



# **Annual Report 2025**

## **Governor's Council on Disability**



**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL  
ON DISABILITY**



Mike Kehoe  
Governor

Ronald Hack  
Council Chair

Claudia Browner  
Executive Director

December 16, 2025

To the Honorable Governor of Missouri, Members of the Missouri General Assembly, Commissioner of the Office of Administration, and Citizens of Missouri,

On behalf of the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD), a division within the Office of Administration, I am pleased to present the 2025 Annual Report. This report highlights the GCD's ongoing efforts, accomplishments, and continued commitment to fostering full participation, access, and opportunity for Missourians with disabilities across all areas of community living.

As an advisory council to state leadership, the GCD serves as a vital resource for citizens, state agencies, businesses, and organizations. Our work is dedicated to advancing understanding of the rights and responsibilities established under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related state and federal legislation. Through education, outreach, and collaboration, the GCD strives to promote equitable opportunities and inclusive practices throughout Missouri.

A key responsibility of the GCD is the management of the State of Missouri's Disability Portal, which offers a comprehensive collection of disability-related resources, tools, and guidance for individuals with disabilities, families, employers, and service providers. In addition, the GCD provides educational training programs focused on disability awareness, accessibility, and compliance, helping organizations and communities better serve all Missourians.

Employment remains a central focus of our work. The GCD actively engages in supporting and advancing Missouri's Model Employer Initiative, promoting state government as a leader in the employment of individuals with disabilities. By partnering with state agencies and community stakeholders, we continue to promote inclusive hiring and employment practices and economic opportunity statewide.

The GCD also plays an important role in civic engagement by informing citizens about the legislative process in Missouri and offering educational programs that encourage and empower individuals with disabilities to participate in legislative and policy-making efforts. These initiatives help ensure that the voices of Missourians with disabilities are heard and represented in decisions that impact their lives.

Additionally, the GCD's Missouri Youth Leadership Forum program supports high school students with disabilities by equipping them with essential learning and leadership skills. This program is designed to promote successful transitions from high school to postsecondary education, vocational training, or employment, fostering independence and long-term success.

We appreciate the continued support of state leadership and the citizens of Missouri as we work to advance access and opportunity for all.

For questions or additional information regarding this report, please contact the GCD at 573.751.2600 or visit [disability.mo.gov/gcd](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd)

Respectfully,

Ronald Hack  
Council Chair

Claudia Browner  
Executive Director

## Office of Administration

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Claudia Browner – Executive Director

Reece Ellis – Senior Program Specialist

Laura Mueth – Senior Program Specialist

Jennifer Pettit – Administrative Support Professional

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# History

The Governor’s Council on Disability has its origins in the World War II era. In 1947, President Harry S. Truman issued an Executive Order that led to the creation of the President’s Committee on Employment of the Handicapped. This Committee was designed to help WWII veterans with disabilities reintegrate into the civilian job market. By 1949, Missouri formed its own Governor’s Committee to address work-related challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. In 1977, the Governor’s Committee was officially designated as a state agency, and in 1994, it underwent a name change and a statute update to expand its mission beyond just employment. This transformation allowed the Governor’s Council on Disability to represent over one million Missourians with disabilities across various aspects of life, including state government.

# Mission

To provide leadership and support so people with disabilities achieve inclusion and independence.

# Vision

The Missouri Governor’s Council on Disability will be recognized statewide as the primary organization providing leadership to improve the lives of Missouri citizens with disabilities.

# Goals

The Governor’s Council on Disability’s Strategic and Operational Plan was updated and approved for 2023 - 2027 on November 18, 2022. The Goals are:

- Goal I: Advise all state agencies and non-governmental organizations to advocate for policies and practices that impact Missouri citizens with disabilities.
- Goal II: Encourage system changes and public policies that eliminate barriers and support the wellbeing and independence of individuals with disabilities.
- Goal III: Expand opportunities for independence for people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives.
- Goal IV: Gather input from the public on disability related issues and report the results of this information.
- Goal V: Develop, explore, and implement strategies to increase resources for the operating efficiency of the Council.

For the complete Strategic Plan, please visit our website at [disability.mo.gov/gcd](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd)



## Council Membership

- 20 members and a chairperson comprise the Council.
- Council members are appointed by the Governor.
- The appointment of the chairperson requires the advice and consent of the Missouri Senate.
- Members represent each of the eight U.S. Congressional Districts.
- The majority of members are individuals with disabilities or represent the disability community.
- The Governor's Council on Disability is comprised of the following committees: Executive, Advocacy, and Programs.
- The Council conducts quarterly meetings.
- Currently, there are six Council member positions vacant.



