



**Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board (CCDDB) and
Champaign County Mental Health Board (CCMHB)
Joint Study Session Agenda
Wednesday, September 30, 2026, 5:45PM**

This study session will be held in person at the Shields-Carter Room of the Bennett Administrative Center, 102 E. Main St., Urbana, IL 61801. Members of the public may attend in person or virtually, using <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81393675682> Meeting ID: 813 9367 5682

- I. Call to order**
- II. Roll call**
- III. Approval of Agenda***
- IV. Public Participation/Agency Input.** See below for details.**
- V. Chairpersons' Comments – Jane Sprandel, Anne Robin**
- VI. Associate Director's Comments – Kim Bowdry**
- VII. STUDY SESSION –Advocate Feedback on CCDDB Resolution**

Members of the Community Choices Human Rights and Advocacy group and Advocates who work with DSC will present on how to advance the CCDDB Resolution and Pledge.

To support this discussion are:

Presenter Bios (pages 3 and 4)

Plain language version of the CCDDB resolution (pages 5-8)

Presentation materials (pages 9-26)

Full version of the CCDDB Resolution and the subsequent Pledge (pages 27-30)

- VIII. Public Participation/Agency Input.** See below for details.**
- IX. Board Announcements and Input**
- X. Adjournment**

Upcoming DDB Meetings: October 28, November 25, and December 9, 2026

Upcoming MHB Meetings: October 21, November 18, and December 9, 2026

* Board action is requested.

**Public input may be given virtually or in person. If the time of the meeting is not convenient, you may communicate with the Board by emailing stephanie@ccmhb.org or leon@ccmhb.org any comments for us to read aloud during the meeting. The Chair reserves the right to limit individual time to five minutes and total time to twenty minutes. All feedback is welcome. The Board does not respond directly but may use input to inform future actions. Agency representatives and others providing input which might impact Board actions should be aware of the [*Illinois Lobbyist Registration Act, 25 ILCS 170/1*](#), and take appropriate [*steps to be in compliance with the Act*](#).

For accessible documents or assistance with any portion of this packet, please [*contact us*](#) (leon@ccmhb.org).

Community Choices Presentation Speakers

Jen Buoy

Jen is a Champaign native and member at Community Choices. She is one of the oldest members of Community Choices' Human Rights and Advocacy group and has given many presentations on living with autism and I/DD.

Eric Beasley

Eric is a Community Choices member and currently lives in Urbana with his family. He is another of Community Choices' Human Rights and Advocacy group's oldest members. Every year, Eric participates in presentations at the U of I on living with autism and I/DD.

Tara Verse

Tara is a Champaign local and has lived independently for several years now. Tara enjoys learning about local community issues and advocating for those with I/DD in her free time.

Edgar Hryhorysak & Rachel Viscuso

Edgar and Rachel work for Community Choices and help facilitate Human Rights and Advocacy meetings.

DSC Self-Advocate Bios

Chloe Briskin

Chloe is a self-advocate who utilizes services from both DSC and Community Choices. She is an intelligent and vibrant young adult who takes a lot of pride in her Ukrainian heritage. Chloe is a creative writer who spends a lot of time working on her stories.

Jamesa Lee

Jamesa is a self-advocate who attends one of DSC's CDS programs. She is an entrepreneur who sells jewelry and is working on expanding her skills with the ultimate dream of designing clothes and shoes for people who wear orthotic braces like her. Jamesa is admired for her kind heart and strong advocacy skills.

The Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board (CCDDDB) Resolved to:

1. Recognize that Autism + I/DD is a natural part of the human experience
2. Recognize that people with Autism + I/DD have a right to exist as they are
3. Recognize that people with Autism + I/DD are valued diverse members of our community
4. Work with people with Autism + I/DD to create & sustain community services and supports
5. Actively use input from people with Autism + I/DD in policies that directly affects them
6. Improve accessibility for people with Autism + I/DD so all feel included
7. Educate the public on the rights of people with Autism + I/DD Locally and nationally
8. Work toward a system of care that meets the needs and goals of people with Autism + I/DD
9. Encourage Champaign County Mental Health Board to have an inclusive community based system of care using ideas from people with disabilities
10. Encourage MTD, Park Districts, Schools, Public Health, Board of Health and Communities to improve access, accessibility and inclusion for all using ideas from people with disabilities
11. Encourage Illinois agencies and officials to redesign the care system to improve accessibility, use input from the disabled community and properly fund and support community based services in line with the Olmstead Act.
12. Encourage the federal government to commit to access and inclusion for all, use input from the disabled community and protect and acknowledge the need and importance of home base support, personal support workers.

