

**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

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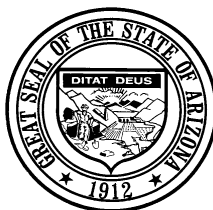
**Attendance**

Present:

- **Lisa Ehlenberger** (District Central Committee Chairperson)
- **De Freedman** (District West Chairperson)(Facilitator)
- **Keith Jansen** (District South Chairperson)
- **Don Harrington** (District North Chairperson Pro Tem)
- **Suzanne Hessman** (District East Chairperson)
- **Kin Counts** (DDAC Member; District East IOC Member)
- **Jon Meyers** (DDPC President)
- **Zane Garcia Ramadan** (DDD Assistant Director)
- **Nicolette Fidel** (DDD DDD Chief Operating Officer)
- **Angie Venne** (DDD CARES Administrator)
- **Christina Hedges** (DDD CARES Member - OIFA Administrator)
- **Joan McQuade** (DDD CARES/Chief advocate)
- **Morgan O'Hara** (DDD IOC Liaison)
- **Michelle Rademacher** (Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD IOC Liaison)
- **Fredereaka Graham** (AHCCCS IOC Manager)
- **Larry Allen** (ADOA State IOC Liaison)
- **Mandy Harman** (District Central IOC member)

Public Attendance:

- **Ryan Rodriguez** (Arizona association of school psychologists)
  - **Kristen Lilly** (Arizona association of school psychologists)
  - **Joe Donaldson**
  - **Lisa Persinger**
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*This editable transcript was computer generated and might contain errors. Liaison has edited some of the transcript for accuracy and ease of reading. Any blue italics transcription was missed by the transcriber.*

**DDD Quarterly Statewide Chairs Meeting - 2025/01/22  
17:05 MST - Transcript**

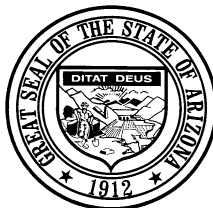
**Attendees**

+1 928-\*\*\*-\*\*01, Angela Venne, Christina Hedges, Christina Hedges's Presentation, Diedra Freedman, Don Harrington, Fredreka Graham, Joe Donaldson, Jon Meyers, Keith Jansen, Kin Counts, Kristen Lilly, Lawrence Allen, Lisa Ehlenberger, Lisa L. Persinger, Mandy Harman, Marsha L S Spencer, Michelle Rademacher, Morgan O'Hara, Nicolette Fidel, Ryan Rodriguez, Suzanne Hessman, Zane Garcia Ramadan

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Transcript**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So I hereby call to order this regular meeting of the DES DDD district central Independent oversight committee, excuse me the statewide independent oversight committee. Today's date is January 22nd, 2025 and the time is 5:38 p.m. And this is a quarterly meeting of the statewide IOC and it's being held electronically and is being recorded and the transcript of that recording will be posted on the ADOA IOC website. And in an effort to avoid excess background noise and potential microphone feedback, please mute your microphone when you're not speaking. The host of the meeting can mute but then you can mute yourself when you'd like to speak by clicking on the microphone icon at the bottom or elsewhere depending on your platform.



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**DISCLOSURES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And additionally I've been asked to read the following statement. I think we still do this in statewide. Do we have anyone that has to disclose a conflict of interest and if there is, the committee member needs to disclose why for the statewide. Sounds like no conflict.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So we will now have introductions of those present because my name is Lisa Ehlenberger and I am District Central IOC chair. And if I can get Michelle or someone to help me with the additional introductions, that would be great.

**Michelle Rademacher:** So, that's not a problem at all. Let's see. I'm just going to go straight across starting with the chairs. Keith, would you introduce yourself, please? Thank you.

**Keith Jansen:** My name is Keith Jansen. I'm the District South IOC chair.

**Michelle Rademacher:** And De.

**Diedra Freedman:** Hi, I'm Diedra Freedman.

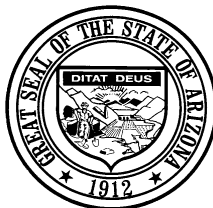
**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you, Don.

**Don Harrington:** Don Harrington, District North IOC chair, and I'd like to make a statement that we have our last meeting, we had a quorum. So, we've got four members plus myself. Okay. Okay, go ahead.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Don, nice announcement. Absolutely exciting. and Susie, Suzanne, I know you were driving. Are you able to introduce yourself?

**Suzanne Hessman:** Can you hear me?

**Michelle Rademacher:** We can. Yes.



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**Suzanne Hessman:** Okay, Yes, I'm driving. Sorry about that. Susie Hessman, I am District East IOC chair.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you. And I'm going to move on to invite Zane Garcia Ramadan.

**Zane Garcia Ramadan:** Good evening everyone. My name is Zane Garcia Ramadan. I'm the Assistant Director for DDD.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you. Nicolette Fidel.

**Nicolette Fidel:** Hi, good afternoon everybody. Nicolette Fidel, Chief Operating Officer for DDD.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you, Angie. Christina

**Angela Venne:** Hi, good evening everyone. My name is Angie Vene and I am the CARES Bureau Chief with DDD.

**Christina Hedges:** Hi everyone. I'm Christina Hedges. I am the Division's office of individual and family affairs administrator. Thank you.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you, Larry. Thank you,...

**Lawrence Allen:** Larry Allen with the Arizona Department of Administration.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Fredreaka. Thank you,...

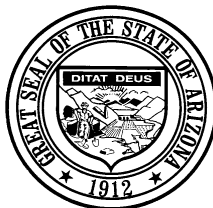
**Fredreaka Graham:** Hello, this is Fredreaka Graham with AHCCCS

**Michelle Rademacher:** John. Thank you,...

**Jon Meyers:** I'm John Meyers, executive director of the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you, Morgan.

**Kin Counts:** Good evening everyone.



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**Morgan O'Hara:** Good evening. Morgan O'Hara, independent oversight committee liaison with DDD and the CARES Administration.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you, Mandy. Sorry, Mandy. You're on mute.

**Mandy Harman:** That's okay. I was just getting it off when you said that. My name is Mandy Harmon. I am a member of the district central as well as a member of DDD.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you. My name is Michelle Rademacher. I'm a DDD independent oversight committee liaison under the CARES Administration. And I know we have three or four guests present. If you would like to introduce yourself, you're more than welcome to. You don't have to though. Thank you.

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**Kristen Lilly:** Hi, I'm Kristen Lily.

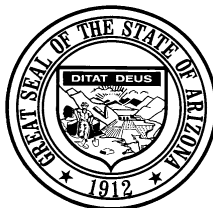
**Kristen Lilly:** There's a few of us here from the Arizona Association of School Psychologists. We had heard you guys were having a meeting today and possibly talking about some proposed changes to eligibility and so we were interested in hearing that and just learning more. Thank you.

**Ryan Rodriguez:** Hello, my name is Ryan Rodriguez. I'm also joining as a representative. I'm the president-elect for the Arizona Association of School Psychologists.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Welcome.

**Joe Donaldson:** Hello everybody. Sorry about that. I'm Joe Donaldson, school psychologist and education services director for the Yavapai County Education Service Agency. And I've worked with Dr. Smith, pediatrician and Yavapai pediatrics following the early access to care model and assessing children for autism.

**Lisa L. Persinger:** Lisa Persinger.. I am a school psychologist in central Arizona, right now. But have worked all over the state and continue to do so.



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**Michelle Rademacher:** Okay, Lisa, I think you're good to go.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay.

**District Updates (Central, East, North, South, West) by Chair**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So, we'll go ahead and go to the consent agenda items. So, number one would just be district updates. And that's just I believe we could start with what? Let's start with east. That's possible. I believe Susie.

**Suzanne Hessman:** Can you hear me?

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yes, we can.

**Suzanne Hessman:** I really don't have anything wonderful to say. Everything is going well. We continue to have good participation with our committee and are able to meet quorum every meeting and have wonderful staff with Morgan and Michelle and have great participation from all of DDD leadership that attends our meetings.

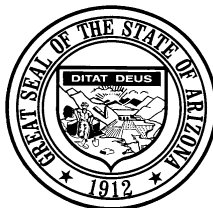
**Suzanne Hessman:** So, we appreciate their participation and cooperation. And other than that, I don't really have anything unless Morgan or Michelle, you can think of something that I'm not thinking of to share.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Not currently, but thank you.

**Suzanne Hessman:** Okay. Yes. Thank you.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay, thanks. District North

**Don Harrington:** It's not snowing, so that's a good thing. But we're doing very well. We have a five member panel now. So, that's something to get used to. The District North is doing well. I think at our last meeting they said they had one vacancy for a support coordinator. So, that has a lot to do with why things are going well. So, yeah, everything's fine.



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January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Awesome Don. And South we do have South on?

**Keith Jansen:** Yep, that's me. yes,...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Hi Keith.

**Keith Jansen:** since our last meeting three months ago, we have acquired a new member. She's in training with Michelle and getting hooked up to the system and all that stuff. But now we have eight people in our committee. We haven't seen that. And I'm going to use a term, we haven't seen that since pre- pandemic levels. So, we're glad that things are going up. And I'm glad things are going up for Don, too, because it makes it, even if you just got five, easier to make quorum.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Absolutely understand.

**Keith Jansen:** And we're trying to keep up with all our IRs. Almost as fast as they come in, we try to get them done. We're doing pretty good. We're not 100% there, but give us another week or two. That's it.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yeah. Thanks, Keith. De, West.

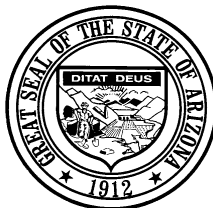
**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah. District West, we continue to be very interested in policy issues. Right now, we're very concerned about the warning letter from the DOJ for DCS about discriminating against children with disabilities and...

00:10:00

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Absolutely. Mhm.

**Diedra Freedman:** their parents who have disabilities. Just put it on the record. I'm sure all of you know, but DDD has more group homes within our borders, I'm sorry DDD district west has more group homes within our borders than any other district. And we continue to be worried about the fact that contrary to Arizona laws DCS has no IOC. So, we keep asking.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Absolutely.



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Meeting Minutes**

**January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm**

**Diedra Freedman:** But as we all know, the only thing we're empowered to do is ask questions. We did, I'm sure most of you in your meetings either did or are going to do the information session for the DDD 5-year strategic plan. I thought that was very informative. And we also are worried about quality of care for our DDD members, especially the acute care issues that stem from having developmental disabilities, especially autism. So Dr. Farah Lokey came to talk to us at our November meeting and I thought it was very informative for all of us. She's the medical director for quality of care and she answered a lot of questions on that subject, but she was also professional enough to answer all of our other questions that she was able to answer. And I have to tell you on the record, I personally along with the other IOC members who attended the meeting, it was unanimous. We're all very impressed with her and we're all very happy that she chose to join the DDD staff. So that's your update.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And that was Dr. Lokey, right? Okay.

