



# **Rethinking Guardianship: Making Alternatives a Reality in North Carolina (MAR-NC)**

## *Year 1 Progress Report*

July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021

*Prepared by*

Linda Kendall Fields, MEd, Alison Climo, MSW, PhD,  
and Rebecca M. Collins, BA  
Center for Aging Research and Educational Services  
School of Social Work  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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# 1. Introduction

This report summarizes the first year (July 1, 2020—June 30, 2021) of *Rethinking Guardianship: Making Alternatives a Reality in North Carolina* (MAR-NC), a three-year project (2020-2023) funded by the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD). The purpose of this initiative is to increase the number of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in North Carolina who are aware of and make use of Supported Decision-Making (SDM) and other alternatives to guardianship. Many individuals in North Carolina fall under full guardianship without a thorough assessment of their abilities to make life decisions. Often, they do not fully understand their rights or that less restrictive alternatives are available.

The Rethinking Guardianship initiative began in 2015 through a contract with the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), which subcontracted with the Jordan Institute for Families at the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Social Work (now the Center for Aging and Adult Research & Educational Services or “Cares Program” for short). The initiative, using the Collective Impact model, convened a workgroup consisting of diverse stakeholders representing individuals under guardianship, family members, human service organizations, Disability Rights North Carolina (DRNC), the Carolina Institute on Developmental Disabilities (CIDD), and county court systems. Rethinking Guardianship is a collaborative effort between the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities and the UNC-CH School of Social Work’s Cares Program.

This phase of Rethinking Guardianship, “Making Alternatives to Guardianship a Reality in North Carolina,” builds upon prior phases of the initiative. It aims to ensure all stakeholders in the guardianship system are educated about guardianship, less restrictive alternatives to guardianship (especially SDM), and best practices so that individuals with I/DD can have more control over their daily lives. The initiative set out with the following objectives:

1. Expand and facilitate the Rethinking Guardianship Working Group and Steering Team to encompass and guide all aspects of the “Making Alternatives a Reality...” initiative throughout the three-year grant period.
2. Continue and further the Collective Impact model that supports the Rethinking Guardianship initiative.
3. Develop an online, interactive training on SDM and other less restrictive alternatives.
4. Promote the practice of using SDM agreements and other alternatives to guardianship among youth with I/DD transitioning to adulthood and individuals in long-term residential facilities transitioning back to the community.
5. Evaluate state interest and readiness for possible SDM legislation.

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*The purpose of this initiative is to increase the number of individuals with intellectual and other developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families in North Carolina who are aware of and make use of Supported Decision-Making (SDM) and other alternatives to guardianship.*

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## Year 1 Accomplishments

- Expanded the Steering Team and Statewide Workgroup to reflect more family members and individuals with I/DD; members of the Latinx community; and the following key partners: First in Families NC, The Arc of NC, and the NC Family Support Network, NC Department of Public Instruction, Disability Rights NC, Partnership to Address Adult Abuse, County Departments of Social Services, NC Guardianship Association, and the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities.
- Engaged national consultant, Jonathan Martinis.
- Revised Common Agenda to reflect the current grant's focus.
- Established buy-in to the "Why" of SDM.
- Established a baseline for a shared measurement on awareness and use of SDM through a state-wide survey with 293 responses.
- Updated Rethinking Guardianship brochure to include ABLE Accounts and a re-ordered list of options.
- Created an introductory video, "Exploring Alternatives to Guardianship in North Carolina" (available online at <https://rethinkingguardianshipnc.org/>).
- Developed the following 12 educational guides for individuals, families, and professionals about alternatives to guardianship:
  - Supported Decision-Making: Formal and Informal
  - Foster Care 18-21 / NC Links Independent Living Services
  - ABLE Account
  - Simple Financial Tools
  - Living Trust
  - Special Needs Trust
  - Representative Payee for Social Security Benefits
  - Fiduciary for Veteran's Benefits
  - Power of Attorney (Durable/General)
  - Health Care Power of Attorney
  - Advance Instruction for Mental Health Treatment
  - Living Will or Advance Directive
- Although not in the grant, but with permission from the DD Council, continued work with the Statutory Writing and Review Teams and worked with the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services to completely overhaul guardianship training for DSS and Corporate guardians across the state to emphasize choice, self-determination, and consideration of alternatives before guardianship.

