



WISCONSIN BOARD FOR PEOPLE
WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

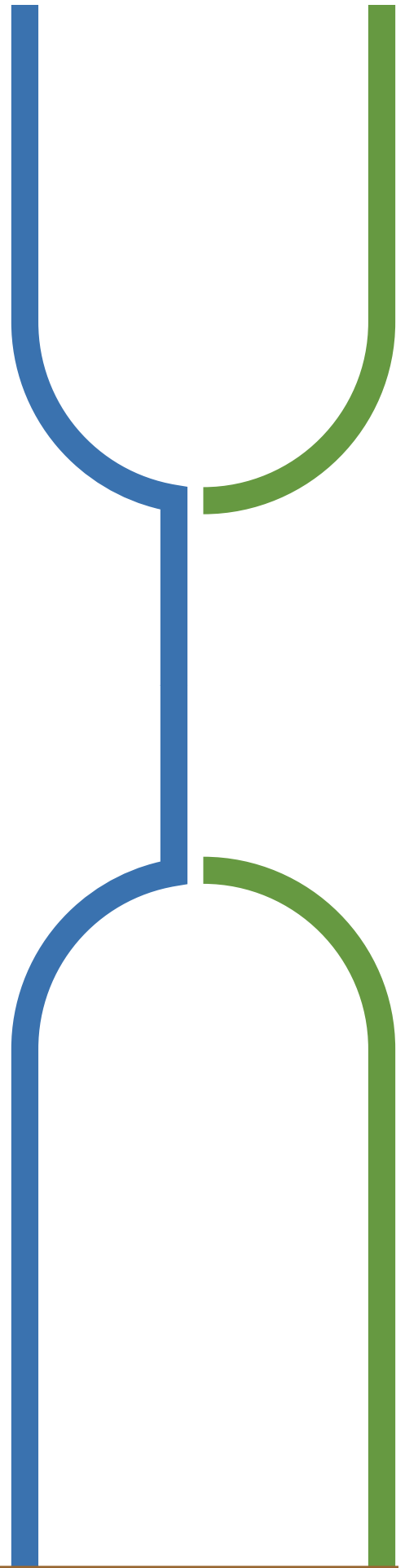


WI Board for People with Developmental Disabilities 2023 - 2025 **Biennial Report**

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This work is supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL) of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of an award totaling \$1,434,492 with \$1,305,492 or 91% from federal funding. Grantees undertaking projects with government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their findings and conclusions. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent the official views of nor are endorsed by ACL, HHS, or the U.S. Government



Message from Leadership

Here is the Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) 2023-2025 biennial report. BPDD works across the state to ensure the health, safety, and independence of people with developmental disabilities. BPDD is made up of people living with developmental disabilities and family members from all parts of the state who are appointed by the Governor, as well as representatives from state agencies and service systems.

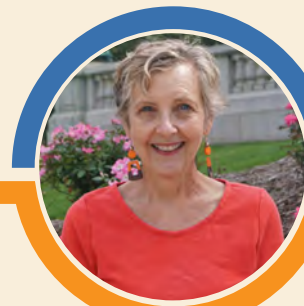
We are charged in the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act to find the most pressing needs of people with developmental disabilities and develop cost-effective and results-oriented ways to improve health, safety, and independence while ensuring the voices of people with developmental disabilities are at the center of all decisions. We also advocate at the state level to improve services and supports so people with developmental disabilities can live the lives they want, free of abuse or neglect.

BPDD gathers input from around the state to create a five-year state plan to get people information, help them understand and use programs, and learn how to advocate for themselves and others to stay healthy, safe, and improve their lives.

We offer resources and opportunities both in-person and virtually, in accessible formats and in other languages. More than 70% of our funds are invested in efforts to impact local communities statewide. Because of federal budget uncertainties, we have taken steps in the past months to reduce costs and more intensely focus our funds on statewide efforts. Learn more at wi-bpdd.org



Sydney Badeau, Board Chair



Beth Swedeen, Executive Director



Ashley Mathy, Outgoing Chair

A few highlights include:

1. Developing a Fellowship and Internship program in disability public policy in partnership with Includa Foundation. The program placed two fellows and seven interns into policy positions within state government and statewide advocacy non-profits to build future disability policy leaders with lived experience.
2. Bringing plain language to state programs, including supporting state agencies to share critical program and policy information in ways that are easy to understand.
3. Taking policy actions: We have been a leader in shaping policies that impact Wisconsinites with disabilities and their families. Our work has improved voting access; worked to protect people with disabilities from abuse and neglect; supported people with disabilities and their families to effectively advocate for Medicaid and other public programs; worked to expand accessible, affordable housing options.

