



## Partnership Forum 2025

### Key Takeaways & Next Steps

At the Forum, we worked in small groups to talk about five areas of the DD system: **access, case management, sustainability, quality, and efficiency**. Each group shared ideas, questions, and what they would keep, burn, or invent for the future.

#### What we heard most often:

- Families need one clear way in (“one door”) to get services, with the same rules across counties.
- SSAs should spend less time on paperwork and more time with people.
- The workforce (DSPs and SSAs) needs stability, training, and career paths.
- Funding should move away from 15-minute billing toward daily, monthly, or outcome-based models.
- Technology can make the system simpler, more consistent, and more transparent.
- Quality should be measured by people’s lives and outcomes, not by paperwork.

#### Keep, Burn, Invent

- **Keep:** Medicaid funding, local County Board support, continuum of services, DODD as a Cabinet-level agency.
- **Burn:** The Ohio ISP, duplicative rules, endless paperwork, and EVV requirements.
- **Invent:** A statewide tech platform, outcome-based payment and compliance, tools to separate wants vs. needs.

#### Next Steps

- Share these ideas with the **DD Budget Coalition** as they set shared advocacy priorities.
- Use them to shape **OPRA’s plan for gubernatorial candidates and campaigns**.
- Test ideas through **pilots or Learning Labs** to see what works and improve as we go.
- Create **more opportunities to gather**, reflect, and keep building this work together.

**Bottom line:** People want a system that is simpler, more consistent, powered by technology, and focused on outcomes that matter, not paperwork.

**More detail is included in the sections that follow**, including the themes and questions by area, the “Keep, Burn, Invent” lists, and the changes people suggested for now, in one year, and in five years.

## Shared Priorities by Action Area

### Access

#### Ideas that surfaced:

- Families need a clear, consistent entry point — “one door” or a statewide process that works the same everywhere.
- Eligibility and access differ by county; people want consistency across the state.
- Technology tools (AI, apps, centralized platforms) could streamline intake, eligibility, and navigation.
- Demographic data should be used to forecast and plan for demand.

#### Questions that surfaced:

- How can families simply know where to go for help?
- Why would every county have the same tool but not the same rule?
- How can we use technology to lower costs and improve efficiency?

### Case Management

#### Ideas that surfaced:

- The SSA role needs to be redefined: less paperwork and compliance, more relationship-building and problem-solving.
- Workforce stabilization is urgent to prevent turnover and burnout.
- Statewide standards for training, role clarity, and expectations are needed.
- Technology and automation should reduce administrative burden so SSAs can focus on people.
- Some groups questioned whether alternative or regionalized case management models might be needed.

#### Questions that surfaced:

- Who is actually providing case management?
- How do we simplify the SSA position and reduce administrative duties?
- Can we cut the admin burden so SSAs can spend more time with people?

## Sustainability

### Ideas that surfaced:

- Broad consensus to end 15-minute billing and replace it with daily, monthly, or outcomes-based models.
- Several tables emphasized distinguishing wants vs. needs — with technology as a possible tool to help.
- Ongoing workforce investment (DSPs, SSAs) through training, credentials, and career ladders.
- Better use of data and analytics to project demand and plan long-term.
- Reinvest savings from institutions or high-cost settings into community supports.

### Questions that surfaced:

- How soon must we have the difficult conversations about wants vs. needs?
- How do we get more creative with our funding?
- Can we design a tool that helps identify a want vs. a need?

## Quality & Accountability

### Ideas that surfaced:

- Strong agreement to move away from compliance-driven paperwork like the Ohio ISP.
- Quality should be defined by outcomes, independence, and satisfaction — not by forms.
- Transparency: make accountability data visible and accessible.
- Recognition and incentives for high-performing providers.
- Accountability must include the voice of the person served.

### Questions that surfaced:

- Are people happy? Are they meeting their goals?
- Could we create a customer-service style approach to quality (e.g., surveys)?
- How can quality and accountability be made more transparent and accessible?

## Efficiency

### Ideas that surfaced:

- A universal call to simplify and streamline: fewer forms, fewer reassessments, less duplication.

- Technology should connect systems and cut down repetitive work.
- Efficiency also means choosing what not to do — stopping duplicative or outdated requirements.
- Collaboration and integration across DODD, County Boards, and providers are essential.
- Some participants questioned whether Ohio can sustain 88 separate county boards, suggesting regionalization or shared administrative functions to reduce duplication and improve consistency.

### **Questions that surfaced:**

- What is really necessary to provide services and case management?
- Why isn't efficiency a part of every conversation?
- What are we going to do — and what are we not going to do?

## **Keep, Burn, Invent**

### **Keep:**

- Medicaid funding for DD.
- County Board/local infrastructure and property tax support.
- Continuum of services (ICF, waiver, residential, community).
- Independence, community engagement, and stakeholder input.
- DODD as a Cabinet-level agency.

### **Burn:**

- The Ohio ISP.
- Current compliance/accreditation models.
- Duplicative reassessments and constant rule changes.
- EVV requirements.
- The idea that “everything hangs on Medicaid.”

### **Invent:**

- A statewide technology platform that integrates eligibility, assessment, planning, compliance, and funding.
- AI-powered tools to separate wants vs. needs, reduce documentation, and support SSAs.
- Outcome-based compliance systems.
- New funding/payment models (daily, monthly, outcomes-based).
- A common language and transparent metrics of quality.

## Change Now, 1 Year, 5 Years

### Change Now:

- Launch technology pilots (AI, apps, access/navigation tools).
- Start conversations with families on wants vs. needs.
- Cut duplication and reduce unnecessary rules.
- Focus on workforce stabilization and SSA role clarity.

### Change in 1 Year:

- Establish statewide SSA role standards and reduce admin burden.
- Develop new outcome-based quality/satisfaction measures.
- Pilot “one door” access models.
- Integrate technology into planning and compliance processes.

### Change in 5 Years:

- Fully modernized, tech-enabled, simplified waiver system.
- Payment models tied to outcomes, not units of service.
- Transparent, person-centered quality/accountability system.
- Stable, professional workforce with career paths.

## Conclusion

The table discussions reflect a strong **consensus on priorities**: simplify the system, stabilize the workforce, modernize with technology, and measure what matters — people’s lives, not paperwork.

Participants were clear about what to **keep, burn, and invent**. The pathway points toward a system that is **streamlined, consistent statewide, powered by technology, and accountable to outcomes defined by people with disabilities and their families**.