



**Wisconsin Board for People
with Developmental Disabilities**

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2020 Biennial Report





September 2020

The Honorable Tony Evers Governor
State of Wisconsin 115 East-State Capitol
Madison, WI 53702

Dear Governor Evers:

Please find attached the 2018-2020 biennial report from the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD). The report details our Board's mission, membership, goals, accomplishments, and budget.

Our federal charge in the Developmental Disabilities Act is identifying the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities and developing innovative and cost-effective ways to meet these needs in a manner that upholds human and civil value. Councils (Boards) must include, at minimum, 60% people with developmental disabilities and their family members.

The BPDD State Plan, informed by statewide input from the disability community, focuses primarily on two areas: Full Participation in the Community and Advocacy Efforts. During 2018–2020, we have made significant progress in all our goal areas.

A few highlights include:

- **COVID-19 Efforts** – BPDD plays a powerful role in response to COVID-19 in ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and their support networks are not left behind. BPDD quickly switched from in-person gatherings to virtual events, launched new videos on the BPDD Self-Determination YouTube Channel that help people cope with COVID-19 and developed a COVID-19 Toolkit for people with disabilities, families, and providers on how to stay healthy, safe and connected.
- **Family-Led Projects** - As a result of additional barriers facing Ho-Chunk and Latino families whose children have disabilities, BPDD put in place Family Navigators to provide culturally sensitive and intense resource coordination to over 21 tribal and Latino families in Wisconsin. These families were not adequately connected to formal services and supports and many of them were already experiencing low income and food/housing insecurity prior to COVID-19.
- **Living Well Grant** - The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) received a 5-year federal grant from the Administration on Community Living to develop and test approaches for improving home and community-based services (HCBS) for people with developmental disabilities. Wisconsin's Living Well project aims to increase health, safety, independence, and well-being of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the community. The project produces a Living Well Wednesday every week on Zoom and Facebook in response to COVID since April 2020. The topics have included the COVID-19

Toolkit, rights, employment, voting, re-opening, and virtual services. All the videos can be found at: bit.ly/LWVideos

- **Voting** - BPDD and its partners in the WI Disability Vote Coalition hosted 4 webinars for more than 150 people on COVID-19 and Voting to help voters understand their rights, how to vote absentee and stay safe if voting in person. The Disability Vote Coalition, which BPDD co-founded, continues to provide accurate information and a hotline to assist voters with disabilities.

As a Governor-appointed Board, BPDD is committed to apply cultural competence in all that we do. The Board strives to increase the number of people in Wisconsin with I/DD to become more independent, productive, and included in all facets of community life.

If you have questions or comments regarding this report or about BPDD, please contact Beth Swedeen, Executive Director, BPDD (contact information listed on Staff page). Additional information, including our five-year plan for 2017-2021, is located on our website, www.wi-bpdd.org.

Best regards,



Elsa Diaz-Bautista, Board Chair

Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

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Parent
Whitefish Bay



Cheryl Funmaker
Parent
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Greg Meyer
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Self-Advocate
Monico



King Hall
Self-Advocate
Milwaukee



Nathan Ruffolo
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Appleton



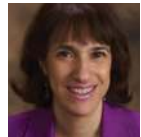
Sydney Badeau
Self-Advocate
Brodhead



Desi Kluth
Self-Advocate
Pewaukee



Andy Thain
Self-Advocate
Thorp



Barbara Beckert
Disability Rights WI
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De Pere



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Self-Advocate
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Milwaukee



Hector Portillo
Parent
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About the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

BPDD is Wisconsin's state developmental disabilities council, authorized under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act (DD Act). Every state and territory have a state Developmental Disabilities Council.

Federal law outlines a unique role for state Councils that includes:



Serving as an independent advisor to the Governor and legislature on public policy issues that impact people with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD)



Charging councils with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and **integration and inclusion in all facets of community life** for people with I/DD.



Engaging with people with disabilities and their allies to understand pressing needs and identify emerging issues impacting the state's I/DD community.



Funding innovative and pilot projects—based on data driven strategic planning—that test best practices and inform state and federal policies and practices leading to greater independence and self-sufficiency for people with I/DD



Encouraging citizen engagement and participation so that the voices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are part of policy decisions.

The Governor appoints BPDD's board members. 60% of BPDD's board are people with I/DD and family members from across the state. BPDD's work is driven by a five-year state plan, which is created based on statewide input from the disability community. 70% of BPDD's federal funding is spent on local projects in accordance with needs identified in the state plan.

BPDD's Unique Role



The role of state councils is to seek continuous improvement across all systems—**education, transportation, health care, employment**, etc.—that touch the lives of people with disabilities. Our work requires us to have a long-term vision of public policy that not only sees current systems as they are, but how these systems could be made better for current and future generations of people with disabilities.

BPDD has relationships with people with disabilities and their families across the state. We routinely host community conversations, outreach to diverse communities, fund local initiatives, and provide information and training to empower citizens to be more engaged on issues affecting people with I/DD.

BPDD is an independent state agency and is available as a resource to Wisconsin's executive, legislative, and judicial branches on disability and disability policy issues. BPDD is also connected and can draw upon a national network of disability experts and data sets to understand how federal actions may impact Wisconsin, and other states' approaches to disability issues.

BPDD's federal charge to improve the lives of people with I/DD cont.