## 2. MAR-NC Grant Objectives and Activities

- a) **Expand the Rethinking Guardianship Workgroup to encompass more in-depth education on Supported Decision-Making and other alternatives to guardianship aimed at two primary audiences: youth with I/DD transitioning into adulthood and adults transitioning to the community from long-term residential facilities.**

**NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS WITH I/DD AND FAMILY ADVOCATES INVOLVED PER QUARTER**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q 4
Workgroup – Individuals with I/DD	144	4	3	4
Workgroup – Family Advocates		5	10	11
Steering Team – Individuals with I/DD	24	1	3	3
Steering Team – Family Advocates		4	3	4
Statute Writing/Review Teams – Individuals w I/DD	18	1	1	1
Statute Writing/Review Teams – Family Advocates		2	2	1

MAR-NC expanded the Steering Team and Statewide Workgroup to reflect more family members and individuals with I/DD; members of the Latinx community; and the following key partners: First in Families NC, The Arc of NC, and the NC Family Support Network, NC Department of Public Instruction, Disability Rights NC, Partnership to Address Adult Abuse, County Departments of Social Services, NC Guardianship Association, and the NC Council on Developmental Disabilities.

- b) **Focus the work (agendas, events, committees, etc.) of both the Statewide Workgroup and the Steering Team on the goal of increasing awareness and use of Supported Decision-Making and other less restrictive alternatives to guardianship in North Carolina.**

The focus of the work for the Steering Team, Statewide Workgroup, and other committees is reflected in the desired outcomes, as follows:

Steering Team:

- July 14, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Receive overview and orientation to the MAR-NC grant; 2) Establish the Steering Team and suggest new members; 3) Review the Common Agenda to determine alignment with MAR-NC grant; 3) Become familiar with evaluation goals and strategies and initiate subgroups; 4) Meet our consultant, Jonathan Martinis, and discuss the “why” of supported decision-making; 5) Determine next steps for the initiative.
- August 11, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR grant work plan; 2) Touch base on statutory reform efforts; 3) Recruit self-advocates and representatives of the Hispanic/Latinx community; 4) Revisit the edited Common Agenda to determine alignment with MAR-NC grant; 5) Discuss shared measurement/evaluation questions; 4) Gain insight through Jonathan Martinis re: Virginia SDM grant; 6) Suggest preliminary agenda for September 23 Statewide Workgroup meeting.

- September 8, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR grant work plan; 2) Consider Elon intern activities for our initiative; 3) Touch base on GS 35A reform; 4) Discuss survey process and next steps re: shared measurement/evaluation; 4) Reflect on introduction to SDM module; 6) Plan agenda for September 23rd Statewide Workgroup meeting.
- October 13, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant; 2) Touch base on GS 35A reform; 3) Discuss survey responses and implications for educational development; 4) Reflect on introduction to SDM module and make recommendations for NC-specific information; 5) Decide on next steps following discussions.
- November 17, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant; 2) Conclude intern experience with the initiative 3) Reflect on introduction to SDM module and landing page; 4) Decide on next steps following discussions.
- December 8, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant and 35A Statute Writing; 2) Consider changes to SDM module draft and brochure 3) Set agenda for January 21 Statewide Workgroup Meeting; 4) Decide on next steps following discussions.
- February 9, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant and 35A Statute Writing; 2) Debrief from January 21 Statewide Workgroup Meeting and apply lessons learned; 3) Offer feedback on SDM 101 educational module draft; 4) Decide on next steps following discussions.
- March 9, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant and 35A Statute Writing; 2) Provide assistance & feedback on SDM 101 educational module drafts; 3) Offer preliminary ideas for next full statewide workgroup on April 22.
- April 13, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant and 35A Statute Writing; 2) Consider WINGs initiatives of interest to NC & upcoming 4th Guardianship Summit; 3) Experience new Alternatives/SDM educational module and video and provide feedback about what needs to be done at the April 22 Statewide Workgroup meeting.
- May 18, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track grant updates and 35A Statute Writing; 2) Discuss application of results from the 4th NGN Summit; 3) Provide feedback about the Rethinking Guardianship website, the educational pdfs, and how they are categorized; 4) Brainstorm use of the educational materials.
- June 15, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track grant updates and 35A statute progress; 2) Review DRAFT Pre-Service for DAAS/DSS training; 3) Develop preliminary agenda for July 28 Statewide Workgroup meeting.

