



UnlockGA Strategic Plan

2025 & 2026

UnlockGA 2025/206 Goals and Actions

Plain Language Version

On May 14th, a group of 30 people—including people with disabilities, families, advocates, and professionals—met at the Tommy Nobis Center to help set goals for UnlockGA. They talked about the problems people face with Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) and how UnlockGA can help fix them. Together, they came up with ideas and actions for the next year. UnlockGA will focus on three main goals:

Goal 1: Show how HCBS helps Georgia

UnlockGA will collect stories from people with disabilities, their families, and professionals. These stories will explain how HCBS improves lives and benefits the state. The goal is to help lawmakers understand why HCBS is important and worth protecting.

Goal 2: Build a strong team to support HCBS

UnlockGA will hire part-time ambassadors with disabilities from each of Georgia's six regions. UnlockGA Ambassadors will gather information about what people need and share UnlockGA updates in their communities. UnlockGA will also hold monthly online meetings and regular advocacy events to talk about how to improve HCBS and solve problems people face.

Goal 3: Work together with other groups across Georgia

UnlockGA will team up with organizations around the state to share resources, push for better policies, and advocate for HCBS. They'll hold quarterly meetings with these partners to plan and take action together.

Long Version

OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

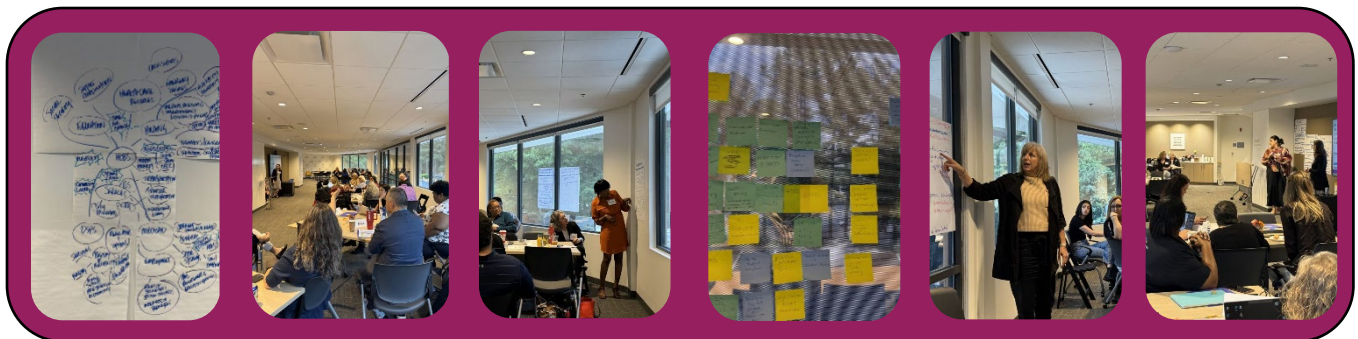
On May 14th, 30 people from across Georgia met at the Tommy Nobis Center to make a plan for the future strategy of UnlockGA. During the day, leaders from across the Georgia Developmental Disabilities system talked in small and large groups to:

1. Consider challenges and opportunities to HCBS in Georgia
2. Discuss a vision for HCBS in Georgia
3. Create long and short term goals to improve access and quality of HCBS
4. Prioritize the actions most important for UnlockGA to take in the next few years
5. Begin planning how UnlockGA will continue to work to make HCBS supports more accessible and better quality in Georgia

THEMES FOR ACTION

During the meeting, leaders focused on six themes for action that are important for improving HCBS in Georgia. They determined long term and short term goals and actions needed for making HCBS more accessible, available, and higher quality. From there, the group came up with plans to guide the work of UnlockGA over the next year and in the future.

Want to read the notes, including short and long term priorities and plans for each action theme? Go to www.unlockgeorgia.org





Resources for Inclusion

- Public Spaces
- Transportation
- Accessibility



Community Based System Upgrades

- Making sure people have a menu of supports (roles, level, funding, options)
- Increasing quality of services
- Increasing systems support to ensure quality of services



Provider Capacity Building

- Increase wages and funds
- Address low housing supply
- Build capacity for statewide person centered supports



Employment

- Improving employment services
- Connecting with employers
- Improving benefits planning



Education and Culture

- Improving caregiver support and information access
- Making a business case for HCBS
- Shifting systems values and priorities
- Investing in leadership of people with disabilities



HCBS and Environmental Access

- Addressing the waitlist and waiver eligibility challenges
- Reducing reliance on crisis supports
- Make HCBS more available to at risk populations
- Addressing service limitations
- Improving state and systems processes that make HCBS possible

2025/ 2026 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

At the meeting, the leaders who attended talked about priorities and plans for each of the themes for action. Plans were used to choose three strategic goals and actions that UnlockGA will aim to meet in 2025 and 2026. These actions have the potential to have impact and create pathways to policy change.

This strategic plan will be a living document, meaning the UnlockGA team will update and adapt it throughout 2025/2026 when we need to. You can follow updates to the plan on the UnlockGA website www.unlockgeorgia.org.