**Ronald Hack**  
**Council Chair**  
Sunset Hills  
Appointed: 6/28/22  
Confirmed: 3/8/23



**Steve Ahrens**  
Member 1  
Jefferson City  
Appointed: 6/5/24



**Charles Comstock II**  
6th Congressional District  
Kirkville  
First Appointed: 7/29/10



**Wayne Crawford**  
Member 3  
Marshall  
First Appointed: 3/15/21



**Betty Davidson**  
Member 5  
St. Louis  
First Appointed: 11/16/09



**Aaron Durso**  
Member 9  
Taneyville  
First Appointed: 6/27/25



**Stacey Elster**  
Member 7  
Wildwood  
First Appointed: 3/15/24



**Katie Jones**  
Member 4  
St. Peters  
First Appointed: 10/27/17



**Elijah Mayfield**  
Member 11  
Jefferson City  
First Appointed: 3/14/18



**Jennifer Meyer**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District  
O'Fallon  
First Appointed: 6/27/25



**Susan Orton**  
Member 8  
Creve Coeur  
First Appointed: 7/19/05



**Andrew Sartorius**  
3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District  
Jefferson City  
First Appointed: 7/9/19



**Jason Schott**  
Member 6  
Ste. Genevieve  
First Appointed: 6/5/24

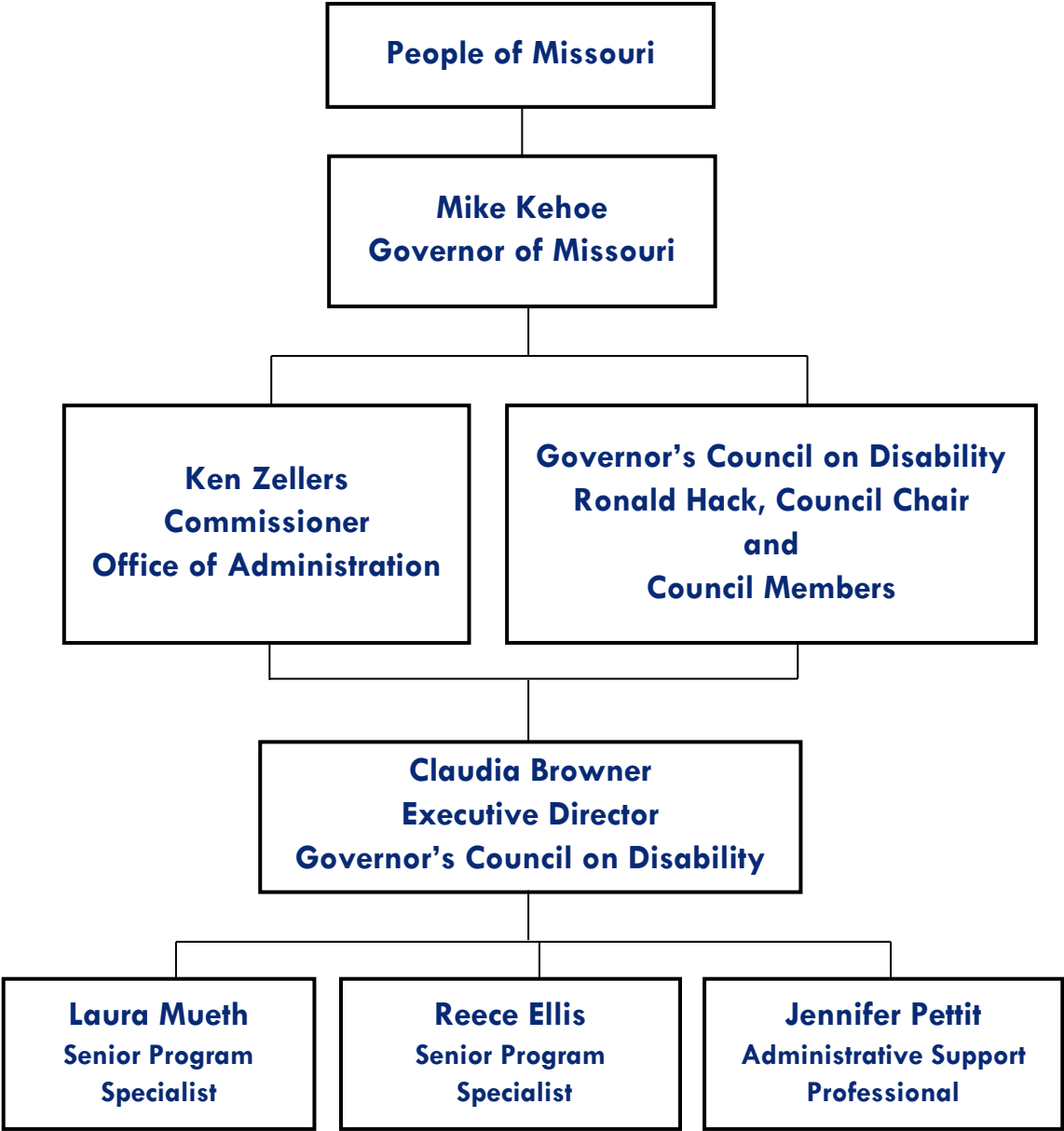


**Lesia Shelton**  
4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District  
Buffalo  
First Appointed: 7/9/19



**Robert Wallace**  
Member 2  
St. Louis  
First Appointed: 5/10/10

# Organizational Structure





# Council Events 2025

## Council Membership

- Council member resignations – Rosemary Hendon (2/1/25), Chip Hailey (4/9/25), Kim Lackey (8/10/25)
- New Council member appointments – Aaron Durso and Jennifer Meyer (6/27/25)

