



Communities at the Center Advisory Group
Meeting Minutes
January 23, 2023
9:00 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
3839 North 3rd Street, Suite 306, Phoenix, Arizona 85012

A virtual committee meeting of the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) was convened virtually January 23, 2023. Notice having been duly given. Present were the following members of the Communities at the Center Advisory Group and staff from the Center for the Future of Arizona and Arizona Town Hall.

Communities at the Center Advisory Group Members

Melissa Van Hook
Kin Counts
Jules Hyde
Kathy Levandowsky
Gabrielle Orozco

Center for the Future of Arizona and Arizona Town Hall	Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
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Evelyn Casuga, Center for the Future of AZ & Arizona Town Hall	Michael Leyva, Contracts/Grants Coordinator
Tara Jackson, Arizona Town Hall	
Madison Rock, Center for the Future of Arizona	
Kristi Tate, Center for the Future of Arizona	

A. Welcome & Introductions

Michael Leyva welcomed everyone to the Communities at the Center Advisory Group meeting. The meeting began at 10:03 am. Advisory Group members and Center for the Future of Arizona and Arizona Town Hall staff introduced themselves.

B. Overview of Communities at the Center Project

Kristi Tate provided an overview of the Communities at the Center project.

- Bring trusted data to inform and prompt dialogue around issues impacting the transition of young people with disabilities into postsecondary education and career success.
- Engage cross-sector leaders to understand the challenges in and opportunities for advancing equitable access, and surface opportunities for action.
- Amplify the voices of young people with disabilities themselves, and their families, in generating solutions with a focus on starting the conversation at earlier ages; and,
- Identify areas of opportunity where CFA, Arizona Town Hall, ADDPC, and others could partner to support these priorities, whether through additional data, engagement, or resources.

C. Role of the Advisory Group

- Strategic Direction – advisory group will provide guidance and direction to the CFA team during the project.
- Stakeholder Engagement – advisory group will help identify and garner diverse stakeholders to participate in the project.
- Key Takeaways – advisory group will review and discuss themes emerging from listening sessions and identify what is missing.
- Communications and Messaging – advisory group will finetune how to name the project to the community at large so it resonates and helps with consistent messaging.

CFA reviewed a timeline for the Communities at the Center project.

January through May 2023 – Meet with various stakeholder groups

May – July 2023 – Synthesizing and Reporting

August 2023 – Cross Sector Convening

September 2023 – Final Report Rollout

CFA shared initial back research – highlighting the following

- Among the 6,000 youth with a disability who transition yearly from high school, those with autism, an intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities are the least likely to experience support for post-secondary engagement (i.e., college, training, or employment) (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

- In fact, less than a third of youth with autism, an intellectual disability, and multiple disabilities take a college entrance exam or gain workforce development or job experience while in high school.
- According to 2019 research published by ADDPC, only 36% of working-age individuals (ages 16-64) with a disability were employed, compared to a 72% employment rate for working-age individuals without a disability.

CFA ask Advisory Group members if they had questions or wished to share comments.

Melissa Van Hooks expressed her support and passion for Communities at the Center and thanked the Advisory Group members for volunteering their time to serve and help with the project. The work will be very important and much needed to help improve postsecondary outcomes and career opportunities.

Kin Counts asked which families will be included.

Answer: Young families, young to middle school student/families, various parent support groups.

Gabrielle Orozco commented that if kids make though high school, they will be ok.

Kathy Levandowsky asked how the Communities at the Center project will be sustained, and how rural and tribal communities will be targeted.

Answer: The Report will not sit on the shelf. CFA will bring in possible partners to keep the momentum going. Although it was not originally included in the proposal, targeted efforts will be made by the CFA team to reach individuals and families in rural and tribal communities. Evelyn Casuga who works for both CFA and Arizona Town Hall lives in Pinal County which is considered a rural area and the work she does with Arizona Town Hall reaches virtually all areas of Arizona.

Jules Hyde asked if we would have an opportunity to talk to the Arizona agencies providing services such as VR. It's important to include the Arizona systems that are working with families.

Answer: Yes, there will be an opportunity to include Arizona agencies that provide services.

Kin Counts commented agencies that provide services to individuals need additional manpower/staff to provide adequate and ongoing assistance to individuals with disabilities.

There was discussion on utilizing and tapping into existing organizations and conferences to reach audiences. It was recommended to reach out to the American Indian Disability Summit, African American Conference on Disabilities, DD Town Hall, and Vocational Rehabilitation Job Coaches

D. Call to the Public

There were no members of the public present.

E. The Communities at the Center Advisory Group Meeting adjourned at 10:31 a.m.

Dated this 23rd day of January 2023
Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council

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