

Spring 2026 Public Comment: Overall Olmstead Plan feedback and participant demographics

Contents

Spring 2026 Public Comment: Overall Olmstead Plan feedback and participant demographics.....	1
Contents.....	1
Introduction	1
Draft Olmstead Plan background.....	2
Public comment period background.....	2
Public comment participation and demographics.....	4
Survey demographics.....	4
Virtual meeting demographics.....	6
Themes from overall feedback about the Olmstead Plan	8
Overall, draft goals are not ambitious enough.	8
Concerns about data collection and measurements.....	9
The draft plan does not have built-in accountability	9
Missing topics	10

Introduction

This report shares findings from the spring 2026 public comment period on the draft Olmstead Plan. The public comment period sought feedback about proposed Olmstead Plan goals.

Draft Olmstead Plan background

The first Minnesota Olmstead Plan was adopted in 2015. In 2023, the Olmstead Subcabinet decided it was time for a more comprehensive update. For the plan update, OIO worked with a contractor called the Dendros Group. The Dendros Group brought on people with lived experience of disability as Inclusion Consultants. Inclusion Consultants worked with state agency staff to write goals and strategies for the draft plan.

The draft plan included both measurable goals and data collection goals. Measurable goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Measurable goals are the foundation of an effective Olmstead Plan. Data collection goals represent issues that agencies want to write goals about, but don't have the data to create a measurable goal yet. The draft plan grouped goals into seven topics:

- Crisis services
- Education
- Employment
- Health and safety
- Housing
- Transportation
- Transition

For more information about Olmstead, the 2026 plan drafting process, and to read the draft plan, please visit the OIO website: [MN.gov/olmstead](https://mn.gov/olmstead)

Public comment period background

The Olmstead Implementation Office (OIO) held the public comment period in partnership with the Dendros Group, Inclusion Consultants, and state staff. The public comment period took place in April and May 2026. It included:

- An online survey
- Virtual meetings and individual interviews
- Email comments and submissions from organizations

Online survey

The online survey was available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Somali, and American Sign Language (ASL).

Survey participants could choose which goal topics to share feedback about. They could also choose to give general feedback about topic areas overall, specific feedback about individual goals, or both. The survey was anonymous, and all questions were optional.

Survey questions

The survey asked the following questions about each topic area:

- Do you think reaching these goals will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities? (multiple choice question)
- Are there any topics or issues you feel are missing from these goals? (comment box question)
- Do you have any general feedback about these goals? (comment box question)

The survey asked the following questions about each individual measurable goal:

- Do you think this is an important question for the lead state agency to address? (multiple choice question)
- This measurable goal is... (multiple choice question)
- Do you have any ideas of other strategies and action steps to reach this goal? (comment box question)
- Do you think reaching this goal will improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities? (multiple choice question)

For data collection goals, the survey asked, “Do you have any feedback about this goal?” with a comment box.

The survey also included optional demographic questions.

Virtual meetings and individual interviews

Dendros Group planned and implemented virtual meetings as part of the public comment period. Inclusion Consultants facilitated the meetings. Dendros held seven meetings, one for each topic in the plan. The meetings were intended to be an accessible alternative to the online survey. Registration was open to the public, and the meetings took place on Zoom.

Facilitators asked the following questions during virtual meetings:

- What would make these goals more effective to improve the lives of Minnesotans with disabilities?
- What would make these goals more effective to better integrate Minnesotans with disabilities in community life?
- What’s missing from these goals?

Dendros Group also offered individual interviews. The interviews were intended to be an accessible alternative to the survey and virtual meetings. Inclusion Consultants conducted the interviews.

Email comments and submissions from organizations

OIO also received public comments through email. These comments came from individuals and organizations.

Public comment participation and demographics

This table shows the number of submissions received through the public comment period.

Source	Number of submissions/participants
Survey	122
Virtual meeting	48
Emails and letters	16

Notes:

- Submissions from organizations are counted as one respondent.
- Interviews are included in the survey totals.

Survey demographics

Survey participants were asked to share their role; age; race and/or ethnicity; and county or Tribal Nation or community. These questions were optional.

Role

This table shows the number and percentage of survey participants by role. Participants could choose more than one answer, so percentages do not add up to 100.

Role	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Person with a disability	42	34.4%
Parent of someone with a disability	41	33.6%
Work in a disability-related field	40	32.8%
Friend or ally of someone with a disability	31	25.4%
Caregiver	29	23.8%

Role	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Other	18	14.7%
Service provider	16	13.1%
State of Minnesota employee	13	10.6%
Legal guardian of someone with a disability age 18 or older	12	9.8%
Child of someone with a disability	11	9%
Legal guardian of someone with a disability under age 18	4	3.3%
Did not respond	7	5.7%
Total	122	

Age

This table shows the number and percentage of survey participants by age group.

