



2027-2031 Five-Year State Plan

Overview & Framework

The Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities (ICDD) develops a Five-Year State Plan to improve the independence, productivity, integration, and inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families across Illinois. The plan is designed to meet the requirements of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act) and focus ICDD resources on systems change efforts that improve lives statewide.

To develop this draft framework, ICDD gathered input from self-advocates, families, community partners, providers, state agencies, and other leaders across Illinois. Research and the Council's statewide systems work, combined with this community input, made clear that individuals with DD and their families continue to face barriers in self-advocacy, leadership access, employment, housing, behavioral health, service coordination, and crisis response.

Individuals and families consistently emphasized the need for stronger leadership pathways, a greater voice in shaping systems priorities, more responsive supports, and improved coordination across public systems.

The priorities reflected in the draft State Plan were further refined through the Council's goal mapping process and organized into two major focus areas: Individual and Family Advocacy (IFA) and Systems Change (SC).

The IFA goal focuses on strengthening self-advocacy, leadership development, and lived experience so individuals with DD, families, and allies can shape cross-disability and systems change efforts. The SC goal focuses on strengthening the support systems that impact daily life, including employment, community living, behavioral health, service access, and responsiveness to emerging needs.

GOAL 1: INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY ADVOCACY (IFA)

By September 30, 2031, individuals with developmental disabilities, families, and allies across Illinois strengthen self-advocacy and leadership skills and shape cross-disability, culturally responsive, and systems change efforts through lived experience.

Objective 1.1: Statewide Self-Advocacy Network

By September 30, 2031, 1,000 self-advocates with developmental disabilities will strengthen leadership skills through a statewide self-advocacy network and meaningfully contribute to cross-disability and culturally responsive advocacy initiatives.

Objective 1.2: Strengthen Leadership and Self-Advocacy Skills

By September 30, 2031, ICDD will support at least 10,000 individuals with developmental disabilities, family members, and allies to strengthen leadership and self-advocacy skills through training, peer learning opportunities, leadership activities, and community engagement that prepares individuals to serve as leaders, peer mentors, and trainers in their communities.

Objective 1.3: Regional Self-Advocacy Outreach and Engagement

By September 30, 2031, ICDD will expand statewide outreach and engagement with at least 1,500 individuals with developmental disabilities to strengthen self-advocacy and elevate lived experience in shaping systems change priorities.

Suggested Activities

1. Build and sustain a statewide self-advocacy leadership network by connecting regional self-advocates, emerging leaders, and existing advocacy groups through recurring convenings, issue-based workgroups, and shared leadership opportunities.
2. Host peer-led leadership and advocacy webinars by engaging self-advocate leaders to co-design topics, recruit speakers, facilitate sessions, and develop accessible tools participants can use in their own communities.
3. Support self-advocate leadership forums and regional listening sessions by creating structured opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to identify emerging issues, elevate lived experience, and inform ICDD priorities and public systems discussions.

4. Expand peer mentoring and lived experience leadership opportunities by developing mentor cohorts, fellowship pathways, speaker bureaus, and train-the-trainer models that prepare self-advocates to lead education and systems change efforts.
5. Increase participation in cross-disability coalitions and advisory bodies by preparing and supporting self-advocates and family leaders to serve on state workgroups, task forces, boards, public planning bodies, and community partner committees.
6. Support family and ally leadership development by providing training, peer learning, and coaching opportunities that strengthen advocacy skills, community leadership, and partnership with self-advocates in systems change work.
7. Create self-advocate leadership fellowships tied to specific policy or systems change initiatives.
8. Develop a rapid response lived experience network that can provide input on emerging policy, service, and systems issues.
9. Support self-advocates to co-lead statewide conferences, public comment sessions, and legislative education efforts.
10. Build plain-language toolkits on self-advocacy, systems navigation, and public voice.
11. Partner with culturally diverse disability communities to expand leadership pathways in underrepresented regions and populations.

