

Olmstead Consumer Taskforce (OCTF) Meeting Minutes

Date: November 14, 2025

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM

Location: Virtual (Zoom)

Olmstead consumer Taskforce Members Present:

Michelle Allmandinger

Edward Esbeck

Ernie Geiger

Mary Roberts

Lisa Pakkebier (Chair)

Joel Vander Molen (Vice Chair)

Mari Brown

Garret Frey

Kris Graves

Brittney Montross

Megz Stroback

Jessica Williams

Olmstead Consumer Taskforce Members Absent:

Amber Alaniz-Stiles

Greg Fier

Bill Loyd (Excused)

Joey Wesselink

Emma Bouza (Excused)

Marc Hines (Excused)

Kelly Stull

Other Attendees:

Ben Grauer

Caitlin Owens

Julie Gibbons

Paula Connolly

Skylar Hoffman

Krys Purcell

William Cross

Andria Pooley (Staff Support)

Brooke Lovelace

June Klein-Bacon

Laura Leise (Iowa HHS)

Kim Walford

Geoffrey Lauer

Kristen Aller

Katie Damon

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Lisa Pakkebier (Chair) called the meeting to order. Members were reminded to ensure Andria had their most updated email address for distribution list accuracy.

Links shared in chat at the start of the meeting included:

- Current OCTF Members page
- Application to become a member

Joel Vander Molen (Vice-Chair) welcomed returning members and reviewed the structure of the meeting, which would include full introductions due to the addition of new voting members.

2. Welcome of New Voting Members

Vice Chair Joel Vander Molen welcomed three new voting members:

- **Kris Graves** – present
- **Mary Roberts** – present
- **Emma Bouza** – joining intermittently; introduction postponed

Introductions from New Members

Kris Graves

Kris Graves introduced herself as a self-advocate living in Des Moines. She is a CCO provider for two individuals and also works as a Peer Support Specialist. Kris previously served on the OCTF and is returning after the personal loss of close colleagues. She remains active in Allies and Advocacy, Access to Independence, LEND, and several other boards, and she expressed a strong commitment to advocacy and peer support.

Mary Roberts

Mary Roberts reintroduced herself as a returning OCTF member, having previously termed out. She is a self-advocate with autism and the parent of two children with profound autism who receive HCBS services. Mary is the co-founder and President of Village Community, an HCBS provider in Johnson County, and she also serves on the CICS District 6 Advisory Council. She expressed appreciation and enthusiasm about contributing to the taskforce again.

Emma Buza

- Introduction forthcoming

Joel noted that two voting member positions remain open and encouraged referrals. The application link was provided in the chat.

3. Full Introductions of Voting Members

To support new members, the taskforce held full voting member introductions.

- **Lisa Pakkebieer, Chair** – 34+ years in provider services; personal family experience; serving second term (ends September 2026).
- **Michelle Allmendinger** – Director of Human Services, To The Rescue.
- **Mari Brown** – ASK Resource Center; sibling of a person with multiple disabilities.

- **Ed Esbeck** – Case Coordinator; self-advocate.
- **Ernie Geiger** – Former physical therapist; ABI survivor; long-term professional experience.
- **Brittany Montross** – 19 years at Exceptional Persons, Inc.; oversees workforce, intermittent services, tech-enabled supports, expanding into employment.
- **Megz Stroback** – Independent Living Specialist, Access to Independence; person with multiple disabilities; 10+ years of IL experience.
- **Joel Vander Molen, Vice Chair** – High-level quadriplegic for 40 years; web developer, substitute preacher, author, advocate; Chair of Community Access Committee.
- **Jessica Williams** – Voting member living in Johnston; lived experience; supported through Mosaic host home; recently started a new job at a local restaurant.

4. Review and Approval of November Agenda

The November agenda was reviewed and approved with a motion by Mary Roberts and a second by Ernie Geiger. The outcome was unanimous approval with no abstentions.

5. Review and Approval of September Minutes

The September minutes were reviewed and approved with a motion by Joel Vander Molen and a second by Ernie Geiger. The outcome was unanimous approval with no abstentions.

6. Olmstead Plan Update – Presentation by Laura Leise (HHS Aging & Disability)

Laura Leise from HHS Aging & Disability provided an update on the Olmstead Plan. The target publication date is February 2026, with hopes to release the plan in January pending review by new HHS Director Larry Johnson. From April through September, Laura and her team completed a substantial data-collection effort across HHS divisions to identify trends, gaps, themes, and cross-division intersections, which were then shared internally for prioritization.

Goal areas identified include increasing access to employment and stable jobs; expanding the availability of affordable housing and transportation; increasing developmental screenings for children ages 9–35 months; and ensuring representation across the lifespan, from birth through end of life.

Key social and health indicators, such as depression, anxiety, loneliness, and lack of social support, were incorporated into goals to help strengthen community connections and reduce isolation.

Since the previous meeting in October, a participatory workgroup met for 12–13 hours with 18 external participants to identify measurable indicators related to housing instability,

transportation, employment, child referrals, and social and emotional support. Draft strategy concepts include expanding transportation options through volunteer and regional partnerships, advancing supported decision-making using the Science of Hope framework, funding community health workers, and revising zoning to support more diverse housing.

Next steps include finalizing strategies before Thanksgiving, preparing a draft plan in early December, and holding a Plan Subcommittee meeting on December 4, 2025 (email Andria-pooley@uiowa.edu for an invite). The draft plan will be shared prior to that meeting and then forwarded to division directors and HHS leadership.

8. Transportation Updates: North Liberty & SEATS – Report by Ernie Geiger

Ernie Geiger provided an update on transportation issues related to North Liberty and SEATS. He noted that he was unable to attend a recent Iowa Transportation Advisory Committee meeting due to illness and later learned the meeting had been rescheduled. The updated meeting information was forwarded to Andria for distribution.

Ernie highlighted an ongoing concern that SEATS only travels to North Liberty three times per day (at 7:00 AM, 11:00 AM, and 4:00 PM) which creates significant hardship for riders, especially during the winter months. While Johnson County’s curb-to-curb model works well within the county, it does not extend to North Liberty because of county boundary limitations. Many stakeholders, including drivers, the North Liberty hospital, and orthopedic providers, are aware of the problem. Ernie and Angela McConnell plan to attend future advisory meetings and encourage others to participate as well.

9. Public Comment

A. “Let Them Work” Campaign – Brooke Lovelace (Iowa DD Council)

Brooke Lovelace from the Iowa DD Council shared an update on the “Let Them Work” campaign, which is running through November and December and encourages constituents to contact legislators about Medicaid income limits, asset caps, and needed reforms to the Medicaid for Employed People with Disabilities (MEPD) program. She provided links and noted that talking points are available, and she confirmed that the campaign will have a presence at the Capitol during the legislative session.

B. William Cross – Policy Discussion

William asked clarifying questions regarding campaign goals. Brooke reiterated the need for Medicaid coverage regardless of income because private insurance does not cover long-term supports.

C. Independent Living (IL) Stories – Krysl Purscell (SILC)

Krysl Purscell from SILC announced that the organization is collecting Independent Living (IL) stories for use in outreach and training. Stories may be submitted in written or recorded

form and should describe the IL services used and how they connect to the Center for Independent Living (CIL) system. Links to the IL story submission form and the statewide CIL map were provided.

Meeting Adjourned at 11:55pm
Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Andria Pooley