

New State Plan Goals and Objectives – Public Review

By Alicia Cone, Ph.D.

The Tennessee Council on Developmental Disabilities is in the process of developing its new five-year state plan. This plan will be in effect for federal fiscal years October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2016. The plan will be submitted to our federal oversight agency, the Administration on Developmental Disabilities on August 15th, 2011. The State Plan is our strategic planning document for the next five years, and it will serve as a framework for our planning, implementing and evaluation activities. Each year, the plan will be updated, particularly the goals and objectives section of the plan.

A couple of key components to the process of developing the state plan are public input and public review. Let’s look at public input first. Most often the public input comes during the needs assessment process of the plan development. Through a number of activities the Council solicits from the public information regarding how the Tennessee service system is working, where the gaps in services are, and what are the major issues that need to be addressed in the service system. The information developed from the needs assessment activities then drives the development of the goals and objectives for the new state plan.

We were very thankful to be able to obtain data from 15 different sources using the following activities: needs assessment surveys (mailed and on-line), project summary reports, research results, program evaluations, a series of 4 Plus 1 activities (this is a person centered planning tool), review of DD Network agency state plans, and customer satisfaction and stakeholder forums. Additionally, we sent out surveys to all pertinent state agencies asking for program, outcome and resource allocation information.

From the information gathered, we learned that Tennessee has a plethora of needs:

Area of Need	Summary of Needs
Employment	Increased and improved: employment and employment related services; work/employment outcomes; job placement and support; training and mentoring for job coaches and developers; expertise in customized employment; job retention; and transition from school to work outcomes. Additionally, respondents wanted problems with existing state Employment First policies addressed. 765 people highlighted employment issues during the needs assessment process.
Education	Stakeholders identified the following lack of resources and services: postsecondary education opportunities; access to appropriate special education and early intervention services; and Autism spectrum disorders services, training, and awareness; Stakeholders wanted increased and improved: IDEA training and

	<p>education; sharing of information gained through research; dissemination of information; seclusion and restraint policies and training; assistive technology in education; professional development for those serving people with I/DD; IEP and 504 accommodations; and transition planning.</p> <p>622 people highlighted education issues during the needs assessment process.</p>
Community Services	<p>Gaps in specific community services were identified as: information and referral services, respite, assistive technology, personal assistance, service coordination/case management, day services, homemaker services, personal emergency response systems, legal services, financial services, support groups, in-home assistance, assistance navigating the Social Security system (i.e., SSI/SSDI), flood relief, autism resources, and services targeted to the Hispanic/Latino communities. Additionally, the following issues were identified: the need for more money for DSP training, decrease in DSP turnover, more money for increased community services so people can live in the community, lack of HCBS for people with I/DD; lack of services in rural areas; need for increased family support funding; and more consumer and self directed services.</p> <p>5217 people identified issues with community services and supports and the disability service system in general during the needs assessment process.</p>
Housing	<p>Increased: funds for home modifications; residential services; homeownership opportunities; affordable housing; home repair and habilitation; number of homes that are visitable; adherence to fair housing laws; accessible housing; and housing with Universal design.</p> <p>1295 people identified housing issues during the needs assessment process.</p>
Health	<p>Gaps in health care resources and services were identified as: therapies (OT/PT/ST), behavioral services/adaptive interventions, nursing; MH/MI, dental care, affordable medications/prescriptions, food supplement, supplies, equipment; eye care, futures planning, emergency planning and preparation, end of life documents, access to health care and insurance, education and support for aging person with I/DD, need to research and support healthy aging in person with I/DD, and infant mortality.</p> <p>2111 people highlighted health care related issues during the needs assessment process.</p>

Child Care	<p>Increased special child care (before and after care); access to developmental assessment; information and training on learning disabilities; lack of access for students with disabilities to appropriate services when in or are at risk of entering the juvenile court system; and children with disabilities in state custody who have had a trauma do not receive best practice in MH treatment and services.</p> <p>277 people identified child related issues as part of the needs assessment process.</p>
Transportation	<p>Increased available, affordable, accessible public or private transportation; increased funds for vehicle modification; more transportation to employment sight and employment opportunities; and increased accessible parking.</p> <p>556 people identified transportation issues during the needs assessment process.</p>
Recreation	<p>Increased inclusive recreation and arts opportunities (e.g., camps, scouting, hand-cycling racing).</p> <p>65 people identified recreational needs during the assessment process.</p>
Self advocacy/ leadership, advocacy and diversity	<p>Self advocacy issues– more support for self advocates, lack of SA participation in some areas of State, lack of different approaches in rural versus urban areas, lack of advisors for local chapters, need strong leaders, more outreach to young people in school, need to build up the next generation at every opportunity, educate lawmakers about self advocacy, implement programs in high schools and colleges, look at programs that are working and replicate, increase use of People 1st language</p> <p>Diversity (Ethnic/race barriers) – address service issues of un/underserved populations and promote self determination, address language barriers.</p> <p>Advocacy issues - advocacy training for families and involvement in decision making; build advocacy base; law enforcement training regarding I/DD; inclusion of people with I/DD in the research process; and accessible communities (programmatically, and attitudinally).</p> <p>74 people identified self advocacy/leadership, advocacy and diversity issues during the needs assessment process.</p>

From the above information on needs our proposed goals and objectives for the next five years were developed and prioritized. Through the 4 Plus 1 activities, which were part of

the needs assessment process, the Council members identified employment and self advocacy/leadership development as areas to work in during the next five years. It further became clear through the needs assessment process that addressing the issues in the area of community services was going to be a key goal for the next five year state plan. We also focused in on information dissemination and education outreach as a goal area to address the needs identified in the data.