In keeping with other federal laws and policy—including the Americans with Disabilities Act—our charge is to work towards people with disabilities having the same rights and responsibilities as people without disabilities.

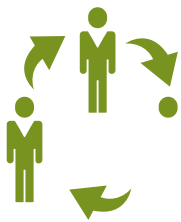
BPDD's federal charge includes advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities. What do these terms mean?



Self-determination means freedom for people with I/DD to: explore their interests; develop skills; have new experiences—including making and learning from mistakes; make decisions about their lives; have relationships; and choose support staff and others they want to support them.



Independence means maximizing the control people with I/DD have over their lives, including: managing their money; living independently; choosing where to live and with whom; being able to get where they need to go on their schedule; and having a job in the community that matches their skills and interests.



Productivity means having full or part-time work at minimum wage or higher, with wages and benefits similar to those without disabilities performing the same work, and fully integrated with co-workers without disabilities.



Integration and Inclusion means having the same expectations and opportunities for people with disabilities as people without disabilities. People with disabilities need the same access to and preparation for education, community participation, and community employment as people without disabilities; outcomes and expectations for people with disabilities include independence, decision-making, living and social skills.

What does BPDD do to advance advocacy, capacity building, and systems change?

The federal DD Act charges BPDD and other DD Councils with outreach, training, technical assistance, supporting and educating communities, interagency collaboration and coordination, barrier elimination, system design and redesign, coalition development and citizen participation, informing policymakers, and demonstration of new approaches to services and supports.



Developmental Disability Councils play a powerful role in response to COVID-19 in ensuring that people with disabilities, their families and their support networks are not left behind. Wisconsin's Board for People with Developmental Disabilities has fluidly shifted much of our work to shape COVID-19 related state policies and support communities around the state to promote the health, safety and connections of people with disabilities who are at increased risk of infection, serious complications, and heightened health and safety risks created by isolation and lack of supports.

LIVE GATHERINGS

BPDD has quickly switched from planning in-person gatherings to virtual platforms, while supporting people with disabilities who have not used this technology before.

- Disability Advocacy Day that typically draws upwards of 400 people each year was the first event to switch to a virtual format with 1,392 people engaged.
- Partners in Policymaking switched to an abbreviated live Zoom session that included speakers and activities while retaining full attendance.
- The Employment First Conference that draws 300 participants is using a virtual format with sessions on how to use technology to provide remote employment supports, how to lead at a time of change and updates on providing employment services and supports in the COVID-19 environment. Registration fees have been eliminated for self-advocates and their family members. An online virtual marketplace will allow microenterprise vendors to continue selling their products at the conference. An Essential Worker video being created with Wisconsin's Managed Care Organizations will be shown to highlight people with disabilities continuing to work through the COVID crisis.

“
You guys just keep knocking it out of the park with the best information in my news feed
”
- Parent

OUTREACH

BPDD has developed a databank with close to 10,000 contacts and an active social media presence that allows us to quickly get information and resources into the hands of the disability community.

- BPDD and its partners in the WI Disability Vote Coalition (WDVC) hosted 4 webinars for more than 150 people on COVID-19 and Voting to address the fast-changing rules around Wisconsin's Spring Election, help voters understand their rights, how to vote absentee and stay safe if voting in person.
- People First Wisconsin, the statewide self-advocacy network supported through a grant from our Council, is working with all 21 chapters on how to have effective Zoom meetings. The Executive Director, a self-advocate herself, sends a weekly letter to members to keep them updated and keep their spirits up.
- BPDD's [Self-Determination You Tube Channel](#), which features 4 dynamic self-advocates co-hosting segments that feature other self-advocates, developed 3 new videos to help people cope with COVID-19, including how to stay healthy, safe, and avoid emotional isolation. Segments are now being taped using Zoom and Facetime, which has proven to be a more cost-effective way to keep the channel going with more frequent and fresh material.

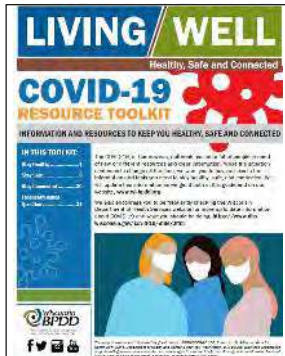
10 Fun Things To Do On-Line



#StayHome #WithMe

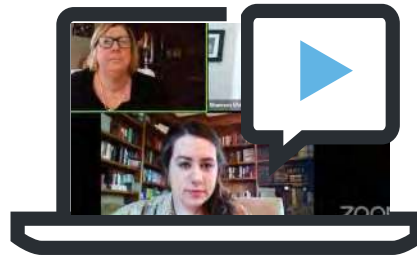
- As a result of additional barriers facing Ho-Chunk tribal members whose children have disabilities, BPDD is hiring a Family Navigator to provide culturally sensitive and intense resource coordination to up to 19 tribal families in Wisconsin. These families are not connected to formal services and supports and many of them were already experiencing poverty and food/housing insecurity prior to COVID-19.

- BPDD's Living Well project has created a COVID 19 Toolkit: [Stay Healthy, Stay Safe, Stay Connected](#) for people with disabilities, families, caregivers and providers.



The redesigned toolkit features a new look and two new sections to make it easier for people to download and use by themselves or alongside those who support them.

