

National Council on Disability

Performance and Accountability Report Fiscal Year 2015



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Table of Contents

Introduction

Report Purpose	3
Report Organization	3
Message from the Chair	4

Management’s Discussion and Analysis

History	7
Organization	8
Mission, Vision, Goals and Objectives	9
Agency Mission Challenges	9
Performance Measurement Methodology	10
Performance Highlights	12

Financial Section

Independent Auditor’s Report.....	16
Principal Financial Statements	19
Notes to the Financial Statements	24
Implementation of Federal Manager’s Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) at NCD	34
Legal Compliance	36
Chair’s FMFIA Statement of Assurance	38

Performance Section

Performance Framework.....	39
Performance Measurement Challenge.....	43
Program Activities & Performance Results by Strategic Objectives	44

Message from the Executive Director.....	59
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Appendix – Listing of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Report Purpose

The National Council on Disability's (NCD) Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR) provides the results of the agency's program and financial performance and demonstrates to the Congress, the President, and the public NCD's commitment to its mission and accountability over the resources entrusted to it.

This report includes information that satisfies the reporting requirements contained in the following legislation:

- Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act of 1982
- Government Performance and Results Act of 1993
- Government Management Reform Act of 1994
- Reports Consolidation Act of 2000
- Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002
- Improper Payments Information Act of 2002
- GPRA Modernization Act of 2010

Report Organization

1. **Management's Discussion and Analysis** – Provides an overview of NCD's mission and organization, mission challenges, performance measurement methodology, key performance measures and efficiency measures, performance highlights, alignment of NCD costs and goals, financial highlights, and management assurances on internal control and financial systems.
2. **Financial Section** – Provides financial details, including the independent auditor's report and audited financial statements with accompanying notes
3. **Performance Section** – Explains NCD's performance relative to its strategic goals and objectives, and includes an overview on how performance data are verified and validated.

Message from the Chairperson

On behalf of the members of the National Council on Disability (NCD or the Council), I am pleased to submit the Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Performance and Accountability Report (PAR). The Council received an unqualified opinion from its independent auditors on its FY 2015 annual financial statements.

The Council is working intensively with technical and contractual support from the General Services Administration to improve and further strengthen our internal agency operations and fiscal management. Additionally, NCD is also implementing best practice procedures in accordance with guidance from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the AICPA Audit Committee Effectiveness Center.

During the course of FY 2015, the Council continued implementing the policies and procedures listed in the financial procedural manual facilitated under the leadership of the Executive and Finance Committee and reviewed by external government partners for additional input. Likewise, the NCD management team began a comprehensive review and rewrite of its Administrative Policies Manual in FY 2015, which is work that has continued and will be completed in FY 2016, ensuring that document and accompanying staff training is also up to the standards required by federal rules.

The Council's role as an independent advisor on disability matters to the President and Congress is essential to assuring the Federal Government is well informed and qualified to perform its duties and effectively serve the public, including individuals with disabilities. NCD carries out its mission to promote equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities of all ages and backgrounds by: (1) continually reviewing federal disability programs and policies, (2) meeting with people with disabilities and other stakeholders around the country to learn about on-the-ground realities, and (3) providing advice, analysis and recommendations on disability policy to the President, Congress, and other federal agencies. NCD's analysis and recommendations have led to enactment of important laws and other improvements to the programs and services provided by the many federal agencies that serve the disability community. NCD's most historic achievement is drafting and recommending the Americans with Disabilities Act.

During FY 2015, the Council extended its engagement in several substantive areas that contributed to the nation's progress toward achieving the goals of equality of opportunity, independent living, full participation, and economic self-sufficiency for all people with disabilities.

These efforts have been undertaken while remaining effective stewards of limited fiscal resources and included addressing the needs of students in the school to prison pipeline, individuals impacted by the roll out of managed care, and individuals with disabilities who would benefit from emerging technologies and innovations in transportation. Additionally we are proud to continue our efforts in

promoting effective communication fully accessible to all people with disabilities throughout all phases of emergency management.

During the course of the fiscal year, NCD released a series of reports, papers, and letters including:

Publications:

- *Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline for Students with Disabilities*
- *Home and Community-Based Service: Creating Systems for Success at Home, at Work, and in the Community*
- *Securing the Social Contract: Reforming Social Security Disability*
- *Transportation Update: Where We've Gone and What We've Learned*
- *Briefing Paper: Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act (HEA): The Implications for Increasing the Employment of People with Disabilities*
- *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report (2014)*
- *National Disability Policy: A Progress Report (2015)*

Statements:

- Statement on the Annual Day of Mourning for People With Disabilities killed by Family Members and Caregivers
- Statement in response to Peter Singer Interview Advocating the Killing of Disabled Infants
- Statement on the 40th Anniversary of the Willowbrook Consent Decree
- Statement on the 50th Anniversary of Medicare and Medicaid
- Commemoration of Veterans Day
- Statement of Support for Department of Justice's Voting Guidance
- Statement on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Letters:

- Letter to Senate HELP committee on the Every Child Achieves Act of 2015
- Letter to EEOC on Employer Wellness Regulations
- NCD Letter to House Energy and Commerce Committee on Mental Health Reform
-

Amicus Briefs:

- Brief Amicus Curiae of the National Council on Disability in Support of Respondents - City and County of San Francisco, California, Et Al. v. Teresa Sheehan

The Council released its 2014 annual Progress Report in the fall of 2014, in accordance with NCD's authorizing statute: [National Disability Policy: A Progress](#)

[Report; and its 2015 annual report in July of 2015 in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.](#)

NCD is proud of its successful efforts in promoting equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic sufficiency for all individuals with disabilities, of all ages, throughout the country. I want to express my profound appreciation for the hard work and dedication of NCD's Council Members and staff, who continued to make important policy contributions while simultaneously addressing concerns raised in last year's audit. We remain steadfast in our commitment to carrying out our responsibilities in working with the President, the Congress, and federal agencies to accomplish our nation's vision of valuing and respecting each member of our society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clyde Terry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Clyde Terry, Chairperson

History

National Council on Disability (NCD) (www.ncd.gov) is an independent federal agency that advances full inclusion, independence, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. NCD was initially established in 1978 as an advisory board within the U.S. Department of Education (Public Law 95-602). The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1984 (Public Law 98-221) transformed NCD into an independent agency and required NCD to provide expert advice to Congress and the Administration. Changes were also made to NCD's statutory mandate by the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 and 1998 and the Education of the Deaf Act Technical Amendments of 1993.

NCD's governing body is the Council, which is currently comprised of 10 appointees – 7 presidential (including the chairperson) and 3 congressional. Following the appointment of one additional Congressional appointee, the Council's total number will reduce to 9, with 5 presidential and 4 congressional appointees, including one member appointed by each of the following: the Speaker of the House, the House Minority Leader, the Senate Majority Leader and the Senate Minority Leader.

Council Members live across the country and each brings a unique perspective informed by personal and professional experiences. Council Members are people with disabilities, disability service providers, parents or family members of people with disabilities, and/or other people who have substantial knowledge of or experience with disability policies and programs. Council Members are appointed to represent people with disabilities, national organizations concerned with disabilities, providers and administrators of services to people with disabilities, people engaged in conducting medical or scientific research related to disabilities, business concerns and labor organizations. The majority of the current Council Members are people with disabilities.

As the governing body, Council Members establish NCD's priorities and budget, and monitor and provide oversight of NCD's programs, operations and finances. The Council's oversight responsibilities are organized and led by a six-member Executive and Finance Committee, consisting of the Chairperson of the Council; the two Co-Vice Chairs of the Council; and three Council Member principals for finance, governance and policy. The Chairperson of the Council also serves as the Chairperson of the Executive and Finance Committee. NCD also has a Policy Committee that proposes NCD policy priorities for discussion.

The Chairperson appoints an Executive Director and evaluates the Executive Director's performance.

Organization

NCD's Executive Director serves as the chief executive of the agency and has full responsibility for managing the agency to accomplish the mission, and the goals and objectives established by legislation or Council members. When fully staffed, NCD has 13 full-time employees, organized into three teams:

- **Policy & Legal Team** - The Policy & Legal Team analyzes federal laws, regulations, programs, policies and case law precedent; and proposes and develops NCD policy positions that have a national, state and international impact on the lives of people with disabilities.
- **Legislative Affairs & Outreach Team** - The Legislative Affairs & Outreach Team analyzes proposed legislation and monitors congressional activity on issues critical to the disability community; cultivates and maintains relationships with NCD's diverse stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels; and promotes NCD's policy positions through a variety of mediums.
- **Administrative Operations Team** - The Administrative Operations Team provides staff support and monitors the agency's finance and accounting, information technology, and human resources management.

Mission, Vision, Goals & Objectives

NCD has a unique mission among federal agencies because it is charged with reviewing all programs and policies that affect people with disabilities across the Federal Government, not merely one aspect of policy affecting people with disabilities.

Mission	Promote equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency of people with disabilities of all ages and backgrounds by providing advice, analysis and recommendations on disability policy to the President, Congress and other federal agencies.
Vision	NCD leads by facilitating, articulating and promoting inclusion and empowerment of individuals with disabilities to live, learn and earn based on informed choices.
Strategic Goal	Advance the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act by promoting policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity and provide for economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society for individuals with disabilities.
Strategic Objectives	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engagement - Engage stakeholders in order to assess concerns and priorities and build a network of NCD partners. 2. Policy Development & Collaboration – Address stakeholder concerns and priorities by advancing specific, practical, policy solutions and encouraging collaboration.

Agency Mission Challenges

NCD is a micro-agency with a macro mission, a small staff, and a modest budget of \$3.2 million. Because the breadth of possible policy topics on which to focus in a given year is so expansive, the Council has adopted the practice of voting on policy priorities and allocating resources of staff time and policy research dollars accordingly. In addition to these set priorities, the staff are charged with making recommendations to the Council of instances in which the Council should take more nimble action to respond to pressing matters that arise congressionally or in the Administration on which NCD’s guidance is requested or would contribute an important disability voice. Additionally, NCD has adopted a strategy of working in conjunction with a wide range of stakeholders – including people with disabilities, federal, state and local agencies, elected officials and their staff, universities, and

a diverse group of non-profit organizations and individual disability policy experts and advocates – to leverage and steward resources to advance our mission, goals and objectives.

Performance Management Methodology

NCD utilizes the following performance management methodology to set priorities, allocate resources, and evaluate results.

Strategic Goal	Statements of long-term aims outlined in NCD’s Strategic Plan, which define how NCD carries out its mission.
Objectives	Statements of how NCD plans to achieve its strategic goals.
Performance Measures	Indicators used to gauge success in reaching strategic objectives.
Key Measures	Measures that best indicate whether NCD’s activities are achieving the desired outcome associated with the related objective.
Targets	Expressions of desired performance levels or specific desired results targeted for a given fiscal year. Targets are expressed in quantifiable terms.
Outcomes	Meaningful measures to show effectiveness, efficiency and results in mission achievement.

Measuring NCD’s impact on its strategic goal of guaranteeing equal opportunity and providing for economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society for individuals with disabilities is challenging since these are large-scale, long-term endeavors.

Accordingly, as we evaluate performance measurements, key measures, targets and outcomes, we ask:

- Has NCD identified critical needs where our engagement with stakeholders and policy development and collaboration can advance existing initiatives?
- Can NCD be a thought leader, performing important research and analysis on critical and/or emerging topics?

- Can NCD provide practical, timely policy recommendations and consultations to Members of Congress and the Executive Branch?