## Programs and Initiatives

- GCD is collaborating with Office of Administration (IT and Facilities Departments) to bring Wayfinding Technology for individuals with disabilities to the Missouri State Capitol, with a goal of implementation before the end of 2026
- GCD participated in Model Employer initiative committees to improve employment outcomes for Missourians with disabilities and facilitated quarterly meetings of the state government ADA Coordinator Network
- GCD collaborated with other disability agencies and organizations on planning and facilitating Disability Rights Legislative Day
- GCD developed and maintained partnerships among the state departments and state department liaisons participate in the quarterly Council meetings and provide input from their departments
- GCD staff provided educational presentations to organizations, agencies, and employers throughout Missouri on a variety of disability-related topics such as employment of people with disabilities, disability awareness, accessibility, service animals and the GCD youth program
- GCD staff served on state agency teams, committees and boards to exchange information and collaborate with disability-related organizations
- GCD collaborated with the Office of Equal Opportunities on awareness activities and event planning to celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), Black History Month, and Veterans Day
- GCD staff participated in the National Association of Youth Leadership Forums (AYLF)
- GCD Executive Director participated in the National Association of Governor's Councils
- GCD published the GCD Newsletter covering disability-related topics and agency updates
- GCD continued its annual programs:
  - GCD Awards Programs – Inclusion Award and Youth Leadership Award
  - GCD Poster Contest and NDEAM celebration recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month
  - GCD Youth Program – Missouri Youth Leadership Forum
  - Legislative Programs
    - Legislative Education Project (LEP)
    - Legislative Priorities Poll
    - Legislative Update
    - Disability Rights Legislative Day

# Finances

The Governor’s Council on Disability’s programs and services are funded from General Revenue, with the exception of the youth transition program. This funding covers personnel costs and expenses for most Council activities.

The Fiscal Year 2026 (July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026) budget is listed below:

Personnel (4 FTE):	\$239,220.00
Operating Expenses:	<u>\$ 25,350.00</u>
Total:	\$264,570.00

At the time of publication, the Council has spent/encumbered \$9,246 in operating expenses, or 36% of the FY26 budget. Expenses include supplies, postage, telecommunications, Council meeting expenses, travel, professional development, disability accommodations, and expenses for GCD programs.

The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) program is **not** funded from General Revenue funds. This program is funded through a combination of sponsorships and donations. Paraquad, Inc., a Center for Independent Living in St. Louis, serves as the 501(c)3 fiscal agent for the program.

The following is a summary of the **2025 MO-YLF** budget and program expenditures.

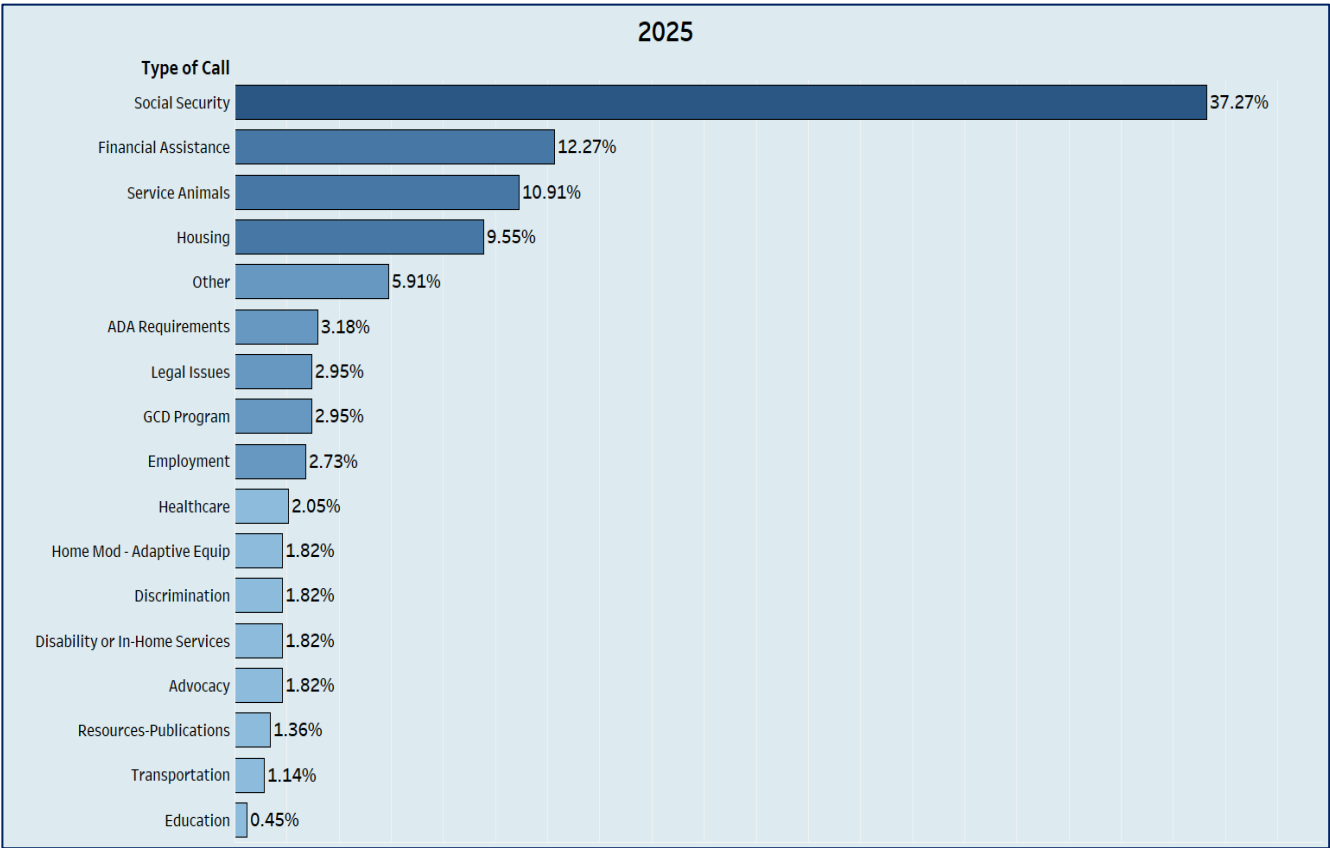
Beginning balance in <b>MO-YLF</b> account on January 1, 2025:	\$121,775.54
Donations/sponsorships/deposits received in 2025:	\$ 71,450.00
MO-YLF Expenditures	<u>\$ (73,885.46)</u>
Balance in MO-YLF account (November 30, 2025)	\$119,340.08