5 Actions Steps for Local Government to Commit to:

1. Make it easier to find resources that community members can use.
2. Make sure resources are available and welcoming to people with Autism + I/DD.
3. Including people with Autism + I/DD in making decisions that involve them.
4. Making accessible documents and websites and using plain language.
5. Raise community awareness of accessibility and disability issues.

2026 Pledge to Residents with Disabilities

Approved by the CCDDDB on January 28, 2026

In November of 2025, the Champaign County Board for Care and Treatment of Persons with a Developmental Disability A/K/A Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board A/K/A CCDDDB passed a Resolution on behalf of residents who have developmental disabilities.

The **CCDDDB** is a unit of government established by voter approval under Illinois statute. They are responsible for evaluating and funding services for Champaign County residents who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). They partner with the **Champaign County Mental Health Board**, which has similar responsibilities. Both seek to understand what could be better and to advocate on behalf of people who have I/DD.

This advocacy includes working with state and federal authorities to improve the larger systems for these residents. The **CCDDDB** recognizes that fixing Illinois community-based services will require big changes and for people to work with Autistic people and people with I/DD, and they know that federal programs supporting Autistic people and people with I/DD are under new threats.

The CCDDDB Resolved to:

- Recognize that Autism¹ and I/DD are a natural part of the human experience.
- Recognize that Autistic people and people with I/DD have a right to exist as they are.
- Recognize that Autistic people and people with I/DD are valued and celebrated diverse members of our community and the human family.
- Work with Autistic people and people with I/DD to create and sustain community-based services and supports that they want and need.
- Seek and use their input in policy that affects them, and support their right to do so.
- Improve physical and digital accessibility so that all are welcomed, included, and informed.
- Work to educate the public on the rights of Autistic people and people with I/DD.
- Recommit to achieving a community-based system of care which meets the needs and advances the aspirations of Autistic residents and/or residents with I/DD.
- Urge the **Champaign County Mental Health Board** and the **Champaign County Board** to commit to achieving a robust community-based system of care and an accessible, inclusive community based on input from people with disabilities and other lived experience.
- Urge other units of local government, such as the **Mass Transit District, Public Health District, Board of Health, Park Districts, School Districts, Cities, Villages, and Townships**, to commit to improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all and seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.

Also in November of 2025, the CCDDDB shared Resolution #1 with the **Champaign County Mental Health Board** and the **Champaign County Board**, in the hope they would also commit to achieving a robust community-based system of care and an accessible, inclusive community based on input from people with disabilities and other lived experience.

¹ In solidarity with the disability community, we use both identity first and person first language.

Next Steps:

1. Urge other units of local government, such as the **Mass Transit District, Public Health District, Board of Health, Park Districts, School Districts, Cities, Villages, and Townships**, to commit to improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all and seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.
2. Create a pledge of action for each governmental unit to complete during 2026, to demonstrate this commitment and to make authentic, informed progress toward the goals.

For these steps to be meaningful, the CCDDDB seeks the assistance and guidance of advocates who have relevant lived experience. This might include Autistic people, people with I/DD, their family members, or their close supporters. Advocates might attend meetings of these other units of government to address them during Public Input/Participation, or they could direct us or other supporters to do so on their behalf.

The pledge 2026 will ask other units of local government to commit to:

- Making it easier to access information about resources available to community members.
- Making sure those resources are available to and welcoming to people with I/DD or autism
- Including people with I/DD or autism in the process of decisions which impact them.
- Learning about accessible documents and websites and plain language documents.
- Raising community awareness of accessibility.