As a working board the following statements were developed by board members in accordance with the Developmentally Disabled Assistance and Bill of Rights Act.

Mission:

To unite ALL of Wisconsin in supporting our residents with developmental disabilities to lead their most independent lives. We want all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to have the lives they want. Yet, we know that not all people are living the lives they want because of racism and discrimination. We commit to finding and addressing these inequities at BPDD and in the service systems. We will listen, we will learn, and we will achieve change.

Charge:

We visited communities around the state to find out what issues matter to you and what you'd like to see changed. We listened. And from your words came our five-year state plan for people with developmental disabilities.

Land Acknowledgement:

The Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities (BPDD) has the honor and responsibility to acknowledge the Indigenous people who have called this land home for generations. Our office is in Madison, known as Teejop (pronounced day-JOPE) by the Ho-Chunk people. They had 10 million acres that were recognized by treaty. They were repeatedly removed from Wisconsin from 1832-1874, but they kept coming back to their homeland and are still here.

While BPDD is located on Ho-Chunk land, we work across the state. No matter where you are in the state, you are on the ancestral land of Tribal nations. There are 12 Tribal nations in Wisconsin, 11 of which are federally recognized. We encourage you to learn about and appreciate the history of the Tribal nations who cared for this land and continue to contribute to our communities.

BPDD also wants to recognize the different ways that Indigenous cultures see disability: people with disabilities have a place and a purpose in tribal communities. These are cultural teachings we can all learn from. BPDD developed this land acknowledgement with Tribal members connected to the Board, based on studying other land acknowledgements. Special thanks to Kenneth Funmaker, Jr., and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for providing language.

What We Do

We Lead: We take bold steps to improve the lives of people with developmental disabilities. We help lead the way with new ideas.

We Inform: We provide information and resources so people with disabilities and their family members can understand their rights, increase their independence, and find the services and supports they need.

We Partner: We bring together people with developmental disabilities, their family members, organizations, and others. Together we find solutions to problems and take action to bring about change.

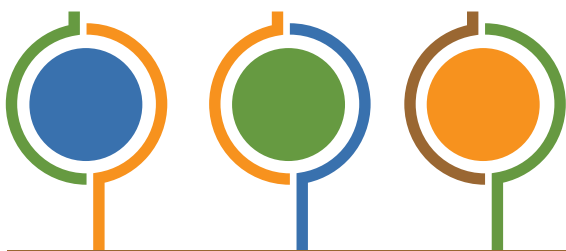
We Improve Health: We support people to use self-determination in their own healthcare and provide information on the best way to do this. We also partner with community organizations to help people get vaccinated.

We Strengthen: We fund advocacy and leadership training. People with developmental disabilities and their family members learn how to effectively advocate for themselves and others.

We Advocate: We advocate for and with people with developmental disabilities to have the same opportunities in life that other members of the community have. We advocate for people to be included and supported so they are successful.

We Innovate: We are a leading organization in Wisconsin that funds grants focused on developmental disabilities. Grantees develop and test new ideas. We use what we learn to bring about change throughout Wisconsin.

We Advise: We are a trusted advisor to leaders in state government and the state legislature. We work with them to improve laws, policies, programs, and services.



We Lead

The Wisconsin Disability Policy Fellowship and Internship Program, funded by the Inclusion Foundation, provides people with developmental disabilities and their families an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in disability policy. The program empowers future leaders, provides professional development, and creates community by advancing inclusive policies across Wisconsin.

2 fellows and **7** interns were placed at five state agencies and four advocacy organizations and worked on 20 policy related project.