GOAL 2: SYSTEMS CHANGE (SC)

By September 30, 2031, support systems will be strengthened to improve employment, community living, behavioral health, service access, and responsiveness to emerging needs for individuals with developmental disabilities and families in Illinois.

Objective 2.1: Employment First

By September 30, 2031, ICDD will promote participation of people with developmental disabilities in Employment First activities, increase stakeholder capacity, and advocate for at least two policy changes to increase competitive integrated employment.

Objective 2.2: Community Housing

By September 30, 2031, ICDD will collaborate with state agencies, providers, and community partners to expand the range of community housing models for people with developmental disabilities by supporting at least three statewide initiatives that improve access to Host Homes, Shared Living, small CILA options, community-based living supports, or independent living with person-centered supports.

Objective 2.3: Behavioral Health

By September 30, 2031, ICDD will partner with individuals with developmental disabilities, families, advocates, content experts, and at least three state agencies to identify barriers in the behavioral health, dual diagnosis, and crisis response system, with a focus on improving coordination across systems, and implement at least two regional or statewide interventions that improve access, reduce avoidable emergency room admissions, and strengthen crisis stabilization pathways.

Objective 2.4: Improved Systems Through Collaboration

By September 30, 2031, through strategic partnerships, ICDD will implement at least five innovative initiatives that improve service access, strengthen community living, and enhance coordination across responsive systems for individuals with developmental disabilities and families.

Objective 2.5: Emerging Needs

By September 30, 2031, ICDD will address any unanticipated emerging needs (e.g., natural disasters, pandemics, etc.) for individuals with developmental disabilities and families.

Suggested Activities

1. Advance Employment First policy and systems alignment by partnering with state agencies, employers, providers, and community partners to identify barriers, strengthen implementation, and support policy, practice, and data changes that increase competitive integrated employment.
2. Expand community-based housing pilots and scalable models by testing and strengthening Host Homes, Shared Living, small CILA, and independent living approaches that increase person-centered housing choice and reduce reliance on more restrictive settings.

3. Improve crisis stabilization and dual diagnosis pathways by convening behavioral health, disability, emergency response, and state agency partners to redesign access points, strengthen diversion strategies, and improve stabilization outcomes for individuals in crisis.
4. Test and scale innovative cross-system solutions by piloting flexible service models, evaluating outcomes, and expanding effective approaches that improve access, community participation, and responsiveness across systems.
5. Improve service coordination across agencies and community partners by aligning roles, referral pathways, communication protocols, and problem-solving structures that reduce fragmentation for individuals with developmental disabilities and families.
6. Respond to emerging statewide needs affecting the developmental disabilities community by coordinating rapid systems responses, cross-agency planning, and resource alignment during disasters, public health emergencies, service disruptions, or other urgent statewide issues.
7. Advance data-sharing and systems mapping efforts that help identify persistent barriers, service gaps, and opportunities for statewide improvement.
8. Support regional or statewide demonstrations that test new approaches to access, navigation, stabilization, and long-term community supports.
9. Develop scalable tools, frameworks, and guidance that help agencies and community partners replicate successful systems change strategies statewide.
10. Partner with culturally and geographically diverse communities to identify disparities in access and test responsive solutions that improve equity across Illinois systems.



2027-2031 Five-Year State Plan Public Comment Period

The draft ICDD 2027–2031 Five-Year State Plan will be posted for a 45-calendar-day public comment period consistent with DD Act requirements.

Open Date: Thursday, April 10, 2026

Close Date: May 24, 2026

This process ensures individuals with DD, families, advocates, community partners, and other members of the public have a meaningful opportunity to review the proposed goals and objectives and provide input before final submission.

Feedback gathered during this period will inform any final revisions prior to submission to the federal Office of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.

★ **SUBMIT PUBLIC COMMENT** ★

Please contact Mariel Hamer-Sinclair, Associate Director of Program & Policy at Mariel.Hamer-Sinclair@illinois.gov with any questions or for support submitting your public comment.

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