#### Statewide Workgroup

- September 23, 2020; Desired Outcomes: 1) Review & track progress on the MAR-NC grant; 2) Understand recommendations for statutory changes from the writing and review teams; 3) Create awareness of SDM Survey and take final steps to disseminate across the state; 4) Take time for health and wellness; 5) Gain greater understanding of SDM and apply knowledge to older adults and adults with disabilities living in North Carolina; 6) Summarize next steps and adjourn until Thursday, January 21, 2021.
- January 21, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Increase awareness of goals & activities within the present MAR-NC grant; 2) Track progress on statutory changes from the writing and review

teams; 3) Consider SDM best practices developed in Missouri; 4) Evaluate the continued impact and challenges faced by WINGs groups (including NC’s Rethinking Guardianship) across the country; 6) Summarize next steps and adjourn until Thursday, April 22, 2021.

- April 22, 2021; Desired Outcomes: 1) Track progress on the MAR-NC grant and 35A Statute Writing; 2) Consider WINGs initiatives of interest to NC; 3) Experience new Alternatives/SDM educational module and video and provide feedback.

The Statute Writing Team met 25 times this year to painstakingly review, rewrite, and edit major portions of the General Statute 35A so that it is consistent with the goal of this grant to further the use of SDM practices throughout North Carolina.

The Team then began a series of sessions in late June 2021 with leaders from the North Carolina Bar Association’s Elder Law and Special Needs Section and Estate Planning & Fiduciary Law Section. Significant progress is being made to move towards legislation (in 2023) that will increase individual rights and mandate the courts’ use or consideration of SDM and other alternatives before appointing a guardian(s).

Finally, a new Outreach Planning Team was established and met once, on June 8, 2021, to develop a stated goal, four distinct strategies, and plans for next steps.

**c) Ensure that the goals, objectives and activities of “Making Alternatives to Guardianship a Reality in North Carolina” align with Rethinking Guardianship’s existing core concepts, basic principles, and common agenda.**

At the beginning of this year, the Steering Team revised and updated Rethinking Guardianship’s Common Agenda to reflect the goals, objectives, and activities of MAR-NC. The updated Common Agenda is as follows:

*Rethinking Guardianship is...*

1. *Promoting less restrictive alternatives to guardianship*
2. *Creating long-term changes in the state’s guardianship system*

*Core Concepts and Basic Principles*

- *Autonomy, Liberty, Freedom, Dignity*
- *Presumption of competence*
- *Right to life-time decision-making support*

*The System-as-it-Should-be would:*

1. *Always use least restrictive options and be based on best practices*
2. *Offer easily available and accessible information about options and alternatives to guardianship that is communicated to and understood by stakeholders*
3. *Rest on a process in which all stakeholders are identified and engaged*

In addition, all meeting agendas and notes reflect the use of Collective Impact.