Outreach Metrics

As a testament to the efficacy of our outreach efforts, with a month to go before the end of the 2015 fiscal year, we had already surpassed the total from last year at the same point in time by over 175,000 unique visitors (for a total of 463,000), which represented a 49% increase in visitors over FY14; and an 87% increase over FY13. The three most commonly viewed reports in FY 2015 were evidence to the diversity of NCD’s stakeholders’ interests, the breadth of our mission, and the relevance of our reports, years after their release – *The Current State of Health Care for People with Disabilities* (2009); *Effective Emergency Management: Making Improvements for Communities and People with Disabilities* (2009); and *Rocking the Cradle: Ensuring the Rights of Parents with Disabilities and Their Children* (2012).

The total number of individuals who “like” NCD’s Facebook page has more than doubled from 9,000 in 2014 to over 22,015 as of September 1, 2015. Similarly, NCD’s Twitter account from which we regularly host “live” tweets of disability-focused legislative hearings and briefings, and coordinate discussions among stakeholders and constituents, rose steadily in FY 2015 by nearly 2,000 from the previous fiscal year, to total 6,840 in September 2015.

NCD remains recognized by the disability community as a leader in utilizing social media to engage with stakeholders with our active Facebook and Twitter accounts. NCD staff continued to “live tweet” many disability policy events and hearings on Capitol Hill and the White House to bring information from these Washington, DC based events, which were neither webcast nor available for teleconference participation, to far wider audiences beyond the Beltway.

Performance Highlights: Goals, Measures & Activities

Goals, Measures & Program Outcomes				
	Strategic Goal Components	Key Measures	Program Activity Outcomes for FY 2015	Potential and Planned Activities for FY 2016 and 2017
	Economic Self-Sufficiency	Enhance participation in and knowledge of programs available to assist people with disabilities in enhancing their self-sufficiency through employment,	Provided extensive technical assistance to Senators Wyden, Casey, and Grassley in the development of bipartisan legislation called the “Transition to Independence Act” (S. 1604) that would incentivize states to move towards supported employment	Report on implementation of Section 503 of WIOA Work with Members of Congress on a House companion bill to S. 1604

		<p>education and job training.</p>	<p>Following extensive communications and a 2014 forum on accessible currency, NCD hosted with the Government Accountability Office, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and the Department of Treasury announced that upcoming twenty dollar bills will be brailed.</p> <p>As NCD has consistently recommended, Senator Brown proposed legislation to raise the asset limit under SSI.</p>	<p>Continue to discuss and hold congressional briefings on NCD's recommendations for Social Security reform.</p> <p>Collaborate with the Small Business Administration in changing the definition of presumed groups for 8(a) eligibility to include people with disabilities.</p> <p>NCD will create and disseminate a brochure to U.S. pharmacies outlining best practices for making information on prescription drug container labels accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired.</p> <p>NCD will finalize a public service announcement intended for radio on the same topic, and pursue dissemination channels.</p>
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<p>Independent Living</p>	<p>Improving access to long term services and support, health care, housing and transportation</p>	<p>Provided technical assistance to Senators Wyden, Casey, and Grassley in the development of bipartisan legislation called the “Transition to Independence Act” (S. 1604) that would incentivize states to move towards supported employment</p> <p>Convened congressional briefing on a 21st Century Social Security System</p> <p>Hosted three community phone briefings on the Affordable Care Act’s impact on people with disabilities, its implementation, and its enforcement</p> <p>Convened stakeholder meetings on Medicaid Managed Care Roll Out</p> <p>Released comprehensive report on transportation and held meetings with stakeholders on implementation</p> <p>Produced Report on Autonomous Vehicles & convened meetings with Stakeholders and Policymakers on community concerns</p>	<p>Affordable Care Act reports on implementation and enforcement</p> <p>Discussions with National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) and manufacturers on autonomous vehicles</p> <p>Report on concerns and issues with guardianship and supported decision making</p> <p>Jointly publish an online toolkit on the rights of parents with disabilities</p> <p>Offer testimony to the Senate Commerce Committee on autonomous vehicles</p>
<p>Integration & Inclusion</p>	<p>Improving policies and practices to ensure that all children, youth, and adults with disabilities are valued by, and contribute to, their communities of choice and civil</p>	<p>Engaged with policymakers and stakeholders on school to prison pipeline and the propensity of individuals with disabilities to fall into this category.</p> <p>Recommended retaining the 1% cap on students taking alternative assessments remain</p>	<p>White House Forum on Parents with Disabilities</p> <p>Work with Senate offices to request a GAO field study of polling place accessibility in the</p>

		rights are protected	<p>in Every Student Succeeds Act reauthorization.</p> <p>Briefed HHS & Education on access issued tied to parents with disabilities in their guidance on early childhood education centers</p> <p>Provided technical assistance to a Massachusetts legislator on parenting rights of people with disabilities</p>	<p>2016 national election</p> <p>Report on mental health in post-secondary education</p> <p>Engagement on issues tied to disproportionality in identification, placement, and discipline in special education</p> <p>Engagement in policy discussions tied to the role, responsibility, and authority of School Resource Officers</p>
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NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

and

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

As Of And For The Years Ended September 30, 2015 and 2014

Rocha & Company, PC

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Certified Public Accountants

and Management Consultants

Independent Auditor's Report

Board Members and Executive Director
National Council on Disability

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying balance sheet of the National Council on Disability (the Council) as of September 30, 2015 and 2014, and the related statements of net cost, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the years then ended. In our audit of the Council for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2015, we found:

- The financial statements are presented fairly in all material respects, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.
- No material weaknesses in internal control over financial reporting.
- Instances of non-compliance that are detailed in the Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations section of this report, the following findings were identified:

The Council does not appear to comply with the Prompt Payment Act. During our audit we noted instances where payments to contractors and vendors were not made within the required 30-day stipulation.

The following sections discuss in more detail our opinion, our consideration of internal control over financial reporting, our tests of compliance with certain provisions of applicable laws and regulations, and management's and our responsibilities.

Opinion on the Financial Statements

In our opinion, the financial statements, including the accompanying notes present fairly, in all material respects, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles, the financial position of the National Council on Disability as of September 30, 2015 and 2014, and its net costs, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the years then ended.

Consideration of Internal Control

In planning and performing our audit, we considered the Council's internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our auditing procedures and to comply with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) audit guidance for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on internal control and compliance or on management's assertion on internal control included in the Management's Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on internal control over financial reporting and compliance or on management's assertion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control over financial reporting, or on management's assertion on the internal control included in the MD&A.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the limited purpose described in the preceding paragraph and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might material weaknesses or significant deficiencies and therefore, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

A control deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect misstatements on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance. A material weakness is a significant deficiency, or combination of significant deficiencies, that results in a more than remote likelihood that the design or operation of one or more internal controls will not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their duties, to promptly detect or prevent errors, fraud, or noncompliance in amounts that would be material to the financial statements.

Our consideration of internal control over financial reporting was for the purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in the Council's internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. However, given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be a material weakness.

We noted other non-reportable matters involving internal control and its operation that we will communicate in a separate management letter to the Council's management.

Compliance with Applicable Laws and Regulations

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Council's financial statements are free from material misstatement, we also performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws and regulations for fiscal year 2015. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests of compliance disclosed instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

The details of non-compliance are presented in Exhibit A.

Consistency of Other Information

The information in the Management's Discussion and Analysis is not a required part of the financial statements, but is supplementary information required by U.S. Generally accepted accounting principles. We have applied certain limited procedures, which consisted principally of inquiries of management regarding the methods of measurement and presentation of this information. However, we did not audit this information and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

The information in the Chairman's Message, Performance Section, and Other Accompanying Information is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not required as part of the financial statements. This information has not been subjected to auditing procedures and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

Responsibilities

Management's Responsibilities. Management is responsible for the preparation of financial statements, establishing and maintaining effective internal control over financial reporting, and complying with laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements applicable to the Foundation.

Auditor's Responsibilities. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statements based on our audits. We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America; the standards applicable to financial audits contained in the U.S. Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States; and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Bulletin No. 15-02, Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements. Those standards and OMB Bulletin No. 15-02 require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the agency's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the agency's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the agency's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

The Council's written response to the deficiencies in internal control, instances of noncompliance or other matters identified in our audit is presented attached to our report, and was not subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the Council's financial statements and, accordingly, we express no opinion on it.

Independent Auditor's Report

Introduction to Exhibit on Internal Control and Compliance and Other Matters

Our report on internal control over financial reporting and compliance and other matters is presented in accordance with Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. The internal control weaknesses and findings related to compliance with certain laws and regulations presented herein were identified during our audit of the National Council on Disability's (the Council) financial statements as of, and for the year ended, September 30, 2015. Our findings and the status of prior year findings are presented in the following exhibit:

Exhibit A: Instances of non-compliance identified during the audit of the Council.

Independent Auditor's Report

Exhibit A: Instances of Non-Compliance

A-1 Non-Compliance with the Prompt Payment Act

Conditions: The Council does not appear to comply with the Prompt Payment Act. During our audit, we noted six instances where payments to vendors were not made within the required time period.

Criteria: The Prompt Payment Act and 5 CFR Part 1315 require that payments should be made to vendors within 30 days from the time a proper invoice is received.

Cause/Effect: Due to limited resources the Council elects to contract certain accounting services to a third party provider, those services include remitting payments to vendors. Of the six (6) instances we identified as Prompt Payment Act violations, five (5) of the related invoices were submitted to the third party provider within the allowed 30-day time frame, however; by the time the third party remitted payment to the vendor, the 30-day time frame had been exceeded. Management was aware of the issue during the year and has been working with the third party provider to ensure compliance going forward.

Recommendations: We recommend that the Council continue to work with the third party provider to ensure invoices are remitted in sufficient time to allow the third party service provider to process vendor payments to ensure compliance. In addition, we recommend the Council establish internal control procedures to monitor the third party payment for timeliness.

Management's Response:

The Council concurs with the cause/effect and recommendations. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure vendors are paid timely in accordance with the Prompt Pay Act. The Council will enhance internal control procedures to monitor prompt payment compliance by our third party service provider.

The External Services Branch (ESB) that provides the Council with accounting services transferred from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on March 22, 2015. This transition has brought many challenges to our third party services provider. The Council will continue to monitor the performance of our service provider and will work with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) to improve deficiencies as they continue their transition to USDA.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

BALANCE SHEET

As Of September 30, 2015 and 2014

		2015	2014
Assets:			
Intragovernmental:			
Fund Balance With Treasury	(Note 1)	\$ 1,211,289.87	\$ 1,317,988.67
Other:			
Advances and Prepayments	(Note 2)	<u>87,253.76</u>	<u>89,000.00</u>
Total Intragovernmental		1,298,543.63	1,406,988.67
Assets With The Public:			
Accounts Receivable, net	(Note 3)	<u>18,966.02</u>	<u>17,558.83</u>
Total Assets		<u>\$ 1,317,509.65</u>	<u>\$ 1,424,547.50</u>
Liabilities:	(Note 4)		
Intragovernmental:			
Accounts Payable		81,690.96	9,111.96
Other:			
Employer Contributions and Payroll Taxes Payable	(Note 5)	<u>8,031.53</u>	<u>7,593.62</u>
Total Intragovernmental		89,722.49	16,705.58
Liabilities With the Public:			
Accounts Payable		78,456.88	177,544.25
Other:			
Accrued Funded Payroll and Leave		35,562.41	32,646.38
Employer Contributions and Payroll Taxes Payable		952.36	918.52
Unfunded Leave		<u>89,830.11</u>	<u>89,975.63</u>
Total Liabilities		\$ 294,524.25	\$ 317,790.36
Net Position:			
Unexpended Appropriations - All Other Funds (Consolidated Totals)		1,093,849.49	1,179,173.94
Cumulative Results of Operations - All Other Funds (Consolidated Totals)		(70,864.09)	(72,416.80)
Total Net Position - All Other Funds (Consolidated Totals)		<u>1,022,985.40</u>	<u>1,106,757.14</u>
Total Net Position		<u>\$ 1,022,985.40</u>	<u>\$ 1,106,757.14</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Position		<u>\$ 1,317,509.65</u>	<u>\$ 1,424,547.50</u>

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY
STATEMENT OF NET COST

As Of and For the Years Ended September 30, 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
Program Costs:		
NCD:		
Gross Costs	\$ 3,359,025.32	\$ 2,650,259.42
Net Program Costs	3,359,025.32	2,650,259.42
Net Cost of Operations	\$ 3,359,025.32	2,650,259.42

The financial statements, including the accompanying notes present fairly, in all material respects, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles, the financial position of the National Council on Disability as of September 30, 2015 and 2014, and its net costs, changes in net position, and budgetary resources for the years then ended. Year over year changes in financial position, results of operations and key budgetary accounts are summarized below.