**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, Dr. Farah Lokey, she was a pediatrician who was in private practice then she was a PCH for yeah that's...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And she also did the mortality and review with you as well. Correct. Okay.

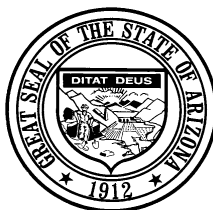
**Diedra Freedman:** That's what we asked her that's...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And quality of care. Mhm.

**Diedra Freedman:** What we asked her to do was to explain to us how DDD tracks and trends mortality and morbidity and she was nice enough to speak to the issues of quality clinical care that she could address, but DDD has a separate medical director who addresses those issues but they seem to have a great working relationship.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Mhm.





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Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Diedra Freedman:** So she gave us quite the education and especially regarding autopsies. She actually shared her view that she'd like to see a lot more with DDD members because there's a lot of information that is missing that she's not getting. But it's a systems limitation. Although I will tell you in district west we had a death within the last month the DDD requested an autopsy. So I have no idea what the circumstances are but I thought that it was very interesting that she's not afraid to request an autopsy if she thinks that it's necessary or her clinical counterpart. I'm not sure if she requested it or her counterpart and I forget the other doctor's name, but it was requested. So, we were happy to see that. And it looks like in the future there's going to be improved quality of care for our DDD members. So, it's Yeah.

Chat Message:

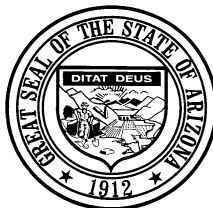
Zane Garcia Ramadan: Dr. Copeland

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** That's great. I mean, and that's what they should be doing, So, that's great that they're actually requesting an autopsy when they notice and they see it in their review.

**Diedra Freedman:** We also need to recognize that they're hamstrung by the system. In Arizona, the main purpose of autopsy is to determine criminology. It's not really to determine true cause of death. It's not. We don't have a major university hospital that is doing these autopsies that researchers are really doing them. You're talking about unless you want to pay for a private autopsy, which is very expensive. You're talking about the county coroner's office doing them. I'm sorry, the medical examiner's office doing them.

00:15:00

**Diedra Freedman:** And they're specifically looking for criminal causes of death. So, you're just not getting the information you may get in a city with a major medical center where you have pathologists who are really interested in research who are really delving deeper into the minutia of the cause of death. The system's just not set up to do it. So, I don't want anybody with the impression that the doctors at DDD were giving poor care previously. It's just that we have these two new doctors. Before it was only one medical director. Now we have at least three. And they're very interested in the subject. And so they're trying to improve the system.



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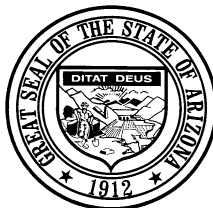
January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I think that's great. So we're up to I believe, excuse me, district central that's my district and we're up to about nine IOC members, I believe. Which is great. We started with I think four last January is what we had and after many a couple retired and we had some past individual committee members that passed away. And we've started, to which I'd like to maybe chat with De in the future, because we have a subcommittee right now with that's been discussing and asking questions of the department of child safety and we have the same exact concerns in regards to there's no IOC even though it's written in that they have one and it even shows on the website that they have an advisory committee except there's no information or it says that they're required to have one and it doesn't exist. So, that was something that we really were focusing on. As well as the way that before the DOJ article came out, we were actually asking DCS why they don't have a separate investigative unit or a specialty investigative unit.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** which we're kind of really looking and concerned about because when you have individual children and you have individuals with developmental disabilities, you need people that have a level of understanding and knowledge about disabilities whether and when the parent has a disability as well. You need a level of understanding that I don't think their general investigators do. And I'm not saying that they're doing it wrong. It's just that I think that there needs to be an elevated type of requirement for them. But that's something else.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And so we have a subcommittee right now that's focused on that as well as another subcommittee that is looking at the quality of care within mental health facilities and DDD members, minors and adults. And that those are two things that we're kind of focused on along with we haven't heard the strategic plan but that's something that will be presented this Friday. And now we're up to the point where we actually have enough IOC volunteer members where we are going to be looking at a vice chair. So I'm really looking forward to that. So that's something that hopefully will be discussed in our next IOC meeting this Friday.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And I will say I think since we last met I finally finished the annual report. We did not have a subcommittee on that and I just took it by the reins. It was my first one and I think I kind of followed along Linda's lines and I've wrote a book as De said in the past, but thank you De for your advice as well. When I called and asked questions, you were available for me and thank you Larry and for all of your help, Larry. You were super helpful with that as well.



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January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So, I'm looking forward to sharing that responsibility this year with a vice chair and I actually did have someone help me. Actually, Mandy helped me with editing it grammatically. So, that was amazing. And I think that's all for our updates. We're trying to keep up with PRC and PRC the program review committees. So any individual that's a DDD member that that lives outside of their family home on psychotropic medications has to have a behavior plan and then you review them. and I've been doing a lot of PRC and they've added a statewide.

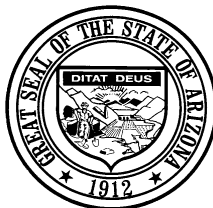
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**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So any IOC members in any district, so district south, west, north and east, if you have any members that would like to sit on statewide, I know that. I think they're only meeting on Wednesdays. And they usually only have anywhere from two to four meetings rather than maybe a longer day of PRC meetings. And I know that they would really appreciate more IOC I'm sure members from different groups and districts to volunteer if you would like to. And they're really great to work with as is the district central PRC. I've been doing a lot of those as well. And I have a couple of volunteers from IOC that are going to start joining more on doing that. So that will be helpful.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And then I have a lot of IOC members in district central that are really focusing just on reading IRs. So that's really helpful. And then of course I have my wonderful Eva who focuses on all early notification policies. So we are really sharing the responsibilities I think in district central. So I'm really grateful to that and for that and that's my update. Anything else that I may have missed? I don't think. So, I think we've gone through the updates by all districts.

**Clarification on the Proposed Rule Changes to 6 A.A.C. 6, Article 3 Eligibility  
For Developmental Disabilities Program**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So, we'll go into agenda item number two. And I believe there is someone here from DDD that was going to potentially be available for clarifying maybe some of the proposed rule changes to the eligibility the 6 AAC and article 3 eligibility for DDD program.



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Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Nicolette Fidel:** Yeah, good evening again, Lisa. This is Nicolette. I'm the Chief Operating Officer for DDD and I do support our eligibility teams. So, I'm going to go ahead and be available to answer questions and I'm putting in the chat just for the public that's here to remind them that the reason it's on the agenda was questions that you all had but that it is currently open for informal public comment on the DES website. and after we receive the informal public comment and the public comment period closes, there'll be some more internal review and potentially changes before it goes through the full formal public comment rule making process through ADOA, etc. So, this is sort of an interim step to make sure that we're getting it right and that we're getting our community to give us feedback before we sort of send it through that more formal rulemaking process.

Chat Message:

**Nicolette Fidel:** Public Comment:

<https://des.az.gov/documents-center/des-rules/des-rulemaking-activities>

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And I think that deadline is February 14th. Is that correct?

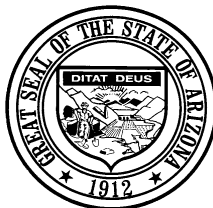
**Nicolette Fidel:** Let me just look again before I confirm that. It's on the website, so let me just double check. Yes, the 14th.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay. I'm...

**Nicolette Fidel:** And all of DES's role rules are there. This is just the only one right now that DDD has open. Did you have specific questions that you'd answered or would you like me to just do a high-level summary of the proposed? Sure.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** if you want to do a high-level summary and focus maybe a little bit on the autism because I know there were some changes on the autism eligibility that maybe left things a little bit vague and kind of opened it up a little bit more maybe for that it wasn't really clear.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** But yeah, I would love to hear a general as well as maybe a little bit more focus on that autism piece.



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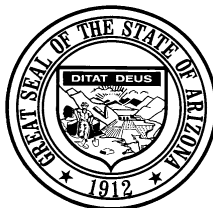
**Nicolette Fidel:** I can speak to that.

**Nicolette Fidel:** So really what our goals are with revising this rule is to update and make it, first of all, add more clarity. Places where I've identified may be where it's not clear to the public or we want to ensure that it's as transparent as possible for community members to understand since our whole system and the way our statute and rules are written are related to receiving documentation and reviewing available documents.

**Nicolette Fidel:** So, it's really important that we're as clear as we can be about the kinds of documentation that meet a standard in order to make someone eligible as with one of our five qualifying diagnoses and then evidence of three of our seven substantial functional limitations. So, to that end, we did add new definitions that were missing from the rule and that included a definition of economic self-sufficiency and a definition of capacity for independent living. And again those are really to clarify what does that exactly mean. We also updated the definitions to align with some of the nomenclature we use now for our policies and that includes an update of what the planning document is as well as updated definitions of self-direction and mobility.

00:25:00

**Nicolette Fidel:** We use this opportunity to ensure that Down syndrome was added into our rules as a qualifying condition because that did pass as a bill a couple of years ago and it is in our policy. So, this was our opportunity to add it to the rule. We enhanced some requirements for eligibility for children under the age of six requiring signed evaluations by professionals with credentials such as bachelor's degrees and early childhood education. So we could outline kind of who those professionals should be. And then we enhanced that the tools used for assessment should be culturally and developmentally appropriate to assess developmental delay. We also enhance some requirements for individuals six years and older stipulating about substantial functional limitations being documented in three or more major life activities. Go ahead, De.



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**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, Nicolette, When I reviewed this, you have to excuse me because I don't have it in front of me, but the review of, actually the professional qualified to do the evaluation, I want to make sure that I'm not missing anything. It just looked to me like that's aligning with existing qualifications for AzEIP evaluators. Is that correct?

**Nicolette Fidel:** *It was to try to provide more clarification about the qualification of who actually* does the evaluations because it's written, the way now, it's more clear in our policy but it's not in the rule. So yes. yep.

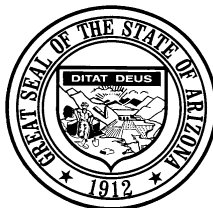
**Diedra Freedman:** Okay. I just want to make sure of that. We're doing it already. I mean, I didn't see anything in there that jumped out at me. It just looks like you're making clear what we're currently doing.