**d) Establish a baseline “shared measurement” with partner organizations – The Arc of NC, First in Families, and Family Support Network – regarding awareness and use of Supported Decision-Making and other alternatives.**

The Steering Team created and distributed an electronic survey about awareness and use of SDM. The survey was available August 25 through October 2, 2020, and was distributed through the following networks:

- Cardinal Innovations LME/MCO
- Parents of a local high school that specializes in students with IDD
- Parent resource LiveBinder
- EC Division Parent Newsletter
- Family Support Network affiliates
- Individual self-advocates
- NCCDD members, particularly the Community Living Committee members
- Participants in FIRST’s Natural Support Network Development initiative
- Supported Living Action Team members
- Raleigh Mayor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities members
- Personal Facebook pages
- Local Arc Chapters and their families and providers
- Regional Guardianship Specialists/Supervisors
- Friends, co-workers, and associates
- Parent support group
- Church committee
- DSS Adult Services supervisors
- Guardianship corporations that contract with the Division of Aging and Adult Services

In all, 293 individuals completed the survey. Of this sample, 169 (58%) were self-advocates, family members, or friends who assist an individual with decision-making; the majority were parents. Fifty-seven (19%) were professionals who assist others with decision-making (e.g., teacher, provider/agency representative, attorney, disinterested public agent, guardian, DSS social worker, group home manager). Sixty-seven (23%) were either not involved with decision-making or otherwise left the answer blank.

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS' FAMILIARITY WITH AND USE OF SDM**

	Self-advocates, family, friends		Professionals	
	<u>Familiar With</u>	<u>Currently Use</u>	<u>Familiar With</u>	<u>Currently Use</u>
<b>Supported decision-making (in general)</b>	40%	n/a	81%	n/a
a. Family, friends, and community support services	42%	55%	52%	69%
b. Supported decision-making agreement	26%	15%	32%	26%
NC Foster Care 18-21	6%	<1%	26%	29%
Joint bank account	58%	32%	70%	26%
Living trust	33%	5%	32%	5%
Special needs trust	40%	25%	40%	29%
g. Representative payee for social security benefits	55%	38%	89%	79%
h. Fiduciary for veteran's benefits	4%	1%	35%	22%
i. Power of attorney (durable/ general)	60%	19%	82%	38%
j. Health care power of attorney	62%	23%	84%	45%
k. Advance instruction for mental health	21%	4%	47%	9%
l. Living will or advance directive	59%	12%	74%	34%
ABLE account	33%	17%	23%	16%

The survey results suggested that professionals are more familiar with supported decision-making in general, and in many cases, with specific options as well. In addition, while self-advocates, family, friends, and professionals might be aware of an option, they may not be using it currently.

The survey was subsequently revised in order to make analysis more straightforward and to eliminate unnecessary data, and it was translated into Spanish for use in Year 2.

**e) Convene the Rethinking Guardianship Steering Team and the Rethinking Guardianship Statewide Working Group regularly to engage in mutually reinforcing activities and continuous communication.**

An excellent example of mutually reinforcing activities and continuous communication emerged when Steering Team member Beverly Colwell of the NC Department of Public Instruction's Exceptional Children's Program contacted Cares Coordinator, Linda Kendall Fields, regarding language in a LEA (Local Education Agency) brochure to families. The language clearly urged families to seek guardianship for youth transitioning into adulthood. With the help of consultant Jonathan Martinis, Linda was able to share language to place in the brochure which would widen the lens of Supported Decision-Making possibilities for families.

The Steering Team met 11 times on the following dates: 7/14/20, 8/11/20, 9/9/20, 10/13/20, 11/17/20, 12/08/20, 2/09/21, 3/09/21, 4/13/21, 5/18/21, and 6/15/21.

The Statewide Workgroup met three times on the following dates: 9/23/20, 1/21/21, and 4/22/21.



The Statute Writing Team met 25 times on the following dates: 7/7/20, 7/15/20, 7/30/20, 8/18/20/, 9/2/20, 9/30/20, 10/1/20, 10/27/20, 11/3/20, 11/17/20, 12/3/20, 12/7/20, 1/7/21, 1/12/21, 2/4/21, 2/18/21, 2/22/21, 3/5/21, 3/17/21, 3/23/21, 4/7/21, 4/27/21, 5/6/21, 5/26/21, and 6/24/21.