The toolkit includes fillable forms, tips, links to information and activities in sections; how to stay healthy, safe and connected. The toolkit contains a Stay at Home fillable plan and a healthcare form. The Living Well project also created several rights documents on living situations, employment, and re-opening in plain language for people with disabilities. The project premiered Living Well Wednesday every week since the beginning of April. The topics have included the toolkit, rights, employment, voting, re-opening, and virtual services. **All the videos can be found at: bit.ly/LWVideos**



Living Well Wednesday has reached over 7000 people and the toolkit has been viewed over 3000 times.

POLICY ACTION

BPDD has taken a lead role in reaching out to the Governor and state Legislature to shape the state's emergency waivers, funding and policy protocols and the unique issues facing people with disabilities during this pandemic. Press releases, press conferences, action alerts, recommendations, surveys and Letters to the Governor about COVID policies and the impact of COVID on people with disabilities can be found at <http://www.survivalcoalitionwi.org/>.

- Many disability service providers responded to the pandemic by offering virtual Home and Community Based Services (HCBS). To evaluate these services and to identify best practices and outcomes, BPDD partnered with the Waisman Center's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities to design and coordinate an evaluation project. 15 service providers participated.

“ You give me an avenue to tell my story (by) giving this press conference. I must have gotten 25 different responses after I spoke saying they would gladly help in any way possible. My hope is after COVID-19 has passed, we can continue to be a caring and helping nation as we are right now. ”

- Self Advocate



The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) mission is to help people with developmental disabilities become independent, productive, and included in all facets of community life.

Increasing Civic Engagement and Advocacy

The Board is sought out by state agency and state policymakers for its I/DD perspective. We are frequently asked how public policies—budget decisions, legislation, administrative rules, and changes to or implementation of state agency programs—will affect people with I/DD and their families. We are also consulted for recommendations on ways to improve programs and public policy for people with I/DD and are a valued stakeholder in a wide variety of public policy arenas (health care, long term care, transportation, and education).

BPDD works in collaboration with Survival Coalition—a cross disability group of 30 organizations—and with the three DD Act partners—Disability Rights Wisconsin, the Waisman Center, and People First Wisconsin—on high priority public policy issues affecting people with I/DD and their families including expanding integrated employment, increasing transportation options and access, improving special education quality and general education access, and improving Medicaid and long term care quality and access.

BPDD collaborates as a joint partner in the Disability Vote Coalition, a non-partisan effort to increase voter turnout and participation in the electoral process by Wisconsin voters with disabilities.



“

I am thinking of getting involved in my local government. Maybe working on a commission on veterans issues. 6 months ago I would not even have thought about this.

- Partner in Policymaking Graduate

”

Empowering advocates with information:

- BPDD collaborates with Survival Coalition of Wisconsin during Disability Advocacy Day. This event connects more than 600 disability advocates from around the state with their legislators at the State Capitol. The annual event includes a briefing about current disability issues and meetings between disability advocates and their legislators.
- BPDD maintains an active legislative alerts email service which allows us to send about 200 alerts a year. BPDD maintains an overall list of more than 9,000 members. In 2018-2019 more than 1,200 subscribers were added to the list.
- BPDD, in partnership with Disability Rights Wisconsin and The Arc, trained over 400 people statewide on disability-specific issues in Governor Evers 2019-21 Biennial Budget to help them advocate for their needs. • Two trainings were offered in Spanish along with translated materials. About 25 people took advantage of these trainings.
- The WI Disability Vote Coalition provided language and testimony on a bill to remove the requirement that a voter with a disability must state their name before being allowed to vote.
- Promoted social media campaigns, public service announcements, press releases and email to spread awareness about Disability Voter Registration Week.

Partners In Policymaking

Partners in Policymaking is a six-session advocacy program for people with I/DD and family members to become seasoned leaders across the state. Graduates work to improve policies and practices that lead to better lives for people with disabilities by improving the quality of supports, developing cost efficiencies, and learning how to use community supports to maximize independence. Partners in Policymaking is designed for adults with developmental disabilities and family members of children and youth with developmental disabilities ages birth to 21.



“ I always believed grassroots activism can work. Partners allowed me to stop thinking of issues as something someone else can fix and helped me realize I can be that someone. That I do not need to take a backseat in activism but instead can be a leader.

- Partners Graduate ”

100% of graduates said they would be more connected with their legislator.

Partners gets results:

- More than 200 Partner graduates are now a network of community leaders and decision-makers serving on policymaking committees, commissions, and boards at local, state and national levels.
- 100% of Partner graduates say they will be a stronger advocate and be more actively involved in issues that affect people with disabilities.
- When asked how they will use their new skills after Partners, graduates said:
 - “I am thinking of getting involved in my local government. I may work on a commission on Veterans’ issues. 6 months ago, I would not even have thought about this.”
 - “I have joined the board of a second non-profit centered around individuals with disabilities. I feel like I am now a much more informed board member that can help guide decisions and advocate for innovative service delivery models.”
 - “Partners influenced me to volunteer as a Special Education Liaison for families. I’ve joined an advocacy committee, spoke at a Black Disabled Lives Matter event, was just offered a paid advocacy job and am writing the story of my son and I in order to help others advocate.”