1 fellow accepted a permanent position at the Division of Medicaid Services

100%
of participants reported they developed new skills during the program

42
people applied to the first year of the Disability Policy Fellowship and Internship Program

200+
state employees attended a disability awareness event led by an intern

“The opportunity I received from BPDD is more than I ever expected...Now, I feel like I belong in these spaces.”

Intern, Department of Transportation

“I am not alone. Although I am a little shy, I will speak louder and be braver to help disabled people like us. I really enjoyed myself and I learned a lot from my peers (at all levels of experience)..around me. Thank you. Excited to learn more.”

Self-Determination Conference Participant

We Inform

We continued our webinar series on ‘hot’ topics to give people easy-to-understand information on issues important to them and action steps to take. These free webinars focused on federal funding cuts and the impact to disability programs, strategies to tell your Medicaid story, accessible playgrounds, and making accessible documents.

Our Self-Determination Conference focuses on how to live more independently, participate more in your community, and direct your public funds efficiently. Informational sessions continue to be led by individuals with lived experience. The conference was attended by nearly 700 people.

Webinar Data point:

4,000+
people participated in the webinars

76% contacted
or helped
someone else contact their
state or national legislators

Self-Determination Conference Data points: Of over 100 survey respondents

93% reported making
more choices about
what is important to
them

89% met at least one new
person they plan to stay
in touch with

91% reported that because of the conference they have more
resources to get the life they want

We Partner

We partner with People First Wisconsin (PFW), a statewide self-advocacy organization run by people with disabilities. We help PFW strengthen their leadership and increase opportunities for more people with disabilities to advocate for issues important to them.

People First WI Data points:

8 grants received in the last two years



Total number of people with disabilities employed by PFW in the last two years grew from **3** to **18**

\$430,000
in grant awards

PFW members serve on **12** boards and councils across the state

“

Overall, participating in WI-BPDD activities has improved my life because I'm making connections to people who share the same passions as me. I am also becoming more and more comfortable using my voice to speak at different events to help provide education and insight into disability issues.

”

Survey Respondent

We Partner

Our partnership with the WI Department of Public Instruction (DPI) continued to support nine community-based organizations that serve families of children with disabilities. The organizations bring families together for connection and support. Families learn about available services and programs, how to advocate for their child's needs, and how to maintain strong mental health.

Families Supporting Families Data points:

Nearly **1,300** people participated in at least one event

87% of families feel more connected and supported

63 more youth with disabilities and family members are taking on leadership roles

Another essential partnership is the Developmental Disabilities Network, established by the Developmental Disabilities Act, which includes our agency, the Waisman Center UCEDD, Disability Rights Wisconsin, and other advocacy groups. Together we make sure programs and services work as they should. Through our joint efforts, starting in 2018, we have increased the number of people directing their own lives with supported decision-making, a shift that keeps people healthier and more independent.

99% of families report learning about services and supports



We Improve Health

People with developmental disabilities are often immunocompromised: they are the first to get sick and the first to die. To keep people healthy and out of hospitals, we continued to support Parent University in Milwaukee, in collaboration with Hayat Pharmacy, to provide people with vaccinations and vital health information. By being trusted community members, they were able to explain vaccinations in ways people understood. People then felt comfortable getting shots and asking other questions about their health.



2,270 people connected to accurate vaccination and health information and to other available services

955 people vaccinated

People with disabilities need to be healthy, safe, and connected. Our Living Well project created the Healthy, Safe, and Connected toolkit to give people simple ways to be sure they know how to do all three. We want everyone to have the information and tools to take charge of their own health throughout their lifetime and not just during an emergency.

2,700+ toolkits distributed in English, Spanish, and Hmong



We Strengthen

We develop leaders across the state through Partners in Policymaking. These leaders use their strengthened advocacy skills to work with legislators and communities on policies that benefit people with disabilities.

35 people with disabilities, parents and family members completed the program

300+
graduates total

100% feel that they are stronger advocates

89% plan to be more engaged with their legislators



Our Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) is a career awareness and leadership training program designed to increase youths' skills in self-advocacy and leadership and expose them to the variety of options after high school.

47 high school students participated

100% say they will be stronger advocates in their communities

“I’ve lived [my disability]. This program helped me feel confident in it.”