**Nicolette Fidel:** Some of the changes that was to line kind of with current practice. Some of, again since the rules haven't been worked in a while, some of this information is in our policy already. So, it's for the public, but to put it in a rule, it kind of brings it up to that next level of enforcement, if you will. And so, policy should really be describing our rules, not carrying that date, that information. So, we really need to put the information into the rule for the public.

**Nicolette Fidel:** So that's several of the changes that we're proposing for the public comment process are things that align too. So then, for the eligibility determination process, so this would be six and older. And I think Lisa, this might be what you're referencing, expanding roles, allowing diagnosis from medical professionals beyond those specified subject to Division approval.

**Nicolette Fidel:** And this statement and we would be, we'd welcome again feedback on. It is really in order. In addition to the specifics that we have in the rule, to allow some flexibility in the future for us to add additional diagnosticians or people who are qualified in the future through potentially a policy revision if we need to. it will provide some additional flexibility so we can add more. I heard one of your guests talk about being a part of the group that was trained to do assessments for autism specifically and that would be an example with special qualifications that we could then implement through a policy revision process.

**Nicolette Fidel:** Go ahead.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Diedra Freedman:** One of the things, Nicolette, that I find frustrating is that in behavior health practice and we're talking about these are evaluations that are paid for by AHCCCS, which means if you have a kid 0 to three or I sorry, 0 to six who's receiving behavior health treatment, if they're an AHCCCS member, they're a DDD member, these are the services that they're receiving. You've got nurse practitioners, I'm not sure about PAs but I know psychiatric nurse pracs who are basically diagnosing these children and it's acceptable. AHCCCS is paying for this. They're acknowledging this diagnosis and they're receiving these services but it's not acceptable. I'm not assessing any blame here. Again we're talking about making things that meet the practice that's going on. It's not acceptable for eligibility purposes for that six-year evaluation. And number one, obviously, it's more costly for AHCCCS because you've got to go out and get an evaluation for one of those delineated professionals to qualify.

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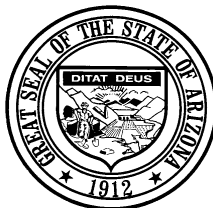
**Diedra Freedman:** And number two, it's time for that family and you're talking wait lists and you're talking shortages. And so I just want to point out

**Nicolette Fidel:** Understood. And again in the public comment process, please feel free to provide that. I know in the past when we've made some edits to this policy, and to our policy, that's been some of the feedback we've got specifically, nurse practitioners. So, we'll happily take that feedback.

**Nicolette Fidel:** This is building the opportunity for us to do some additional things like that in the future but if there's things of course that you think should be built in now and I think the challenge that we've had in identifying who that should be is there's not a lot of specialized training program certification types of things so that we could ensure that we convey who can actually do that in that profession.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I think Keith has his hands. Okay.

**Nicolette Fidel:** So I think hearing from you all about ideas that you have more suggestions in the public comment process about how we could articulate that, we're happily take that feedback.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

**January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm**

**Keith Jansen:** Yes, I was thinking if you're looking at adjusting how things are worded so it's crystal clear and who can and who cannot do these. One of the ways there, I can think of two ways that might help is you go to the universities, to people that are studying, or the departments that are teaching these people and let them know so their students don't miss out on a course that they were supposed to have that would have made them qualified. So far as the state is concerned and also going to professional organizations one of the things I really like is we have the school psychologists here today listening. Yeah. So I'm glad they're in here listening in. But to a professional group like that and letting them know you can put in for this paperwork and you'll be okay. And because of your education or whatever. And so yeah,...

**Kristen Lilly:** How?

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** or qual certifications.

**Keith Jansen:** we could really use your help in that field...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Qualifications. Yeah.

**Keith Jansen:** because they may not even know that they're qualified.

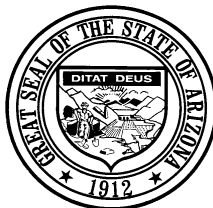
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yeah. I think that I'm going to go ahead and just put my hand up real quick. In regards to. You know what, I'll let Kristen share. But my past was within school psychology and oftentimes individuals that are eventually DDD members are primarily identified within the school system. I mean we are sometimes, not just sometimes, very frequently and we're trained in evaluating. I think it's okay. Let me just get clarification, Michelle. Is it okay for Kristen Lily to speak? She's from the public.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Michelle or Larry? Mhm.

**Michelle Rademacher:** This meeting is a little unique. It's not a singular committee meeting. So that would be up to you and the other chairs.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Are the other chairs okay with Kristen Lily speaking on behalf and just as representative of, school psychologist? I have thumbs up from De.





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Keith Jansen:** Yep. Yes.

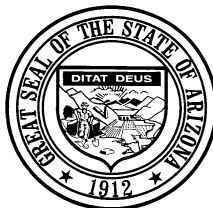
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Can I get other IOC chair members voting? Keith, Don. Yep. Suzanne. Thank you so much, Kristen. Go ahead. Dr. Lily, you have a floor.

**Kristen Lilly:** Thanks, Lisa. So, we are so excited to be part of this conversation. Currently, school psychologists are not considered qualified evaluators for children who apply for DDD services unless they hold a license as a licensed psychologist. There are a small number of us who are licensed. A couple of us are here on this call, but we receive very comprehensive training in evaluating for autism. We do culturally appropriate and non-biased assessments looking at both school and home. and we just really want to be part of this conversation to see if there's a way for us to get added to the language of who could be a qualified evaluator to see if we would be able to, be named as someone who could do this for families.

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**Kristen Lilly:** We're about to have a training by Emery, who's a DDD employee who reviews evaluations, and she's going to be sharing with us what's helpful to you guys when we work with families and kids. And, we are on board. So, please let us know how we can help.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I think in the past I know that I've actually had a case where I was the evaluator and this was about 2010 and it was a school eligibility of autism and the family did bring that paperwork to the division and the division contacted the district and the division said that as long as a clinical psychologist that worked within the district could review the evaluation and kind of sign off on it and then complete a form that looked at the three areas at that time that in regards to repetitive movements etc communication social impact etc and it was approved by the division. But with the language specific that includes school psychologists or certified school psychologists I think it would really allow with those criteria that DDD wants and needs, especially for autism specific.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** A lot of the other disabilities or other qualifying cognitive disabilities are kind of clear I think when the reviewers at DDD look at the information whereas autism is so broad that I can see why it has in the past been only for those clinical psychologists, psychiatrists etc. However, I think that school psychologists actually have the most comprehensive evaluations at this time. I mean, we've really improved over the last 10 years. And they actually are the best evaluations that I've read in comparison to even some private evaluations, although private evaluators as well are getting a lot better with their comprehensive detailed information. De

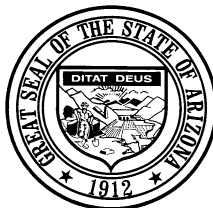
**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, this is just so that everybody has a little information. And you guys may already know this, but this is an emerging issue in the medical billing field for the diagnosis of autism. And you'll have to excuse my ignorance if I'm incorrect, but unless you're a licensed clinical psychologist, if you have psychology credentials and you can do the testing for autism, then you're considered to be a psychometrist is how it looks to be coming out in the billing field because eventually somebody's got to pay for these evaluations. So, I'm wondering, especially with all the money that's being pumped in for behavioral health services that will soon be available in schools, I'm wondering...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** ...We actually. Go ahead.

**Diedra Freedman:** if there's a funding mechanism there. I'm wondering if there's a funding mechanism there where you can actually get them paid for by Medicaid because obviously everybody's always worried about money,...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** You mean within the schools, De

**Diedra Freedman:** the new delivery model system for behavior health services for school age children, there was a law that was passed seven years ago in 2018 and I forget what it was called but it's family first or something like that and it was in response to the results of the opioid crisis that we're seeing the money is being pumped to child protective service agencies across the 50 states. We have a plan here in Arizona, but the services are supposed to be provided in the school.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Diedra Freedman:** So, when you're talking about a state like Arizona where 50% of our kids qualify for Medicaid and you're delivering services in the school, you're going to have to utilize the Medicaid in the school's funding mechanism. So,

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** and the schools actually do that and we actually used to bill. So I'm actually not a PhD level school psychologist. I'm master's plus a CG or certificate of advanced graduate studies. So in between. And I used to bill and that was in 2010 but then they stopped allowing the non-licensed psychologist but the speech and language pathologist bill, the occupational therapist bill. A lot within the school setting do that billing and...

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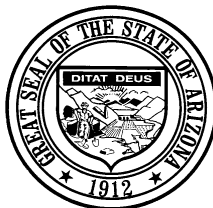
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** then the school gets those reimbursements based upon parent permission or parent signature of allowing for that reimbursement. but I mean it's not like we. Go ahead.

**Diedra Freedman:** Right. But what my point is, it's a much bigger issue. It's a professional issue across the spectrum of the profession. It's not just for DDD eligibility that this is going to impact, regarding school psychologists.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Mandy, go ahead. You're muted, Mandy. ...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** De. I hear what you're saying. And I think that I don't know if we want to get to the point where school psychologists actually evaluate or DDD. They have their case loads that are tremendous. It's just a matter of whether or not to be included in the language of acceptance. Mandy

**Mandy Harman:** I just wanted to say though, I know of some people that work for school districts now. I currently do not, but I know people that do. And some of the children's private aids and nurses are billed through Medicaid while they're at school. So, it can be done. It's just a matter of how to incorporate it in the system. But anywhere they can get money and use money, they will find a way to do it.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

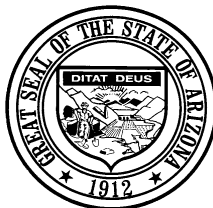
**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yeah, that's true, Mandy. Thank you for bringing up that point. Yes, the student aids and students or the teacher assistants or individuals that work with individuals with special needs and they do billing as well. So, if there are no other questions, Nicolette, I think if you want to just kind of wrap up a brief summary. if there's any specific points that you'd like to make prior to us going on to the next agenda item. And thank you so much for coming. Really appreciate it. I think it was super informative. And thank you for those members of ASP that are here. and I look forward to joining in on your meeting with I believe Erin Meyers is it, next week on Wednesday.