The Outreach Planning Team met once, on 6/08/21.

**f) Provide backbone support to Rethinking Guardianship initiative, including but not limited to meeting planning, logistics, facilitation, agendas, and notes; staffing for research, program development, policy analysis, evaluation, report writing, and engaging expert consultation.**

The UNC Cares Team, with support from two Elon University interns managed meeting planning, logistics, facilitation, agendas, and notes. Cares Coordinator Linda Kendall Fields consulted with 19 individuals and families who had guardianship concerns and questions after visiting the Rethinking Guardianship website; she also spoke with 16 professional groups that often included families of individuals with I/DD. Finally, the Team maintained ongoing engagement with consultant Jonathan Martinis.

**g) Identify 5-7 specific alternatives to guardianship to include in the suite of trainings along with Supported Decision-Making.**

The Steering Team decided to begin with training material for those options that the most people would be able to make use of. The first of these was "Supported Decision-Making: Formal and Informal."

In addition, the Steering Team designed a landing page for a new, updated website. The page features an introductory video, "Exploring Alternatives to Guardianship in North Carolina," followed by links to educational resources for each of 12 options, including "Supported Decision-Making: Formal and Informal."

**h) Conduct an audit of existing trainings and best practices and evaluate them for use and adaptation.**

Jonathan Martinis, Consultant, Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse University, is the leading expert across the United States on supported decision-making and, as such, has access to existing trainings and best practices across the country. Jonathan provided the Steering Team with several trainings as examples of what he particularly recommended. The Steering Team evaluated the examples and determined what to adopt, transform, add, etc. to tailor an "SDM 101" training for North Carolina. The result was an introductory video titled "Exploring Alternatives to Guardianship in North Carolina."

In addition to work on the MAR-NC materials, Linda KF audited the existing Division of Aging and Adult Services guardianship training (4 days total) for all public guardians (DSS and corporations) serving 100 counties across the state. Work is underway to rework the entire curriculum, beginning with the learning objectives and course layout, to reflect new emphasis on choice, self-determination, supported decision-making (as well as other alternatives) and, as a last resort, the practice of guardianship (substitute decision-making).

**i) Develop 6-8 online, interactive trainings.**

The UNC Cares team created an introductory video titled "Exploring Alternatives to Guardianship in North Carolina" featuring narration by Jonathan Martinis and video of Janie and Suvya, two self-advocates engaged in SDM.

UNC Cares intern Rebecca Collins researched, designed, and produced the following 12 educational modules for individuals, families, and professionals about alternatives to guardianship:

- Supported Decision-Making: Formal and Informal
- Foster Care 18-21 / NC Links Independent Living Services
- ABLE Account
- Simple Financial Tools
- Living Trust
- Special Needs Trust
- Representative Payee for Social Security Benefits
- Fiduciary for Veteran's Benefits
- Power of Attorney (Durable/General)
- Health Care Power of Attorney
- Advance Instruction for Mental Health Treatment
- Living Will or Advance Directive

Each of these modules is being checked for readability for low-vision readers, and plain language for all readers. In addition, all modules will be made available in Spanish during Year 2.

**j) As trainings are developed, pilot their use with various stakeholders for feedback on accessibility and quality, and adjust accordingly.**

As each module was completed (including the introductory video), they were shared with Steering Team members, and through the DD Council, with individuals with low vision and with I/DD for readability. Many were reviewed by professionals with content area expertise, and by self-advocates. These reviews often resulted in improvements to the modules.

**k) As trainings are completed, make them available via the Rethinking Guardianship website.**

The introductory video and all 12 educational modules are completed (in English) and available on the Rethinking Guardianship website (<https://rethinkingguardianshipnc.org/>). As Spanish versions become available during Year 2, they will be added to the website.

