups** since we may have intersecting issues
- **We bring a value of being a resource** to direct people to other resources that can help them
- **Identify local resources when conducting scouting**, ensure they are at the table with a concerted effort to allow for a wider variety of experiences and opinions instead of just the elected officials and school personnel, etc.
- **If we took that a step further, we could involve the abovementioned folks in actually planning the outreaches**, involve them in all the various stages, including follow up
- **How do we pick the places, without regard to the final structure, is it just based upon where we haven't been lately, and switching between the two sides of the state?** Should we somehow rate the communities using different criteria, or is that too much work without any real **impact**? Could we somehow combine the two approaches? Location also affects the success of an outreach due to varying factors. Don't necessarily focus on "geographic fairness," and note that some people choose to live in a certain community for differing reasons, or at the same time, are unable to relocate because of varying factors. We do have a database of where we've been so far available if needed.
- **Do we have a mechanism for communities to request for us to come to them?** (Yes and no, listed on website, but could be publicized more heavily)
- **Do it in a low-pressure way (reach out to folks) to get buy-in** (such as DD coordinators, or health department, etc.) and county leadership and get their feedback too
- **In the same way, practical considerations could pigeonhole us into a certain location**, versus being focused on the greatest area of need

- **Pre-work to identify key liaisons in the community** who can help may assist with the abovementioned step.

Break at 3:30pm (10 minutes)

Next action steps:

Essence of brainstorming – get a wide perspective, as many ideas as possible, don't talk about the downsides necessarily although we have been doing that a bit, have we gotten all the possibilities out there?

Now pick the best of them and group them in a way that will hopefully empower people with disabilities to solve our own problems.

Nearing end of time set aside for this question, although we don't necessarily have to adhere to that. We do already have a start on the list of disability organizations, and we may be getting closer to moving forward on our first discussion item.

How do we move forward from here? A lot of what we said could be incorporated into the current structure, reaching out to organizations, doing more research ahead of time, involving community members in the whole process, going where we can make the most impact and where we have buy-in versus geographic fairness, may be preferable to make incremental changes versus throwing out the whole structure, keep the large meeting and workshop session to solve problems versus just discussing only, but more intentionally involve folks throughout the process so we aren't going against NAUWU or promoting separate but equal.

Do folks concur with Warren's assessment above? Do we want to take a step back and decide to just listen before moving forward as was suggested, have we heard from everyone, can we think about it and digest after reading the notes? Could we get input from past members?

Could we change the structure from 1-hour monthly meetings to 2 hours every other month with work in between?

Could we conduct an online survey about where folks are landing in general and use that to inform our next meeting? Maybe an email chain as opposed to a survey, so we don't have to pare it down and choose one over another?

Marsha concurs with Warren and doesn't feel as though we have enough info to go in that direction even though that had been the plan to move forward with our next question to inform our next step as well.

Stopping point on brainstorming, Marsha does not want to influence decisions, but does she have any visions of where she'd like it to go that she can share as a starting point to help folks possibly?

DEI conference is seeking presenters with lived experience – like-minded party to possibly increase impact and have value? Should we consider attending?

Resource provider days at various other conferences that we could consider attending too.

Elaine can provide the list of current ACAC counties.

Can we find a way to validate what we are doing to get feedback on input before deciding to proceed with counties, etc.?

Listening sessions may or may not be beneficial in terms of being easily synthesized into a new model, versus getting feedback on something concrete, that many people may be able to provide input on (i.e., current structure, is it valuable, can it be improved etc.)

One thing to note is that we aren't necessarily proposing to throw out the whole thing, rather take a pause to see how we might want to involve, and then allow ourselves time to actually make those changes.

Equity work is important in state government. Lots of work happening around that.

We need to synthesize the notes and come up with a proposal, though we may not be able to walk away from today's meeting with that as planned, but we are moving in that general direction.

We also need to decide how to select where we are going to do something. We can work with existing organizations perhaps, keeping in mind that not all disabilities have groups representing them, so we need to consider how we might reach those groups.

Marsha will work with Emily on that and allow folks to think and then respond via email perhaps.

By way of a path forward, we have a couple of locations already selected, maybe we try to take one of those locations (Sultan by Steven's Pass or one Ridgefield location near Vancouver, or Ephrata – various locations across the state **that has already been slightly researched and try to apply some of these principles**, i.e. try to get the buy in and schedule out far enough to allow time to think about how we can get the right people to the table), apply some of them and then decide how to proceed later. Leverage what we've done and keep moving forward.

How to decide where to go – easiest partnerships, best chance of success, or most empowerment? Should we test our assumptions as we move forward?

Don't walk away without a plan or we might flounder, instead take the approach of making small changes, and still look at advocacy.

No plans have been established for 2023 as of yet. Can we still have an event?

Next meeting – Tues. 3/14 at 4pm

DISABILITY-RELATED ORGANIZATIONS (Marsha will share list for input – we will need contact info, members to send within two weeks, go from there to strategize on contacting and moving forward with an event)

ORGANIZATIONS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Local

United Blind of Tri-Cities

United Blind of Walla Walla

Yakima Valley Council of the Blind

ACACs

(County Veterans Programs?)

Advocates for Neurodiversity and Unique Employment

Regional

Peninsula Council for the Blind

State

Hearing Loss Association of America, Washington State Association

Washington State Community Access Project

Guide Dog Users of Washington State

Here and Now Project, the Washington Paralysis Network (also the state chapter of United Spinal)

WA Council of the Blind Members at Large

Disability Rights Washington and Cross Disability Advocacy Network (focuses on legislative advocacy)

United Peers of Washington (mental health/addiction)

(Veterans Programs?)

Autism Society of Washington

PARENT ORGANIZATIONS

Local

Yakima Children's Village – Parent to Parent

Kittitas County Parent to Parent

Kitsap County Parent Coalition

Regional

State

ORGANIZATIONS SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Local

Pierce County Coalition for Developmental Disabilities

Pierce County Aging/Disability Resources

Tacoma Area Coalition of Individuals with Disabilities (peer led)

Ark (in multiple locations)

Northwest Service Dog Alliance

Lilac Services for the Blind

HOPE School (Hearing Oral)

Special Mobility Services

Centers for Independent Living

Northwest Access Fund

Hearing, Speech, & Deaf Center

Regional

State

Washington Autism Alliance

Washington Assistive Technology Act Program

SUPPORT GROUPS

(Chronic Illness?) – will get input from Andy re: hospitals and also check Facebook

Local

Regional

State

Meeting adjourned at 4:48pm with no objections