References

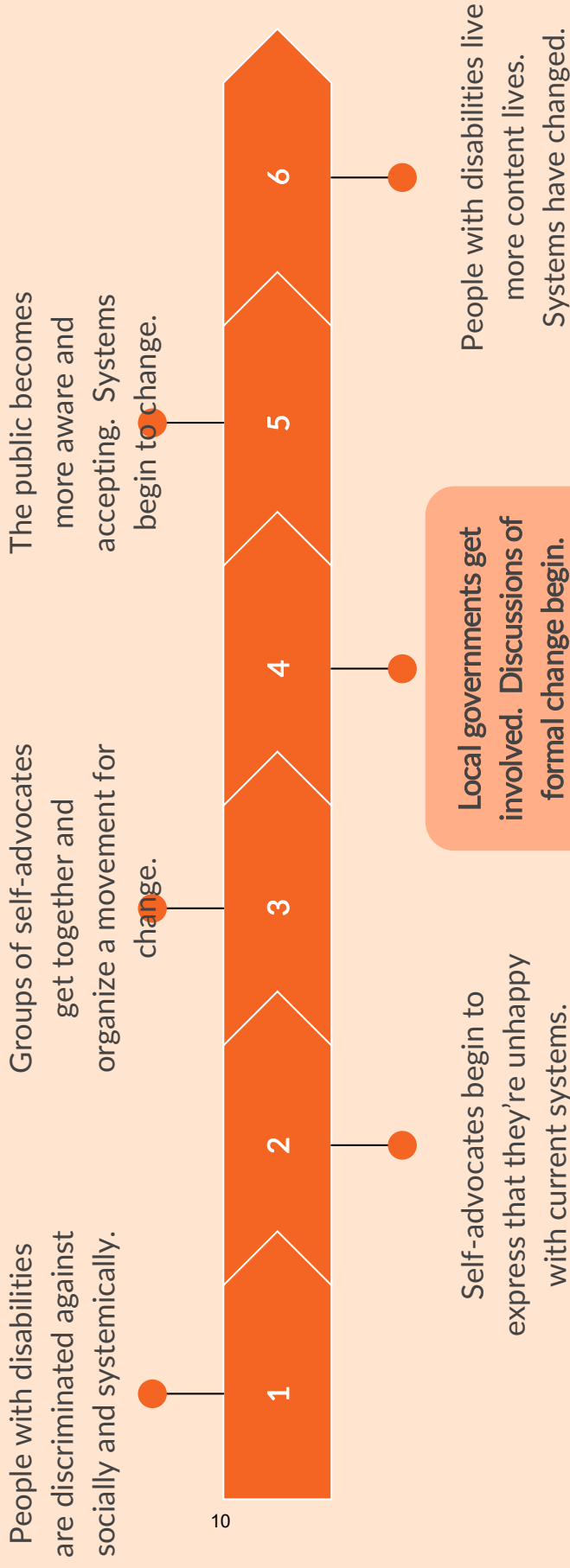
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network. (2012, March 2). Identity-First Language. <https://Autisticadvocacy.Org/>. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/identity-first-language/>
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network. (2021, June 25). What We Believe. <https://Autisticadvocacy.Org/>. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/what-we-believe/>
- Rogers, M., & Roberts, S. (2023, February 23). *The Power of Language: Person First v. Identity First Language*. Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center. <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/the-power-of-language/>

Self-Advocate Feedback: CCDDB Resolution

Thoughts from local community members



Steps to Social Change



Self-advocates associated with the Developmental Services Center and Community Choices expressed what each resolution means to them.

We asked advocates:

When the **statement is true**, what does it **look and feel like**?

When the **statement is not true**, what does that **look like**?

Recognize that Autism + I/DD is a natural part of the human experience

When this is true, what does it look like?

- People generally accept me and how I act
- I have the ability to contribute to society
- Greater acceptance and better accommodations

What does this feel like?

- Being different than others feels neutral, not negative
- Loving, caring, patient
- Equality

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- People don't think we should exist
- I am bullied for being different
- Discrimination, persecution, institutionalization

Recognize that people with Autism + I/DD have a **right to exist as they are**

When this is true, what does it look like?

- People do not try to change me to fit the “norm”
- People are understanding
- I get to exist as I am in public without staring or judgement

What does this feel like?

- Comfortable being myself
- Improved self confidence and lower social anxiety
- Positive, peace, harmony

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- People try to change or exclude me
- Depressing, isolating
- Discrimination and persecution

Recognize that people with Autism + I/DD are **valued diverse members of our community**

When this is true, what does it look like?