SPARKS Grants

Small grants of \$3,000 or less to “SPARK” local communities into action have led to big changes at the local level. The purpose of SPARKS Grants is to organize local grassroots groups that identify and make changes in their communities that result in a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities. Grassroots community organizing means local people working for positive community change with people with disabilities on issues that are important to them.



“Such an amazing opportunity for kids with all different backgrounds to come together and build friendships. My daughter had the time of her life and can’t wait to come back next summer!”

Parent of Camp Kindred Participant

16 SPARKS grants were awarded during 2018-2020.

Communities best know what they need:

- Two projects focused on getting people with disabilities registered to vote and to the polls.
- Padres e Hijos en Accion** offered inclusive community activities to Spanish speaking families and received another grant to host a Hispanic radio talk show to educate families about disability resources.
- People First Wisconsin of Fond du Lac** got their chapter going with a focus on legislative advocacy and received another grant to offer members a chance to participate in musical theater (see photo).
- All My Friends** playground project helped garner community support for an inclusive playground in Grafton, WI.
- Camp Kindred** used their funds to include youth with disabilities and siblings in a unique camp experience with the goal of disrupting the cycle of segregation in Milwaukee.
- The Mad Town Mommas** are growing their nonprofit to educate families whose children have IEPs to know their rights.
- Two projects focused on raising disability awareness including a week of activities such as voter education and an art show in La Crosse and a community screening of the ‘Intelligent Lives’ movie in Stoughton.
- Opportunity Development Centers** educated people with disabilities about making informed choices, voting, working in the community and being an active citizen.
- Two projects addressed transportation barriers for people with disabilities: one in Wausau and one Marshfield.
- Creation of a sensory room so people with disabilities and their families can try equipment without a diagnosis, membership or insurance.

Employment First Initiative

Wisconsin Employment First promotes competitive integrated employment—jobs in typical business settings at minimum wage or higher—in the general workforce for people with disabilities. The initiative combines the work of grassroots groups with statewide policy and legislative efforts. The Employment First Partners project provides mini-grants of \$2,000 to local groups to create big changes in their communities. The Employment First Conference continues to focus on sharing lessons and brainstorming ideas to support people with disabilities to have meaningful lives in the community that include work, connections, recreation, and contribution. In 2020 the conference went virtual and included sessions on the shifting landscape in employment opportunities and services, due to the pandemic.



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“We set up internships at The Waters restaurant for students with disabilities as a result of this meeting”

- Employment First Partner

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As a result of three Employment First Partner events, three students with disabilities got a job, two applied for services through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and two applied for a college program that they did not know about previously.

Grassroots efforts create opportunities:

- 16 statewide grassroots groups worked with local businesses and communities to increase employment at competitive wages for people with the most significant disabilities.
- Over 750 professionals, self-advocates, and families attended the Wisconsin Employment First Conference in May 2019 and 2020.
- 30 Employment First Ambassadors, people with disabilities working in the community who advocate with Employment First Partners about the importance of competitive integrated employment, presented at 24 events, building self-confidence while educating others.
- Employment First Partners coordinated over 30 events, reaching nearly 600 people to advocate for employment for people with disabilities.

Legislation to Improve Employment Opportunities:

“BPDD advocated for the passage of Wisconsin’s Employment First law in 2018. In 2019, implementation of the law continued with Wisconsin’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health Services, and Department of Public Instruction collaborating to develop a joint plan to increase competitive integrated employment.”

Wisconsin Promise

BPDD received three contracts, based on previous successful work, to support the implementation of the PROMISE grant. BPDD coordinated community conversation events around the state to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities and facilitated executive committee meetings for project leadership and state agency secretaries and superintendent. In addition, BPDD supported the development of a network of family advocates around the state who supported participating youth and families to build their advocacy skills, to raise family expectations about employment, and to help families navigate service systems. In 2019, an extension year for the project, BPDD supported interested youth and families in implementing community leadership projects.



Wisconsin Promise was a project for 2000 participating Wisconsin families with 14 to 16 year old teens who receive Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI). The goal was to support teens receiving SSI and their families in achieving their education and career goals. The main project ran from 2013-2018 with an extension year for final activities in 2019. Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation received and led the grant.

Youth and Families Impacting their Communities

- 33 youth and 56 family members who participated in the Promise project implemented over 60 Community Leadership Projects.
- A parent who works for the United States Postal Service (USPS) saw many jobs at work that could be done by a person with a disability. The parent joined the board of the national union and quickly gained support for hiring people with disabilities. She is working with the USPS to create a study guide and accommodations for the entrance exam to minimize the barriers.
- A father brought together a group of Latinx family members for networking, mutual support, and education on disability rights and resources available in the community. Twenty people attended the first meeting, and he continued to bring the group together monthly with guest speakers addressing topics relevant to the Latinx community.
- In a small town in northern Wisconsin, a youth developed a plan to provide support and information to teens with mental health issues that impact their ability to stay in school and find work. She also spoke to her local mental health coalition about her experience as a trauma survivor and the challenges people face to employment in her community.

Take Your Legislator To Work Campaign

The Board for People with Developmental Disabilities' Take Your Legislator to Work Campaign connects individuals with a disability who work in local businesses, both large and small, with their state legislators. BPDD supports the employee and employer through the process of hosting a legislative visit in district, providing guidance, materials (t-shirt, buttons, and stickers), and assistance with communication if needed. The Take Your Legislator to Work campaign has resulted in increased civic engagement and has helped to forge lasting relationships between legislators and their constituents with disabilities who are working and contributing to the local community and economy



I was able to learn how having a job has helped a person with a disability increase their self-esteem, foster new relationships and have pride for money earned through employment.