2025 YLF Graduate

We Advocate

The Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition (WDVC) is a non-partisan effort to help ensure full participation in the entire electoral process of voters with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote, and accessing polling places. The Coalition is on the frontline providing training and support to voters with disabilities, family members, and service providers. While much progress has been made in improving the accessibility of our elections, many opportunities for improvement remain. The Wisconsin Supreme Court restored the use of drop boxes, which the DVC advocated for as a way to make it easier for people with disabilities to return their absentee ballots.

40+

organizations are part of the vote coalition

9

policy priorities worked on to make voting easier for people with disabilities

Reached over

14,000

readers with our monthly newsletter



Persons with disabilities need to show our elected officials that we are a powerful voting bloc, but our voices won't be heard until there is an increase in voter turnout. Our voice matters!



Disability Vote Coalition Member

We Innovate

Peer Mentoring programs empower people with lived experience to share their knowledge and skills with their peers to increase health, safety, advocacy and community. Wisconsin's Peer Mentors are trained and certified after a 90-hour internship to provide a high-quality service supporting participants to set their own goals, be in charge of their services and find new ways to participate in their communities. With support from partners, BPDD expanded our Peer Education and Mentoring initiatives to grow this innovative practice and integrate it into Home and Community-Based Services.

22 Self-advocates trained to be peer mentors

13 peer mentors placed in internship opportunities

We provide a platform for the voices of lived experience through our Self-Determination YouTube channel run by a group of self advocates. This channel is dedicated to sharing people with disabilities voices about making choices and speaking up for themselves. We celebrate successes and show that, through perseverance, anything is possible.

2,480 Total Subscribers
805 New subscribers

119,000 views of videos
that share strategies to be stronger advocates and more self-determined

63 new videos posted

100+ Self-advocates featured



“Without Partners in Policymaking I would never have become a school board member. Prior to that time I didn’t believe disabled individuals could run for office let alone serve as an elected official.”

Partners in Policymaking Graduate

We Advise



4 State policies influenced



We testified on **20** bills



25 Public comments submitted on state and federal policies



Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

We Lead

- Disability Policy Leadership Program

We Inform

- “Hot topic” webinars
- Supported Decision-Making
- Self-Determination Conference



We Partner

- People First Wisconsin
- Families Supporting Families grants



We Improve Health

- USAgging COVID



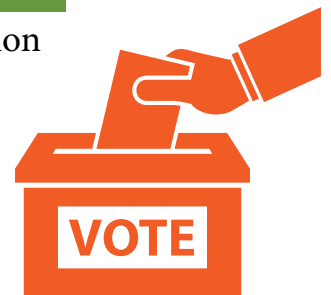
We Strengthen

- Partners in Policymaking
- Youth Leadership Forum



We Advocate

- Disability Vote Coalition



We Innovate

- Innovation Grants to communities
- Self-Determination YouTube Channel



We Advise

- Policy efforts
- Legislature
- Governor



Performance Measures

2023 AND 2024 GOALS AND ACTUALS

Prog No	Performance Measure	Goal 2023	Actual 2023	Goal 2024	Actual 2024
1.	Number of people with disabilities, and family members, who say they better understand the services and supports available.	200	248	200	91
1.	Number of families of children of color with developmental disabilities who report they know about and are using services, programs and community supports they want and need.	20	106	20	80
1.	Number of improved policies and practices that increase community participation, decision making and full inclusion.	5	14	5	8
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report making at least one new connection to expand their social network or natural supports.	130	494	130	84
1.	Number of people with a developmental disability in long-term care programs participating in self-directed supports.	11,250	14,657	11,500	15,933
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities, and their families, who can identify the rights of people with disabilities.	50 people with disabilities; 30 families	58 people with disabilities; 43 families	50 people with disabilities; 30 families	64 people with disabilities; 64 families
1.	Increase in number of people with developmental disabilities who recognize signs of abuse and know someone to whom they could report abuse.	75	31	75	44
1.	Number of people with developmental disability who say their advocacy skills have improved.	100	156	100	170
1.	Number of people with developmental disability, and their families, who participate in leadership training and practice their leadership skills.	200	393	200	340

Note: The measures are established by the federally required state plan, which covers the period October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2026.