**Nicolette Fidel:** There's obviously more details in each particular section and for the purpose of time, we don't need to go through all those, but again, please encouraging and I'm very encouraged to have your guests here today as well because we do want to partner. We work really hard with the community. I'm glad that Dr. Mahoney's meeting with you. I know our clinical team would love to reach out and with others in the community so that we want to be as transparent about what's needed and collaborate so that it's easy for people the first time when they apply for services that we have everything we need and we make it as streamlined as possible for those folks. So, I appreciate being invited and if there's any other follow-up questions afterwards, please let us know.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yeah, thank you. I do have one thing and I'm not sure if it's related, but this is something that I really would love to see because I sit on a lot of PRC's where we have individuals that are 18 or 21 and maybe they just graduated from high school and in their plans, their behavior plans and their person-center support plans, there's not very much information and sometimes they just say they can't get that information. And I'm like, if DDD collaborated with the schools, when they finish high school, they have a summary performance. It's comprehensive information. or even attaching that last eval even if it was a reevaluation of just a review of existing data and records of their whole entire life of evaluations. If that can go into DDD's database, that would help our members significantly because if they need an FBA at 22, they've likely had one when they were 14 and maybe again when they were 16. There's so much information in their school evaluations and IEPs that could be so helpful for especially our members that are non-verbal, that aren't able to go to day programs because of their behaviors and they've transitioned out of high school, but they've lost that background. And that background, I think, could really help.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

00:45:00

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And Nicolette, the association asked if they could have your email address. I don't know if you could put that in the chat.

**Nicolette Fidel:** Sure.

Chat message:

**Nicolette Fidel:** [nfidel@azdes.gov](mailto:nfidel@azdes.gov)

Discussion on the December 16, 2024 Department Of Justice's Report of  
Arizona's Department of Child Safety

<https://www.justice.gov/crt/case/arizona-department-child-safety>

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you so much. Really appreciate it. We'll go ahead and go on to the next agenda item, which is probably another big one as well, is the DOJ article on DCS.

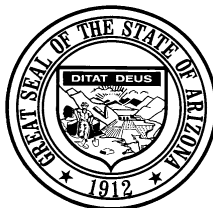
**Nicolette Fidel:** Hi everybody. I'm the chief operating officer for DD.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Go ahead,...

**Nicolette Fidel:** And I'm here to answer some questions to the extent that I can. so I wanted to know first sort of the high. If there are specific questions you're looking for. We can certainly review all of the ways we currently collaborate with DCS. That's some of the information I can share, but I wondered if there were particular questions first, before we do that, sure.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Keith and De.

**Keith Jansen:** Yeah, sorry for being ignorant, but I hadn't heard about that case where the DOJ got involved. Could you please just give a little bit of elaboration?



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Nicolette Fidel:** At a high level, and it's a public document, so we can probably put it in the chat as well, but there was an advisory notice to the Department of Child Safety after an investigation about multiple concerns that they had but just a summary is that, individuals who needed accommodations didn't receive them. Parents who needed accommodations didn't receive them. There was concerns about language access and specifically providing ASL to individuals who needed to have language access and accommodation.

**Nicolette Fidel:** So there was multiple findings and I don't know if that's something you all want to distribute but it was out in the media and the document itself has been circulated and it's our understanding that DCS is collaborating and to work on the issues that are identified in the letter of course because we mutually support people where it's our intention to continue to collaborate with them to provide, education, training, and information about the people we support and the families we support to help them do the best job they can to support children when they come and families when they come into care. so, I don't know if you want me to put it in the chat, I can because again, it's a public document.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** If you want,...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Nicolette, I think that'd be great for those who haven't read it. De

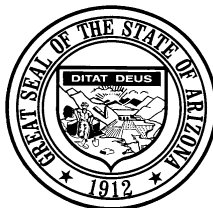
Chat Message:

**Michelle Rademacher:** <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case/arizona-department-child-safety>

Chat Message:

**Nicolette Fidel:** <https://www.justice.gov/crt/case/arizona-department-child-safety>

**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, I. Nicolette heard my spiel this morning because we talked about this at the governance committee meeting. Obviously we in District West are worried about this because of the number of group homes in District West, although I don't know how many DCS group homes that we have.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

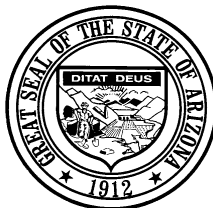
**Diedra Freedman:** But Jeffrey Yamamoto, who is the DDD liaison to DCS, those of us who have been on the IOC for a while know Jeffrey because he used to be an IOC liaison. Jeffrey spoke to us, in the last year, and from what I gathered and the other District West IOC members gathered is that Jeffrey is trying very hard to do an impossible job. He's trying very hard to communicate with DCS, but DCS doesn't seem to want to communicate with DDD. And we actually had a presentation by a couple individuals from their public affairs office of DCS and we got the same stonewalling that I'll bet you that Jeffrey's getting. So, I'm just wondering, and the reason that I asked for this discussion was number one to bring it to everybody's awareness, but number two, is the DOJ intervention, although they've been investigating for 5 years, has the warning letter helped? Are there any more cooperative? And are we able to protect our DDD members any better?

**Diedra Freedman:** We remain very worried because they're supposed to have an IOC. They don't have an IOC. so we're worried about our DDD members and when we're talking about discrimination because of a disability, our DDD members and their families have to be involved. So that's our concern from District West.

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**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And I would say I think I kind of shared our concern from district central when I shared the updates of our subcommittees. and we do have some additional questions that we're going to be raising to the department of child safety. And I do think that there's actually a couple of bills that are potentially being proposed in legislation right now that also might be kind of in alignment with this or possibly within that area of DCS and their discrimination with removing children without a lot

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I don't know I guess overly removing children is one of the things that I've heard and then I think that within that as well is also I know that one in our subcommittee we've discussed there's two clinical psychologists now on district central IOC and they actually work with DCS members and I think that they do see and a lot of when they're doing reunification that often times the characteristics of the disability. They're observed as a part of maybe this child not being attached to the family when it's actually the disability and the characteristics of the disability rather than a true place where they need to be removed from their family. I'm not going to go into that too much more. Go ahead, Keith.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

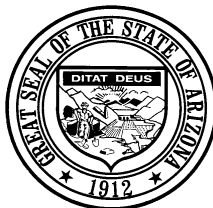
**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Keith Jansen:** Just one of the things I was going to bring up Miss Fidel is I remember months ago we had the adult protection group say they had a special group that works within DDD and your, the situation with DCS kind of sounds like a situation when some years back, I was a member of the clergy and I volunteered at the state penitentiary and helped get that system up and running the way they wanted it. And I was supposed to volunteer for one maybe two years. I did it for six years. And then as soon as I was done, the boss at the state penitentiary at Douglas called the county jail who was trying to start up a program. And because I had all the clearances, I knew what I was doing. I had been his basically aid. And so he said, " yeah, I know. Just got a call." And now Cochise County because they listened to what the state had to say, the penitentiary had to say. And their personnel who had been through it. It was easier for the county to integrate its clergy program. And now the county is so effective that they have clergy that go to the hardened shelter, where the bars are and everything. And then they have other clergy and they go over to the DUI unit, which is tense. And they have enough to do both because it's only in Bisby, as from Sierra Vista, which is relatively close. But also, if you pick the DUI unit, there are some people that don't want to be where murderers are or anything like that. But the thing is, the county listened to what the state had to say, and the state had to work its baby steps up.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Keith, what you were saying? Yeah basically when we had that presentation, it was in July at statewide, actually believe it was July 24th of 2024. We had APS and statewide as well as DCS and they both gave a presentation. APS gave, they really shared a lot of good information. They said they have a DDD unit 108. And I'm not sure where that's written yet, if it's in policy or operations, but hopefully we'll find that out at some point in time. and then DCS really didn't have much to give us. And I think, De that's when you were facilitating the meeting and you just stopped them and just said, "Hey, does anybody really need to hear any of this? I think we all know their basics of operation, but they didn't have the answers to the questions that we had in July. So, I think it's definitely something that needs to continue to, like Keith said, baby steps to make changes occur that will really just enhance our organizational ability in the state of Arizona to protect the rights of individuals with developmental disabilities and DD and ID. Don You're muted to





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

00:55:00

**Don Harrington:** I worked for DCS for six and a half years. The last two and a half were high-profile across northern Arizona. And what you guys are on the outside looking in. What you're looking in at, in my perspective, I've been gone since 2017, is that they're always approaching this case load, especially in Phoenix and Tucson, from behind. They have the recurring case managers. I mean they're all new. If you get. I know in the Flagstaff office there was complete 100% turnover about every six to eight months. So they're not wanting scrutiny on what they're doing and the state doesn't really want it either because they're going to find stuff if they do.

**Don Harrington:** So, that's the roadblock that you're hitting. And it's not that they're not doing a good job, they're doing the absolute best they can, but when you have,...

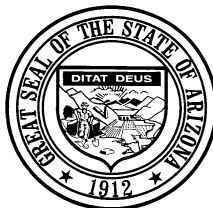
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay.

**Don Harrington:** an average workforce of three to six months, they're going to have these situations. And this thing by DOJ has been coming since I was in there. So yeah, there's a lot more. if you ever get into the fine tooth of it, it's more than just depriving services. You got DCS people in Kingman and Paige and Holbrook and Winslow. You can't find services. You can't find therapeutic aid. You can't find in-home family counselors. They're not there. They have all these services maybe in Phoenix and Tucson, but when you get to the outer edges of the state, they're just not there. and you're looking at Kingman where there's no colleges around Kingman that will produce a four-year degree that will qualify them for being a case manager. The requirements for a case manager, at least back then, was a social work degree or some kind of sociology something like that. But half the staff I worked with in Flagstaff had education degrees or arts degrees or English degrees like that. They could write a report but chances are they didn't know how to set up family visits. They didn't know how to provide transportation. They didn't know how to do the bare necessities of reunification families. Therefore, there was a lot of families that suffered a great deal. So, ...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** That's great information, Don. Thank you.

**Don Harrington:** Yeah, just perspective on what you're looking at.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yeah. Yeah, definitely. De



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, I Don, I appreciate the perspective and I spent a decade as a family court attorney back in New York. So, I was in the trenches for a decade and things obviously are different in New York. but there are federal laws, there are Arizona laws and we don't have the resources. Doesn't cut it. It's not acceptable. And I understand you're just explaining to us the situation. But the reason, just we hold DDD to a higher standard, there's no reason that DCS shouldn't be held to that same high standard. So when we have a job to do.

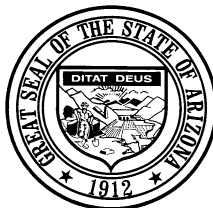
**Diedra Freedman:** We have to look out after our DDD members. And I'm looking at you on my screen, Nicolette. So, I, Nicolette and I have been going at this for almost two decades. And Nicolette knows I ask the hard questions and we don't take, we have the personnel, for the answer. It's not acceptable to me and it's not acceptable to Nicolette. So, this is a really concerning issue for us. And I know, as I said before, Nicolette and Zane and their staff are doing the best they can, but because DCS has not been part of DES for a long time, unfortunately, they have no way to make DCS protect our DDD members as they should. And I'm just hoping that with the feds involved, maybe DCS will change their attitude and improve things for our members.