Goals	Objectives
<p data-bbox="235 491 667 527">Goal 1: Leadership Development</p> <p data-bbox="235 562 792 919">Annually, the Council will, in partnership with Tennesseans with disabilities, families and other partners provide training, education and informational opportunities that result in private citizens who are better able to access services, serve on cross disability and culturally diverse leadership coalitions, influence policy, communicate needs, and build relationships in their communities.</p>	<p data-bbox="820 491 1317 527">Objectives – Leadership Development</p> <p data-bbox="820 562 1370 741">1.1 Yearly, provide 7 weekend sessions of Partners in Policymaking to train 10 self advocates and 15 family members on disability policy and practice in Tennessee and nationally.</p> <p data-bbox="820 783 1382 1255">1.2 Yearly, provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities and family members to develop their knowledge and leadership skills via four activities: funding and strengthening People First of Tennessee (PFT); strengthening other self advocacy initiatives in Tennessee led by individuals with disabilities; funding and operating the Consumer Education Stipends so 150 people are assisted; and in partnership with other advocacy groups funding and co-sponsoring the annual Tennessee Disability Mega Conference.</p> <p data-bbox="820 1297 1377 1507">1.3 Each year of the plan provide the Tennessee Youth Leadership Forum (YLF) to support 15 youth in high school with disabilities to develop and serve as leaders and mentors to their peers.</p> <p data-bbox="820 1549 1333 1696">1.4 For a minimum of FY 2012 and 2013, expand the number of members in Next Chapter Book Clubs from 50 to 75.</p>
<p data-bbox="235 1736 719 1772">Goal 2: Service System Improvement</p> <p data-bbox="235 1808 789 1873">Annually, in collaboration with individuals with disabilities, families, professionals</p>	<p data-bbox="820 1736 1370 1772">Objectives – Service System Improvement</p> <p data-bbox="820 1808 1344 1873">2.1 For FY 2012 through 2014, facilitate replication of Project Opportunity to 2</p>

<p>and policy makers, fund and replicate demonstrations of best practice, form and support public policy development, and coordinate coalitions so that the Tennessee developmental disability service system is person and family centered and supports individuals with developmental disabilities to be independent, productive and included in all facets of community life.</p>	<p>additional sites in Tennessee.</p> <p>2.2 Research demand side employment demonstration projects</p> <p>2.3 Working with the Tennessee Employment Consortium, and the Tennessee Alliance for Full Participation during FY 2012 and 2013, research state policies on Employment First and advocate for Employment First! public policy or legislation in Tennessee.</p> <p>2.4 Yearly, form, support and/or serve on public policy coalitions in order to advocate for and educate policymakers on best policies and practices in services to people with DD. Note – the focus of the coalition can be employment, housing or any other topic relevant to the DD Act.</p> <p>2.5 Annually, fund a minimum of 4 demonstration projects in order to highlight models such as self directed services, person centered thinking organizations, or other community-based best practice models. Note – this can be accomplished through either the Call for Application or Continuation Proposal processes.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Information and Outreach</p> <p>Annually, Tennesseans with disabilities, family members, professionals, organizations, policymakers, and the public have a reliable source of and are provided with information about disability issues, services and supports which they use to increase access to services and drive systems change.</p>	<p>Objectives – Information and Outreach</p> <p>3.1 Yearly, provide information on disability issues and topics through a magazine format.</p> <p>3.2 Yearly, provide educational information on policy and legislation at the state and federal level through a newsletter format distributed via mail, e-mail, conference calls, and the Internet.</p> <p>3.3 Yearly, provide information, referral, and support to people with disabilities and families seeking to access and use services.</p>

Now let's talk about the second important process in the development of the state plan, which is Public Review. The Public Review occurs after the issues revealed in the needs assessment have been analyzed and the new goals and objectives developed. The Public review period allows for a 45 day window of opportunity for the citizens of Tennessee to review the newly developed goals and objectives, and to then share their comments with the Council in order to improve the state plan. We encourage the public to send their comments, thoughts, and concerns to the Council via e-mail or phone call or snail mail.

We want to know the following:

1. Do these goals and objectives present a roadmap that can be followed?
2. Do these goals and objectives make sense?
3. Is there anything we can make clearer or simplify?
4. Have we missed a step or left anything out?
5. Is there something else we should focus on?

With this article we would like to start the 45 days for public review of the new goals and objectives. The goals and objectives will also be linked to our web site at

To submit public review comments or for information about the State Plan, please contact Alicia Cone at alicia.cone@tn.gov , 615-253-1105, or Parkway Towers, Suite 130, 404 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243.

The Council looks forward to collaborating and working with all our partners to address the identified service system issues over the five years and beyond!