- State Legislator

100% of participants say they are more likely to remain in contact with their legislator, and they feel more confident talking to him or her about issues that are important to them.

Changing attitudes about hiring people with disabilities:

- In 2018/2019 there were 42 total visits including 21 State Representatives and 12 State Senators.
- BPDD also coordinated a Capitol Square Employment Tour with: 6 legislators and staffers, staff from the Governor's office, the Secretary of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) along with 2 DWD staff
- In response to the COVID-19 Pandemic BPDD's programs have gone virtual.

As a result of participating in the program, Employers said:

- "We believe in a supportive community. We believe in walking the walk and not just talking the talk."
- "We want more employees like him. That enthusiasm is something we need in our community."

As a result of participating in the program, legislators say:

- "Alex makes a huge difference in our community. That's why NOW is the time to get more hardworking people like him employed in WI."
- Rep. Barb Dittrich
- "This exemplifies how these great community-based partnerships work. I want to highlight this great story and encourage other businesses to consider similar arrangements when making decisions as to how to address their workforce development needs" -Rep. John Spiros

Public Policy



BPDD works with the state legislature, state agencies, and Governor's office to consult and advise on public policy issues that impact people with I/DD.

This year, BPDD worked with legislative members on several proactive legislative ideas including, required training for guardians, continuing the successful PROMISE Family Navigator program, increasing the capacity to provide community integrated employment services across the state, facilitating regional approaches to transportation, improving non-emergency medical transportation, promoting effective abuse prevention and response for people with disabilities, and incentivizing increases in the number of accessible bathrooms with adult changing tables. BPDD submitted its first annual report to the legislature on the outcomes of the Partners with Business Grant program established in 2018.

The 2019-21 State Budget included many positive items BPDD discussed with the Governor and the legislature's budget writing committee, including increases in: special education categorical aid, Medicaid Personal Care Services rate and Family Care direct funding supplement; children's long-term support funding sufficient to end the current waiting list; public transit, specialized transit, and paratransit funding; lead poisoning and prevention funding; and funding for Dentists serving Medicaid patients with disabilities.

Legislative Advocacy:

- This year, the Governor created a Task Force on Caregiving a key ask from the disability community, including BPDD. Several Board members and Staff from BPDD were appointed to the Task Force.
- Passage of Seclusion and Restraint law
- BPDD collaborated with state agencies to facilitate and advise on the implementation of new laws, including training on Supported Decision-Making agreements and adjustments to agency policies to reflect this new option, and changes the Medical Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP) waiver. BPDD responded to agency requests for ideas to improve IRIS, Family Care, Dental Access, community integrated employment, special education and other topics.
- BPDD has also submitted numerous public comments on federal administrative rules and policies that outlined how proposed changes would impact Wisconsin and its residents living with I/DD.

Public Policy cont.

Specific policy changes BPDD worked to achieve included:

- Development of participant page for COVID, including Living Well health and safety toolkit.
- Medicaid Assistance Purchase Plan waiver reform (included in state budget).
- Elimination of Children's Long Term Support waiting list (included in state budget).
- COVID reopening guidance implemented by Department of Health Services.
- DVR change to College Training Programs: does not rely on "skills and abilities" anymore for funding of college training programs.
- Changes to in-person IRIS/Family Care visit protocol: individuals/guardians cannot decline an in-person visit and protocols for safe in-person visits were developed.
- Successful establishment of Department of Transportation non-driver advisory committee, BPDD staff one of co-chairs of statewide group.
- Introduction of Guardian Training bill (passed Assembly).
- Introduction of ABLE Account bill.
- Introduction of Provider Transformation fund bill.
- Introduction of Adult Changing Table bill.
- Governor included workforce that provides in-home support and services to people with disabilities and older adults within executive order establishing essential personal and essential service designations.
- Support of Amicus Brief filed with Wisconsin Supreme Court explaining heightened COVID-19 risks to people with disabilities and older adults.



Increasing Advocacy and Leadership Skills

The Board supports the statewide self-advocacy organization, People First Wisconsin. Members of the organization work to increase advocacy and leadership skills for people with disabilities.



The Wisconsin Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a week-long leadership training and career awareness program for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors with disabilities. Each summer, 25-30 students with disabilities participate.

“*I loved this week....it was the first week I felt like I was not alone in my disability.*
- Youth Leadership Forum Participant”

People First:

- People First supports 20 local People First Chapters around the state. People First members work on state and local issues to improve full participation in their communities and access to the services and supports they need including: expanding transportation, increasing integrated employment, voting education, self-directing their long-term care services and COVID reopening guidance.
- People First members provided training to local chapters on voter education and leadership skills.
- People First works to ensure people with disabilities are represented on committees and Boards that oversee issues that are important to them.
- People First mobilized and gave testimony on Medicaid expansion and Supported Decision-Making

Youth Leadership Forum:

- 21 youth attended the 2018 Youth Leadership Forum and 21 attended the 2019 Youth Leadership Forum to learn leadership skills, advocacy, and career training.
- All youth met with their legislator to discuss an issue that was important to them such as bullying, working in the community, revamping special education services, etc.