Age group	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Under 18	1	0.8%
25 to 34	8	6.6%
35 to 44	20	16.4%
45 to 54	25	20.5%
55 to 64	38	31.1%
65+	19	15.6%
Did not respond	10	8.2%
Total	122	100%

Race and ethnicity

This table shows the number and percentage of survey participants by race and/or ethnicity. Participants could choose multiple responses.

Race and ethnicity	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Asian	2	1.6%
Black or African American	3	2.5%
Native American	6	4.9%
Other/self-describe	8	6.6%
White	90	73.8%
Did not respond	14	11.5%
Total	122	

Geography

This table shows the number and percentage of survey participants by geography. The seven-county metro area includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties.

Geography	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Seven-county metro area	66	54%
Greater Minnesota	26	21.3%
Did not respond	30	24.6%
Total	122	100%

Virtual meeting demographics

Meeting participants were asked to share their role; age; race and/or ethnicity; and county or Tribal Nation or community. These questions were optional.

Role

This table shows the number and percentage of meeting participants by role. Participants could choose more than one answer, so percentages do not add up to 100.

Role	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Person with a disability	23	47.9%
Parent of someone with a disability	14	29.2%

Role	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Work in a disability-related field	25	52.1%
Other	1	2.1%
Service provider	9	18.7%
Total	48	

Age

This table shows the number and percentage of meeting participants by age group.

Age group	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Under 18	0	0%
25 to 34	3	6.2%
35 to 44	13	27.1%
45 to 54	16	33.3%
55 to 64	6	12.5%
65+	6	12.5%
Did not respond	3	6.25%
Total	48	100%

Race and ethnicity

This table shows the number and percentage of meeting participants by race and/or ethnicity. Participants could choose multiple responses, so percentages do not add up to 100.

Race and ethnicity	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Asian	2	4.2%
Black or African American	5	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino/a/e	9	18.7%
Native American	1	2.1%
White	28	58.3%
Did not respond	4	8.3%

Race and ethnicity	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Total	48	

Geography

This table shows the number and percentage of meeting participants by geography. The seven-county metro area includes Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, and Washington counties.

Geography	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Seven-county metro area	29	60.4%
Greater Minnesota	12	25%
Did not respond	7	14.5%
Total	48	100%

Themes from overall feedback about the Olmstead Plan

This section shares themes from comments about the Olmstead Plan overall.

Overall, draft goals are not ambitious enough.

Members of the public and disability focused organizations shared the draft Olmstead Plan needs to have more ambitious goals. Comments included desire for higher targets, shorter timelines to achieve results, and dissatisfaction with the emphasis on training versus more structural changes.

Quotes:

- “MCD [Minnesota Council on Disability], other disability leaders in the State of Minnesota executive branch, and members of the disability community have noted that the current draft falls short. The proposed goals do not meet specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) criteria and lack sufficient ambition to drive meaningful systems change. [...] Many goals are so incremental and conservative; we advise a combination of incremental goals and larger, stretch goals.”
- “Overall, the goals are exceedingly small and attainable with percentages that are incredibly low, or numbers that are just as low.”
- “Over relying on training is going to likely come up short of our goal of improving the lives of those with disabilities and providing opportunities to participate in community.”

- “Data goals [are a] first step - but wow - that has to be done quickly. That is a basic, rudimentary first step - the work only begins after the data is available - first time these gaps are being addressed?”
- “Additionally, compliance with existing law should not be reframed as a future goal. For example, the goal stating that by June 30, 2030, 100% of students with disabilities will have complete postsecondary transition planning in their IEPs is already required by law. This should already be happening and enforced now, not treated as a future target. Presenting it as a long-term goal may suggest a lack of urgency in fixing known gaps in the current system.”
- “Many of the proposed goals reflect minimal improvement over long timeframes (e.g., 2–4% increases). These goals do not reflect the urgency of the barriers people still face or the need for meaningful changes to systems and services.”
- “If this Plan is meant to guide real inclusion, it must set goals that push systems to improve, create better outcomes, and fully support the promise of *Olmstead v. L.C.*”

Concerns about data collection and measurements

Feedback was shared with questions and concerns about the measurement and data used for goals.