# Programs and Initiatives

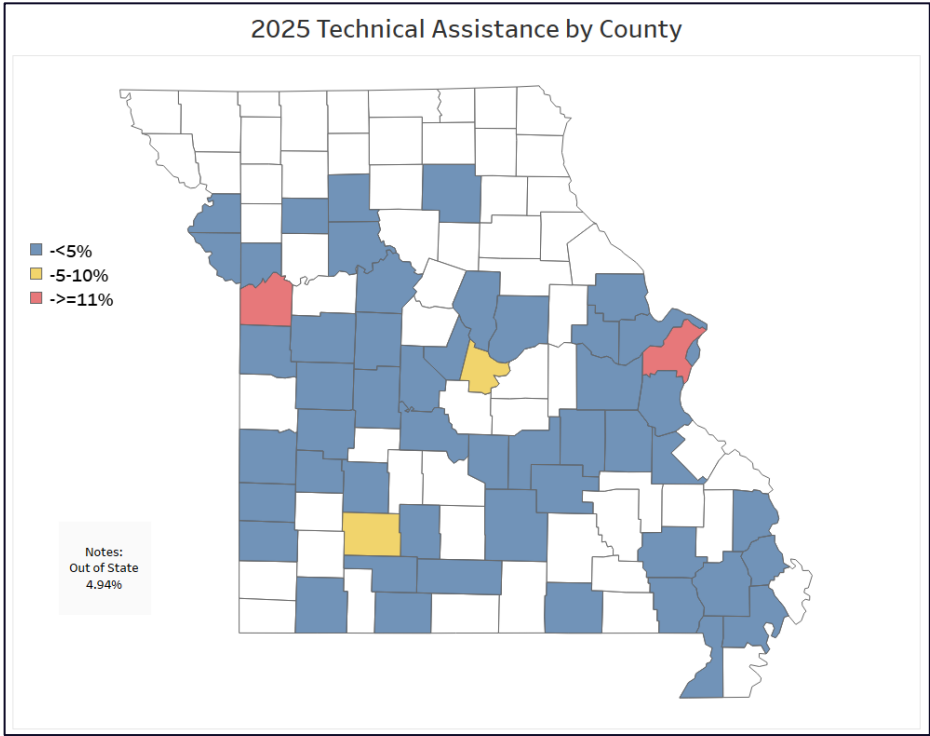
## Technical Assistance

The Governor’s Council on Disability (GCD) provides disability-related technical assistance to individuals, businesses, governmental and agency representatives in Missouri, and other states. The GCD provided critical guidance and connected people to trusted state and federal partners, community-based independent living centers, nonprofit organizations, and, when appropriate, for-profit service providers. The GCD continued to collaborate closely with state agencies, legislators, and the Governor’s Office on constituent matters to resolve complex concerns and deliver meaningful solutions.

The highest demand for technical assistance centered on Social Security benefits and financial assistance, service and emotional support animals, housing resources, and ADA compliance – reflecting the essential role our agency plays in helping individuals navigate the systems that support independent living.



Overall, the GCD assisted 419 different individuals with their phone inquiries and responded to 595 email inquiries and requests.



The counties displayed on the map include:

**Group 1 (<5% of inquiries):**

Barry, Barton, Benton, Boone, Buchanan, Butler, Caldwell, Callaway, Camden, Cape Girardeau, Carroll, Cass, Cedar, Christian, Clay, Crawford, Dent, Douglas, Dunklin, Franklin, Henry, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lincoln, Livingston, Macon, Moniteau, Morgan, New Madrid, Oregon, Pettis, Phelps, Platte, Polk, Pulaski, Saline, Scott, St. Charles, St. Clair, St. Francois, St. Louis City, Stoddard, Taney, Texas, Vernon, Warren, Washington, Wayne, Webster

**Group II 5-10% of inquiries):**

Cole, Greene

**Group III (>10% of inquiries):**

Jackson (20%), St. Louis County (20%)

Total number of counties listed: 53 of 114 Missouri counties, plus the city of St. Louis. Out of state calls accounted for 4.94% of the technical assistance inquiries.

## Publications / Resources

### Disability Web Portal and Directory of Resources for Missourians with Disabilities

The Governor's Council on Disability publishes a variety of educational videos, resources, and information on the [Disability Web Portal](#), including the *Resource Directory for Missourians with Disabilities*. The online Directory allows each user to search for disability-related resources by category or location.