Performance Measures

2025 GOALS AND ACTUALS; 2026 AND 2027 GOALS

Prog No	Performance Measure	Goal 2025	Actual 2025	Goal 2026	Goal 2027**
1.	Number of people with disabilities, and family members, who say they better understand the services and supports available.	200	234	200	
1.	Number of families of children of color with developmental disabilities who report they know about and are using services, programs and community supports they want and need.	20	153	20	
1.	Number of improved policies and practices that increase community participation, decision making and full inclusion.	5	4	5	
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities who report making at least one new connection to expand their social network or natural supports.	130	257	130	
1.	Number of people with a developmental disability in long-term care programs participating in self-directed supports.	11,750	*	12,000	
1.	Number of people with developmental disabilities, and their families, who can identify the rights of people with disabilities.	50 people with disabilities; 30 families	790 people with disabilities and families	50 people with disabilities; 30 families	
1.	Increase in number of people with developmental disabilities who recognize signs of abuse and know someone to whom they could report abuse.	75	239	75	
1.	Number of people with developmental disability who say their advocacy skills have improved.	100	115	100	
1.	Number of people with developmental disability, and their families, who participate in leadership training and practice their leadership skills.	200	267	200	

*Data for 2025 will not be available from the Department of Health Services until 2026.

** In 2027, we will have new performance measures based on the federally-required state plan for October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2031. Our new state plan with new goals and objectives will be developed by August 2026.

Board Members

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Milwaukee

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Neenah

Felicia Clayborne
Wauwatosa

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Ryan McGuire
Fitchburg

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Dept. of Public
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Stevens Point

Hector Portillo
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Julie Strenn
Wisconsin Rapids

Hope Swanson
Disability Rights Wisconsin

Kate Szidon
Waisman Center

Andy Thain
Thorp

Tricia Thompson
Menomonie

Kelly Weyer
Mt. Horeb

Christianne Whiting
Verona

Chris Wood
Eau Claire

George Zaske
River Falls



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Executive Director

Fil Clissa

Community Inclusion

Molly Cooney

Employment And Diversity
Outreach Specialist

Sally Flaschberger

Disability Policy Program
Project Manager

Jeremy Gundlach

Communications Director

Tami Jackson

Public Policy Analyst

Russell McCullough

Office Associate

Kaitlin McNamara

Living Well Project
Coordinator

Jenny Neugart

Disability Grassroots
Organizer

Tami Rogers

Office Manager

BPDD is a small state agency with 7 full-time positions and 1.6 project positions. All project positions are dependent on grants and contracts obtained beyond our federally-funded core grant.

During 2023-2025, BPDD maintained a flexible schedule in which all staff reported to the office the same two days per week, then worked remotely the other three. Office days were focused on team time: full staff meetings as well as one-on-one supervision check-ins and smaller team meetings.

BPDD has found that flexible staffing maximizes in-person connection while providing flexibility that minimizes commute times and allows staff to devote significant time to individual projects. BPDD also experiences the benefits of being able to recruit statewide for staff positions, as less time is expected to be in Madison. Productivity and meeting performance targets have improved using a flexible scheduling approach to staffing.



Financial Information

	FY 2023	FY 2024
Programming	\$1,101,888	\$1,148,646
Board Operations	\$203,604	\$156,286
Grants and Contracts	WI Department of Public Instruction: \$95,000 Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board: \$85,000 Peer mentoring project: \$100,000 Living Well Project: \$215,000 Inclusa Foundation Policy Project: \$350,000 Subtotal: \$845,000	Living Well Project: \$217,432 Inclusa Foundation Policy Project: \$351,608 Peer Mentoring Project: \$100,000 WI Department of Public Instruction: \$95,000 Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board: \$15,000 Subtotal: \$779,040
State Funding	\$102,180	\$102,180
TOTAL	\$2,252,672	\$2,186,152





If you'd like to know more about any of our projects you can visit our website at **www.wi-bpdd.org** or contact us using the information below.

Phone: 608-266-7826

**Address: 101 E. Wilson St., Rm. 219
Madison, WI 53703**