Quotes:

- “Some goals do not have clearly defined measurements or are not measurable; Strategies for implementation are unclear or underdeveloped; Baseline data appears inconsistent or insufficient to support measurement.”
- “Some goals are 1 year - and some 5 year - not sure what happens when a 1 year goal is met? Do these feed other goals - or is there 4 years of ‘nothing’ Rough count - appx 1/3 of goals are 1 year only. How does that work with a five year plan?”
- “Page 57/58 Transition Data Goal #1 - we have a data goal to create a target (By July 1, 2027, DCT and DHS will create a measurable target.) What happens after that? Having a target is the first step - but there has to be concrete and defined action after the data has been collected.”

The draft plan does not have built-in accountability

Feedback was shared that there are no true accountability measures and mechanisms in the draft plan. People are wondering how the state will be held accountable to meet the needs of the disability community and meet their goals.

Quotes:

- “There are no clear accountability or enforcement mechanisms.”
- “The plan indicates that during the inception - 2000 people provided input (Quality of Life Survey) - and then a follow up with an additional 500+ respondents - I am struggling to see how

many of the goals link back to that feedback - and how that input drove the plan. There should be a very clear linkage between input and the plan - and it is not apparent what that linkage is - when I read through the 50+ pages of the plan - and then some of the goals from the earliest pages of the plan - I don't see the connection."

- "The Plan often says agencies will "work together" but does not clearly explain who is responsible for what. Without this information, it is harder to hold agencies accountable and make sure action happens. Each goal must include: Defined roles for partner agencies; Ways to make sure people and agencies are held responsible and progress is tracked."
- "We recommend substantial revision prior to finalization, including: Strengthening the overall vision for full inclusion and systems transformation; Setting stronger and more meaningful goals; Creating clear ways to track progress, enforce responsibilities, and provide funding; Directly addressing known system failures; Making sure new structures work well with existing systems Without these revisions, the Plan may continue the current system instead of creating real community inclusion"

Missing topics

There was feedback about topics that were missing from the plan in general. Many of the missing topics are overarching themes people would like addressed across goals and agencies. Some topics included intersectionality, geographic disparities, choice, assistive technology, and many more.

Quotes:

- "Without taking these differences into account, statewide goals may hide gaps and allow inequities to continue, especially in Greater Minnesota and other underserved areas. The Plan should include goals based on the needs and starting points of different regions. It should also include strategies to make sure progress happens fairly across all parts of the state, instead of using the same goals for every community."
- "I find it odd that guardianship is not mentioned once - since it is such a significant determinant of ones experience and ability to make choices."
- "We have known racial and ethnic differences (and intersectionality) in the experiences of our citizens. The plan needs to address these issues in a complete and comprehensive way - especially since it was an overarching theme [from community feedback as mentioned in the draft plan]."
- "Do not force full inclusion, give [people] choices about what they want to do and who with."
- "As I read your latest draft of the Minnesota Olmstead Plan, I saw what I believe to be several things lacking in the plan. Most of the things that are missing have to do with those who are more severely affected mentally, emotionally, and cognitively by their disability."
- "Furthermore, there is a need for further research for all children, families and individuals with disabilities of all protected classes, including but not limited to race and national origin."

- “The following is a list of major topics, settings, and subpopulations for and of the broader disability community are missing from the draft plan and, in the GCDD’s [Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities] opinion, must be addressed:
 - People with the Most Significant Disabilities: There is no mention or note of this population within the broader disability community, nor any indication that their specific needs or challenges are considered or accounted for within the plan.
 - Children and Youth: Education goals, though very important to this population, are not the same as children and youth issues, which are not raised or addressed in the report.
 - Subminimum Wages and Guardianship/Conservatorship: Neither of these significant issues is mentioned anywhere within the plan or the appendix, though they directly impact the rights and quality of life for thousands of people with disabilities, their families, and the communities where they live.
 - Racial Disparities: The Leadership Forum and the Subcabinet both committed to addressing this issue, but it is not mentioned or addressed in this plan.
 - Assistive Technology: This topic does not appear within the main report and is only mentioned once within the appendix as an example of a theme from community feedback.
 - Person-Centered Planning and Person-Directed Supports: Person-centered planning and person-directed supports should receive prominent attention.
 - Self-Advocacy, Leadership, and Civic Engagement: The plan does not address any of these areas or issues.
 - The disability community is both large and highly nuanced. For the plan and its goals to have a meaningful and transformative impact, specific segments of the disability population, certain age groups (children, youth, young adults), and specific segregated settings need to all be directly accounted for and addressed. We ask that you review the entire plan again to ensure it includes all disabilities, ages, and settings.”