### Legislative Update

During the legislative session, a weekly [Legislative Update](#) is distributed to keep individuals up to date on legislation that potentially affects individuals with disabilities. Over 1,240 individuals subscribed to the publication.

### GCD Newsletter

The GCD publishes six issues of the GCD Newsletter per year about disability-related topics and GCD activities. The newsletter is sent out by e-mail and posted on the website and social media. The newsletters can be found online at [disability.mo.gov/gcd/newsletters.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/newsletters.htm)

### Accessible Parking PSA

The Governor's Council on Disability provides a public service announcement video to educate about the importance of accessible parking spaces for individuals with disabilities, and to remind people to keep access aisles open for those who need them to transfer in and out of the vehicles. The PSA is available at [disability.mo.gov/transportation.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/transportation.htm) or [youtu.be/4OpEtjbNhgA](https://youtu.be/4OpEtjbNhgA)

### Accessibility Guide: A toolkit for accessible communications in the workplace

The Accessibility Guides and coordinating learning paths for state team members and public use provide information and training resources on making events and communications accessible, available at [disability.mo.gov/AT.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/AT.htm)

### Capitol Access Guide

The Governor's Council on Disability collaborates with the Missouri Assistive Technology Council to provide an online publication with information about accessibility and accommodations at the Missouri State Capitol. The guide is available at [at.mo.gov/capitol-access-guide/](https://at.mo.gov/capitol-access-guide/)

### Other Publications

The Governor's Council on Disability also disseminated a variety of program information and publications, including *"This is Not a Ticket"* which provides educational information about accessible parking, and brochures and flyers relating to service animals, emotional support animals, and assistance animals.

## Awards Programs

The Governor's Council on Disability annually recognizes individuals or organizations who promote and demonstrate leadership in inclusion of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of community living. Recognizing best practices in Inclusion and outstanding efforts in Youth Leadership increases awareness about the importance of inclusion in all aspects of community living and awards accomplishments in advocacy efforts for the disability community. The Council selects the winners of the awards, who are nominated by individuals or organizations in their communities.

### Inclusion Award

The Inclusion Award recognizes individuals, businesses, agencies, or organizations that have implemented innovative measures to incorporate people with disabilities into their programs, activities, and operations.

#### 33rd Annual Inclusion Award winner for 2024: True Manufacturing, O'Fallon

*Photo: True Manufacturing team members*



True Manufacturing showcases leadership in disability inclusion through its collaboration with the BCI Skills Center. Over five years, the company has created a job training program for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, hiring 51 graduates with a 76% retention rate. Their inclusive hiring practices have strengthened their workforce and earned the 2024 Talent Pipeline Project of the Year award, showcasing the impact of equal opportunities in employment.

#### Inclusion Award – Honorable Mention: Kit Brewer, St. Louis

*Photo: Kit Brewer*



For over 25 years, Kit Brewer has championed disability employment as the Executive Director of Project CU, Inc., creating inclusive job opportunities for individuals with various disabilities. Project CU serves over 100 individuals by integrating employment services, accommodations, and advocacy for lasting success. His mentorship empowers employees, strengthens Missouri's workforce and establishes standards for disability employment.

For additional information about the annual Inclusion Awards, please visit the website at [disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclusionawards](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclusionawards)



## Youth Leadership Award

The Youth Leadership Award recognizes emerging leaders in the disability community (ages 16-26) that demonstrate leadership by engaging in activities that have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities in their communities.

### 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Leadership Award winner for 2024: Arabel StandingBear, Neosho

*Photo: Arabel StandingBear*



Arabel StandingBear is a passionate advocate for individuals with disabilities and rare diseases, motivated by her own experience. She engages in advocacy at local, state, and national levels, collaborating with legislators on initiatives like a childcare bill for families with disabilities. Her notable achievements include acting in "Killers of the Flower Moon," working with the Osage Nation Tribe, and contributing to a viral blood donation campaign. Arabel's leadership and advocacy embody the spirit of the Youth Leadership Award.

### Youth Leadership Award - Honorable Mention: Lucas Fritsche, Perryville

*Photo: Lucas Fritsche*



Lucas Fritsche has significantly impacted his community through his commitment to inclusion and accessibility. His journey began when he noticed a friend being unable to enjoy recess due to an inaccessible playground. This prompted him to advocate for an inclusive playground, leading to the Lucas and Friends Backyard Adventure project, which opened in 2021. Lucas's efforts have transformed his community and exemplify how young voices can drive meaningful change.

More information about the annual Youth Leadership Award can be found online at [disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipawards](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipawards)

The awards were presented to the winners at the Missouri Rehabilitation Association (MRA) Conference in Lake Ozark on May 29, 2025.

Nominations for the 2025 Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards may be submitted online until **January 31, 2026**.

# Legislative Programs

## Legislative Education Project

The purpose of the Legislative Education Project (LEP) is to educate people about the Missouri legislative process and empower individuals by providing opportunities to become actively involved in public policies that impact people with disabilities.

The LEP is sponsored annually during the legislative session and includes online learning tools as well as educational webinars for individuals and organizations.

The online training modules and videos teach individuals about *How a Bill Becomes a Law*, the *Elected Officials and General Assembly*, and *How to Navigate the House and Senate Websites*. The videos educate about *Accessible Voting*, *Attending a Senate Hearing and Providing Testimony*, and *Building an Effective Relationship with Legislators*.