**l) Influence policy and communication from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) related to youth with I/DD transitioning into adulthood so that children and families understand the range of options available to them well before, and then upon nearing the age of 18.**

National consultant, Jonathan Martinis, at the request of the Steering Team, provided “best practice” training materials to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) re: Supported Decision-Making, aimed at North Carolina Exceptional Children’s teachers.

Steering Team member Beverly Colwell, who works for DPI, was approached by a NC school district for input on a brochure they were working on. The content was a good example of the “school to guardianship pipeline” language. With guidance from Rethinking Guardianship, Beverly proposed alternative language. We plan to follow up on this by reaching out to the 150 LEAs and 200+ charter schools as part of this project.

Beverly has extended an invitation to MAR-NC to present at the statewide Exceptional Children’s Conference in Greensboro, NC on November 18-19, 2021. Jonathan Martinis & Linda Kendall Fields will provide a session during the conference on SDM and other alternatives and the importance of offering choice and options to families and youth transitioning into adulthood.

**m) Educate individuals and their families and guardians on transitioning back to the community from long-term residential facilities to build capacity for decision-making within and outside of guardianship.**

MAR-NC has made inroads with transition programs, Transitions to Community Living Initiatives (TCLI) and Money Follows the Person (MFP) through the creation of an Informed Decision-Making Tool, which was completed at the beginning of Year 1, in July 2020 and edited several times during the year. Furthermore, facilitator Linda Kendall Fields and consultant Jonathan Martinis presented to the Olmstead Planning Advisory Group in October 2020 about how SDM both inside and outside of a guardianship arrangement can further the goals of supporting individuals to choose whether they wish to transition out of licensed residential facilities in order to live in their own homes in the community.

Throughout Year 1, Linda Kendall Fields was active with the Olmstead Advisory Council and presented on guardianship and SDM/alternatives to the Olmstead Subgroup on Older Adults on January 8, 2021. In addition, she continues to share the Informed Decision-Making (IDM) tool developed for the Transitions to Community Living Initiative with professional and family groups. The IDM tool illustrates the connection between Olmstead and SDM and how guardians can be challenged to empower adults subject to guardianship in exploring and having a say in choosing where they want to live. The IDM tool was slightly modified during this period per the request of DHHS. In addition, Linda Kendall Fields presented to the Vaya Olmstead Committee on MAR-NC and did some problem-solving with them about situations that could warrant the use of an alternative to guardianship.

**n) Train the 12 Family Support Network affiliates across the state so they can be conduits to training within their own local networks.**

The Outreach Planning Team includes Steering Team member Tamara Norris, who works with the Family Support Network. As part of outreach planning, each team member is identifying specific takeaways for

each target audience. Tamara is assisting in developing targeted trainings for the 12 Family Support Network affiliates as part of this project.

**o) Train Transition Coordinators and other human service providers associated with Supported Living, MFP, and TCLI.**

During Year 1, Linda Kendall Fields presented to the NC Department of Social Services Directors on October 7, 2020; the Buncombe Aging Services Alliance on October 21, 2020; and the Brain Injury Association of NC (BIANC) on November 7, 2020. BIANC is made of up professionals, individuals, and families. Other groups included a Johnston County Family Group; the Family Support Network of the Greater Triangle; the Carolina Institute on Developmental Disabilities Community Talk series; Alliance Health LME/MCO; a podcast with Donald Bailey and Jonathan Martinis; Eastpointe LME/MCO; UNC-CH Disability Policy Class; and Partners Behavioral Health LME/MCO.

Throughout this initiative, Linda Kendall Fields has been involved in the state's Olmstead Planning efforts, bringing forth the issues of guardianship improvements, SDM, and other alternatives to guardianship. She participated in the May 12, 2021 meeting with national Olmstead Planning consultants TAC, who met with a wide range of professional stakeholders to go over assessment of services and supports for individuals with disabilities in North Carolina. She was also involved in a follow-up meeting on May 25, 2021 to provide input regarding an "Assessment of Services and Supports for Individuals with Disabilities in NC," developed by the Technical Assistance Collaborative (TAC). Finally, the Informed Decision-Making Form, created during an earlier grant to assist individuals (and importantly, their guardians), living in adult care homes and psychiatric treatment centers to consider transitioning to the community, continues to be adapted and modified and is currently broadening its reach to other groups, including individuals with IDD.