GOAL ONE Develop a statewide, collective voice about how HCBS makes Georgia better.

STRATEGIC ACTION Gather stories and information from people with disabilities, family members, and professionals about how HCBS improves Georgia, and leads to a better life.

What We'll Do

1. **Share real stories from Georgians with disabilities and their families**
We'll collect personal experiences—both good and bad—from people using or waiting for HCBS. These stories will show how HCBS helps people live better lives and how issues like long waitlists affect them.
2. **Highlight insights from professionals in the field**
We'll gather input from HCBS providers about what's working, what's challenging (like staff shortages and system issues), and what they need to offer strong support. Their stories will show how HCBS improves lives and reduces reliance on the crisis system.
3. **Provide facts and resources about HCBS's impact on Georgia**
We'll share research and data showing how HCBS strengthens communities and the economy—by helping people with disabilities contribute locally, creating jobs, and supporting working families.

How We'll Partner

- **Coordinate with UnlockGA members, the GA DD Network, and GA advocacy groups**
We'll work together to spread the word about collecting and sharing stories and share information, resources, and research that makes the case for HCBS in Georgia
- **Work with UnlockGA members to gather and tell their stories**
We'll collect stories of how HCBS makes peoples' lives better, and how people use HCBS to make Georgia better

Role of UnlockGA Members

- **Share your story!**
- **Help us gather stories and information**
- **Share resources, research, and information**

Share resources that help make the case and inform support for HCBS

GOAL TWO Continue to build an informed and engaged coalition dedicated to protecting and making HCBS better in Georgia.

STRATEGIC ACTION Engage and inform people who are involved in and impacted by HCBS across Georgia. Bring people together to improve HCBS through advocacy, collective action, and information sharing.

What We'll Do

1. **Hire UnlockGA Ambassadors from six Georgia regions**

These leaders with disabilities will share updates, connect with their communities, and gather feedback on HCBS needs and challenges.

2. **Host monthly virtual meetings on key HCBS topics**

Each session will focus on issues like waitlists, housing, and transition support, featuring experts from Georgia and beyond to spark ideas and solutions.

3. **Share resources to keep people informed**

We'll provide updates on system changes and advocacy opportunities across the state.

4. **Offer tools to build better HCBS services**

We'll share guides and resources to help shape strong, person-centered supports for people using HCBS.

Advocacy and Information topics that are priorities for UnlockGA protecting funding for HCBS, reducing or eliminating Waitlists, reducing overreliance on crisis supports, waiver models and eligibility that ensure people with the highest support needs have access to community supports, guardianship and supported decision making, advancing the rights of people with disabilities who use HCBS, ensuring compliance to HCBS regulations, and addressing housing needs, promoting accessibility across Georgia, raising DSP wages, ensuring an infrastructure of support for provider organizations

How We'll Partner

- **Coordinate with the GA DD Network and GA Advocacy groups to organize advocacy**
We'll support each other to organize events and opportunities together
- **Get regular input from UnlockGA members**
We'll offer many opportunities for members to share about the issues and opportunities that people need the most support to advocate around and understand
- **Advocate together!**

Role of UnlockGA Members

- **Join and lead regular monthly UnlockGA meetings and coordinated advocacy events**
- **Engage with UnlockGA in several ways**
Follow UnlockGA on social media, read regular Advocacy Key emails, and use resources from the UnlockGA website.
- **Share your input about the topics and issues that are most important to you**

GOAL THREE Grow the statewide coordinated and collaborative effort to protect and advance HCBS with organizations and groups across Georgia.

STRATEGIC ACTION Coordinate and partner with organizations and groups across the state working to address issues, challenges, and needs that impact HCBS in Georgia.

What We'll Do

1. **Support policy efforts across Georgia**
We'll back organizations working to protect HCBS and related issues like housing, transportation, and DSP certification.
2. **Coordinate statewide advocacy**
We'll work with agencies to plan and take part in events, press conferences, and outreach to lawmakers.
3. **Participate in partner events**
We'll show up and support advocacy efforts that aim to improve the lives of people with disabilities.
4. **Share useful information and opportunities**
We'll spread the word about resources, initiatives, and events from groups working to make Georgia more inclusive.