The online learning modules and videos had 2,980 views, and 95 individuals participated in four LEP webinars during the legislative session to learn about the legislative process, how to get involved in advocacy, and hear about pending legislation that would affect the disability community.

## Legislative Priorities Poll

Each year the Governor's Council on Disability distributes a Legislative Priorities Poll to determine the issues that are important to Missourians with disabilities and those who work and live with them. The poll is sent out to agencies and individuals. This year, 346 individuals from 59 counties in Missouri participated in the poll. Based on the results, the legislative priorities the Governor's Council on Disability will be following during the 2026 legislative session are:

1. The State of Missouri updating websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties
2. The Personal Care Attendant/Aide/Direct Support Professional workforce providing critical services
3. Funding needs
4. Transportation needs

Outcomes of the Legislative Priorities Poll are shared with the General Assembly and elected officials. The complete report is available online at [disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative\\_priorities\\_poll.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm). The GCD will continue to help people with disabilities advocate in the 2026 legislative session. GCD staff will be examining bills relating to disability and analyze their impact on the disability community.

## Legislative Update

The Governor's Council on Disability continues to publish the weekly [Legislative Update](#) newsletter during the legislative session to provide information about disability-related bills and their status in the legislative process.

## Disability Rights Legislative Day

The Governor's Council on Disability works in partnership with the Missouri DD Council and other disability agencies and organizations to organize the annual Disability Rights Legislative Day (DRLD).

The event took place on February 26, 2025, at the state capitol in Jefferson City and online. Over 500 individuals and organizations from Missouri's disability community participated in the event, both in person and virtually.

Attendees who joined in person had the opportunity to connect with representatives from disability-focused organizations to get information about their resources and services.

Participants received information on how they could engage with various legislative issues and were encouraged to meet with legislators. A rally in the capitol rotunda featured a range of speakers discussing crucial disability-related topics.



Transportation, employment, and access to services were the focus of the day. The keynote speakers were all individuals with disabilities, family members, or service providers in addition to legislators and elected officials. Governor Kehoe who was introduced by Representative Stinnett attended his first DRLD as governor.

More information about Disability Rights Legislative Day is available at [drlld.org](https://drlld.org)

# Missouri Youth Leadership Forum

The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) is a five-day leadership and career development program designed for transition-age high school students with disabilities. From July 15–19, 2025, the 21st annual MO-YLF convened at the University of Missouri in Columbia, hosting twenty (20) delegates representing fourteen different counties.

The intensive curriculum covered essential topics including self-advocacy, disability culture and history, the legislative process, independent living, and assistive technology.

This program offers students a unique chance to learn from mentors, alumni, and volunteers who share similar lived experiences with disability, advancing their growth as leaders within their communities. Delegates experience a preview of college life while attending the program and gain insights into career and higher education opportunities through discussions with an employer panel and post-secondary education experts. A legislative day at the capitol allows participants to explore the legislative process and the importance of self-advocacy, while a community service project emphasizes the significance of volunteering. Small group activities were led by sixteen (16) returning alumni who served as facilitators and team leaders, providing these young leaders an opportunity to grow and build on their leadership skills. Evening social activities provide opportunities for bonding and the formation of lasting friendships.



## Group I (less than 5 alumni): (56 counties)

Audrain, Barry, Bates, Benton, Caldwell, Carter, Cass, Cedar, Chariton, Clark, Clinton, Cooper, Crawford, Daviess, DeKalb, Dent, Franklin, Gasconade, Henry, Hickory, Holt, Howard, Iron, Jasper, Lafayette, Lewis, Lincoln, Linn, Macon, Madison, Maries, Marion, Miller, Moniteau, Monroe, Nodaway, Pettis, Phelps, Pike, Polk, Pulaski, Ray, Reynolds, Ripley, Saline, Scott, Shelby, St. Francois, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard, Stone, Taney, Vernon, Warren, Webster, Wright

## Group II (5 – 10 alumni): (10 counties)

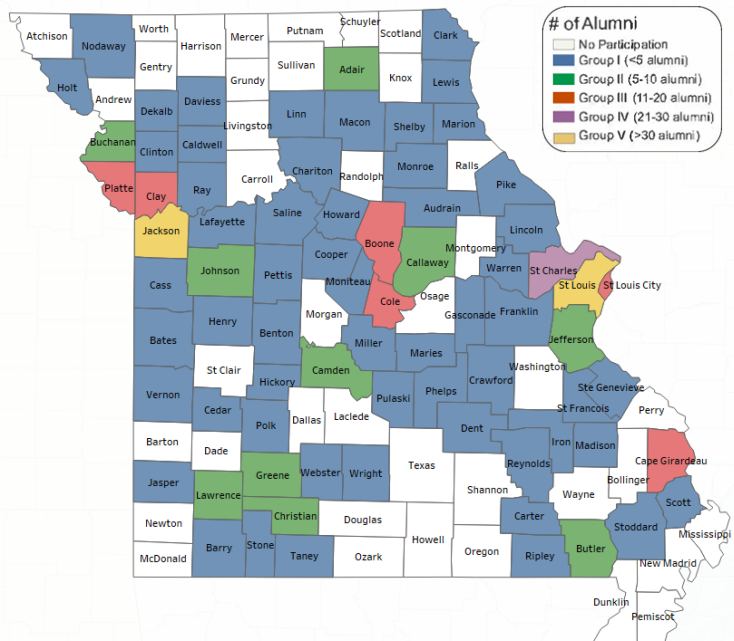
Adair, Buchanan, Butler, Callaway, Camden, Christian, Greene, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence

## Group III (11 – 20 alumni): (5 counties plus City of St. Louis)

Boone, Cape Girardeau, Clay, Cole, Platte, St. Louis City

## Group IV (21 – 30 alumni): (1 county) St. Charles

**Group V (more than 30 alumni):** Jackson (50 alumni), St. Louis County (81 alumni)



Since inception of the MO-YLF in 2001, 433 alumni have graduated from the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, representing 74 of the 114 Missouri counties, plus the city of St. Louis.