Management is working to improve and refine NCD’s fiscal management in concert with GSA (USDA) technical assistance and support services. Major initiatives have been developed to improve internal controls over contract monitoring and financial reporting. NCD has improved efficiency as well as reliability and usefulness of financial reporting.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

STATEMENT OF BUDGETARY RESOURCES

As Of and For the Years Ended September 30, 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
	<u>Budgetary</u>	<u>Budgetary</u>
BUDGETARY RESOURCES		
Unobligated balance brought forward, October 1	\$ 385,020.89	\$ 537,544.61
Unobligated balance brought forward, October 1, adjusted	385,020.89	537,544.61
Recoveries of prior year unpaid obligations (unobligated balances)	19,873.29	157,412.52
Other changes in unobligated balance	<u>(42,595.25)</u>	<u>(25,551.32)</u>
Unobligated balance from prior year budget authority, net	362,298.93	669,405.81
Appropriations (discretionary and mandatory)	3,250,000.00	3,186,000.00
Spending authority from offsetting collections	26,167.41	3,848.50
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total budgetary resources		
STATUS OF BUDGETARY RESOURCES		
Apportioned	94,703.11	279,195.57
Unapportioned	<u>152,085.19</u>	<u>105,825.32</u>
Unobligated balance brought forward, end of year	246,788.30	385,020.89
Total budgetary resources	<u>\$ 3,638,466.34</u>	<u>\$ 3,859,254.31</u>
Unpaid obligations, brought forward, October 1 (gross)	\$ 932,967.78	\$ 465,017.08
Obligations incurred	3,391,678.04	3,474,233.42
Outlays (gross) (-)	(3,340,270.96)	(2,848,870.20)
Recoveries of prior year unpaid obligations (-)	<u>(19,873.29)</u>	<u>(157,412.52)</u>
Unpaid obligations, end of year	964,501.57	932,967.78
Obligated balance, start of year (net)	932,967.78	465,017.08
Obligated balance, end of year (net)	<u>\$ 964,501.57</u>	<u>\$ 932,967.78</u>
Budget authority, gross (discretionary and mandatory)	\$ 3,276,167.41	\$ 3,189,848.50
Actual offsetting collections (discretionary and mandatory) (-)	<u>(26,167.41)</u>	<u>(3,848.50)</u>
Budget authority, net (discretionary and mandatory)	3,250,000.00	3,186,000.00
Outlays, gross (discretionary and mandatory)	3,340,270.96	2,848,870.20
Actual offsetting collections (discretionary and mandatory) (-)	<u>(26,167.41)</u>	<u>(3,848.50)</u>
Outlays, net (discretionary and mandatory)	3,314,103.55	2,845,021.70
Agency outlays, net (discretionary and mandatory)	<u>\$ 3,314,103.55</u>	<u>\$ 2,845,021.70</u>

NOTE 1 – FUND BALANCE WITH TREASURY

All of NCD’s fund balance with treasury is coming from appropriations. No trust, revolving or other fund type are used to fund NCD’s activities. NCD operates as an annual fund, where each year is a new appropriation. This fund balance with treasury is a consolidated balance of one no-year fund and five annual funds (FY 2011, FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014 and FY 2015). The annual fund for FY 2010 is cancelled and the remaining fund balance of \$42,595.25 is given back to US Treasury during fiscal year 2014.

A. Fund Balance with Treasury	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Appropriated Fund	1,211,289.87	1,317,988.67
B. Status of Fund Balance with Treasury		
1) Unobligated Balance		
a) Available	94,703.11	279,195.57
b) Unavailable	152,085.19	105,825.32
2) Obligated Balance not yet Disbursed	964,501.57	932,967.78
Total	<u>1,211,289.87</u>	<u>1,317,988.67</u>

NOTE 2 – ADVANCES AND PREPAYMENTS

Advances and Prepayments represents advances to Government Publishing Office Deposit Accounts.

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Deferred	87,253.76	89,000.00
Total	<u>87,253.76</u>	<u>89,000.00</u>

NOTE 3 – ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE, NET

Accounts Receivable, Net from the Public represents the Accounts Receivable from current employees.

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Accounts Receivable - With the Public	18,966.02	17,558.83

NOTE 4 – LIABILITIES NOT COVERED BY BUDGETARY RESOURCES

Liabilities of NCD are classified as liabilities covered or not covered by budgetary resources. As of September 30, 2015, NCD showed liabilities covered by budgetary resources of \$204,694.14 and liabilities not covered by budgetary resources of \$89,830.11. As of September 30, 2014, NCD showed liabilities covered by budgetary resources of \$227,814.73 and liabilities not covered by budgetary resources of \$89,975.63.

As of September 30, 2015, liabilities covered by budgetary resources are composed of Accounts Payable of \$156,781.29, Accrued Funded Payroll and Leave of \$35,562.41, and Employer Contributions and Payroll Taxes Payable of \$8,983.89. As of September 30, 2014, liabilities covered by budgetary resources are composed of Accounts Payable of \$186,656.21, Accrued Funded Payroll and Leave of \$32,646.38, and Employer Contributions and Payroll Taxes Payable of \$8,512.14.

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
With the Public		
Other (Unfunded leave liability)	89,830.11	89,975.63
Total liabilities not covered by budgetary resources	<u>89,830.11</u>	<u>89,975.63</u>
Total liabilities covered by budgetary resources	<u>204,694.14</u>	<u>227,814.73</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>294,524.25</u>	<u>317,790.36</u>

NOTE 5 – OTHER LIABILITIES

As of September 30, 2015, other liabilities with the public consist of Accrued Funded Payroll and Leave of \$35,262.41 unfunded leave in the amount of \$89,830.11, and employer contributions and payroll taxes payable – TSP of \$952.36. Other Intragovernmental liabilities consist of employer contributions and payroll taxes payable of \$8,983.89.

As of September 30, 2014, other liabilities with the public consist of Accrued Funded Payroll and Leave of \$32,646.38, unfunded leave in the amount of \$89,975.63, and employer contributions and payroll taxes payable – TSP of \$918.52. Other Intragovernmental liabilities consist of employer contributions and payroll taxes payable of \$7,593.62.

	<u>With the Public</u>	<u>Non-Current</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Total</u>
2015	Other Liabilities	89,830.11	36,514.77	126,344.88
2014	Other Liabilities	89,975.63	33,564.90	123,540.53

	<u>Intragovernmental</u>	<u>Non-Current</u>	<u>Current</u>	<u>Total</u>
2015	Other Liabilities	-	8,031.53	8,031.53
2014	Other Liabilities	-	7,593.62	7,593.62

NOTE 6 – INTRAGOVERNMENTAL COSTS AND EXCHANGE REVENUE

Intragovernmental costs are those of goods/services purchased from a federal entity.

	<u>Total</u> <u>2015</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>2014</u>
Program A		
Intragovernmental costs	884,096.35	730,765.76
Public costs	2,474,928.97	1,919,493.66
Total Program A costs	<u>3,359,025.32</u>	<u>2,650,259.42</u>
Total Program A	<u>3,359,025.32</u>	<u>2,650,259.42</u>

Basis of Presentation

These financial statements have been prepared from the accounting records of NCD in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) as promulgated by the Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board (FASAB), and the form and content for entity financial statements specified by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in OMB Circular No. A-136, "Financial Reporting Requirements." GAAP for Federal entities is the hierarchy of accounting principles prescribed in Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standards (SFFAS) 34, "The Hierarchy of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, Including the Application of Standards issued by the Financial Accounting Standards Board."

OMB Circular No. A-136 requires agencies to prepare principal statements, include a Balance Sheet, Statement of Net Cost, Statement of Changes in Net Position, Statement of Budgetary Resources. The balance sheet presents, as of September 30, 2015, amounts of future economic benefits owned or managed by NCD (assets), amounts owed by NCD (liabilities), and amounts which comprise the difference (net position). The Statement of Net Cost reports the full cost of the program, both direct and indirect costs of the output, and the costs of identifiable supporting services provided by other segments within NCD and other reporting entities. The Statement of Budgetary Resources reports an agency's budgetary activity.

Basis of Accounting

Transactions are recorded on the accrual accounting basis in accordance with OMB Circular No. A-136. Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned, and expenses are recognized when a liability is incurred, without regard to receipt or payment of cash.

Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results may differ from those estimates.

Budgets and Budgetary Accounting

NCD follows standard federal budgetary accounting policies and practices in accordance with OMB Circular A-11, "Preparation, Submission, and Execution of the Budget," dated June 2015. Budgetary accounting facilitates compliance with legal constraints and controls over the use of federal funds. Each year, Congress provides NCD appropriations to incur obligations in support of agency programs. For Fiscal

Years (FY) 2015 and 2014, NCD is accountable for general fund appropriations and no-year fund carryover.

NCD recognizes budgetary resources as assets when cash (funds held by Treasury) is made available through warrants and when spending authority from the offsetting collections is incurred.

Revenues and Other Financing Sources

NCD receives substantially all of the funding needed to support its programs through appropriations. NCD receives annual and no-year appropriations that may be used within statutory limits, for operating and capital expenditures. Appropriations are recognized as revenues as the related programs or administrative expenses are incurred.

Other financing sources for NCD consist of imputed financing sources which are costs financed by other federal entities on behalf of NCD, as required by SFFAS No. 5, "Accounting for Liabilities of the Federal Government." In certain instances, operating costs of NCD are paid out of funds appropriated to other federal agencies. In accordance with SFFAS 5, all expenses of a federal entity should be reported by that agency regardless of whether the agency will ultimately pay those expenses. Amounts for certain expenses of NCD, which will be paid by other federal agencies, are recorded in the Statement of Net Cost. A related amount is recognized in the Statement of Changes in Net Position as an imputed financing source. NCD records imputed expenses and financing sources for employee retirement plan contributions, group term life insurance, and health benefit costs, which are paid by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Personnel Compensation and Benefits

Salaries and wages of employees are recognized as accrued payroll expenses and related liabilities as earned. These expenses are recognized as a funded liability when accrued. Annual leave is accrued as it is earned by employees and is included in personnel compensation and benefit costs. An unfunded liability is recognized for earned but unused annual leave, since from a budgetary standpoint, this annual leave will be paid from future appropriations when employees use the leave. The amount accrued is based upon current pay rates for employees. Sick leave and other types of leave that are not vested are expensed when used and no future liability is recognized for these amounts.

NCD's employees participate in one of two retirement programs, either the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) or the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), which became effective on January 1, 1987. NCD and its employees both contribute to these systems. Although NCD funds a portion of the benefits under CSRS and FERS and makes the necessary payroll withholdings, it does not report assets associated with these benefit plans in accordance with SFFAS 5.

For CSRS employees, NCD contributes an amount equal to 13.2% of the employees' basic pay to the plan. For FERS employees, NCD contributes an amount equal to 7% of the employees' basic pay to the plan. For FERS-RAE and FRAE employees, NCD contributes an amount equal to 11.1% of the employees' basic pay to the plan.

Both CSRS employees and FERS employees are eligible to participate in the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). The TSP is a defined contribution retirement plan intended to supplement the benefits provided under CSRS and FERS. For FERS employees, NCD contributes an amount equal to 1% of the employee's basic pay to the TSP and matches employee contributions up to an additional 4%. CSRS employees receive no matching contribution from NCD.