- People value me for how I think differently
- People listen to what I have to say
- Community functions better as a whole

What does this feel like?

- I feel proud and valued for my differences and uniqueness
- Being respected and included
- Equally contributing

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- I am seen as lesser because of my disability
- I am not listened to
- Being taken advantage of – others try to control and change behaviors

Work with people with Autism + I/DD to create & sustain community services and supports

When this is true, what does it look like?

- I'm included
- Better services exist and people's needs are met
- Services are more accessible and easier to understand

What does this feel like?

- I have autonomy
- People care for, support, understand me
- Exciting and prideful

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- Being ignored
- Services created which may not be helpful
- Uncaring, violent

Actively use input from people with Autism + I/DD in policies that directly affects them

When this is true, what does it look like?

- Better quality of life for people with disabilities
- Equal opportunities

What does this feel like?

- Somebody cares for what I have to say - exciting, happy, peaceful
- A big accomplishment
- Pride in ability to contribute

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- Discriminatory policies
- Policies that keep people in poverty, houselessness, and exposed to violence
- Unaccommodating - lower quality policies

Improve accessibility for people with Autism + I/DD so all feel included

When this is true, what does it look like?

- Multiple ways to access information
- Easy-to-read language
- A more welcoming community

What does this feel like?

- Caring, loving, supportive and safe
- More accepting for who I am
- Relief - easier to participate

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- Isolation, discrimination
- Being removed from the community
- Inability to access resources even if they exist

Educate the public on the rights of people with Autism + I/DD locally and nationally

When this is true, what does it look like?

- Public helps push for rights and services of those with disabilities
- Greater opportunities
- Accommodations are built in to daily life

What does this feel like?

- Being understood
- Grace and patience
- Caring, loving, uplifting and happy

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- Struggle and depression
 - Public feels negatively toward people with disabilities, leads to feelings of worthlessness
 - Discrimination
-

Work toward a system of care that **meets the needs and goals** of people with Autism + I/DD

When this is true, what does it look like?

- Being offered an equal opportunity for a good life
- Endless possibilities
- A huge stepping stone toward success

What does this feel like?

- Belonging
- Dedication to disabled community and therefore everyone
- Relief and freedom

When this is not true, what does it look like?

- Homelessness, poverty, bigotry, abuse
- Disadvantaged - set up for failure and missed opportunities
- Feelings of helplessness

5 Action Steps **for Local Government** **to Commit to**

Make it easier to find resources that **community members** can use

Examples of ways to make it easier:

- ★ More funding for community resource events.
- ★ Encourage all local service providers (including schools) to readily advertise accommodations.
- ★ Employ ambassadors from the disabled community.
- ★ Inform community with pamphlets, websites, public transit ads, radio, TV, newspapers.

Make sure **resources** are **available** and **welcoming** to people with Autism + I/DD

Examples of ways to make things available and welcoming:

- ★ Host community resource events in accessible locations (including accessible via public transportation).
- ★ Provide multiple ways to access information: audibly, visually, and written.
- ★ Always use plain language.

Including people with Autism + I/DD in making decisions that involve them

Examples of ways to make your involvement inclusive :

- ★ Offer multiple accessible ways for people with disabilities to give feedback: in person, online, writing in, etc.
- ★ Local entities should create relationships with disability service providers to be able to reach more of the disabled community.
- ★ Advertise to people with disabilities to let them know that feedback is encouraged and plainly explain how to do it.

Making accessible documents and website and using plain language

Examples of ways to make documents and websites more accessible :

