

From our partners:
The Link Center:
Steering Committee Members Named

July 18, 2023

Media Contact:
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
Carrie McGraw
cmcgraw@nasddds.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, DC – The Link Center: Bridging I/DD and Mental Health Systems, is pleased to announce the members of its inaugural steering committee. Funded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the mission of this national resource center is to improve the quality of life for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) and mental health conditions by supporting state agencies with policy development, service design, and service coordination resources, and sharing resources with individuals, families, direct support professionals, clinicians, and other policymakers.

Through a five-year cooperative agreement with ACL, The Link Center is led by three national associations whose state and professional members are essential to systems change in this arena – the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD), and the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD). Additional partners include the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, CommunicationFIRST, Green Mountain Self-Advocates, the National Center for START Services, the Nisonger Center, the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities, and the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators (NASHIA).

This project is governed by a steering committee of 12 people with lived experience. Over their five-year terms, committee members will meet quarterly, and more often if needed, to advise on priorities and provide their perspectives on the center’s work. They will, in collaboration with NASDDDS, NASMHPD, NADD, and ACL, shape the center’s efforts to identify and share resources that better meet the needs of individuals with I/DD and mental health conditions, recognizing that everyone is unique and has different needs and preferences.

Committee members were selected from across the U.S. through a thorough application and review process. They come from many backgrounds and are experts in their experiences living with disabilities.

Steering Committee Members

- Emily Brown, *Iowa*
- Reid Caplan, *Massachusetts/DC*
- Danielle Coles, *New York*
- Reverend Denise Walden Glenn, *New York*
- Alicia Hopkins, *Ohio*
- Kimberley Jackson, *Colorado*
- Tyrome Launderville, *Iowa*
- Perri Spencer, *Kansas*
- John Tkacz, CRC, *New Jersey*
- Micah Peace Urquilla, *Kentucky*
- Victoria Villalobos-Gallardo, *California*
- Monica Wafford, *Alaska*

“Without a doubt, the most important part of this project is the steering committee, as it will drive the work of our center,” said NASDDDS Executive Director, Mary Sowers. “The diversity of this group and their representation of the many cross-sections of experience encountered by people with I/DD will be key to the success of the project. We look forward to working with this impressive group.”

###