OPM is responsible for reporting assets, accumulated plan benefits, and unfunded liabilities, if any, applicable to CSRS participants and FERS employees government-wide, including NCD's employees. NCD has recognized an Imputed Cost and Imputed Financing Source for the difference between the estimated service cost and the contributions made by NCD and its covered employees. The estimated cost of pension benefits is based on rates issued by OPM.

Employees are entitled to participate in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program. Participating employees can obtain "basic life" term life insurance, with the employee paying two-thirds of the cost and NCD paying one-third. Additional coverage is optional, to be paid fully by the employee. The basic life coverage may be continued into retirement if certain requirements are met. OPM administers the FEGLI program and is responsible for the reporting of related liabilities. Each fiscal year, OPM calculates the U.S. Government's service cost for the post-retirement portion of basic life coverage. Because NCD's contributions to the basic life coverage are fully allocated by OPM to the pre-retirement portion of coverage, the Board has recognized the entire service cost of the post-retirement portion of basic life coverage as an Imputed Cost and Imputed Financing Source.

Assets and Liabilities

Intra-governmental assets and liabilities arise from transactions between NCD and other Federal entities.

Funds with the U.S. Treasury comprise the majority of assets on NCD's balance sheet. All other assets result from activity with non-federal sources.

Liabilities represent amounts that are likely to be paid by NCD as a result of transactions that have already occurred. The accounts payable portion of liabilities consists of amounts owed to federal agencies and commercial vendors for goods, services, and other expenses received but not yet paid.

Liabilities covered by budgetary or other resources are those liabilities of NCD for which Congress has appropriated funds, or funding is otherwise available to pay amounts due.

Fund Balance with Treasury

The U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury) processes NCD's receipts and disbursements. Fund Balance with Treasury is the aggregate amount of the agency's accounts with Treasury for which the agency is authorized to liquidate obligations, pay funded liabilities, and make expenditures. The fund balance is increased through the receipt of non-expenditure Treasury warrants for appropriations, positive non-expenditure transfers, and other expenditure inflows of funds. The Fund Balance with Treasury is reduced through non-expenditure Treasury Warrants for recissions, negative non-expenditure transfers, disbursements, and other expenditure cash outflows of funds.

NCD's funds with the U.S. Treasury are cash balances from appropriations as of the fiscal year-end from which NCD is authorized to make expenditures and pay liabilities resulting from operational activity.

General Property, Plant, and Equipment, Net

Property, plant, and equipment (PP&E) have been defined in the Federal Government as tangible items owned by the Federal Government and having an expected useful life of greater than two years. NCD has established the following policies for PP&E:

PP&E is reported at acquisition cost.

The capitalization threshold is \$5,000 for assets with a useful life of two or more years.

For bulk purchases, items will be capitalized when the individual useful lives are at least two years and the property has an aggregate value of \$100,000 or more.

Acquisitions of PP&E that do not meet the capitalization criteria outlined above are recorded as operating expenses. General PP&E consists of items that are used by NCD to support its mission.

Depreciation on assets is calculated using the straight-line method. Depreciation begins the month after the asset is placed in service.

Useful lives are as follows: Equipment - 4 years
Furniture - 4 years

Maintenance, repairs and minor renovations are expensed as incurred. Expenditures that materially increase values, change capacities, or extend useful lives are capitalized.

The costs of any leasehold improvements financed with NCD appropriated funds is capitalized if the total cost exceeds \$25,000. Construction costs are accumulated as “construction in-progress” until completion, at which time they are transferred to “leasehold improvements” and depreciated over 7 years or the remainder of the lease, whichever is less.

Internal use software development and acquisition costs of \$25,000 are capitalized as “software development-in-progress” until the development stage is completed and the software is successfully tested. At acceptance, “software development-in-progress” costs are reclassified as “internal use software” and amortized using the straight-line method over an estimated useful life of 4 years. Purchased commercial software that does not meet the capitalization criteria is expensed. Enhancements that do not add significant new capability or functionality are expensed.

Prepaid and Deferred Charges

Payments in advance of the receipt of goods and services are recorded as prepaid charges at the time of prepayment and recognized as expenses when the related goods and services are received.

Liabilities

Liabilities represent amounts expected to be paid as the result of a transaction or event that has already occurred. Liabilities covered by budgetary resources are liabilities incurred which are covered by realized budgetary resources as of the balance sheet date. Available budgetary resources include new budget authority, spending authority from the offsetting collections, recoveries of unexpired budget authority through downward adjustments of prior year obligations, and unobligated balances of budgetary resources at the beginning of the year. Unfunded liabilities are not considered to be covered by such budgetary resources. Examples of unfunded liabilities are actuarial liabilities for future Federal Employees’ Compensation Act (FECA) payments and annual leave. The Government, acting in its sovereign capacity, can abrogate liabilities arising from other than contracts.

Contingencies

The criteria for recognizing contingencies for claims are (1) a past event or exchange transaction has occurred as of the date of the statements; (2) a future outflow or other sacrifice of resources is probable; and (3) the future outflow or sacrifice of resources is measurable (reasonably estimated). NCD recognizes material contingent liabilities in the form of claims, legal action, administrative proceedings and environmental suits

that have been brought to the attention of legal counsel, some of which will be paid by the Treasury Judgment Fund.

It is the opinion of management and legal counsel that the ultimate resolution of these proceedings, actions, and claims, will not materially affect the financial position of results of operations.

Net Position

Net position consists of unexpended appropriations and cumulative results of operations. Unexpended appropriations represent amounts of budgetary authority to include unobligated or obligated balances not rescinded or withdrawn. Cumulative results of operations are comprised of the following: (1) the difference between revenues and expenses, (2) the net amount of transfers of assets in and out without reimbursement, and (3) donations, all since inception of the fund(s).

Funds from Dedicated Collections

SFFAS 43 replaced SFFAS 27 and resulted in a significant change in the definition of what was previously known as "earmarked funding." SFFAS 43 states that funds from dedicated collections are financed by specifically identified revenues, provided to the government by non-federal sources, often supplemented by other financing sources, which remain available over time. These specifically identified revenues and other financing sources are required by statute to be used for designated activities, benefits or purposes, and must be accounted for separately from the government's general revenues.

As of FY 2015 it was determined that NCD funding that previously was designated "earmarked" did not qualify under the new definition for "Funds from Dedicated Collections" and are not presented separately in these financial statements.

RECONCILIATION OF NET COST OF OPERATIONS (PROPRIETARY) TO BUDGET

Budgetary resources obligated are obligations for personnel, goods, services, benefits, etc. made by the NCD in order to conduct operations or acquire assets. Other (i.e., non- budgetary) financing resources are also utilized by the NCD in its program (proprietary) operations. For example, spending authority from offsetting collections and recoveries are financial resources from the recoveries of prior year obligations (e.g., the completion of a contract where not all the funds were used) and refunds or other collections (i.e., funds used to conduct operations that were previously budgeted). An imputed financing source is recognized for future federal employee benefits costs incurred for the NCD employees that will be funded by OPM. Changes in budgetary resources obligated for goods, services, and benefits ordered by not yet provided represents the difference between the beginning and ending

balances of undelivered orders (i.e., good and services received during the year based on obligations incurred the prior year represent a cost of operations not funded from budgetary resources). Resources that finance the acquisition of assets are budgetary resources used to finance assets and not cost of operations (e.g., increases in accounts receivables or capitalized assets). Financing sources yet to be provided represents financing that will be provided in future periods for future costs that are recognized in determining the net cost of operations for the present period. Finally, components not requiring or generating resources are costs included in the net cost of operations that do not require resources (e.g., depreciation and amortized expenses of assets previously capitalized).

A reconciliation between budgetary resources obligated and net cost of operations (i.e., providing an explanation between budgetary and financial (proprietary) accounting) is as follows (note: in prior years this information was presented as a separate financial statement (the Statement of Financing)):

	2015	2014
Budgetary Resources Obligated	3,391,678.04	3,474,233.42
Spending Authority from Recoveries and Offsetting Collections	(46,040.70)	(161,261.02)
Distributed Offsetting Receipts	-	-
Imputed Financing from Costs Absorbed by Others	67,848.83	69,541.77
Changes in Budgetary Resources Obligated for Goods, Services, and Benefits Ordered but Not Yet Provided	(52,908.14)	(713,207.85)
Other Resources or adjustments	-	-
Resources that Finance the Acquisition of Assets	(1,407.19)	(16,559.43)
Increase in Annual Leave Liability	(145.52)	(2,487.47)
Net Cost of Operations	3,359,025.32	2,650,259.42

SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

In preparing these financial statements, management has evaluated events and transactions for potential recognition or disclosure through February 1, 2016, which is the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

Limitations of the Financial Statements

The principal financial statements have been prepared to report the financial position and results of operations of the Council, pursuant to the requirements of 31 U.S.C. 3515 (b). While the statements have been prepared from the books and records of the Council in accordance with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) for federal entities and the formats prescribed by OMB, the statements are in addition to the financial reports used to monitor and control budgetary resources, which are prepared from the same books and records. The statements should be read with the realization that they are for a component of the U.S. Government, a sovereign entity.

NCD has a unique mission among federal agencies because it is charged with reviewing all programs and policies across the federal government, not merely one aspect of policy affecting people with disabilities. While the Council's independent status allows NCD to provide an unbiased overview of many of those agency services and programs, it is the nature of NCD's overview and recommendations that make NCD's work so important in the eyes of those who eventually benefit when those recommendations are acted upon by those who have the power to do so.

The Council produces information critical to improving the delivery of programs to individuals with disabilities. The Council's series of reports and papers study a broad array of disability-related laws and programs and has resulted in or documented the need for ongoing changes to many of the services needed to sustain the health and independence of many of our citizens with disabilities. These reports can be found at <http://www.ncd.gov/publications>. In addition, as related below, NCD has been given substantial responsibilities for disability-related issues in the nationwide effort to improve emergency preparedness and enhance homeland security.

Management Assurances and Analysis of Controls, Systems and Legal Compliance

Implementation of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) at NCD

Federal agency managers have a fundamental responsibility to develop and maintain effective internal controls. Effective internal controls help to ensure that programs are managed with integrity and resources are used efficiently and effectively through three objectives: effective and efficient operations, reliable financial reporting, and compliance with laws and regulations. The safeguarding of assets is a subcomponent of each objective.

NCD management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control and financial management systems that meet the objectives of the *Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA) of 1982* as implemented by OMB Circular A-123, revised, *Management's Responsibility for Internal Control*. Circular A-12 focuses on providing agencies with a framework for assessing and managing risks more strategically and effectively. The Circular contains multiple appendices that address, at a more detailed level, one or more of the objectives of effective internal control. Appendix A provides a methodology for agency management to assess, document, test and report on internal controls over financial reporting.

Appendix B requires agencies to maintain internal controls that reduce the risk of fraud, waste, and error in Government charge card programs. Appendix C implements the requirements of the Improper Payments Information Act, as amended by the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act, which includes measurement, reporting, recovery and remediation. As a small, independent agency covered by the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002 as opposed to the CFO Act, NCD is exempt from many formal reporting requirements in Circular A-123.

The FMFIA requires federal agencies to provide an annual statement of assurance regarding management controls and financial systems. The objectives of NCD's internal controls are to provide reasonable assurance that:

- Obligations and costs are in compliance with applicable laws and budget restrictions;
- Assets are safeguarded against waste, loss, unauthorized use, or misappropriation;
- Revenues and expenditures applicable to NCD operations are properly recorded and accounted for to permit the preparation of accounts and reliable to financial and statistical reports, and to maintain accountability over assets; and
- All programs are efficiently and effectively carried out in accordance with applicable laws and management policy.

