

Emily Manire, Chair
New Hampshire Developmental Services Quality Council
2 ½ Beacon Street
Concord, New Hampshire, 03301
nhcasdq@gmail.com

Re: Self-advocacy Opportunities for People with Developmental Disabilities

Dear Emily,

This letter serves as acknowledgement of the Quality Council's October 1, 2024, letter, within which the Council requested that the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS) develop a plan to support local and regional self-advocacy efforts across the state. We agree with the Council's perspective that self-advocacy is critically important to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities can take the lead in making decisions for their lives, express their needs and goals and have control over their services and supports.

In considering the current status of regional self-advocacy groups shared by Isadora and Kelly it is clear that any approach to reconvene the meetings should also consider a mechanism to ignite desire from individuals in New Hampshire for robust participation in self-advocacy. I find it important to acknowledge that a plan developed by BDS would lack valuable information and perspective from individuals as well as critical information that would be necessary to offer a successful approach that impacts individual's lives. For this reason, BDS cannot act alone but is committed to partnering with our community in addressing this area of need that it has identified. Rather than BDS creating a plan, I have consulted with ABLE NH, who will create a task force with initial goals as follows:

- 1) Ensure individuals with lived experience have a leading voice in identifying how they would like self-advocacy in New Hampshire to function.
- 2) Conduct outreach to self-advocacy groups and Developmental Disabilities Councils in other states to learn best-practices in this area as well as how resources were gathered to support self-advocacy, including funding.
- 3) Work with the taskforce to create a plan that outlines the goals and necessary resources for robust self-advocacy in New Hampshire.

BDS values its partnership with the Quality Council and the agencies and stakeholders represented within. Please let me know if you have any additional thoughts or feedback.

Best Regards,



Jessica Gorton
Bureau Chief Bureau of Developmental Services
NH Department of Health and Human Services
105 Pleasant Street, Main Building
Concord NH, 03301
jessica.d.gorton@dhhs.nh.gov