**p) Implement SDM with individuals and families in partnership with First in Families, The Arc of North Carolina, DPI, Family Support Network affiliates, MFP, and other community partners.**

The Outreach Planning Team was established at the end of Year 1 and is developing strategies and a plan to promote the website and other Rethinking Guardianship materials. This team includes the following Steering Team members: Jean Farmer Butterfield, retired executive director of the Arc of NC; Beverly Colwell, Consultant for Intellectual Disabilities and Secondary Education at North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; Cheryl Walfall-Flagg, Parent Advocated with many affiliations, including Family Support Network and NC ABLE Advocates Network; and UNC Cares team members Tamara Norris, who works with the Family Support Network, Rebecca Collins, and Alison Climo.

Meanwhile, several family groups requested presentations on guardianship and SDM. In addition to meetings mentioned earlier, Linda Kendall Fields presented to the Johnston County Family Education & Support Group on December 14, 2020, the Family Support Network of the Greater Triangle on December 17, 2020; and to the CIDD Community Talk Series and other LME/MCO groups mentioned previously in this report who also invited families to educational offerings.

First in Families of NC has been especially active in implementing SDM with individuals and families. Through contacts made by First in Families' Scott Secor, two individuals with IDD were willing to share their stories of self-determination and SDM through a video taken by Elon intern, Rebecca Collins. This

video is now available on the Rethinking Guardianship website and offers a way that individuals and families can begin to imagine and plan for SDM in their own lives.

**q) Explore SDM legislation passed in other states and applicable to NC.**

During Year 1, the Steering Team learned of other state SDM legislation through national consultant Jonathan Martinis and through ongoing participation in national WINGS calls.

In addition, in May 2021 four members of the Rethinking Guardianship workgroup were involved in the 4th National Guardianship Network Summit sponsored by the American Bar Association, Syracuse University College of Law, and others. At this event, Linda Kendall Fields facilitated the national working group on Supported Decision-Making. The recommendations written and adopted by the summit's 72 delegates will affect both state and national policy over the next ten years. The summit resulted in the release of 22 national policy and practice recommendations, including four about SDM which will inform MAR-NC as it strengthens the "reach" of SDM materials and moves towards passage of North Carolina's General Statute 35A reform and consideration of additional SDM legislation in the state. The full report from the summit can be found at

[http://law.syr.edu/uploads/docs/academics/Fourth\\_National\\_Guardianship\\_Summit\\_-\\_Adopted\\_Recommendations\\_%28May\\_2021%29.pdf](http://law.syr.edu/uploads/docs/academics/Fourth_National_Guardianship_Summit_-_Adopted_Recommendations_%28May_2021%29.pdf)

**r) Engage stakeholders in assessment of interest, feasibility, readiness, etc.**

Not applicable in Year 1.

### **3. Conclusions and Next Steps**

The first year of "Rethinking Guardianship: Making Alternatives to Guardianship a Reality in North Carolina" has been one of great productivity, high stakeholder involvement, and continued momentum towards increasing the knowledge and use of Supported Decision-Making and other less restrictive options to guardianship throughout the state.

With the ongoing support of the North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities, the MAR-NC initiative will capitalize on the relationships and educational materials developed in Year 1 to bring the maximum impact of this Collective Impact effort to bear in the lives of individuals with IDD and their families during the next two years.

Specifically, with high quality materials available on the completely remodeled Rethinking Guardianship website (<https://rethinkingguardianshipnc.org/>); heightened access to information through implementation of a carefully designed Outreach Plan; and continued work on legislation, policy, and practice, MAR-NC is well positioned to make significant impact towards greater choice and self-determination for those at risk of guardianship in North Carolina.