Section 2 of the FMFIA requires federal agencies to report, on the basis of annual assessments, any material weaknesses that have been identified in connection with their internal and administrative controls.

NCD's completed an independent audit of financial statements for FY 2015 to ensure the agency is free from material misstatement. No material weaknesses were identified in internal control over financial reporting for FY 2015. The financial statements of the National Council on Disability were audited and NCD received an unqualified opinion for FY2015. Furthermore, the audit did not identify any deficiencies in internal control.

This resulted in an unqualified assurance that NCD's systems and management controls comply with the requirements of the FMFIA. During FY 2015, the Council's Executive and Finance Committee and NCD management focused efforts on

streamlining financial processes and monitoring the operating effectiveness of key controls, such as monthly reconciliations of agency data to service provider data, quarterly analysis of financial statements, monitoring contracts and undelivered order status of open obligations, and year-end search for unrecorded liabilities and preparing year-end accruals. Accordingly, NCD's assurance on its internal controls was unqualified based on the reviews and consideration of internal analyses, reconciliations and the findings identified in the *Independent Auditor's Report on Internal Control Over Financial Reporting*,

Section 4 of the FMFIA requires that agencies' financial management systems controls be evaluated annually. NCD relies upon GSA for the evaluation of its financial management systems for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014 in accordance with the *FMFIA* and OMB Circular No. A-127, *Financial Management Systems*, as applicable. NCD uses GSA as its accounting service provider. GSA's financial management systems conform to the principles and standards required under Section 4 of the *FMFIA*. Accordingly, NCD is able to provide reasonable assurance under Section 4 of the *FMFIA*.

Legal Compliance

Federal agencies are required to comply with a wide range of laws and regulations, including appropriations, employment, ethics, health and safety, and others. Responsibility for compliance primarily results with agency management. Compliance is addressed as part of agency financial statement audits. Agency auditors test for compliance with selected laws and regulations related to financial reporting. The FY 2014 and FY2015 audit did not report any instances of non-compliance. Management comments on compliance efforts with specific laws and regulations are below.

Federal Financial Management Improvement Act (FFMIA)

Agencies subject to the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act (ATDA) of 2002 are not subject to the requirements of FFMIA. Accordingly, NCD is not subject to the requirements of FFMIA. However, OMB A-136, revised, requires NCD to be in compliance with FFMIA. NCD uses GSA as its accounting service provider. GSA's financial management systems conform with the principles and standards required under OMB A-136 and FFMIA.

Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act

The Improper Payments Information Act (IPIA—P.L. 107-300) requires federal agencies to identify and report on significant payment programs that are susceptible to improper payments. The Act defines significant improper payments as those within a single payment program that exceed both 2.5 percent of that program's annual amounts paid and \$10 million annually.

The Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA), enacted on July 22, 2010, requires the development of policies and procedures for the prevention and detection of improper payments in the federal government. The Act expands on the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002 (IPIA), which requires an initial assessment to identify those programs that are susceptible to significant risk of improper payments. "Significant," as defined in the Act, means that in the preceding fiscal year, improper payments in the program or activity may have exceeded \$10,000,000 of all program or activity payments made during that fiscal year reported and 2.5 percent of program outlays; or \$100,000,000.

NCD does not have any programs where significant erroneous payments have occurred within the agency. The Council will continue to review its financial operations on an annual basis to determine if any significant erroneous payments exist.

Prompt Payment Act

The Prompt Payment Act requires federal agencies to make timely payments to vendors, including any interest penalties for late invoice payments. In FY 2015, Rocha and Company, PC final report, NCD's auditors found that:

"During our audit, we noted six instances where payments to vendors were not made within the required time period.."

Cause/Effect: Due to limited resources the Council elects to contract certain accounting services to a third party provider, those services include remitting payments to vendors. Of the six (6) instances we identified as Prompt Payment Act violations, five (5) of the related invoices were submitted to the third party provider within the allowed 30-day time frame, however; by the time the third party remitted payment to the vendor, the 30-day time frame had been exceeded. Management was aware of the issue during the year and has been working with the third party provider to ensure compliance going forward.

Management's Response: The Council concurs with the cause/effect and recommendations. It is the Council's responsibility to ensure vendors are paid timely in accordance with the Prompt Pay Act. The Council will enhance internal control procedures to monitor prompt payment compliance by our third party service provider.

Chairman's Assurance on Internal Control-The following pages contain NCD Chairman's Statement of Assurance on Internal Control.

Chairman's Statement of Assurance

The Council's management is responsible for establishing and maintaining effective internal control and financial management systems that meet the objectives of the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA). No material weaknesses were identified in internal control over financial reporting for FY 2015. The NCD received an unqualified opinion for FY2014 and FY2015. Furthermore, the audit did not identify any deficiencies in internal control.

NCD is continually monitoring internal control effectiveness. Operating with a small staff and under limited resources, the Council relies highly on the effectiveness and good-faith efforts of a staff. The Council hired permanent full-time staff in 2014 with the skills to implement and maintain the key functions of agency operations and to ensure continuity in operations.

As the Council closes its FY2015 books, we have developed controls to identify failures or deficiencies in real-time to ensure that corrective measures will be taken while they still can still be remedied. The Council's goal is to become a model small independent agency with regard to financial procedures and controls. In FY2016, the Council intends to onboard additional full time staff and continue the momentum of strengthening its financial oversight by cross training key personnel to ensure ongoing compliance and continuity of NCD's financial operations. Additionally, the Executive and Finance Committee is tasked with the oversight of increased transparency and accountability of the financial management of the agency.

Based on our assessment, we have determined that the Council's financial systems conform to applicable financial systems requirements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clyde Terry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Clyde Terry
Chairperson
March 1, 2016

Performance Framework

NCD’s performance framework consists of a mission statement supported by a single, overarching strategic goal supported by two strategic objectives that advances NCD’s statutory mandate. The two supporting objectives and their corresponding strategies indicate how NCD will achieve its goal and provide an approach for measuring NCD’s progress and success. The strategic framework in the table below is followed by a detailed view of each objective and its corresponding strategies, key outcomes, means and key activities, and performance measures follows the overview.

Mission	Promote equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency of people with disabilities of all ages and backgrounds by providing advice, analysis and recommendations on disability policy to the President, congress and other federal agencies.
Vision	NCD leads by facilitating, articulating and promoting inclusion and empowerment of individuals with disabilities to live, learn and earn based on informed choices.
Strategic Goal	Advance the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act by promoting policies, programs, practices, and procedures that guarantee equal opportunity and provide for economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society for individuals with disabilities.
Strategic Objectives	<p>Engagement - Engage stakeholders in order to assess concerns and priorities and build a network of NCD partners.</p> <p>Policy Development & Collaboration – Address stakeholder concerns and priorities by advancing specific, practical, policy solutions and encouraging collaboration.</p>

Stakeholders	<p>All Americans with disabilities – a population diversified by geography, age, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, income, education, political party, type of disability, and other affiliations and identities.</p> <p>Policymakers and decision makers – including the President and all federal agencies, Congress, state, tribal, and local governments and communities – who create and implement federal policies and programs that affect people with disabilities.</p> <p>Groups and organizations concerned with people with disabilities.</p> <p>Families and support systems of people with disabilities, including parents and guardians.</p>
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	Society at large – employers, educators, manufacturers, service providers, engineers, designers, entertainers, and other individuals and organizations who influence inclusion and participation of Americans with disabilities.
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NCD has developed specific strategies and measurements of outcomes, means and key activities for its two strategic objectives.

Strategic Objective #1	Engagement – Engage stakeholders in order to assess concerns and priorities and build a network of NCD partners.
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Overview: NCD cannot fulfill its mission without regular, meaningful engagement with its stakeholders. NCD’s authorizing statute mandates this valued interaction. More importantly, the value of policy evaluation and recommendations should be measured by whether they are consistent with the needs, challenges, and aspirations of NCD’s stakeholders. By facilitating meaningful communication with stakeholders, Objective 1 (Engagement) supports the agency’s strategic goal through identification of systems of success as well as shortfalls, toward which NCD can direct its attention in the formulation of policy solutions.

Throughout the life of the agency, NCD has closely consulted stakeholders as key advisors in shaping NCD’s policy endeavors. NCD gathers information through a variety of means: public testimony, national and regional forums, electronic mail or letters from the public, public consultations via the Internet, research reports, conferences and meetings of stakeholder groups, federal workgroups, and meetings with members of Congress or their staff. In addition, NCD has also pursued creation of public-private working groups and/or federal advisory committees on priority issues to ensure NCD is both in continual contact with stakeholders and to act nimbly and efficiently when responding to identified need for action.

Strategy 1A – Create and maintain regular opportunities to receive direct input from community stakeholders: Coordinated collaboratively by the General Counsel and Policy Directorate and Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will develop and implement an annual outreach plan to provide meaningful venues for direct contact with disability community stakeholders on a regular basis.

Strategy 1B – Cultivate trusted relationships with Congress: Coordinated collaboratively by the General Counsel and Policy Directorate and Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will develop and implement a program for meaningful NCD engagement with Congressional Members and their staff and Committee leadership and their staff.

Strategy 1C – Establish and cultivate trusted relationships with state, local, and tribal governments and other entities: Coordinated collaboratively by the Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate and the General Counsel and Policy Directorate, NCD

will develop and implement a program for meaningful NCD engagement with leaders of state, local, and tribal governments and other entities.

Strategy 1D – Brand NCD as a principal national voice of the disability

community: Coordinated by the Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will develop and implement a communications plan to develop messages and modes of delivery designed to enhance the understanding of NCD’s mission, activities, and accomplishments with its stakeholders.

Strategic Objective #2	Policy Development & Collaboration – Address stakeholder concerns and priorities by advancing specific, practice policy solutions and encouraging collaboration.
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Overview: Using the information NCD has gained from its engagement activities with its stakeholders, as outlined in Objective 1 (Engagement) above, NCD must identify and prioritize opportunities to add value and make a difference in peoples’ lives. NCD does not have rulemaking or enforcement authority. Rather, NCD serves as an independent advisor on disability matters to the President and Congress. This role is essential to assure the Federal Government is well-informed and qualified to perform its duties and effectively serve the public, including individuals with disabilities. In addition to meeting with stakeholders, NCD advocates for equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for people with disabilities of all ages and backgrounds by continually reviewing disability programs and policies and providing analysis and recommendations on disability policy to the President, Congress, and other federal agencies.

NCD's analysis and recommendations have led to enactment of important laws and other improvements to the programs and services provided by the many federal agencies that serve the disability community. Yet people with disabilities continue to face personal, social, and economic disadvantages and barriers that prevent access to the same opportunities as Americans without disabilities. Therefore, NCD will increase emphasis on providing recommendations and looking for opportunities for their implementation.

NCD optimizes opportunities to put to practical use its vast amount of acquired knowledge through years of intensive research activities. This research is reflected in NCD's reports, papers, and briefs which each contain analysis and recommendations for actions at all levels of government. These reports and papers are available on NCD's agency website at www.ncd.gov.

Objective 2 (Policy Development & Collaboration) supports the activities of identifying and formulating solutions to emerging and existing challenges; providing tools to facilitate effective implementation of policy solutions; and engaging and influencing current debates, all of which directly support the strategic goal. Further, Objective 2 supports the strategic goal by leveraging NCD's resources through coordination and collaboration to amplify its impact relative to the agency's size.

Strategy 2A – Cultivate trusted relationships with other federal agencies and look for opportunities to coordinate and work collaboratively: Coordinated collaboratively by the General Counsel and Policy Directorate and Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will develop and implement a program for meaningful NCD engagement with other federal agencies.

Strategy 2B – Work closely with and enlist the support of stakeholders to develop and advance policy responses to priority issues: Coordinated collaboratively by the General Counsel and Policy Directorate and Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will develop and implement a program to partner with a cross-section of stakeholders to consider priority policy issues and strategic activities to address them, and to support successful implementation of federal legislation that benefits people with disabilities.