Self-Determination Conference

The Board is dedicated to improving the independence, productivity, and integration of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

The Self-Determination Conference helps to educate individuals with disabilities, their families and the people who support and provide services. The conference is an opportunity to gain skills, tools, and information that they can take back and implement for themselves; either in their own lives or in their professional role.



“

Of all the super powers we have, sometimes people do not give us credit for them

”

- Self Determination Conference participant

Besides having a better understanding of resources available, such as how to help people with setting up ABL Accounts or how to hire Private Hired Workers (self directed model through IRIS), my main take-away is the importance of finding people's strengths. Everyone has strengths and you can build community on these strengths.

Improving independence, productivity, and integration:

- More than 750 people attended the Self-Determination Conference in 2019.
- BPDD provided over 125 scholarships for families and individuals with disabilities to attend the conference.
- Over 38 organizations attended to provide resources at exhibitor tables.
- 27 Micro-bussinesses exhibited and sold their crafts, art, jewelry etc.
- We asked participants what their experience was like at the conference and they had this to say:
 - "I now have tools to help my family member be as successful as possible in their self-direction and determination."
 - "I am going to work more on helping people with disabilities to vote, by getting the word out and coordinating transportation."
 - "This conference is always a great reminder that even little things mean a lot. I will continue to be a steward for self-determination working within my community to continually make others aware of possibilities and opportunities. My next measurable action will be participating in Superior Days to advocate for more Medicaid dollars to be delegated to caregivers in an effort to support self-determination."

Family-Led Network Grants

Goal: *People with disabilities and their families make choices about their lives and are actively engaged in planning their services and supports.*

Individuals with disabilities and their families must have adequate information, resources and supports to create opportunities for an inclusive and meaningful life in their communities. Many families are uncertain about what they were looking for other than they want the best possible life for their loved ones. When families support each other, they are empowered to think creatively to meet the needs of their individual with a disability.



“One of the tribal youth a 19 year old who is participating in Project Search, has chosen to use the retreat time to practice his Self-Advocacy skills. He’s been sitting in on the parent sessions and working on his own future plans. He decided to apply for Cutting Edge and found out recently that he was accepted into the program for next fall. The other families see him as a great example of what they can hope for with their youth, and it has helped many of the families dream bigger to see his success.”

Changes in people’s lives (2018 - 2019):

- There are currently 4 family groups supported through a technical assistance grant with LOV Inc: one in Mukwonago with over 20 families in total.
- In 2018 there were two new groups added to the four groups already active
 - We launched a Transition group for Padres e Hijos en Acción to support Spanish speaking families in the Dane County area
 - And SPARRK Group of families from The Arc in Mineral Point, a very rural area
 - Tribal families who have members with disabilities from the Ho-Chunk Nation.
- Two Family Navigators were hired to support families during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Family-Led: Story

One mom advocated for the school to have an accessible stage at graduation. Her son graduated this year, but broke his knee a few weeks before graduation, so wouldn’t be able to climb the stairs to get to the stage to accept his diploma. Unfortunately, the school was unable to provide a ramp, but they did come up with a workaround for her son that allowed him to participate fully in the ceremony. She felt empowered to advocate because of the knowledge she has gained by connecting with the group.

Supported Decision-Making

Supported Decision-Making is an alternative to guardianship through which people with disabilities get help from trusted family members, friends and professionals to help them understand the situations and choices they face, so they can make their own decisions. Supported Decision-Making enables people with disabilities to ask for support where and when they need it.

Supported Decision-Making Agreements can be used for many kinds of decisions including medical, financial, housing and other life matters. Powers of attorney, representative payees and simple release of information forms can also help families provide the needed supports and safeguards without going to court and imposing guardianship restrictions.



Supporting Individuals to Live Full lives Keeping Them in Charge:

- DPI now has information on Supported Decision Making and alternatives to Guardianship in the Post-secondary transition planning (PTP) tool.
- We are seeing indications that the numbers of guardianships in WI are going down but don't have definitive info on that.
- BPDD is on the WI WINGS Steering committee: WINGS stands for Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders. WINGS is part of a national movement for improving guardianship and conservatorship practices.
- BPDD held two statewide Supported Decision Making training with 700 people in attendance from around the state.
- Over 7000 booklets distributed statewide
- 2 Adult Protective Service agencies have included and referred parents to Supported Decision Making information as an alternative to guardianship.

“

We wanted our son to have the chance to grow and learn to make decisions that affect his life. As his parents, we won't always be around to guide him, and we didn't want to restrict his life and future happiness. So, we chose not to pursue guardianship and instead to develop a circle of supporters to help him make those big decisions in life.”– Parent

”

BUILDING FULL LIVES

Creating BIG CHANGE for People with Disabilities

Building FULL Lives provides coaching and business planning expertise to disability service providers working with hundreds of people around the state with the most significant disabilities and their families to more flexibly support people with disabilities in the community. Service providers are learning to create individualized supports that lead to better employment outcomes, build skills and independence.



“

After twelve years in facility-based prevocational services, Nathan got a job at the local coffee shop and is a valuable member of the team.

-Building Full Lives Participant ”

Leads to increased independence and connections in the community, resulting in a decrease in the need for paid supports.