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**Don Harrington:** *I absolutely agree. There are children are suffering. And they're suffering in state care. I've seen it. I've heard it.* Yes, the case load is overwhelming, but that's not an excuse for children suffering. So, if I could help you, give you information, run something by me, please do not hesitate to call me.

**Discussion on How DDD is Improving Communication with DCS when a  
DDD Member &/or Family Member is Involved with DCS**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you, don. Any other questions on this article or the next agenda item is actually related somewhat. So I don't know if we want to move on to the next agenda item. Is everybody in agreement?



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So the next agenda item is number four and that's in regards to the discussion on how DDD is improving communication with DCS when a DDD member family member is involved with DCS. I believe we have somebody here from DDD that is also going to support answering any questions, comments. Michelle, did you say that was ...

**Nicolette Fidel:** So, I mean,...

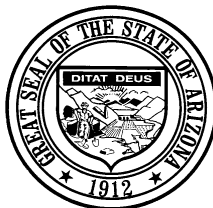
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** go ahead.

**Nicolette Fidel:** I can speak to what efforts we're making, and I didn't know if I should get into the details, but what efforts were making from a systems perspective to improve communication or continue communication. So, of course, they do have a new director now and we will be meeting with her shortly. We have quarterly meetings that are established at the leadership level. There's shared case management meetings and specifically there's some that are related to transition. DCS did hire a DD liaison several years ago. I don't know whether that's been shared with the committees, a former DDD employee. So we collaborate that way and of course Jeffrey has his outreach that you've already mentioned.

**Nicolette Fidel:** We have been working with DCS when there's complicated support for children and particularly supporting children with complex needs who are looking towards adoption. We've been working closely with them on trying to kind of have a smooth way to have that work or support families in returning children from care back home with appropriate support.

**Nicolette Fidel:** So I think to the point that De made when something gets to I don't like to see it to this level but of course when it gets to this level, a lot of resources that I think DDD can provide I think that we have some opportunities to meet with DCS and try to provide support to them and articulate our mutual desire to make sure that the children and families that we support and that they mutually support are getting what they need from both agencies. So that's really our intent to do that. Now some of the meetings, the coordination we do, have the stakeholder engagement manager that sometimes has to help us at the leadership level to right side some of the meetings.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Of course.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Nicolette Fidel:** So that has happened recently in some appropriate cases, but for the most part we want to continue to try to be good partners with them and continue some of the work and are ready to provide resources and support to them to the extent possible that we can. Mhm.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I think De has her hand up for a question.

**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, I just want to make sure that we keep the record clear because Billy Henderson's name was mentioned and when Jeffrey Yamamoto presented to District West IOC, the issue is not the communication and the relationship between Billy Henderson and Jeffrey Yamamoto. It's a great relationship, but as you know, when you're a state employee working for an agency, you can only do what those above you empower you to do. and again, just to disclose for the record, Billy Henderson happens to be married to a former DDD district west IOC member, Bernardine Henderson. So, we kind of had an inside track there. And, they're trying.

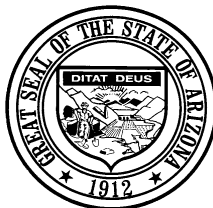
**Diedra Freedman:** I mean, there's nothing more that we could have asked of Jeffrey and Billy. They're doing the best they can under a very difficult situation. So, I just want to make sure that everybody understands that's not where the log jam is.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Any other questions in regards to this? I think De, you had requested the agenda item, so I'm not sure if you have any other additional comments or questions or No. Okay. Yes.

01:05:00

**Diedra Freedman:** No, I'm all set, Nicolette. I appreciate it. I just wanted to make sure that that issue was brought to the record and...

**Nicolette Fidel:** Sure.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

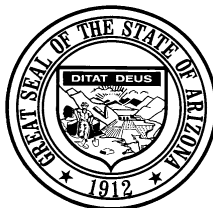
**Diedra Freedman:** I want to make sure that everybody understands. As I said before, when an issue comes up and the log gym is on DDD's side, I'm one of the first people to point it out. But I also want to be one of the first people to point out when the log jam is not on your side and you're going above and beyond to try to protect our members and try to solve the problem and your hamstrung you can't. And in my opinion, that's what we're talking about with DCS. So,

**Discussion on Conflict of Interest as Applied to the IOC**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So we'll go ahead and move on to number five. A little lighter issue here but still. Number five, conflict of interest. Believe someone is here to speak on behalf of that in regards to conflict of interest in IOC.

**Suzanne Hessman:** So I was the one who wanted to put it on the agenda. We, for the first time, had an issue of having conflict of interest in our committee. And my question and wanting to understand procedurally and rulewise who is the deciding person or group for making a decision whether a conflict actually exists. Because in this case, the member on the committee didn't feel like there was a conflict and I think several of the other members on the committee didn't feel that there was a conflict. In this specific case it was that she had read an IR and the name of the member or mother was not redacted and she happened to know who that person was; not that she had a relationship with a person but happened to know them because obviously for many of us this is a small community. We know each other especially through this, IOC's, and wanted to discuss some of the concerns that she had regarding the group home agency versus the nursing home agency and how that was affecting the member. because she said that she knew who the member was, she was told that this was a conflict and wasn't able to discuss anything, which I think our goals ultimately are all the same, that we just want to protect members. So my issue again is who is the person who makes that decision that there is indeed a conflict

**Mandy Harman:** If that's the case, then there's a lot of times that I should have excused myself then too cuz I know a lot of people and I know their situation. But that was never explained in any of the training or anything.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lawrence Allen:** Susie, this is Larry. I'm the one that makes the call during a meeting if I interpret the situation to be a conflict. So it is my decision at that particular time. I am in no means saying that I could go back to my legal department to get it an official ruling on that from an attorney. I'm not opposed to that at all. but at that time it was a very gray area and I made a determination that she did in fact have a conflict.

**Lawrence Allen:** Knowing the individual, being in a text thread with that individual, knowing the daughter, knowing the situation she was in, and pretty much knowing everything that was going on during that case. and her time being at that home. So, it was my call and I guess that's where it fell. sometimes as a liaison and trying to keep these meetings in line with open meeting law and with the attorney general's office. We have to make a call sometimes. Sometimes it's not a very popular decision. Sometimes it is. So that's where it fell.

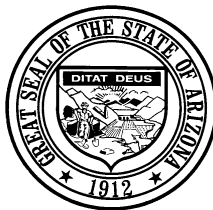
01:10:00

**Lawrence Allen:** I'm not opposed to going back to get another opinion from somebody. Mhm.

**Suzanne Hessman:** *And Larry, I wasn't calling you out. But I would like to know* who is the judge of that? Because it seems to me that it would fall upon the committee to make a decision, a determination that we should have voted on it and not that it should be coming from ADOA or DDD because frankly we're the ones who are in charge of our meetings. So I would like to know that's why I'm wanting to know procedurally what is the rule, what is the law that determines who decides that conflict of interest exists or not.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And I think we have a few questions.

**Lawrence Allen:** At that, yeah, at that given time, it's me, but like I said, if the committee wants to move forward and do an official motion and vote on it and send in a question to me, like I suggested at the last meeting, that's perfectly fine. I don't know. It'll probably go to the attorney general's office for an interpretation of what happened. and then they would rule on it, I would imagine. But, I've never tried to do anything with them and in this type of scenario. So, I really don't know to be honest with you.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Suzanne Hessman:** And I'm wanting to know beyond this specific incident, but procedurally how is that supposed to be adjudicated?

**Lawrence Allen:** I'm not understanding your question.

**Suzanne Hessman:** Procedurally, whose job is it to make the determination whether there is a conflict?

**Lawrence Allen:** That was it.

**Suzanne Hessman:** Should it not be done by the committee taking a vote?

**Lawrence Allen:** No.

**Suzanne Hessman:** So what I would like to know and see is where the rules and statutes and policy are in determining that you are the judge for that.

**Lawrence Allen:** You can call me the judge I guess but I am the facilitator of that meeting and I make that call.

**Suzanne Hessman:** I'm just asking for you to show me the policy or rules that make that determination itself.

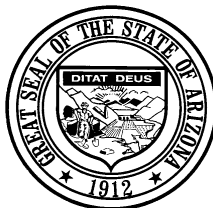
**Lawrence Allen:** And then it's outlined in the attorney general handbook chapter 8 and...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Suzanne, also and then we do have a few questions, hands up just so you guys know.

**Lawrence Allen:** there's several statutes that outline that as well.

Chat Message:

**Michelle Rademacher:** T. Title 38, chapter 3, article 8, relating to conflict of interest, applies to all committee members. 38-503. Conflict of interest; exemptions; employment  
<https://www.azleg.gov/viewdocument/?docName=https://www.azleg.gov/ars/38/00503.htmprohibition>



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

Chat Message:

**Michelle Rademacher:** Suzanne, Here's a better link on Conflict of Interest  
<https://www.azleg.gov/ars/38/00503.htm>

**Suzanne Hessman:** Okay, Keith.

**Keith Jansen:** We've had that happen in district south and...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you, Susan.

**Keith Jansen:** We use a very basic rule that it doesn't matter if there is a conflict of interest if it even appears the appearance of a conflict of interest is enough to say here you take care of it. I shouldn't be involved because it could appear to whoever, let's say they take it up to a court or something, we don't even have to worry about the appearance I wasn't involved so not only couldn't it happen because we decided but it's like we handed it off to people that had absolutely, absolutely no knowledge of it. So there couldn't be a conflict of interest.

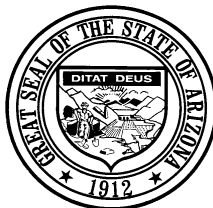
**Lawrence Allen:** And like I mentioned in your meeting, when I determine or Michelle and Morgan determine if there is a conflict, then that particular person needs to recuse themselves from discussion and voting at that time. but I'm not saying you can't move forward with the issues she brought up. I'm just saying that she can't move forward with it.

01:15:00

**Lawrence Allen:** Does that make sense?

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I'm just going to speak with my hand up. I think I was next and then De and then Mandy I believe I think or that could be just. I know for myself one of the things is similar to, so my cousin, I'm guardian of, any of her IRs don't come to district central or they go to a different district because I'm personally involved. So, if I'm personally involved in a case and I know that individual, it's going to be hard when I know that's going to be a conflict for me potentially, even though I can be objective. it could be viewed upon as a conflict, So, of course, her IRs go to other districts. and then I just wanted to share that and I have other examples as well but let's go ahead, De.





