

From: [Leal, Prof. Marian](#)
To: [Carvalho, Joseph](#)
Cc: cscully@thearcct.org
Subject: Re: DDS Draft Five Year Plan. Reminder Hearings are Scheduled Today and Tomorrow.
Date: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 3:12:46 PM

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We are writing on behalf of our 30 year old non-verbal son with autism. We reside in Fairfield. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft five-year plan developed by the Department of Developmental services. While we are pleased to know that the department has identified goals for the agency, it is more important than ever that DDS address the specific real-life needs of the individuals served by the department, such as how parents are expected to maintain care for our adult children while we are aging and developing medical conditions of our own. We are his primary care team and as we become senior citizens it has become almost impossible to care for him 24-hr a day as he doesn't sleep through the night, even with a prescription of Ambien. We are also both working full time, not because we want to but we just do not see how the state will fund our son in the future 24/7. Ensuring that our son lives in a supported and inclusive community environment is essential and the programs and services developed by the DDS must reflect this approach. He requires 1 to 1 care.

Our voices provide important feedback and highlight the need for additional resources. No longer do we live in a one-size fits all world. In fact, we can learn from the approach of other states and create new, supported living environments and options. Specifically, this plan should be revised to include: More individualized, supported living options, Resources to support person-centered planning, employment progression and affordable community-based housing options, Increased training for families and Support personnel, Improved medical and behavioral emergency support, and Increased collaboration opportunities with DDS for supported individuals and their families.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We look forward to your feedback, seeing the revised plan and the opportunity to work together in this process.

Marian and Mauricio Leal

From: The Arc Connecticut <lisa@grassrootsct.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 12, 2022 10:34 AM
To: Leal, Prof. Marian <lealm@sacredheart.edu>
Subject: DDS Draft Five Year Plan. Reminder Hearings are Scheduled Today and Tomorrow.



Good morning:

This week, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) under the leadership of Commissioner Jordan Scheff, released the agency's draft five-year plan. **The plan, [which can be found here](#)**, encompasses the department's goals for the next five years and charts a course for continued progress within the department. The goals outlined in the plan, were influenced and shaped by many stakeholders, and most recently, through the feedback gathered during the Commissioner Scheff's "Seeds of Change" tour during mid-2021. This stakeholder engagement offered important insight from individuals, families, advocates, providers, staff, and others and helped the department to clearly identify challenges, gaps, and necessary improvements. This new five-year plan puts focuses on the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework.

The plan is the beginning of a living document that will shift and grow over the next five years. The key areas of focus outlined in the plan, include:

- **Daily Life & Employment**-DDS will Continue to work toward integrated day/employment opportunities; enhance with assistive technology; promote flexibility; educate community.
- **Community Living**- Ensure correct level of care; promote most effective *and* least restrictive; support innovative solutions for independence, including use of assistive technology; encourage flexibility.
- **Healthy Living**- CT tends to score high on general measures of physical health – focus on supporting access to mental/behavioral health services and specialty areas (e.g. diabetes).
- **Safety and Security**- Focus service development on filling gaps in specialty areas; integrate a diversity, equity and

inclusion lens to correct systems inequities.

- **Social and Spirituality-** Develop capacity to facilitate networking for various affinity groups; improve communications with all stakeholders.
- **Advocacy and Engagement-** Support work of self-advocates in creating community, peer supports; develop more consistent opportunities to collect feedback from stakeholders.

While the Arc Connecticut is pleased to have been a stakeholder in this process, we would like to see very real and specific changes in the plan in order to achieve the goals we believe are necessary to better the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Our specific requests are included in our attached testimony, but center on:

- More specific goals and objectives
- Defined metrics to gauge progress on many levels
- More defined use of American Rescue Act Funds will be applied
- Operationalization of expanded supported living opportunities within the community
- Initiatives to address the broadened spectrum of need in the community
- Alleviation of roadblocks to independent living
- Enhanced family resources
- Improved employment opportunities
- Formal collaboration with the community across key agencies

We urge members of the intellectually and developmentally disabled community to submit comments highlighting some of these concerns at either of the hearings that have been scheduled.

The dates and times are **Wednesday, January 12th at 12:00 pm** and **Thursday, January 13th at 5:30 pm**. You can sign-up to testify at one of the virtual hearings by [following this link](#) or you may also submit written testimony to: Joseph.Carvalho@ct.gov.

Below is a draft that you may use to personalize your comments. Please copy and paste in your email and personalize with your story. Please remember to copy Carol Scully on your submission. Her email address is

cscully@thearcct.org.

My name is [insert name] and I am from [insert town]. Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on the draft five-year plan developed by the Department of Developmental services. While I am pleased to know that the department has identified goals for the agency, it is more important than ever that DDS address the specific real-life needs of the individuals served by the department. As a [insert relationship, caregiver, parent, sibling, etc.] this plan is critical to the future health and wellbeing of my [insert, child, sibling, etc.]. Ensuring that our loved ones live in a supported and inclusive community environment is essential and the programs and services developed by the DDS must reflect this approach. Our voices provide important feedback and highlight the need for additional resources. No longer do we live in a one-size fits all world. In fact, we can learn from the approach of other states and create new, supported living environments and options. Specifically, this plan should be revised to include: More individualized, supported living options, Resources to support person-centered planning, employment progression and affordable community-based housing options, Increased training for families and Support personnel, Improved medical and behavioral emergency support, and Increased collaboration opportunities with DDS for supported individuals and their families. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to your feedback, seeing the revised plan and the opportunity to work together in this process.

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