Building FULL Lives increases choice, independence and community participation:

- Twelve service provider organizations, receive technical assistance to expand community-based services to support people to safely, explore, connect, and contribute to their communities while developing specific life skills.
- BPDD piloted a mentoring component to build capacity and expand expertise in Wisconsin. Service providers farther along in their service transformation mentor organizations at an earlier stage in the process.
- BPDD developed materials and videos to explain the Building Full Lives service model and to illustrate changes that occur in people's lives when we recognize what is meaningful for people and help them connect to their community.
- At one agency the number of people receiving services to work in the community increased from 20% to 60%.

Partners with Business Annual Report to the Legislature, June 2019 - May 2020

The Wisconsin Legislature established the Partners with Business initiative in 2017 to assist businesses interested in hiring and employing people with disabilities using an evidence-based coaching model. In its second year, Partners with Business provided grant funds and coaching to 5 employment service providers.¹

Cost Savings through Stronger Partnerships with Employers

Employment results from 13 participants with disabilities was collected to determine the impact on Medicaid savings when employment service providers invest in creating stronger partnerships with employers.



Before Partners with Business		After Partners with Business	
Average Hours per Week Employee with a Disability Received Medicaid Funded Job Coaching Support	Average Annual Cost to Medicaid System to Support this Person on the Job	Average Hours per Week Employee with a Disability Received Medicaid Funded Job Coaching Support	Average Annual Cost to Medicaid System to Support this Person on the Job
5.5 hours/week	\$7,150	2.2 hours/week	\$2,860

The Partners with Business investment resulted in a 60% reduction in the number of Medicaid funded job coaching support hours. This saved the Medicaid system on average \$4,290 annually per person or about \$55,770 total per year for the 13 participants with disabilities in this year's Partners with Business cohort.

Ten of the thirteen pilot participants were essential workers, maintaining employment during the COVID-19 pandemic, with average wages of \$10.29 per hour for 16 hours per week.

“ I love the time I am working with [their employee with disabilities]. It ...reminds me of what my job as a manager really should be. Instead of jumping in immediately to put out fires - I step back and allow my crew to do their jobs. I take this time to look at the big picture of how things are working in my store and how I can make it better. ”
Manager at McDonalds in Luxemburg

Partners with Business Success Stories:

One grocery store employee works 65 hours per month and had a Medicaid funded job coach with him at work more than 50% of the time. After working with the employer and his coworkers to provide on-the-job support, he now only receives one hour of Medicaid funded job coaching for a check-in every month, saving Medicaid over \$9,700 per year.

¹ Aptiv, Employment Resources Inc., Valley Packaging Industries, and Portal Inc, and My Choice Family Care.

Another employee had a job coach 100% of the time when at her Boys and Girls Club job where she worked 24 hours per month. By working with her employer and coworkers to provide on the job support, the employment service agency was able to reduce her Medicaid funded supports to a one-hour check-in, resulting in \$6,900 in Medicaid savings per year. In addition, she is much happier and more successful on the job with employer provided supports, rather than Medicaid funded job coaches.

Partners with Business Capacity Building:



Ensure good job matches between employers and job seekers with disabilities;



Empower employers to directly train and supervise their employees with disabilities;



Cultivate workplace inclusion and natural supports;



Maximize independence on the job for workers with disabilities; and



Reimburse employers for the costs of providing formal support above and beyond the “natural supports” typically found in the workplace to their employees with disabilities, rather than relying on outside job coaches provided by a vocational agency.

After implementing the Partners with Business best practices illustrated above, participating employment service organizations reported significant improvements in both the competency of their staff and in partnerships with employers as a result of the Partners with Business support they received. Outcomes include:

- Better matching between employer needs and job candidates with disabilities
- More effective approaches in training new hires
- Stronger partnerships with employers to provide extra support to employees with disabilities to ensure their success, rather than relying on Medicaid funded job coaches from the employment service organization

Listen to how Aptiv, Inc., based in La Crosse, used the Partners with Business strategies to increase the number of people they support on the job while decreasing the number of hours they spend job coaching.

For more information about Partners with Business visit: <https://wi-bpdd.org/index.php/partners-with-business/>



Having [co-worker] support in place, I didn't have to worry about whether a job coach showed up...I know a co-worker is there when he is there.



Employment Resources, Inc.



The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) mission is to help people with developmental disabilities become independent, productive, and included in all facets of community life.



Wisconsin's Living Well project aims to increase health, safety, independence and well-being of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the community. This 5-year federal grant from the Administration on Community Living develops and tests new approaches for improving home and community-based services (HCBS) for people with developmental disabilities focused on building capacity for home and community-based services and improving community monitoring to present abuse, neglect and exploitation. The project's policy and evaluation teams work together to use findings to change programs and policies statewide.

Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Convened five meetings to discuss capacity building to support people with disabilities.
- Over 50 stakeholders at each meeting, including self-advocates, families, providers, advocates, state agencies, long-term care agencies.
- Held a community conversation with 75 people in Dane County. The conversation increased the number of people who believe people with disabilities should have the same rights and liberties as people without disabilities from 84% to 96%.

Peer Education and Network

Completed 70 Personal Outcome Measure (POM) interviews with participants to guide person-centered plans. POM gauge a person's level of choice, health, safety, social capital, relationships, rights, and employment and helps service providers better understand how to improve supports.