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Diedra Freedman:** Yeah, Larry, obviously I'm very interested in the conflict policy because as a health care consultant, I have clients that could possibly be discussed and I try to be very conservative and recuse myself from any discussion. but I'm wondering whether or not this issue was talked about, whether there's a difference between whether this is talked about in an open meeting or an executive session. And I'm assuming because they're talking about a specific individual that it was an executive session. And then I'm also wondering the difference between participating in the discussion and voting.

**Diedra Freedman:** So, I just want to be clear and I know it's in the handbook, but we're talking about different scenarios. So, I'm just wondering with those criteria or if it's a conflict, it's a conflict period and you walk away and let the rest of the committee handle it, which as Keith said is the conservative way to do it. I mean, we haven't had any issues, so we haven't dealt with these specifics. So, I'm just curious

**Lawrence Allen:** Yeah, that I would lean towards what Keith said. Once you determine that there possibly could be a conflict, it's best to recuse yourself from discussion and voting and let the other committee members vet that out and have a discussion.

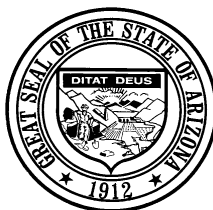
**Diedra Freedman:** And what about are the rules different in executive session and in the open meeting or it's the same exact rule period?

**Lawrence Allen:** It's the same exact rule. That's my understanding. And just to loop everybody in, I'm working with the AG's office to get specific training on open meeting law. Specifically, I asked her to do a talk on conflict of interest. So I think that would be beneficial for everybody involved including myself. so as soon as that's scheduled I would let everybody know.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you. I think Mandy had her hand raised, too.

**Mandy Harman:** So, I guess all that we need to do is just kind of be I guess cuz like I said, I know a lot of people I may not be involved with them personally every day, but I live with other members, so I try not to get involved in any of that stuff either because it's just going to get me in trouble. So, it's hard though cuz you know what happened. So, right.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Exactly. And you might have some information, but you recuse yourself from discussion.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Mandy Harman:** And I end up having to talk to investigators anyways. So, my name's out there anyhow. So, I came in and I was like whatever. So, I try to be as cautious as we can be. It's hard though cuz when you're in a disabled community, everybody knows, everybody unfortunately, we may not know exact details of specific incidents, but I've lived in Arizona for 30 plus years. I know a lot of people. So that's just Yeah.

01:20:00

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And you have a good point. It does become a smaller community.

**Mandy Harman:** Yeah, it does.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Any other questions on agenda number five?

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Can we move on? Any other questions? Suzanne, did you have any other statements or questions? Okay.

**Suzanne Hessman:** No, no, just wanting the policy and I think Morgan or Michelle put something in the chat.

Chat Message:

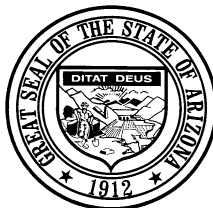
**Michelle Rademacher:** In each district Guidelines document : ARTICLE XIV: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Chairperson may direct any Committee Member to refrain from presenting a case or voting

when a conflict of interest arises. Any member who considers himself/herself to be in a

potential conflict of interest will advise the IOC Chairperson of the situation.

<https://ioc.az.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/DDD%20East%20Guidelines%20%28created%20December%202018%29.pdf>



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** And Morgan and Michelle, will you guys do what you do? I think you guys always do that where you just send us the chat emails or links.

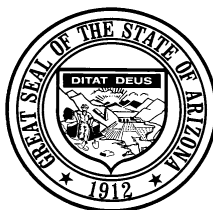
**Michelle Rademacher:** Yes, we'll send an email copy of all the chat messages right away so that you have copies of the links.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Great.

**Olmstead Plan Update**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you. Number six, the Olmstead plan update.

**Christina Hedges:** Hi everyone. Let me bring that up. Is everyone able to see the screen? Perfect. Okay. Let me see if that's. sorry I have too many screens open and it's a little bit difficult. So as I introduced myself earlier my name is Christina Hedges. I am the division's office of individual and family affairs administrator. and I will be giving kind of a really quick update on Olmstead.

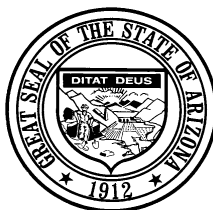


**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

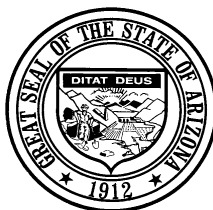
## Background

- 1999 United States Supreme Court decision that provided legal framework for state and federal government to integrate people with disabilities into the communities in which they live
- Arizona chose to create a plan as a way for stakeholders to work together to further improve access to services and ensure people live and receive services in the most appropriate integrated setting in their community
- The Plan was developed in 2023 and is updated every quarter



**Christina Hedges:** So for those of you who don't know, Olmstead is a Supreme Court decision from 1999 which really set up the framework for state and federal governments to assist in the integration of people with disabilities into the communities that they live in. So, while the ruling did not mandate that states create their own plan, Arizona went ahead and did so as a way to ensure that members, families, and various stakeholders are able to work together to continue improving access to services and ensure people are able to continue living and receiving these services in the most appropriate integrated setting within their community.

**Christina Hedges:** So, there are eight strategies in the plan. However, I'm only going to touch on six of them. because these are really kind of the six that have updates that pertain to the division. So, strategy number one looks at effective permanent supporting housing for members to successfully reside in the community. Recent updates from the division include, we're currently in the process of revising our medical policy 1710 to ensure alignment with AHCCCS medical policy 1710.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

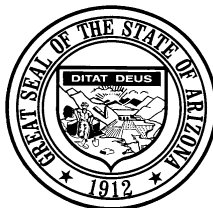
**Christina Hedges:** Also, at the end of 2024, DDD was assigned eight units in Globe, Arizona at the Hill Street School Apartments through the 811 rental assistance program. These apartments are just what they sound like. Hill Street was an old school that was now converted into apartments and we have eight units there that we will be working towards. Just today I heard that we are looking at kind of the next members who are on the list to move into those apartments. We currently have 72 members with subsidies through the 811 program and Coffelt apartment location as well as 24 members using other various vouchers for their housing subsidies. The division has finalized an agreement with Solari as the new AHCCCS H2O administrator and we receive bi-weekly reports in terms of H2O initiatives and we do continue to receive and review monthly reports from the AHCCCS housing administrator.



**Strategy 1:**

**Effective Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) for members to successfully reside in the community**

1. DDD Medical Policy 1710 was created to align with AMPM 1710
2. DDD was assigned 8 units at Hill Street School in Globe, AZ through 811 Rental Assistance in late 2024
3. 72 Division members are currently living in subsidized homes through the 811 program and Coffelt
4. 24 Division members are receiving subsidies in various voucher programs



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Christina Hedges:** Yeah, Lisa, you're on mute.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I took my hand off, not my unmute. What is H2O, what is that? I mean water is what I'm thinking.

**Christina Hedges:** It is the housing.

**Christina Hedges:** No, it is the... Hold on one second. Housing and Health Opportunities Demonstration. So Megan Akens, who is in our affordable housing unit, she's our affordable housing supervisor. She's the one that really kind of works closely with AHCCCS in terms of that program.

01:25:00

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay. So, it's housing and health opportunities.

**Christina Hedges:** Yes, I will be 100% honest. I do not know that much about it, but I'm sure Megan would be more than willing to come and present on it at some point. Megan is the division's affordable housing guru, and she is phenomenal. So, we can definitely get that set up if needed to. Of course.

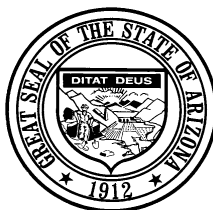
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay. Thank you.

**Christina Hedges:** Of course. And sorry that I don't have all of the information on that.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** No worries. I just didn't know what the H2O was.

**Christina Hedges:** Of course. Sorry I didn't explain it.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** No, no, no. It's okay.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Strategy 2:**

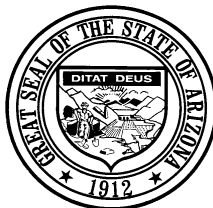
**Reach-in discharge planning for hospital settings**

1. CommunityCares is Arizona's statewide closed-loop referral system - this is a tool available to help AHCCCS health care providers and community-based organizations to quickly and efficiently screen and refer members for Health-Related Social Needs
1. The Division continues to work towards implementation of CommunityCares - Arizona's closed-loop referral system



**Christina Hedges:** So strategy number two looks at reaching discharge planning for when members are in hospital settings. The division does continue to work towards our implementation of community cares which is the Arizona closed loop referral system. A closed loop referral system is a tool that is available to help AHCCCS health care providers quickly and effectively screen members for any health related social needs which were previously called social determinants of health and then refer those members who are identified to community- based organizations that are able to provide assistance. no, I lost my there where did it go?





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

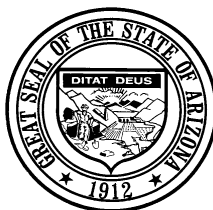
**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Christina Hedges:** Okay, strategy three involves region discharge planning for the justice system. The division justice region program monitors members who are incarcerated or who have pending charges. And this monitoring is done really regardless of the length of incarceration or their DDD status. So this is done for members who are long-term care eligible and those who are not long-term care eligible as well. So there are three justice region coordinators and they're currently monitoring 162 members. and one of the concerns that had been raised within the Olmstead plan was related to members being released from jails or prison without the durable medical equipment that they might need. The division has not seen any specific concerns with members having their needed durable medical equipment when they are released, but we do have a process in place that we can use to work with their health plan counterparts to ensure that members do have what they need upon their release. Thanks, Angie. I saw that you put information about H2O in there. Yeah, Lisa.

Chat Message:

**Angela Venne:** Read about the AHCCCS Housing & Health Opportunities (H2O) Demonstration here:  
<https://www.azahcccs.gov/Resources/Federal/HousingWaiverRequest.html>



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm



**Strategy 3:**

**Reach-in discharge planning for the justice system**

1. DDD currently has 162 members being monitored by the DDD Justice Reach-In Program
2. No concerns or issues related to members needing durable medical equipment upon release - process in place to address

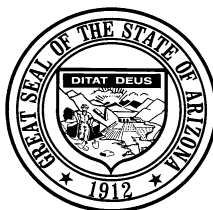
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Sorry about that again. So with that being said, with the justice. With this are. so the Olmstead act is also kind of monitors. Does it monitor DDD members that are going in and out of jail? Does it?

**Christina Hedges:** So, Olmstead does not. Olmstead just ensures that members who might have justice involvement are able to continue receiving services within their community.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** No. even in jail or...

**Christina Hedges:** just when they're outside of jail.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** only out when they're outside of jail. Okay.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Christina Hedges:** So, the DDD has her own justice program and...

