FSC MEMBERS ATTENDANCE
Members/Participants
Rhonda White
Craig Leen
Adrienne Fairley
Catherine Rinehart Mello
Amani Walker
Crystal Thomas
Shonnie Jones
Tokie Jones

Summary
Meeting Minutes and Updates Review
August 28, 2025

QUICK RECAP:
•Co-Chair Craig Leen calls for the meeting to begin
•Co-Chair Rhonda White seconds the motion
•Quorum accepted
The meeting began with introductions and administrative matters, including the approval of June meeting minutes and discussion of technical difficulties experienced by several members.
Craig inquires if Medicaid staff has returned.
The group focused extensively on concerns about Medicaid funding cuts and their impact on disability services in DC, including service reductions and the need for better communication and complaint processes. The conversation ended with discussions about safety planning for families with disabilities, particularly regarding emergency situations and interactions with law enforcement, as well as plans for improving complaint systems and tracking mechanisms.
Next steps
• Catherine: Arrange for representatives from DDS and Healthcare Finance to attend next month's meeting to discuss Medicaid impacts.
• Catherine: Schedule approximately one hour at the next meeting to discuss Medicaid cuts and their impacts.
• Shonnie: Get permission from families experiencing service cuts and share provider information with Crystal.
• Crystal: Follow up with families identified by Shonnie to address service cuts and prevent retaliation.
• DDS: Hold work groups next month to discuss budget offset strategies.
• Catherine: Provide information on what percentage of the DDS budget the $1.6 million cut represents.

• Catherine/DDS: Present to the board about specific impacts of the $1.6 million budget cut on waiver services.
• Chioma: Share the health policy camp report with families when completed.
• Chioma: Implement a Google form for collecting stories and documentation about service cuts.
• DDS: Provide information about the grievance and complaint process at the next meeting.

Medicaid Cuts Impact Disability Services
The group discussed concerns about Medicaid funding cuts and their impact on disability services in DC. Crystal from DDS explained that while current waiver recipients are not immediately affected, there are budget cuts of 1.6 million dollars for DDS that could impact future approvals. Shonnie raised serious concerns about providers terminating or reducing services without explanation, citing specific cases where families were told services were being cut due to Medicaid reductions. The group agreed to follow up on these issues, with Crystal offering to monitor any retaliation against families who come forward with complaints. They also discussed the need to track and document these service reductions, with Chioma suggesting a Google form for collecting stories and experiences.
Medicaid Service Changes Discussion
The meeting focused on concerns about Medicaid service reductions and changes, with Crystal emphasizing that meetings should be held before any service changes to explain the reasoning to families. Catherine added that service changes should align with individuals' needs and goals, while Rhonda highlighted issues with the transition process and the need for clearer communication about DDS and RSA services. The group discussed the importance of having a transparent and accessible complaint system, as well as the need for better coordination between DDS, schools, and healthcare providers during transitions.
Retaliation and Trust-Building Discussion
The meeting addressed concerns about retaliation and trust-building, with Crystal emphasizing the importance of addressing these issues and offering support. Craig suggested tabling a longer discussion for later and focused on reviewing complaint systems and statistics. Updates were shared on national developments, including potential changes to affirmative action requirements for people with disabilities, and subcommittee activities, such as inviting a police representative to discuss training for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Rhonda highlighted issues with Medicaid applications and the need for better support and communication regarding changes in Medicaid policies.
Council Meeting Schedule Discussion
The meeting focused on discussing and voting on a new meeting schedule for the council. Rhonda proposed alternating between afternoon and evening meetings on different days, with a survey monkey created by Catherine to gather input on preferred times. The group agreed to keep the meetings on Mondays, with options for times between 10:30-12:00, 1:00-3:00, 3:00-4:00, 6:00-7:00, or 7:00-8:30. Chioma raised concerns about the challenges of managing multiple meeting schedules, suggesting that subcommittee meetings could be

held at different times to avoid conflicts. The council members were asked to complete the survey monkey to determine the most suitable schedule.

National Guard Deployment Safety Planning

The group discussed safety planning and information sharing in response to the National Guard deployment in DC. Rhonda shared that she is working with The Arc on future planning resources and training, while Chioma emphasized the need for culturally inclusive safety planning that goes beyond what MPD can provide. The discussion highlighted concerns about federal overreach and the limitations of local government autonomy, with Craig noting that while federal involvement can be beneficial, the current situation is complex and uncertain. Catherine and Shonnie both expressed caution about creating safety plans without clear, concrete guidance, with Shonnie specifically focusing on safety planning for families with individuals with disabilities who remain at home.

Disability Complaint Process Review

The meeting focused on discussing the complaint process for individuals with disabilities, particularly regarding DDS and Medicaid. Shonnie suggested evaluating and assessing the complaint process through DDS, and Catherine offered to set up a meeting to review complaint data and processes. The group also discussed the need for more detailed statistics on complaints, including areas of concern and rates of retaliation. Craig emphasized the importance of focusing on people with disabilities regardless of political ideologies, while Chioma expressed concerns about the current political climate and its potential impact on disability rights.

Enhancing Complaint Process Efficiency

The meeting focused on improving the complaint process, with Shonnie suggesting the inclusion of data on complaints transferred to the judicial system and those related to payment issues. Adrienne emphasized the importance of allowing advocates to speak during meetings to provide real-time information and resources. The group discussed upcoming events and the need to complete a survey, with Rhonda reminding everyone to stay diligent with emails and responsive to them.

Action Plan:

Safety Plan for Vulnerable Families

Shonnie proposed creating a safety plan for families with disabilities and immigrant families, focusing on what to do if a family member is apprehended by police or ICE. Rhonda agreed and suggested including future planning considerations, such as emergency plans and letters of intent detailing daily care routines. They discussed the need for a clear process and support system for families in such situations, emphasizing the importance of community support and preparation for potential emergencies

Meeting Adjourned