More information about the MO-YLF is available at [disability.mo.gov/gcd/yfl](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yfl)



# Employment Initiatives

## Missouri as a Model Employer Initiative

In 2019, Governor Parson issued Executive Order 19-16 outlining directives for state agencies to implement the Missouri as a Model Employer initiative. Members of the Office of Administration's Division of Personnel, Office of Equal Opportunity, and the Governor's Council on Disability collaborate to assist executive agencies in carrying out the directives of EO19-16. In 2025, these efforts focused on:

- Conducting the annual self-disclosure survey of state team members and evaluating data
- Collaborating with agency ADA coordinators and HR directors to develop agency implementation plans for the Model Employer initiative and create annual action items based on team member feedback in the self-disclosure survey
- Reviewing and assuring accessibility of hiring platforms and state government websites in collaboration with the OA ITSD division
- Developing a statewide training curriculum on disability awareness, accommodations, accessibility, and employment laws for all state agencies
- Providing training and educational presentations on disability awareness, etiquette, and employment practices
- Hosting inclusive hiring events and targeted outreach activities
  - Talent Showcase Hiring Events
  - Statewide Hiring Events (in person and virtual)
- Hosting statewide awareness events to promote employment inclusion
  - National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Celebration and Resource Event
  - NDEAM Poster Contest

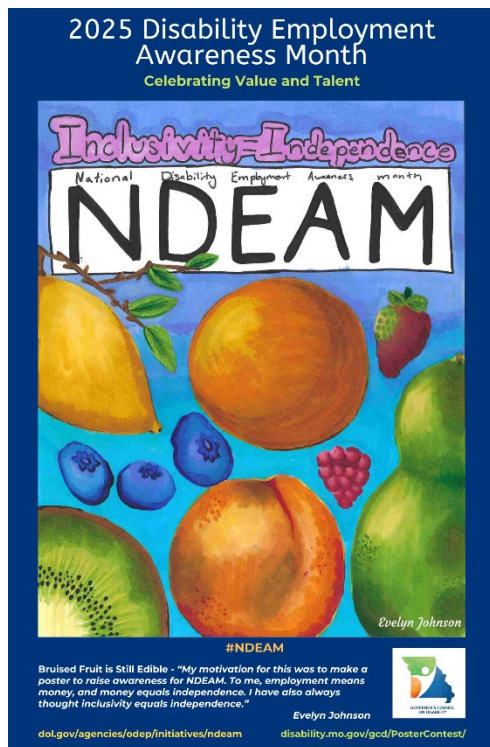
Missouri was selected to participate in the National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) initiative which enables government agencies to receive capacity-building support, policy development assistance and ongoing mentoring to increase competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities. Missouri's NEON workgroup is a collaborative workgroup of state agencies and national Subject Matter Experts working in tandem with the OA Model Employer workgroup to carry out the directives of Executive Order, Model Employer Legislation, and Employment First Legislation. The NEON workgroup focused on:

- Developing an MOU between state agencies for the implementation of the Employment First legislation
- Creating a comprehensive training presentation on the Model Employer and Employment First initiative
- Facilitating connections between state agencies and agencies supporting people with disabilities in employment

More information about the initiative is available at [disability.mo.gov/model-employer.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/model-employer.htm)

## Disability Employment Awareness Month Poster Contest

The Governor's Council on Disability organizes a yearly NDEAM poster contest to honor Disability Employment Awareness Month in Missouri, aiming to highlight the significance of employment inclusion for individuals with disabilities.



The 2025 NDEAM poster contest winner was Evelyn Johnson, who was recognized for her outstanding artwork at the statewide NDEAM celebration event.



## National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is celebrated nationwide throughout the month of October to raise awareness about disability employment issues and celebrate the contributions of America's workers with disabilities. The GCD participated in several NDEAM activities including:

- Collaborating with the Office of Equal Opportunity to co-host the inaugural statewide NDEAM celebration and exhibit hall of notable Missourians with disabilities on October 10
- Receiving a proclamation from Governor Kehoe designating the month of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month in Missouri
- Providing a virtual exhibit about the history and background of NDEAM, which features resources and information related to the employment of individuals with disabilities ([disability.mo.gov/NDEAM.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/NDEAM.htm))
- Participating in employment initiatives and NDEAM employment conferences and events
- Raising awareness through newsletter articles, social media, and email communications, educational presentations, and the NDEAM poster contest



## Other Employment Initiatives

Additional employment related activities of the GCD included:

- Delivering educational presentations to agencies and organizations focused on disability awareness, workforce development, the employment of individuals with disabilities, accessibility considerations and workplace accommodations.
- Engaging in workgroups and initiatives aimed at enhancing transition services, as well as employment and higher education opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Taking part in educational webinars, conferences, and events centered on the employment of individuals with disabilities.
  - APSE-MO discussion panel on Model Employer/Employment First, Columbia – July 24
  - Disability Inclusion Summit. Kansas City – September 25
  - Starkloff Disability Employment Summit, St. Louis – October 23
- Facilitating the ADA Coordinator Network for Missouri state government agencies and leading quarterly meetings to foster education, training, networking, and the exchange of best practices.