Strategy 2C – Produce materials that have practical utility for federal, state, tribal and local stakeholders regarding successful implementation of federal policies: Coordinated collaboratively by the General Counsel and Policy Directorate and Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will produce and disseminate shorter, timely policy briefs, white papers, "policy toolkits," and other materials.

Strategy 2D - Update NCD's annual progress report to be more responsive to Congress and the Administration: Coordinated collaboratively by the General Counsel and Policy Directorate and Legislative Affairs and Outreach Directorate, NCD will develop a new model for its statutorily mandated annual progress report that will

contain a significant discussion of the overall state of the disability community and the policies affecting it based upon information NCD acquires through use of strategies envisioned throughout this plan.

Performance Measurement Challenges

NCD is a micro-agency with a macro mission and a large, diverse base of stakeholders (over 50 million) with many different concerns and priorities. With a budget of only \$3.2 million, 10 part-time Council Members, and 13 full-time staff (when fully staffed), NCD has adopted a strategy of working in conjunction with its wide range of stakeholders – including people with disabilities, federal, state and local agencies, elected officials and their staff, universities, and a diverse group of non-profit organizations and individual disability policy experts and advocates – to level resources and manpower to advance our mission, goals and objectives.

NCD's strategic objectives of engagement and policy development can be quantifiably measured by our raw data and enumerating the number of people that attend our forums, regularly engage with us via social media, download and read our policy reports, and adopt or promote our recommendations. However, measuring NCD's impact on its strategic goal of guaranteeing equal opportunity and providing for economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society for individuals with disabilities is far more subjective since these are systemic endeavors in which NCD is part of a community of agencies, advocates, and others seeking to secure such outcomes.

Accordingly, NCD's analysis of the relationships of program outputs (such as forums and reports) to tangible outcomes impacting our stakeholders requires a multi-year time horizon and it is often many years following a particular research publication and years of follow-up that NCD sees or learns of the fruit of our efforts. Measuring NCD's impact on its strategic goal of guaranteeing equal opportunity and providing for economic self-sufficiency, independent living, and inclusion and integration into all aspects of society for individuals with disabilities is challenging since these are large-scale, long-term endeavors.

Accordingly and as previously mentioned, as we evaluate performance measurements, key measures, targets and outcomes, we ask:

- Has NCD identified critical needs where our engagement with stakeholders and policy development and collaboration can advance existing initiatives?
- Can NCD be a thought leader, performing important research and analysis on critical topics?
- Can NCD provide practical, timely policy recommendations and consultations to Members of Congress and the Executive Branch?

NCD is continually working to identify better mechanisms for measuring outcomes and reporting achievements. This includes increased efforts to gather and report personal stories of where our engagement or policy initiatives provided a spark or tipping point toward improving the lives of people with disabilities.

Program Activities and Performance Results by Strategic Objectives

As indicated above, NCD has one overarching strategic goal and two strategic objectives to advance the agencies mission, strategic goal and statutory responsibilities. Below is a description of key policy and program accomplishments in FY 2012 and planned future activities.

Objective 1: Engagement

NCD is an advisory agency that seeks to provide timely, valuable counsel to the President, Congress and other federal agencies regarding policies, programs, practices, and procedures that affect people with disabilities. NCD views its diverse stakeholders – people with disabilities of all ages and types of disability; groups and organizations concerned with people with disabilities; policymakers; and families and support system of people with disabilities – as key informants to the development of NCD’s policy recommendations. Accordingly, NCD prioritizes creating opportunities to hear from its stakeholders through a variety of means: regional policy forums; public testimony received at meetings in person or by telephone; letters of concern from the public; participation at conferences and meetings of stakeholder groups; congressional policy briefings; and listening sessions and town halls the agency hosts throughout the year.

In addition to these opportunities, NCD’s legislation mandates a minimum of four public meetings annually. Some of NCD’s most important activities occur during the quarterly meetings. Public comment sessions and town halls, full-length presentations by stakeholders, and opportunities to meet with additional stakeholders in the disability community who attend the meetings afford NCD the opportunity to identify needs as well as promising practices in communities and regions across the country. NCD also has a history of playing a convening role, advancing policy discussions in the process, by bringing diverse stakeholders together that may not otherwise have policy discussions with one another.

Fiscal Year 2015

In FY2015, NCD hosted several such gatherings on the topics stakeholders have indicated they want to hear the most about and that build on our previous work:

- In October 2014, NCD hosted a policy forum in Atlanta, Georgia regarding the school-to-prison pipeline for students with disabilities in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF) and the HSC Foundation.

- In January 2015, NCD released its “Securing the Social Contract: Reforming Social Security Disability” report through a congressional briefing that brought together a politically diverse panel of policy experts to discuss Social Security reform and held a follow-up congressional briefing a few months later.
- In February and August 2015, NCD met in Louisiana and Wisconsin to continue facilitating cross-disability stakeholder engagement with federal partners to obtain meaningful input into the planning and implementation of states’ Medicaid managed care programs.
- In July 2015, NCD convened a congressional forum on youth with disabilities who receive social security benefits, with youth with disabilities speaking for themselves of their own experiences, against the backdrop of ongoing policy discussions of reforms to the nation’s Social Security system.
- In September 2015, NCD convened a Twitter chat with mental health advocates on the critical issues within proposed mental health reform.
- In September 2015, NCD convened a Twitter chat on people with disabilities and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.
- Throughout FY2015, NCD engaged more broadly with the cross-civil rights community, meeting and engaging with groups including but not limited to AIDS Drug Assistance Programs, the Leadership Conference for Civil Rights, MALDEF, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, and the National Juvenile Justice Network. Topics included voting rights, police violence, IDEA compliance within the juvenile justice system, health care, and affordable and accessible early childhood education/
- NCD staff provided research and referrals to regular media inquiries on topics of importance to the disability community and often areas of past or current research by NCD.
- NCD staff continued to cultivate and deepen trusted relationships with congressional offices through a regular NCD staff Capitol Hill presence and timely responses to regular member and committee requests for information from NCD.
- Internationally, NCD hosted delegations from Turkey, Jamaica, Liberia, China, Romania, Chile, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Nepal, Mongolia; Laos, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Argentina, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Gambia to discuss NCD’s role and responsibilities. There was a follow up visit from a previous Japanese delegation with the Executive Director, Policy Director and Policy Analyst to specifically dig into the issues around the rights of parents with disabilities.

In addition to congressional and intergovernmental engagement, NCD also continued to actively solicit and collect public comments as a regular part of its quarterly meetings. In addition to oral remarks made, with every meeting, NCD also receives numerous written comments in advance of the meetings. Comments received before and during NCD’s four quarterly meetings in FY 2015 were wide-ranging but included those about the U.N Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the futile care policies of states and hospitals, deinstitutionalization policies, chemical and electrical sensitivities, and voting poll access.

Conferences and Other Speaking Engagements – NCD receives numerous invitations each year to speak at state, national, and international conferences and other events and makes good use of the opportunities it accepts by sharing its latest policy findings and recommendations with hundreds of attendees at each event. In FY 2015, NCD participated in over 50 outreach events, increasing last year's total by 1/3rd, with our media exposure more than doubling last year's totals. Events included interviews, op-eds, presentations at national and state level conferences/meetings, webinars and testimony. These outreach engagements extend well beyond our report releases and hearings and often lead us to new work and exciting new working relationships.

Highlights included:

- Following up on the success initiated in 2013, NCD continued hosting public forums on issues related to Medicaid Managed Care (MMC). In the last fiscal year, NCD conducted five additional MMC forums. On December 12, 2014, NCD conducted a MMC forum in Philadelphia, PA, on February 12 a MMC forum was conducted in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. On June 15, a forum was conducted in Austin, TX and on July 7, 2015, NCD returned to Topeka, KS where the forums began, generating extensive print and broadcast media on the areas of concern in managed care for people with disabilities. The most recent MMC forum was conducted in Madison, WI on August 31, 2015.
- On May 27, 2015, NCD staff presented at the National Conference for Race & Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) titled "What is 21st Century Policing?" addressing the interplay between disability, racial disparities in American society and the current culture of policing in the United States building on the success NCD initiated last year by an NCD co-authored piece on the topic of police violence and disability for THE ATLANTIC.
- On April 11, 2015, NCD staff presented at the first-ever disability-themed event at the National Conference of the National Action Network in NYC at a panel called "Disability at the Intersections of Justice: Fighting for the Rights of All Description." The event was live-streamed and tweeted live by NCD staff to extend the information beyond the location and the event itself.
- In ongoing cross-agency collaboration, in the last year, NCD has maintained a regular presence in posts to Disability.gov's blog including the topics of ending the School to Prison Pipeline, Transportation barriers and access, home and community-based services, and recommendations on how to improve Social Security disability benefit programs.
- Throughout FY 2015, NCD staff continued to present at numerous academic, legal, and policy events on the topic of ensuring the rights of parents with disabilities and their children. For example, in January 2015, staff presented in New Mexico at the Children's Law Institute conference as well as to the National Council on Independent Living's Civil Rights subcommittee.

Through these engagements activities, NCD estimates that the agency reached over 15,000 people.

Congressional and Federal Agency Engagement – As noted above, throughout FY 2015, NCD continued to cultivate and deepen relationships with staff of congressional offices as a trusted advisor in both Member and committee offices and federal agencies. NCD responds to calls and letters from individual congressional offices throughout each year that request disability-related information regarding constituents' needs. In addition to being a resource for Members' district offices, NCD strives to provide timely policy information and recommendations to legislative offices and federal agencies. NCD staff provided electronic copies and in-person briefings of its policy reports and papers to legislative staff in the House and Senate and appropriate federal agencies throughout the past fiscal year. In addition, NCD staff has offered policy briefings on its reports' major findings and recommendations, as well, utilizing teleconferences and in-person Hill and agency briefing formats. Some highlights of NCD's FY15 congressional and federal agency activity include the following:

- In October 2014, NCD hosted a policy forum in Atlanta, Georgia regarding the school-to-prison pipeline for students with disabilities in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).
- In January 2015, NCD released its "Securing the Social Contract: Reforming Social Security Disability" report at a congressional briefing that brought together a politically diverse panel of policy experts to discuss Social Security reform.
- Every few months throughout FY15, NCD hosted cross-disability stakeholder engagement forums with state and federal policymakers regarding the implementation of states' Medicaid managed care programs. NCD held forums in Atlanta, GA; Philadelphia, PA; Baton Rouge, LA; Austin, TX; Topeka, KS; and Madison, WI. Participants included state Medicaid directors; representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; state Developmental Disabilities Councils; Protection and Advocacy centers; Medicaid beneficiaries; and managed care providers.
- In July 2015, NCD convened two congressional forums on Social Security. The first was geared towards Congressional staff who needed to better understand SSDI as reforms were being considered and the second was for a more general audience including Congressional staff and community members. The forum featured youth with disabilities who receive Social Security benefits who were given an opportunity to speak regarding their own experiences, against the backdrop of ongoing policy discussions of reforms to the nation's Social Security system.
- In September 2015, NCD staff and former and current Council Members with relevant experience on mental health disabilities held a closed-door briefing with House Committee on Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health staff and Rep. Tim Murphy (R-PA) to discuss his "Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act Legislation" which was going to be before the Subcommittee for a mark-up.

- Internationally, NCD has hosted U.S. State Department delegations from Turkey, Jamaica, Liberia, China, Romania, Chile, Honduras, Dominican Republic, Morocco, Nepal, Mongolia; Laos, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Argentina, Vietnam, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh and Gambia to discuss NCD's role and responsibilities.