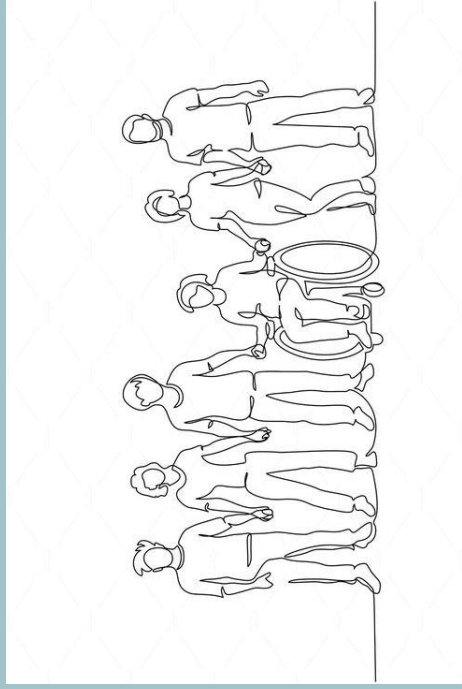
- ★ Use available tools (such as hemingwayapp.com/readability-checker) to check the readability of written resources, website material, etc.
- ★ Employ people with I/DD to translate information into plain language, or to check that language is truly accessible.
- ★ Offer multiple ways to access information - auditory, written, visual.

Raise community awareness of accessibility and disability issues

Examples of ways to raise awareness:

- ★ Website for public reviews of local business from people with disabilities on their ability to accommodate.
- ★ Funding for public service announcements regarding disability and inclusion - infographics, billboards, etc.
- ★ Courses on working with people with disabilities for employers, such as Community Choices' and DSC's joint LEAP program.
- ★ Teams of ambassadors from the disabled community give feedback to local entities.

Questions and discussion on next steps.



RESOLUTION #1

WHEREAS,

The Champaign County Board for Care and Treatment of Persons with a Developmental Disability is a unit of government established by voter approval under Illinois statute.

This unit is called the **Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board** or CCDDDB.

The CCDDDB is responsible for evaluating services for Champaign County residents who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). They are also responsible for funding services for Champaign County residents who have I/DD.

The CCDDDB also works with the **Champaign County Mental Health Board**. The Champaign County Mental Health Board also supports Champaign residents who have I/DD.

The CCDDDB and the CCMHB want to understand opportunities for improvement and to advocate on behalf of people who have I/DD.

The CCDDDB understands that the current state and federal I/DD system:

- Is not easy to understand or access,
- Has not fully realized deinstitutionalization, and
- Has not developed a true community-based support and service system.

The CCDDDB recognizes that fixing Illinois community-based services is difficult. It will require big changes and for people to work with Autistic people and people with I/DD.

The CCDDDB knows that federal programs supporting Autistic people and people with I/DD are under new threats.

The CCDDDB resolves to:

- Recognize that Autism¹, intellectual disability, and developmental disability are a natural part of the human experience.
- Recognize that Autistic people and people with intellectual disability and/or developmental disability have a right to exist as they are as humans.
- Recognize that Autistic people and people with intellectual disability/developmental disability and other disabilities are valued and celebrated diverse members of our community and the human family.
- Work with Autistic people and people with intellectual/developmental disability to create and sustain community-based services and supports that they want and need.
- Actively seek and use input from people with disabilities in policy that directly affects them and support their right to do so.
- Improve physical and digital accessibility of this community so that all residents are welcomed, included, and informed.

¹ In solidarity with the disability community, we use both identity first and person first language.

- Work to educate the public on the rights of Autistic people and people with intellectual and/or developmental disability in our community and across the state and nation.
- Recommit to achieving a community-based system of care which meets the needs and advances the aspirations of Champaign County Autistic residents and/or residents with intellectual and/or developmental disability.
- Urge our government partners, the Champaign County Mental Health Board and the Champaign County Board, to commit to achieving:
 - a robust community-based system of care and
 - an accessible, inclusive community based on input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.
- Urge other units of government operating within Champaign County, such as the Mass Transit District, Public Health District, Board of Health, Park Districts, School Districts, Cities, Villages, and Townships, to commit to:
 - improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all
 - seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.
- Urge State of Illinois' agencies and elected officials, as they redesign formal system of care, to commit to:
 - improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all
 - seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences
 - properly funding and supporting community-based services that meet the tenets of the Olmstead decision.
- Urge the federal government to commit to:
 - improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all
 - seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.
 - Acknowledging the unique role of Direct Support Professionals and the value of Home and Community Based Services and taking steps to protect these critical elements of the country's system of care.

SUBMITTED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Lynn Canfield, Executive Director

Vicki Niswander, Board President

This *RESOLUTION* is approved the 19th day of November, 2025 by **the Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board (CCDDb)** in Champaign County, Illinois.