Trained 7 self-advocates leaders delivery of the Safe and Free curriculum that educates their peers on rights, healthy relationships, abuse and neglect, voting, and problem solving.

Self-advocate leaders began providing Safe and Free peer instruction with the goal of reaching 75-100 people with disabilities each year.

Family Education and Network

Created a COVID-19 toolkit including plain language rights for people with disabilities, families, and providers that has been viewed more than 3000 times via zoom, Facebook, and BPDD website.

Introduced Living Well Wednesdays via Zoom and Facebook and reached approximately 7,250 people. Initially had a COVID-19 focus but has expanded to include a range of topics on self-advocacy and community living.

Resources and policies developed as a result of the pilots will be used to support people with developmental disabilities throughout Wisconsin to be healthy, safe, and included in their communities.

Family Education and Network

Met and coordinated with state agencies at the Department of Health Services and the Department of Justice to guide policy recommendations on improving the abuse and neglect reporting systems in Wisconsin.

Co-developed resources and presented with Wisconsin Managed Care Organizations to over 200 participants on rights for people with disabilities during Covid-19.

For more information about the Living Well Project, contact: Sally Flashberger at Sally.Flaschberger@wisconsin.gov \ (608) 266-5038

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2019 AND 2020 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2019	Actual 2019	Goal 2020	Actual 2020
1.	Number of people with developmental disability in long-term care programs participating in integrated employment.	4,956	6,646	5,337	*
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report they who report they make choices about their everyday lives.	24,848	Data not available	25,928	*
1.	Number of people with a developmental disability in long-term care programs participating in self-directed supports.	9,646	11,393	10,065	*
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report they have a way to get where they want to go.	23,385	22,469	24,402	*
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report that they have a network of community members (outside of paid supports) they can rely on.	23,385	23,418	24,402	*
1.	Number of people with developmental disability who participate in a state self-advocacy organization led by people I/DD.	230	187	240	154
1.	Number of people with developmental disability and their families who participate in leadership training and practice their leadership skills	315	447	339	181
	Number of individuals who are signed up for electronic alerts through the Board's content management/action alert system.	7,000	7,328	7,500	7,748
	Number of improved policies and practices that increase community participation, decision making and full inclusion	5 per year	14	5 per year	25

Note: Based on fiscal year.

Note: The measures are established by the federally required five-year State Plan, which covers the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2021.

* Data for 2020 not yet available from the Department of Health Services; these measures are based on statewide National Core Indicators data which will be released in early/mid 2021.

2021, 2022 AND 2023 GOALS

Prog. No.	Performance Measure	Goal 2021	Goal 2022	Goal 2023
1.	Number of people with developmental disability in long-term care programs participating in integrated employment.	5,720	**	**
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report they who report they make choices about their everyday lives.	27,010	**	**
1.	Number of people with a developmental disability in long-term care programs participating in self-directed supports.	10,486	**	**
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report they have a way to get where they want to go.	25,421	**	**
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report that they have a network of community members (outside of paid supports) they can rely on.	25,421	**	**
1.	Number of people with developmental disability who participate in a state self-advocacy organization led by people I/DD.	250	**	**
1.	Number of people with developmental disability and their families who participate in leadership training and practice their leadership skills	365	**	**
1.	Number of individuals who are signed up for electronic alerts through the Board's content management/action alert system. ***	8,000	**	**
1.	Number of improved policies and practices that increase community participation, decision making and full inclusion	5 per year	**	**

Note: Based on fiscal year.

Note: The measures are established by the federally required five-year State Plan, which covers the period October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2021.

**BPDD is developing its new state plan which will cover the period October 1, 2021 through September 30, 2026. New performance measures will be generated by June 2021.

Financial Information

Budget Summary by Funding Source

	FY19	FY20
FEDERAL CORE GRANT Programming Board Operations	\$1,099,753 \$298,922 Subtotal: \$1,398,675	\$1,623,090 \$203,919 Subtotal: \$1,827,009
FEDERAL GRANTS AND CONTRACTS WI Promise Living Well	\$1,372,130 \$392,000	\$0 (grant ended) \$435,000
WI GENERAL PURPOSE REVENUE Partners with Business	\$43,400 \$75,000	\$44,200 \$75,000
TOTALS – ANNUAL	\$3,281,205	\$1,946,209

Additional Financial Notes

Leverage of financial resources: the Board has been lead grantee or sought out to receive four subcontracts from two federal grants in the past year, totaling an added \$2,343,721 beyond its core funding.

BPDD has seven full-time permanent employees. Official office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Staff can choose their start and stop times within a 2-hour range, starting between 7 and 9, and ending between 3:30 and 5:30. Staff with positive performance reviews also can elect to work up to one day per week from a remote location. Staff who work extra or outside hours (e.g. nights, weekends) earn comp time. This serves as the agency's report on the success or failure in developing and creating flexible-time work schedules; additional, permanent part-time positions; and other alternative work patterns as required by s. 230.215(4), Wisconsin Statutes.

If you have questions or comments regarding financial information in this report or about BPDD, please contact Beth Swdeen, Executive Director, BPDD (contact information listed on Staff page). Additional information, including our five-year plan for 2017-2021, is located on our website, www.wi-bpdd.org.

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WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) is charged under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act with advocacy, capacity building, and systems change to improve self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life for people with developmental disabilities in Wisconsin.

To Find Out More about WI-BPDD

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD)

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