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Just checking.

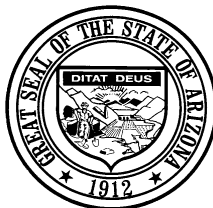
**Christina Hedges:** I'm sure we could also have them come and present or share some of that information.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay. So, it's just basically helping those that are at risk of being going in and out of jail, etc. that they have their services in place as they're leaving jail or trying to do their best to get them their services while they're in that interim state of functioning and living. Okay. Thank you.

**Christina Hedges:** Exactly. to ensure that discharge planning is happening when somebody might be leaving jail or a prison or a juvenile detention center. Our justice region coordinators also have communication with the jails and prisons for any members that might be incarcerated to ensure stuff like medical lists are updated so that the jail has the correct medications for the member and whatnot. Yeah. De

**Diedra Freedman:** Am I misunderstanding? But they're also involved if a member is involved with the judicial system so that they can provide alternative supports and services that may satisfy the judicial system so that they avoid incarceration.

**Christina Hedges:** That's a fabulous question and I am not sure about that. I know that we do monitor them until they're off probation or off parole as well. And we do ensure, we have a monthly meeting to kind of look at all of the members that we are monitoring. We're looking at all of the incident reports that are happening for members, ensuring that behavioral health services are in place, ensuring that division services are in place, to ensure that members are, I guess, for lack of a better term, not at risk of returning to jail.



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Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

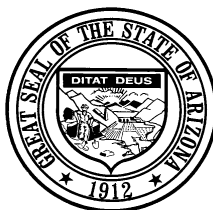
**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

01:30:00

**Diedra Freedman:** I do know because we had the justice coordinator present to district west, but it must have been six years ago and if I'm remembering the wrong first name please excuse me but I think the woman's name was Bambi and she was really good anyway she talked to us about a case where there was a DDD member who was in DCS custody because DCS was the legal guardian, this individual it's called a rule 11 hearing and DCS would not consent to it and the day that this individual DDD member turned 18, it was actually the DDD justice coordinator who made sure that the public defender, because the individual didn't have a guardian, sat down and the individual signed the necessary paperwork and the court immediately granted the rule 11 and the individual was put into a group home situation that the court approved and was happy about and that ended the incarceration. So I just assume because she shared that with us that was part of what they normally do. Maybe she went above and beyond her job, but I would think that that would be something that we would want them to do.

**Christina Hedges:** That's definitely a question that we can take back to our justice team and have them and then provide the answer to you. And also like I said they are more than happy to do a presentation to any of the IOC's about what they do kind of on a daily basis.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

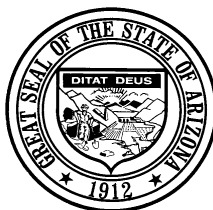
January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Strategy 5:  
Workforce Development Initiatives**

1. Final numbers from ARPA Dual Diagnosis Trainings:
  - a. 114 Behavioral Health Provider Agencies enrolled one or more staff members in the training plan
  - b. 4,250 Individuals completed one or more of the courses in the training plan
  - c. 34,094 Courses in the training plan were completed
  - d. 2,398 Individuals completed the virtual instructor-led course
  - e. 600 participants in total at both conferences
2. Updated ARPA Positive Behavior Support Training numbers:
  - a. Approximately 13,300 direct support professionals trained
  - b. Over 200 family members/caregivers trained through Raising Special Kids



**Christina Hedges:** So, strategy number five looks at workforce development initiatives. And two of the biggest initiatives that the division has been working on, are the American dual diagnosis training and the American Rescue Plan Act positive behavior support training projects. The ARPA dual diagnosis training project wrapped up in September and the final numbers show that we had over a hundred or we had 114 behavioral health provider agencies enroll one or more staff in the training plan with over 4,000 individuals completing one or more trainings in the plan. Over 34,000 courses within the training plan were completed and over 2,000 individuals completed the virtual instructor-led course. Additionally, the division did hold two in-person bridging the gap conferences with a total of 600 participants attending each of those conferences or attending those conferences.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Christina Hedges:** In total, our ARPA positive behavior support training most recent numbers show that we have had approximately 13,300 direct support professionals taking our positive behavior support training as well as over 200 family members and caregivers took the training free of charge through our specialty contract with Raising Special Kids.

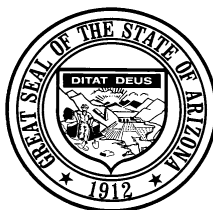
**Christina Hedges:** The numbers for positive behavior support are still going up as we are still getting training records from different qualified vendors and as Raising Special Kids continues to roll the training out. Let's see. Does that it did. Okay, perfect.



**Strategy 6:**

**High quality network to ensure members are served in the most effective and least restrictive manner**

1. Division's new Qualified Vendor Agreement, DDD-2024, has gone into effect as of Wednesday, January 1, 2025.
1. The services open for solicitation are listed on the Division's website



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Christina Hedges:** So, strategy six revolves around having a high quality network to ensure that members are served in the most effective and least restrictive manner. The division has rolled out our new qualified vendor agreement DDD 2024. This went into effect three weeks ago on January 1st. Some of the new things within our new qualified vendor agreement include revised contract language to be more person-centered, as well as new requirements for qualified vendors to have staff and key positions with specific education or specific experience requirements. There is currently a list of services which are open for solicitation and these are listed on the division website and we can drop the link in the chat for that as we go.

Chat Message:

Christina Hedges 7:20 PM

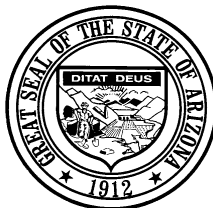
<https://www.azahcccs.gov/AHCCCS/Initiatives/ArizonaOlmsteadPlan/>

**Strategy 7:**

**Person-centered planning enhancements**

1. DDD is seeking accreditation from the National Committee for Quality Assurance for Case Management for Long Term Services and Supports
2. Nursing Support Coordination Unit was created in 2024 with 5 Nurse Support Coordinators and 1 Supervisor - smaller caseloads





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

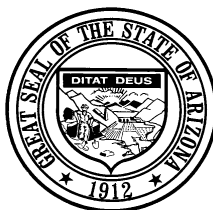
January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Christina Hedges:** And the last strategy that I'll be talking about is strategy seven which involves person centered planning enhancements. The division is seeking accreditation from the national committee for quality assurance or NCQA for case management for long-term services and supports. NCQA is an organization that's focused on improving the quality of health care through evidence-based standards, measures, and programs. Our survey for accreditation is in June of this year and part of the accreditation does involve new support coordination training that'll be rolling out for the new service assessment process. Another thing that the division has been working on in terms of person- centered planning enhancements is the creation of the nursing support coordination unit.

01:35:00

**Christina Hedges:** This was created last year and it consists of five nurse support coordinators as well as one supervisor and it supports the ability for smaller case load numbers for members with more medically complex situations. And that kind of the test unit of this is supporting the entire state as a whole. And finally, if you want to stay connected with Olmstead, you're able to go to the AHCCCS website to subscribe to the Olmstead mailing list for updates as well as information about when public comment periods are open. We will continue to review Olmstead quarterly at various stakeholder meetings. And last but not least, if you want to submit any feedback regarding Olmstead at any time, you're able to do so via their email address. So, does anybody have any questions?





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

## Stay Connected with Olmstead

- Visit [www.azahcccs.gov/Olmstead](http://www.azahcccs.gov/Olmstead). Here, interested parties have the option to:
  - Subscribe to updates to receive the latest news regarding the Olmstead Plan,
  - Receive information about open public comment periods, and
- Review quarterly updates in the Olmstead Plan. Find out when these updates occur by subscribing to updates via the Olmstead web page
- Input and feedback on the Olmstead Plan may be provided during any of the above events or sent separately via the Olmstead email address throughout the year ([Olmstead@azahcccs.gov](mailto:Olmstead@azahcccs.gov))



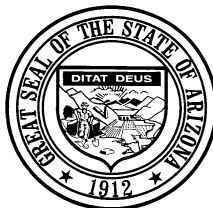
**Christina Hedges:** Yeah, Lisa.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I think I have a lot of questions, but I was wondering, I put it in the chat. Is it possible for us to get a copy of this? just so much information that I'd love to just kind of go through it a little bit more with Thank you so much for the presentation, Don.

**Christina Hedges:** Yeah. Of course.

**Don Harrington:** *I'm just wondering. I mean this is great. There's a lot of great ideas in here. There's a lot of great ways for members to move forward* for members to gain their independence, but some of these things are going to cost money and in the executive session that I had earlier today I mean we can have these ideas but what are the likelihood that this is perhaps ...

**Christina Hedges:** Did Don freeze?



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Yes. I thought I did.

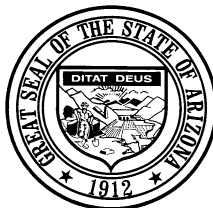
**Christina Hedges:** Sorry, Don. You cut off in the middle of what you were saying.

**Don Harrington:** my screen froze.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** You off after you said you discussed an executive. Yeah.

**Don Harrington:** But some of these programs that are listed along with the mental health clinics and whatnot. In an earlier session today, we discussed that all these increases in mental health services and things like that are preventing from that money flowing down into the DSPs and the ADHDs and so on and so forth. What is the likelihood of all these strategies being fully funded? I guess is my question. Okay.

**Zane Garcia Ramadan:** I can take that one. so I think a lot of the strategies that were just mentioned won't necessitate significant funding above and beyond the current operating budget. So if I think about the NCQA accreditation and the work that we're doing there to improve the quality of support that our staff provide, that's not necessarily going to be anything significantly above and beyond that it would be, a barrier from a financial standpoint. The positive behavior support training that we're providing to direct care workers. We were fortunate in that we received ARPA funds to be able to carry out this first round and get such a large group trained, but even on an ongoing basis, there's going to be opportunities for qualified vendors to be able to send staff to these trainings. And it is something that we might look at if there's potentially other trainings that are somewhat depleted where we could find ways to still provide that training. So I think for a lot of what's in that plan, that's not necessarily going to be the cost driving issues that we talked about this morning, which are more so around the amount of HCBS services that people are receiving. Nothing in our plan is talking about we want to get members more attendant care services or we want to get members, more HCBS services necessarily. And so, I think looking at the ways that we can make positive interventions that support the Olmstead plan that don't necessarily drive costs are something that I'm hopeful within our, current initiatives we're able to do.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

01:40:00

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay, I don't know if Don I think Don lost connection. But Zane, I think that was a very thorough explanation.