References

- Autistic Self Advocacy Network. (2012, March 2). Identity-First Language. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/identity-first-language/>
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network. (2021, June 25). What We Believe. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/what-we-believe/>
- Rogers, M., & Roberts, S. (2023, February 23). *The Power of Language: Person First v. Identity First Language*. Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center. <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/the-power-of-language/>

2026 Pledge to Residents with Disabilities

Approved by the CCDDDB on January 28, 2026

In November of 2025, the **Champaign County Board for Care and Treatment of Persons with a Developmental Disability A/K/A Champaign County Developmental Disabilities Board A/K/A CCDDDB** passed a Resolution on behalf of residents who have developmental disabilities.

The **CCDDDB** is a unit of government established by voter approval under Illinois statute. They are responsible for evaluating and funding services for Champaign County residents who have intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD). They partner with the **Champaign County Mental Health Board**, which has similar responsibilities. Both seek to understand what could be better and to advocate on behalf of people who have I/DD.

This advocacy includes working with state and federal authorities to improve the larger systems for these residents. The **CCDDDB** recognizes that fixing Illinois community-based services will require big changes and for people to work with Autistic people and people with I/DD, and they know that federal programs supporting Autistic people and people with I/DD are under new threats.

The CCDDDB Resolved to:

- Recognize that Autism¹ and I/DD are a natural part of the human experience.
- Recognize that Autistic people and people with I/DD have a right to exist as they are.
- Recognize that Autistic people and people with I/DD are valued and celebrated diverse members of our community and the human family.
- Work with Autistic people and people with I/DD to create and sustain community-based services and supports that they want and need.
- Seek and use their input in policy that affects them, and support their right to do so.
- Improve physical and digital accessibility so that all are welcomed, included, and informed.
- Work to educate the public on the rights of Autistic people and people with I/DD.
- Recommit to achieving a community-based system of care which meets the needs and advances the aspirations of Autistic residents and/or residents with I/DD.
- Urge the **Champaign County Mental Health Board** and the **Champaign County Board** to commit to achieving a robust community-based system of care and an accessible, inclusive community based on input from people with disabilities and other lived experience.
- Urge other units of local government, such as the **Mass Transit District, Public Health District, Board of Health, Park Districts, School Districts, Cities, Villages, and Townships**, to commit to improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all and seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.

Also in November of 2025, the CCDDDB shared Resolution #1 with the **Champaign County Mental Health Board** and the **Champaign County Board**, in the hope they would also commit to achieving a robust community-based system of care and an accessible, inclusive community based on input from people with disabilities and other lived experience.

¹ In solidarity with the disability community, we use both identity first and person first language.

Next Steps:

1. Urge other units of local government, such as the **Mass Transit District, Public Health District, Board of Health, Park Districts, School Districts, Cities, Villages, and Townships**, to commit to improving access, accessibility, and inclusion for all and to seeking and using input from people with disabilities and other lived experiences.
2. Present a Pledge of Actions for each governmental unit to take during 2026, to demonstrate this commitment and to make authentic, informed progress toward the goals.

For these steps to be meaningful, the CCDDDB relies on the assistance and guidance of advocates who have relevant lived experience. This includes Autistic people, people with I/DD, their family members, and their close supporters. Advocates might attend meetings of local government and address them during Public Participation, and they might direct supporters to do so on their behalf.

The 2026 Pledge of Actions will ask other units of local government to commit to:

- Making it easier to find out about resources which are available to community members.
- Making sure those resources are available to and welcoming to people with I/DD or Autism.
- Including people with I/DD or Autism in making decisions which impact them.
- Creating accessible documents and websites and plain language documents.
- Raising community awareness of accessibility and disability issues.

References:

- Autistic Self Advocacy Network. (2012, March 2). Identity-First Language. <https://Autisticadvocacy.Org/>. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/identity-first-language/>
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network. (2021, June 25). What We Believe. <https://Autisticadvocacy.Org/>. <https://autisticadvocacy.org/about-asan/what-we-believe/>
- Rogers, M., & Roberts, S. (2023, February 23). *The Power of Language: Person First v. Identity First Language*. Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center. <https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/resource/the-power-of-language/>