In FY 2015, the Chairperson and Executive Director continued to engage in extensive outreach to NCD's federal agency partners. NCD met with colleagues at over 50 agencies, sub-agencies, and Hill offices to continue partnership conversations and zero in on key policy foci of NCD, including the Office of National Drug Control Policy), the Pentagon (ADA compliance and international installations), Food and Drug Administration (accessible outreach campaign for medications), the Peace Cops (increased inclusion of people with disabilities), the Office of Veterans Affairs and the Veterans Benefits Administration (disability claims backlog), the Department of Defense (disability claims backlog), Joining Forces of the Office of the First Lady at the White House (disability claims backlog), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (School to Prison Pipeline), the Office of the Vice President (mental health & gun control), as well as our traditional partners of the Departments of Education, Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, and the Social Security Administration.

Understanding the critical role NCD plays in bringing a diversity of voices representing Americans with disabilities to the White House and the Congress, NCD has continued maintaining relationships with non-disability diversity organizations including but not limited to the Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, the Human Rights Campaign, the Asian American Justice Coalition, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Council of La Raza, and the National Black Justice Coalition. This has resulted in the Council ensuring that communities of color are at the table as we discuss critical issues but also that feedback from these communities is integrated as NCD determines its policy priorities.

As referenced later in this narrative, NCD also continued its dedicated focus on emergency management, closely collaborating with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the U.S. Department of Homeland Security through weekly calls with the Director of the Office of Disability Integration and Coordination. NCD has also provided updates to the House Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications on this collaboration, as well as other critical areas of emergency management, to help inform the oversight role of the committee.

Media & Other Engagement-Reflecting changes to how people prefer to receive information via ever-changing distribution methods, NCD continues to utilize its traditional email distribution listserv for constituents who favor this method of information delivery. Approximately 3,000 subscribers receive regular policy and activities updates from the agency in this way.

Finally, in keeping with NCD's strategic plan goal to leverage media more aggressively to help brand NCD and help frame national conversations on disability, NCD Members and staff were highlighted in numerous state, local, national and international media pieces on a broad range of topics.

Highlights of NCD's media placement in FY15 include:

- In November 2014, NCD's Public Affairs Specialist was interviewed by USA TODAY about the possible effect of the election results on the 57 million Americans with Disabilities. USA TODAY is the third largest newspaper in the United States with a daily circulation of 1,674,306. A historical overview of elected officials with disabilities was a secondary focus of the article.
- NCD's Attorney Advisor was quoted by the Associated Press on February 2015 about parenting with a disability. Stories published and republished by the AP are distributed to more than 1,700 newspapers, and more than 5,000 television and radio broadcasters. The AP operates 243 news bureaus in 120 countries. NBC's THE TODAY SHOW also referenced NCD's report and published details of the issue on their website including an interview with NCD in March 2015. That month, the flagship morning news program averaged 5 million viewers daily.
- NCD's Quarterly Meeting hosted by Pittsburgh, PA in May 2015 led to six articles before, during and after our visit in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (circulation: 173,160 Daily; 317,439 Sunday) covering a wide range of topics including the impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act, local employment initiatives, coverage of our panels and discussions, and an editorial penned by former Attorney General Richard Thornburgh as a result of NCD's visit there.
- An article co-authored by NCD's Public Affairs Specialist in May 2014 titled "How Misunderstanding Disability Leads to Police Violence" continued to be used as source material for subsequent articles and OpEds in the Washington Post, the British Broadcasting Company, and the Daily Beast. The article was also submitted as a supporting document for proposed legislation under consideration by the Alaska State Legislature in 2015.

These activities, in combination with regular and numerous in-office meetings, including with international delegations, demonstrate that NCD has maintained a large impact, relative to its size. NCD continues to make strides in being a national voice of the disability community, reflective of the community's wide range of disability types, geography, age, and cultural diversity.

Fiscal Year 2016

In Fiscal Year 2016, the National Council on Disability (NCD) will work with our federal partners and stakeholders to advance the goals of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). NCD is committed to approaching its work with an inclusive lens that learns about, includes, and respects various perspectives and backgrounds, including multi-generational perspectives, reflected in the disability community. NCD's policy goals for FY 2016 include the following:

- Impact the development and implementation of Medicaid managed care systems across the country to ensure they are successful for beneficiaries with disabilities;
- Work with congressional staffers toward introduction of and follow-up on federal legislation that emphasizes and invests in integrated, individualized supported employment and deemphasizes and shifts resources away from segregated, subminimum wage employment;
- Work with congressional staffers toward introduction of federal legislation that clarifies and safeguards the rights of parents with disabilities;

Objective 2: Policy Development & Collaboration

NCD contributes to the promotion of successful disability policies in education, transportation, emergency preparedness, international disability rights, employment, foster youth with disabilities, vocational rehabilitation, livable communities, and crime victims with disabilities - to name a few. This section outlines NCD's activities in this area for FY 2015 and what the agency has planned for 2016 and 2017.

FY2015 – Results

In 2015, NCD released *Securing the Social Contract: Reforming Social Security's Disability Benefits System* <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2015/01292015>, a report examining complex policy in two benefit programs linked to key aspects of the ADA—Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Recommendations focused primarily on decoupling health care benefits and cash benefits eligibility, providing wrap-around health benefits, further examination, planning, and gradual phase-in of a revised disability definition for benefits eligibility, management proficiency, early intervention, improved federal collaboration efforts, ways to boost work incentives, evidence-based practices addressing youth and people with mental health needs among vulnerable groups, and state supplemental systems. Current budget debates in Congress and with the President have highlighted that our nation faces a number of daunting fiscal challenges. According to the 2011 Social Security Trustees' Report, the Social Security Disability Insurance Trust Fund is scheduled to become exhausted in 2016. Because of increasing numbers of claims due to the economic situation and concerns with potential work disincentives facing both Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients, these programs have been highlighted as in need of reform by policymakers.

As will be covered in Objective 2, NCD has convened multiple congressional briefings on this topic and has found support for our recommendations by both House and Senate offices as well as politically diverse policy think tanks.

School to Prison Pipeline

In FY 2015, NCD decided to take a look back its 2003 report [*Addressing the Needs of Youth with Disabilities in the Juvenile Justice System: The Current Status of Evidence-Based Research*](#). In the last year, a number of different efforts have been going on around the country looking at best practices in reforming the juvenile justice system to improve outcomes for all young people.

With the tremendous body of work tied to this subject area already, the Council did not need to reinvent the wheel nor engage in a deep dive about the state of the state. NCD worked with the Disability Rights Defense Fund, the HSC Foundation, the Civil Rights Project at UCLA and others to develop *Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline for Youth with Disabilities*. This report was intended to build off of the great work of the recent report developed by the Council of State Governments and be used as a tool to establish a foundation for more focused discussion, tied specifically to potential upcoming reauthorizations of IDEA and ESEA.

Education Issue Briefs In Light of Reauthorizations of ESEA and HEA

Given the priorities in Congress of completing the reauthorizations of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA) in the coming session, NCD provided policy principles and recommendations to both House and Senate committees working on reauthorization, to promote education equality and high expectations for students with disabilities as well as consider professional development programs and strategies to support teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

CMS Regional Office Stakeholder Meetings – This project was follow-up to our Medicaid Managed Care report and facilitated NCD, local stakeholder and CMS Regional Office staff conversations to promote greater dialogue and contact between key decision-makers in CMS' Regional Office system and the disability community regarding Managed Care waiver applications and dual eligible demonstration proposals. In FY 15, NCD held five additional regional forums with HHS regional offices regarding Medicaid managed care and the review of state 1115 and 1915(b) (c) waiver applications, dual eligible demonstration proposals and relevant Medicaid waiver or state plan amendments.

Transportation Update: Where We've Gone and What We Know – Investing in independence necessarily involves investing in transportation. People with disabilities cannot work if they cannot get to the workplace.

In 2005, NCD released a comprehensive transportation report addressing access to ground transportation for people with disabilities: [*The Current State of Transportation for*](#)

[People with Disabilities in the United States](#). In FY 2015, NCD looked at progress made since 2005 and examined the recommendations made by NCD in the 2005 report to identify which recommendations have and have not been addressed successfully, and identified what barriers remain for people with disabilities in accessing transportation, including rural transportation. Particular emphasis was placed on transportation issues for people with disabilities in rural and outlying urban areas; and inner city transit issues – subways, buses, taxis and issues regarding “silo” transit systems such as para-transit. See: <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2015/05042015>

Self-Driving Cars: Mapping Access to a Technology Solution- In 2004 NCD issued a report, *Design for Inclusion*, aimed at educating designers and manufacturers about the way electronic and information technology (E&IT) intersects with the needs of individuals with disabilities, and how designing with access in mind can significantly increase the size of targeted markets for E&IT. In 2011, NCD took the next step in recognizing the transformative power of technology and innovation, and examined the importance of social media and other information technologies in connecting people to job opportunities in report *The Power of Digital Inclusion*. The latest innovations in technology are now upon us through the use of autonomous vehicles. *Self-Driving Cars: Mapping Access to a Technology Revolution* explores the emerging revolution in automobile technology and the promise it holds for people with disabilities, as well as the obstacles the disability community faces to realizing that promise. The report examined the current state of the technology, current approaches to regulation, and potential technological and policy barriers to full use by people with disabilities, and provides recommendations for preventing or eliminating those barriers, including model legislative language.

Although experts in the field across all sectors, whether government or industry, agree that self-driving cars will evolve through many stages, the fully autonomous vehicles needed by many people with disabilities are most likely to appear on our roads sometime between 2020 and 2035. Yet the disability community knows better than anyone how being involved in planning from day one is critical to a successfully accessible product, regardless of how many years in the future it lies. The recommendations set forth in this report are intended to ensure people with disabilities benefit from and realize the freedom of fully autonomous vehicles. The recommendations addressed AV accessibility; funding for research; uniformity of requirements across the 50 states that address non-discrimination, privacy, and ethics; financing; and inclusion of disability access in future hearing testimony. See: <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2015/self-driving-cars-mapping-access-technology-revolution>

Defining and Measuring Home and Community Based Services Quality - Over the course of the last several years, considerable energy and effort has been focused on the topic of expanding Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) for people with disabilities and older adults. Studies have shown that community services are less expensive than institutional care and making such a shift could potentially save

Medicaid millions of dollars annually. Additionally, efforts by the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division to enforce the Supreme Court's 1999 *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision have also helped to further the shift towards community services. Despite this significant progress in terms of state willingness to invest in community support infrastructure, considerable tensions remain as to how to define and assess the quality of HCBS.

Additionally, as the *Olmstead* decision is applied in new contexts, definitions of integrated day and employment activities acquire particular relevance.

CMS has recently issued numerous public comment opportunities focusing on this particular question, and ongoing deliberations within numerous federal agencies, including DOJ, HUD, CMS and the new Administration on Community Living continue to work to identify the best ways at ensuring quality measurement infrastructures that are truly reflective of community life. NCD issued a report in 2015 that provides a meaningful and practical summary of the relevant issues and options available to state and federal policymakers with regards to defining and assessing HCBS systems for consistency with the goals and intent of the Medicaid HCBS program, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the ability to meaningfully enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities and older adults. See: <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2015/02242015>

Affordable Care Act--NCD has released 3 reports on the Affordable Care Act. The purpose of the research was to analyze the impact of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on people with disabilities. ACA is one of the most significant pieces of domestic legislation enacted since the 1960s. ACA's changes to the country's health care system will affect millions of Americans, with a disproportionate impact on people with disabilities. Without question, many provisions of ACA will result in significant improvements in health care access for people with disabilities. On the other hand, as they implement ACA's favorable provisions, federal and state policymakers may not use approaches calculated to achieve the maximum possible gains for people with disabilities. Moreover, ACA's new initiatives create new dangers.

The decisions of federal and state policymakers as well as private sector entities (such as insurers and providers) will greatly shape the fate of people with disabilities under ACA. ACA implementation is at a critical point, a time to take stock of what has already happened and to identify the future choices that will most significantly affect people with disabilities.