## Outreach Activities

The Governor's Council on Disability participated in numerous outreach and educational activities throughout the year to promote disability awareness and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.

### Disability Web Portal / Website / Social Media

- The **Missouri Disability Web Portal** ([disability.mo.gov](https://disability.mo.gov)) serves as a one-stop access point for the public to obtain information on disability resources and offers links to other entities and state agencies that provide services to people with disabilities. The portal also provides a link to the GCD website. In 2025, the Disability Web Portal and GCD website had 164,412 page views.
- **Social Media:** The GCD Facebook page is reaching a growing number of individuals with 2,392 followers. GCD's Twitter/X account has 239 followers to date and the GCD's newly created LinkedIn page has 157 followers. The Missouri Youth Leadership Forum Facebook page has 734 followers.
- **Email subscribers:** Over 2,100 individuals are subscribed to GCD listservs to receive disability-related information and GCD program updates.

### Educational Presentations / Outreach / Exhibits

The Governor's Council on Disability provides educational programs on disability rights, etiquette and awareness, employment of people with disabilities, service animals and other disability-related topics to state agencies, groups or organizations in Missouri requesting such information. Educational programs are specifically tailored to the individuals or groups. During the quarterly public Council meetings, presentations are provided on different disability-related topics.

Throughout the year 2025, the GCD staff:

- Developed and presented **40** educational programs and presentations to **1,598** individuals.
- Provided outreach and shared resources and information with **5,128** individuals at **48** meetings, events, and conferences.

## Boards and Commissions

As part of the Governor's Council on Disability's advisory capacity function, staff and Council members serve on a variety of boards and commissions to promote opportunities in all aspects of life, including education, employment, housing, recreation, and transportation. The following is a list of those boards and commissions on which staff and Council members served in calendar year 2025.

- Access and Functional Needs Committee, Statewide
- Advisory Council for the Master Plan on Aging, Statewide
- Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), Nationwide
- APRIL Youth and Steering Committees, Nationwide
- AYL (Association of Youth Leadership Forums), Nationwide
- Brain Injury Association of Missouri, Statewide
- Cape County Board of Developmental Disabilities, Cape Girardeau County
- Community Transition Teams, Statewide
- Disability Rights Legislative Day Planning Committee, Statewide
- Down Syndrome Association of St. Louis
- East-West Gateway Council of Governments, St. Louis
- Employment First Initiative, Statewide
- Future of Self Advocacy, Statewide
- Long Range Planning Advisory Committee (LRPAC) for the Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled (MSSD), Statewide
- Missouri 911 Service Board
- Missouri as a Model Employer Initiative, Statewide
- Missouri Association of County Developmental Disabilities Services (MACDDS), Statewide
- Missouri Association for Workforce Development (MAWD), Statewide
- Missouri Brain Injury Advisory Council, Statewide
- Missouri Budget Project, Statewide
- Missouri Centers for Independent Living (MOCIL), Statewide
- Missouri Council of the Blind, Statewide
- Missouri Disability and Health Program, Statewide
- Missouri Inclusive Housing Development Corporation Board, Statewide
- Missouri Interagency Transition Team, Statewide
- Missouri Rehabilitation Association State Board, Statewide

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- Missouri State Deafblind Advisory Committee, Statewide
  - Missouri Statewide Independent Living Council, Statewide
  - Missouri Transportation Task Force, Statewide
  - Missouri UD Initiative
  - Missouri Youth Leadership Forum Planning Committee, Statewide
  - Money Follows the Person (Show Me Home) Housing Committee, Statewide
  - MYLIFE Alumni Association, Statewide
  - National Association of Governors' Committees on People with Disabilities, Nationwide
  - National Expansion of Employment Opportunities Network (NEON) Planning Team, statewide
  - Productive Living Board for St. Louis County Citizens with DD, St. Louis County
  - Special School District (SSD) Transition Team, St. Louis
  - St. Louis County Commission on Disabilities, St. Louis
  - St. Louis Disability Transportation Resource Network, St. Louis
  - State Rehabilitation Council (Vocational Rehabilitation), Statewide
  - State Rehabilitation Council for the Blind, Statewide
  - Supported Decision Making Stakeholder Group, Statewide
  - Supporting Young People Committee, Statewide
  - Transition Training Institute Team, Statewide
  - UMSL Office of Inclusive Postsecondary Education (OIPE) Advisory Board, St. Louis

## 2026 Meeting and Event Dates

### Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) Quarterly Meetings

- February 20, 2026
- May 1, 2026
- August 21, 2026
- November 20, 2026

Council meetings are open to the public and are held at the Compass Administrative Building in Jefferson City, beginning at 10 a.m. or virtually by WebEx.

### Missouri Youth Leadership Forum

- July 14-18, 2026

The 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum for students with disabilities (ages 16-21) will be held at the University of Missouri campus in Columbia.