How We'll Partner

- **Bring together organizations and groups from across GA**

We'll host quarterly virtual meetings to talk about issues, challenges, and work they are doing to advance HCBS

- **Share and reshare resources, information, and events from partner organizations**

We'll reach out regularly to make sure we are connecting UnlockGA members with information and advocacy resources that can protect and advance HCBS in Georgia

Role of UnlockGA Members

- **Tell us who we should partner with**

If you work for an organization that we should partner with, let us know

- **Share your input about the topics and issues that are most important to you**

- **Join advocacy events, initiatives, and work**

Stay up to date and involved with advocacy events hosted by UnlockGA and other organizations across the state are hosting

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM UNLOCKGA IN 2025 & 2026

UnlockGA will gather people who use and are impacted by HCBS to advocate and impact systems change together by

1. **Organizing and sharing information about advocacy opportunities for HCBS**

Advocacy opportunities focused on advancing and protecting HCBS in Georgia will happen during and between legislative session

2. **Working with regional UnlockGA Ambassadors with disabilities**

UnlockGA Ambassadors will be supported by UnlockGA to gather and share information with others in their community about HCBS challenges, needed legislative changes, and advocacy opportunities

3. **Holding virtual meetings to grow the UnlockGA Coalition**

Member meetings will be held every month; that open to all members and people interested in attending about different topics related to HCBS (such as getting involved in collective advocacy efforts, understanding decisions during legislative session, and more)

Statewide organization and group meetings will be held quarterly to talk about efforts to protect HCBS, share resources, and coordinate in advocacy

UnlockGA will regularly share information, resources, and advocacy opportunities via emails (Advocacy Keys), social media, and on the UnlockGA website to help you

1. **Connect with people across the state who are working to protect HCBS**

2. **Access resources that can help you learn more about HCBS**

UnlockGA will share information and tools for advocacy, and understanding the GA HCBS landscape

3. **Understand what is happening in Georgia and federally** (that impacts HCBS in Georgia)

UnlockGA will coordinate regular opportunities to give input and share your story to make HCBS better in Georgia, including

1. **Quarterly opportunities to evaluate how UnlockGA is doing**

We'll ask you to provide feedback on the support you need most to impact policy and systems change for HCBS

2. **Opportunities to share your experiences and stories related to HCBS**

UnlockGA Ambassadors and the UnlockGA team will reach out and share several ways to tell your story. Stories will help UnlockGA make a stronger case for protecting and advancing HCBS.

HOW WE WILL MEASURE PROGRESS

To stay accountable to our strategic goals, we will regularly evaluate how well UnlockGA is meeting our goals through surveys, interviews, and check ins with UnlockGA members. We will also track how and when people engage with the Coalition to make sure we are building momentum as we go.

Surveys, Interviews, & Check Ins

- Satisfaction with UnlockGA efforts
- Impact UnlockGA has on advocacy, information sharing, and building a coalition
- Recommendations to improve UnlockGA

Tracking Engagement & Activities

- Who is involved with UnlockGA
- How people connect with and participate in UnlockGA
- Number and types of resources, information, events, meetings, and activities that UnlockGA shares and facilitates

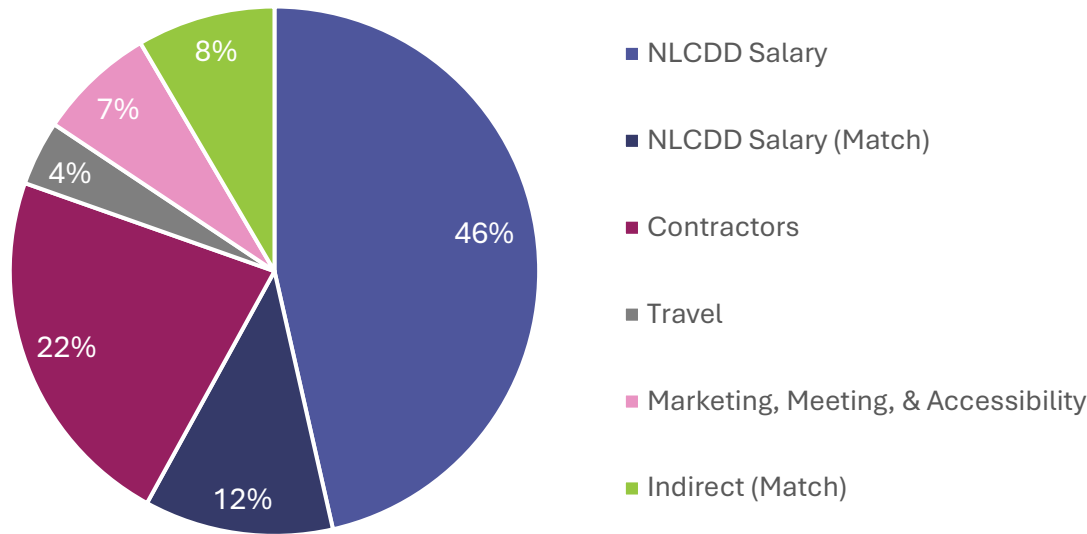
ROLE OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM

The National Leadership Consortium on Developmental Disabilities (NLCDD), with support and funding from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities provides backbone support to UnlockGA. That means that we work, ideally, behind the scenes, to bring people together, provide resources and information, and build momentum for change related to making HCBS better in GA.

UnlockGA is supported by the NLCDD, but it belongs to the Georgia community.

How UnlockGA Uses Funds

From September 2024 to August 2025, the GCDD provided \$100,000 worth of funds, and NLCDD matched \$25,000.



From September 2025 to August 2026, the GCDD is providing \$90,000 worth of funds, and NLCDD is matching \$30,000.

