

AAIDD Interest Network Annual Plan & Yearly Report

Planning and reporting on Interest Network activities designed to fulfil their purpose.
(See the [AAIDD Interest Networks Leadership Manual](#) for the purpose of the Interest Networks.

Interest Network:	Direct Support Professionals
Lead Contact Person(s): Megan Sanders, Jennifer Gray	
Next Scheduled Election & Leadership Position(s) that will be Open for Nomination:	
2025-2026 Report For the year that just ended (July 1-June 30), indicate objectives met, activities completed, and funds used. The DSP Interest Network hosted meetings in August, September, October, and November 2025, and thereafter every two months in January, March, and May 2026. Meeting topics included general discussion of current legislation and its impacts on local and national IDD providers, DSPs, and AAIDD's role as the oldest national research organization devoted to the field of IDD and how this informs any advocacy "with a little a" that AAIDD and its Interest Networks engage in. Two providers from the greater DC, Maryland, and Virginia region presented on their DSP Training programs designed for people with lived experience. Our 2025 conferee Scholarship recipient, Shannon Eshman, presented in collaboration with the Religion and Spirituality IN on "Supporting the Religious and Spiritual Preferences of Adults with Disabilities in Group Homes." Finally, Amy Hewitt and Susan O'Neill gave a book talk on their <i>Direct Support Workforce Solutions</i> . Presentations were followed by lively question-and-answer discussion. In March 2026, the DSP Interest Network was apprised of our fund balance of \$795.00 with a use or lose balance of \$366. The IN members voted to use \$600 toward a scholarship and lunch ticket for a student/early career professional. We deferred to the Students and Early Career Interest Network to make the selection of the scholarship recipient. Samaira Husein was our Scholar for the June 2026 Annual Meeting. Peg Gould, who had co-chaired the DSP IN, stepped down from this role in November 2025. Jessica Neely continued to serve through June 2026. At the Annual Meeting, the IN hosted an off-site lunch for members. After a call for volunteers, the following IN members will step into new leadership positions for the 2026-2027 year: Megan Sanders, University of MN ICI (Co-Chair); Jennifer Grey, College of Health and Human Services, Northern Illinois University (Co-Chair); Kelsey Johnson, Workforce Training/Curriculum Specialist, SEEC (Secretary).	
2026-2027 Plan: Goals, Objectives, Activities, and Strategies For the coming year (July 1-June 30), describe the planned objectives, activities, and proposed expenditure of funds. Goal 1: The DSP Interest Network will meet every other month to facilitate conversations around important workforce-related topics, engaging subject-matter experts as speakers and presenters. ● <i>Objective 1: We will send a meeting schedule for the full 2026-2027 year, with calendar invitations, to support member planning</i> ● <i>Objective 2: We will recruit speakers for each meeting who are subject-matter experts in workforce development.</i>	

Due July 31, 2026

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- *Objective 3: We will informally collect feedback from members at meetings to ensure topic relevance to members.*

Goal 2: We will explore collaborating with at least one other interest network.

- *Objective 1: We will understand what has been done in previous years and how we can build off of that previous work.*
- *Objective 1: We will discuss opportunities with the DSP Interest Network at meetings.*
- *Objective 2: We will contact other interest networks to identify opportunities for collaboration.*