The three reports can be found here:

<http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2016/implementing-affordable-care-act-aca-roadmap-people-disabilities>

<http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2016/impact-affordable-care-act-people-disabilities-2015-status-report>

<http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2016/monitoring-and-enforcing-affordable-care-act-people-disabilities>

ADA @25 Progress Report -- In our work to revise the format of the Annual Progress report to make it more user-friendly for our varied stakeholders, including Members of Congress and their staff, in 2015, NCD produced, with the assistance of a contractor and local stakeholders, a five state examination of progress made in implementing the goals of the ADA in the past 25 years. State stakeholders were asked to identify targets and goals to be achieved by the 30th ADA Anniversary to measure continuing and future implementation efforts. These metrics will be utilized by the Council in meeting our statutory obligation to inform the President and Congress about annual progress. We also envisioned this as a way to make the Progress Report more valuable to our stakeholders and an actual tool that they can use in their work at all levels of government. See: http://www.ncd.gov/progress_reports/ncd-progress-report-celebrates-25-years-ada-envisions-next-25

Police Violence and the Disability Community-- As in the case with NCD's work on the civil rights of parents with disabilities, from time to time issues arise from the grassroots that the Council is asked to weigh in on. This has been the case as it relates to police violence against people with disabilities. Being mindful that a majority of police interactions with the disability community end positively, the Council knows that law enforcement struggles with how to engage with the broader community, as this is an issue that goes beyond mental health. In this past year NCD has been asked to participate in a series of meeting of the White House Task Force on 21st century policing and meetings with the COPS office at the U.S Department of Justice and the Domestic Policy Council to offer guidance on data collection, community engagement, and accountability measures.

FY2016-Planned Activities

Forum on Police Violence and the Disability Community

NCD hopes to build on its' ongoing advising of the White House Task Force on 21st century policing by pulling together a meeting of the disability community, broader civil rights colleagues, and law enforcement organizations to talk about how to improve the engagement between.

Self-Driving Cars: Mapping Access to a Technology Solution

NCD will be engaging in discussions with partners in private industry including Google, Mercedes Benz, and others to talk about the accessibility issues tied to people with disabilities accessing this exciting technology. The Council will also be setting up briefings with senior officials at the Department of Transportation and relevant Hill offices on the recommendations laid out in the report.

ELL & IDEA

Research indicates that students of color with limited use of English sometimes get mislabeled as disabled rather than receive appropriate services as English Language Learners. However, there are students who are both students with disabilities and English Language Learners. The purpose of this project would be to look into what are the challenges facing this population and what are the barriers in accessing programs and services that could meet their needs, and what (if any) best practices exist in ensuring their academic, social, and occupational success. This would also look at how Centers for Independent Living, Protection and Advocacy Organizations, Parent Training and Information Centers, engage with families of children with disabilities who also have limited English proficiency. This project would include formal recommendations for inclusion in upcoming reauthorizations of IDEA and ESEA.

Reimagining the Annual Report to Progress—The State of the Disability Union

As a follow up to the 2015 Annual Report to Congress, NCD will continue to reimagine its Progress Report to increase its value to the general public while at the same time highlighting groundbreaking work the Council is engaging in to improve the lives of people with disabilities. The 2016 Report will be focused on technology as a right, and not a privilege. Based on feedback from the disability community, we've started rethinking how to better market this report as a "State of the Disability Union" to better align the content with relevant branding.

Social Media Dialogue on Voting

With 2016 being an election year, and building off of NCD's existing body of work tied to the voting rights of people with disabilities, the Council will utilize its social media capacity and host 3 dialogues tied to ongoing physical barriers, attitudes, technological gaps, legislative hurdles, and polling place practices encountered by voters with disabilities.

Congressional Forums

NCD has made use of its statutory authority to receive testimony by hosting congressional forums on the topics of the federal budget, voting, and parenting rights. In FY16, the Council intends to continue utilizing this authority to host at least one congressional forum, likely tied to the topic of one of its recent reports, taking into consideration the interests of NCD's stakeholders and the focus of Congress at the time.

White House Forum on Parenting with a Disability – As mentioned earlier, the Council continues to receive significant interest from Federal and State legislators, community based organization (disability and non-disability), and the general public about its work on the Civil Rights of Parents with Disabilities. NCD is looking to convene a forum on this topic-- to provide a venue for the necessary key stakeholders (parents with disabilities, federal agencies, advocates, members of Congress and their staff, service providers, and researchers) to convene and begin focusing the necessary attention this issue so rightly deserves. The conference would attempt to answer several questions of prominent concern such as: what actions have been taken on the

state and federal level to address discrimination against parents with disabilities and their children – what are the barriers and facilitators; what promising practices and/or state initiatives have been implemented to support parents with disabilities and their children since the release of NCD’s report; and what progress has been made on NCD’s report recommendations and what more needs to be done to advance and promote the rights of parents with disabilities and their children. In addition, the conference will break the report out into key topics including, but not limited to child custody, foster care and adoption.

Small Business Administration 8(a) eligibility

The Council is working with the Small Business Administration in the hope that the SBA will make a policy change to include people with disabilities in the presumed group for 8(a) eligibility. Self-employment is one of the prime employment strategies people with disabilities use to gain independence.

Accessible Drug Labeling

Pursuant to NCD’s responsibilities under the Food and Drug Administration Innovation and Safety Act (FDASIA) to conduct public awareness activities about best practices for making information on prescription drug container labels accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired, NCD will develop a print brochure on the best practices and do a mass mailing of it to U.S. pharmacies in partnership with the Assistant Commissioner for the Office of Women’s Health at the Food and Drug Administration. Utilizing the skills and experiences of one of its newest Council Members, NCD will also create a radio public service announcement (PSA) about accessible drug container labeling, as well, and seek nationwide placement of the radio PSA. Finally, NCD will continue to disseminate news of any industry progress toward implementation of the best practices over its listserv and social media channels.

FY2017-Objectives

The employment of people with disabilities remains staggeringly low. The focus for FY17’s policy work will be on employment, and will potentially include the following policy areas:

The Accessibility of Emerging Technologies In our 2011 *Digital Inclusion* report, we noted the nexus between accessible digital technology and social media on the employment of people with disabilities and NCD first proposed the development of a technology bill of rights in its 2011 Annual Progress Report. We recommended Congress enact a comprehensive bill for people with disabilities to clearly establish that manufacturers create accessible user interfaces for all products; authorize the U.S. Access Board to establish uniform technology access standards; and provide for effective enforcement mechanisms. NCD wants to build on this recommendation in FY17 and undertake a “futures studies” on the impact of inclusively designed digital

technologies for people with disabilities. This would be a visions paper applying the futures studies approach to outline strategies to foster an inclusive, digitally driven futures for people with disabilities.

Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – WIOA will have been in place for 3 years in 2017. NCD plans to develop a series of briefs regarding the full implementation of the employment provisions WIOA.

Implementation of Section 503 - Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits federal contractors and subcontractors from discriminating in employment against individuals with disabilities, and requires these employers to take affirmative action to recruit, hire, promote, and retain people with disabilities. The new rule strengthens the affirmative action provisions of the regulations to aid contractors in their efforts to recruit and hire people with disabilities, and improve job opportunities. The new rule also makes changes to the nondiscrimination provisions of the regulations to bring them into compliance with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. The new Section 503 regulations became effective on March 24, 2014. NCD would like to assess the implementation of Section 503 on its three year anniversary.

Progress Report – NCD will issue its statutorily required annual progress report, but will focus its efforts on addressing employment issues.

Outside of the specific employment context, NCD will continue its other areas of focus in the following ways:

Guardianship – Despite reforms that gained traction in the 1980’s which provided some procedural protections to individuals facing guardianship, including due process requirements, the right to legal representation and the possibility of limited guardianship, somewhere between 1.5 million and 3 million adults are under guardianship, in approximately 90% of those cases the guardianship is plenary (all legal rights removed) and in too many cases the reality is that the fundamental and basic right to make decisions for oneself is removed “with all the procedural rigor of processing a traffic ticket.” Article 12 of the CRPD says that the right of legal capacity shall be enjoyed equally by all persons, without regard to disability. Countries that have signed the CRPD must revamp their guardianship laws to provide alternatives to guardianship such as supported decision-making, which provides support to individuals whose cognitive, intellectual or mental health disabilities impair their ability to make decisions without removing the right to make decisions altogether. Even if the U.S. signs the CRPD, the principles of Federalism will prevent these state guardianship laws from being impacted by this international treaty. Guardianship represents a threat to the individual rights of persons with disabilities and undermines the goals of the ADA and Olmstead. Furthermore, there is growing evidence that individuals under guardianship are frequently the victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation by the very guardians appointed to “protect” them. Finally, individuals under guardianship are often subjected to overly restrictive placements that violate the spirit of Olmstead. The Council will

undertake a rigorous study of adult guardianship and develop principles that will guide reform as it has done in other areas such as the recent groundbreaking report on parenting.

Civil Rights of Parenting with Disabilities– NCD will continue its focus on the parenting rights of people with disabilities, zooming in on specific communities within what we categorize as “parents” who are often not actively included in the discussion of parenting rights, i.e. Fathers with disabilities; Native Americans/American Indians with Disabilities; Grandparents with disabilities.

Mental Health and Higher Education – building on NCD’s previous higher education work in FY16, NCD will develop a report on sexual assault on campuses/violence against students on campuses.

Foreign Policy – Five years will have passed since NCD’s last report regarding foreign assistance and ten years since its 2007 foreign policy and disability report. NCD will review which recommendations from its foreign policy portfolio remain outstanding in 2017, and develop a roadmap for implementation of the remaining recommendations.

Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to report that the National Council on Disability earned an unqualified audit opinion on its consolidated financial statements. We have spent much of FY2015 advancing controls over the integrity and security of our financial and administrative operations and being proactive to any potential issues.

Following the close of FY2015, we continue to streamline our systems to ensure efficient and documented processing of invoices and vouchers among our Administration and Finance team members. The goal of this is twofold: to create transparency and to ensure every team member is aware of his or her and others' responsibilities and who the necessary back-ups are. We continue to maintain regular communications among financial staff, the Chairperson, Executive Director, and finance Council Member lead are essential to providing the level of transparency that ensures continuity of operations. We continue to work to ensure NCD's Information Technology systems and equipment include the formulation of appropriate procedures and controls throughout. In sum, our goal, as detailed in our Management Letter Comments, is to increase the transparency, accountability, and reliability of our financial and operations systems as we move through FY2016.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the Council and the entire staff that made our financial management a priority during FY 2015. We are all dedicated to ensuring the development of stronger controls in the future to maintain our commitment to quality financial management.

Rebecca Cokley
Executive Director

Appendix A – Listing of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended
AICPA	American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
ATDA	Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CSRS	Civil Service Retirement System
DOL	Department of Labor
ED	Executive Director
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act
FASAB	Federal Accounting Standards Advisory Board
FBWT	Fund Balance with Treasury
FECA	Federal Employees Compensation Act
FERS	Federal Employees' Retirement System
FFMIA	Federal Financial Management Improvement Act
FICA	Federal Insurance Contribution Act
FISMA	Federal Information Security Management Act
FMFIA	Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
FY	Fiscal Year
GAAP	Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
GSA	General Services Administration
IPIA	Improper Payments Information Act
IT	Information Technology
MD&A	Management's Discussion and Analysis
NCD	National Council on Disability
NCLBA	No Child Left Behind Act reauthorization
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
PP&E	Property, Plant and Equipment
PAR	Performance and Accountability Report
SAS	Statement on Auditing Standards
SBR	Statement of Budgetary Resources
SFFAS	Statement of Federal Financial Accounting Standards
SNC	Statement of Net Cost
TSP	Thrift Savings Plan
UDO	Undelivered Orders
USC	United States Code