**Christina Hedges:** Of course.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you so much. Any other questions in regards to the Olmstead plan? And thank you so much for being able to share that PowerPoint. and we will go to our next agenda item. And if Don comes back on and he has any more clarifying questions, Zane, would you be willing to answer those?

**Zane Garcia Ramadan:** Sure.

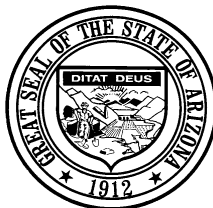
**Update from DDPC (Planning Council)**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Update from DDPC if they're still here, man.

**Jon Meyers:** Good evening everybody.

**Jon Meyers:** John Myers with the DD Planning Council. It's a banner day. I've gotten to hear the Olmstead presentation twice today. I feel like I know everything there is to know about Olmstead. Thank you very much Christina for going through it twice. I wanted to just update you on a couple of things going on with the DD Council. First of all, earlier today we offered to the public a legislative overview related to both the state legislative session and the new congress that is now in session. As an ad organization, we do a lot of bill tracking. We do a lot of public policy work and we do a lot of outreach to our elected officials related to different issues that touch upon the IDD population. So it's very important to us that we also be communicating with the public about what's going on.

**Jon Meyers:** Part of that presentation earlier today was focused on specific bills that we are watching at the legislature. But just as big a part of that was focused on the advocates and advocacy needed statewide and nationwide around the potential for Medicaid funding cuts by Congress. It's as everyone knows a grave concern.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

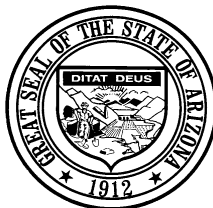
**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

**January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm**

**Jon Meyers:** The House of Representatives is moving very quickly to make changes. The Senate will probably not be far behind and we are dramatically concerned as I'm sure many of you are, probably most or all of you are about the potential damage that could be done by some of the proposals that are on the table right now. So, we're working hard to share the word with our stakeholders around the state and to engage them in advocacy and outreach to our federal elected officials to try and prevent any significant cuts to the Medicaid programs that support so many Arizonans.

**Jon Meyers:** We will be offering another legislative update. We haven't decided yet whether we're going to do one mid session or just a kind of up at the end of the session. but I think we'll probably try to do one in the middle of the session to see how things are progressing and what might actually make it to the governor's desk this year. We'll certainly communicate with anybody who's on our mailing list and through our various communications channels about that event when it gets scheduled. I also wanted to mention that we are just beginning the process of developing our next five-year state plan. We are funded by the federal government and as part of our requirements from the Department of Health and Human Services, we have to develop a five-year plan. The current one we're in runs through, September of 2026. The next one will start in October of 2026 and run through September of 30-31. So, it seems like it's a long way out, but in fact, there's a lot of preparation to do.

**Jon Meyers:** I think the folks from DDD would testify to the fact that as they're doing strategic planning right now, there is a lot of work to be done before a plan itself is actually issued. So that's what we're working on now and we're working with the Institute for Human Development at NAU to do a lot of our data collection to develop a comprehensive review and analysis and then to work with us through the process of doing focus groups and community outreach to get that plan in place. That will be done in August of 2026. So, don't hold your breath, but we will certainly be sharing that information with the public when our plan is finalized. We also have some updates to some website resources for the DD council. During the legislative session, we post a regular legislative update, a roundup of key activity, key legislation.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

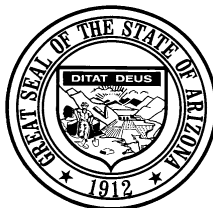
**January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm**

**Jon Meyers:** So, if you're curious about things that we're tracking related to the DD population, you can check out our website. What's even more exciting for us right now is through a data sharing agreement with DES and DDD, our data hub, which is a page on our website that provides data about prevalence and disability diagnoses in Arizona. It's now a more robust site because we are getting some state level information, not just federal level information, from the census bureau, but now we're getting state level information about not individuals but the DD service population. The population served by DDD and ALTCS in Arizona. None of it is personally identifiable.

**Jon Meyers:** None of it exposes who anybody is or where they live, but it allows us to show on a county by county basis, what types of disabilities are most prevalent in those areas. What trends have occurred over time, information like that. It has proven to be very valuable to some researchers. It has proven to be very valuable to some folks at the legislature, and it has proven to be valuable to a lot of members of the general public. So, we are very, very excited to be sharing that information. We're working with a researcher at ASU to keep that site updated and many thanks to Zan and to your team at DDD for working with us to get that data share agreement in place. Made for a really nice resource for the public to use. And then the last thing I would mention is we are a funding agency as many of you know. We do give grants for a variety of projects, research, programmatic and so forth. We don't have any current RFPs issued.

**01:45:00**

**Jon Meyers:** So, we're not looking for any grant applications right now, but we are in the middle of some very exciting projects. We have about 12 different projects being funded right now, including three that are very exciting to us because they're working with each of the state universities on it on separate projects focused on parenting and pregnancy supports for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. More and more people with IDD wish to become parents or are parents, but they don't always have the supports they need in order to be effective parents and in order to do it as well as they would like to do it. So, we're funding these three different research projects on different aspects of providing pregnancy and parenting supports and we've already presented findings from these reports at a couple of different conferences.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Jon Meyers:** IHD will be offering online a webinar coming up in a couple of weeks with a panel of parents with disabilities talking about their experiences and we would encourage any or all of you to participate in that panel to sit in on the webinar. It's really fascinating and it really is enlightening about the experiences that individuals with disabilities go through as they have children, as they raise children and as they watch their children leave the nest and go out into the world. So things that we're really pleased to be working on. I'm happy to answer any questions. I know time is a little bit tight, so I don't want to take too much, but thank you for the opportunity to bring you up to date on some of the things we're working on at the council.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you, Jon. Is it possible to put that webinar link in the chat for the parenting and support? Okay, no problem.

**Jon Meyers:** Give me just a minute to find it. Yeah, give me just a minute to find it. I'll put it in there.

Chat Message:

Jon Meyers 7:26 PM

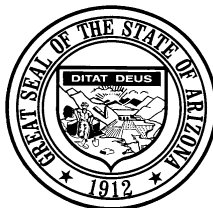
Institute for Human Development/NAU - Amplifying Voices of Disability Virtual Day of Learning - February 27, 2025 - <https://nau.edu/ihd/amplifying-voices/>

Jon Meyers 7:26 PM

Institute for Human Development/NAU - Amplifying Voices of Disability Virtual Day of Learning - February 27, 2025 - <https://nau.edu/ihd/amplifying-voices/>

Update from DDAC (Advisory Council)

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Any questions for him? I know we are tight on time and thank you everyone for hanging on. If not, then we'll go ahead and go to the next agenda update from DDAC.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Kin Counts:** Hi this is Kin. So for a while we have been struggling with the public participants for our public forum. Usually no one ever attend. So we are looking at the spreading awareness through the DDD town hall meetings and also maybe through the support coordinator. We have been struggling with this for a while and we have changed our meetings too. Instead of two forum sessions in a day, one month we have a morning, next month we have a evening but still the last year we have zero participants. Yeah. So that's about it. Thank you.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay, thank you,...

**Assistant Director of DDD Update**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Zane

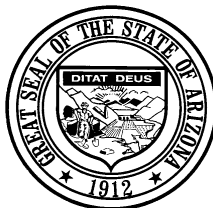
**Zane Garcia Ramadan:** Thanks, recognizing the time, I want to be respectful of everyone's time. A lot of what I was going to share was actually already kind of naturally discussed within the course of the meeting this evening. One thing that I'll just reiterate and mention is that, we are working very closely on our strategic plan that we hope to have published by July of 2025, which will be the first time that we've developed a five-year strategic plan in nearly a decade. And so, we're kind of in this final phase of information collection. We've, met with dozens of groups, collected hundreds and hundreds of pieces of input that, probably in the month of February, we're going to be really closely analyzing and, beginning to put together, the outline and shell of something that, of course, we will continue to engage with the community on as we work towards that, final publication in July. Outside of that, Jon mentioned, we're very closely monitoring the legislative session, and, hoping for support for DDD. And that's about it. Great.

01:50:00

**DDD Leadership and Staff Updates**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Do we still have them?

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Do we still have AHCCCS on the line? Fredreka or Michelle? Okay.



**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Michelle Rademacher:** We may not have any of those updates. My apologies.

**Discussion, Vote on Next Meeting Date & Facilitator**

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** No worries. So, we'll go ahead and I think the last is just discussion and when we are going to have our next meeting. I think what it would be July, correct? Is that accurate?

**Michelle Rademacher:** No, it would be April.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** April. Thank you. I'm sorry.

**Michelle Rademacher:** No problems. Totally understand. Information overload.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** It's 9:30 for me. Any discussion on when and where and not where and who would like to facilitate.

**Keith Jansen:** The 16th looks good at 5:30.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay the April 16th at 5:30. Does that work for all others? That's the Wednesday before Good Friday. if anybody celebrates those things. So there's any, the Wednesday before Easter, all okay with that? IOC?

**Michelle Rademacher:** We do have conflict with that. That would be the District North meeting for DDD IOC. South is on the 14th, West is the 2nd and Central is the 25th. If that helps you guys.

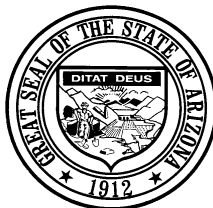
**Lisa Ehlenberger:** What about the 23rd? That would be the Wednesday after Good Friday and Easter. It would be similar to right now, the fourth.

**Don Harrington:** I'm good with a 23rd.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Is Anybody opposed to the 23rd? De

**Suzanne Hessman:** It's fine. It's fine with me.





**Arizona Department of Administration  
Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

**Statewide Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) Chairs  
Meeting Minutes**

January 22, 2025 - 5:30 to 7:30pm

**Diedra Freedman:** 23rd works for me. Lisa

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Okay awesome.

**Keith Jansen:** No opposition from south.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** So that is it. I think we actually can end and then I'm just going to ask is this meeting typically a two-hour meeting? I think it is, Or did we just go a little over today? Okay, perfect. I just want to make sure. Perfect. I mean,...

**Michelle Rademacher:** Does anyone want to facilitate that meeting? I mean I may have not heard. The meeting on the April 23rd.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** I'll volunteer if no one else wants to. You want to? Don will be facilitating.

**Michelle Rademacher:** Thank you.

**Lisa Ehlenberger:** Thank you all DDD staff and all your presentations and information. and I know that all of our hearts are in the same place, we're all here for that. Don, you have your hand raised still? Did you have a question? Good night everyone. and have a great evening.

Meeting ended after 01:54:23 🙌

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm by Lisa Ehlenberger. The next meeting will take place virtually on April 23, 2025 at 5:30pm.