



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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## A YEAR IN REVIEW

by Claudia Browner



The Governor's Council on Disability wishes all of our readers a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Peaceful and Healthy New Year!

Looking back at 2020, I think we can all agree that it has been a challenging year in many ways. Like many others, the [Governor's Council on Disability](#) (GCD) had to postpone or cancel events, and find new ways to do business while dealing with the

fears and concerns of the pandemic. But when I think of a "theme" or defining words for the year, I think of RECOGNITION, APPRECIATION, and INNOVATION.

This year, the nation has celebrated and recognized some important milestone anniversaries: 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act, 45 years of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act—IDEA, 75 years of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and 100 years of Vocational Rehabilitation. We have held events to recognize and appreciate the work that has been done and look for innovative and creative ideas to continue the work into the future.

The GCD has found alternative and innovative ways to do business through remote work and virtual meetings and events. For the first time ever, we have recognized the winners of the annual [Inclusion](#) and [Youth Leadership](#) awards with a virtual award presentation at the November Council meeting, and during the upcoming legislative session, we will be offering virtual Q&A sessions for the [Legislative Education Project](#) (see page 2).

While we are hopeful that we will be able to return to a new normal in 2021, the GCD team has learned that we are adaptable and able to rise to the challenge, and I appreciate that!

## RECOGNIZING LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Who has made a difference for people with disabilities in their communities in 2020? Who has gone the extra mile to advocate for and include those living with disabilities?

The GCD is seeking nominations now to recognize the 2020 leaders in [Inclusion](#) and [Youth Leadership](#). Please help us recognize, honor and celebrate the individuals, agencies, and organizations that have demonstrated leadership and inclusion by improving the lives of individuals in the disability community. Submit your nominations now. Deadline for submissions is January 31, 2021. To nominate, please visit:

**Inclusion Award**—<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

**Youth Leadership Award**—<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

Accepting Nominations Now!

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

**ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM**

Recognizing Leaders in Inclusion and Youth Leadership

Questions?  
573.751.2600/800-877-8249

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/>

## 2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL REPORT

by Laura Mueth



GCD recently conducted its annual Legislative Priorities Poll to determine the level of importance disability related issues have to Missourians impacted by disability through their personal and/or professional lives. Thank you to everyone who participated. The results have already been shared with members of our Council and via GCD's listservs and social media accounts. Legislators and executive branch staff will receive the results in the coming weeks. The report detailing all the results can be accessed at [2020 Legislative Priorities Poll Report](#).

The Council used the results from the Poll which included three hundred seventy-two responses from individuals in fifty-four counties in Missouri to determine our legislative priorities for the 2021 session. They are:

1. Plans for public emergencies and disasters ensuring needs of people with disabilities are met
2. All public buildings having evacuation plans for all people with disabilities
3. Accessible voting machine provided at each polling location to comply with federal law
4. Private insurance hearing aid coverage
5. The increasing cost of medications

More information can be found at [https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative\\_priorities\\_poll.htm](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm)

## 2021 LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION PROJECT

by Laura Mueth

The 2021 Legislative Education Project will look different from past years. Due to COVID-19, LEP on the Road and LEP at the Capitol will not be offered.

Individuals and groups are encouraged to view the modules and videos on the [Legislative Education Project](#) page of the GCD website to increase their knowledge. Please visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LEP.htm>

Topics covered are:

- Navigating the House and Senate Websites
- Your Elected Officials and General Assembly
- Understanding How a Bill Becomes a Law in Missouri
- Giving Testimony at a House and Senate Hearing
- Building an Effective Relationship with Your Legislators
- Accessible Voting



After viewing one or all of the videos and modules, individuals and groups may schedule a virtual Q&A session with a GCD staff member to answer questions. Please contact Laura Mueth at [Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov](mailto:Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov) to schedule. Scheduling is available January through May. The virtual sessions will be provided free of charge via WebEx.

### 2021 Legislative Session—101st General Assembly

December 1, 2020

Pre-filing of bills begins

January 6, 2021

First day of Legislative Session

## MO-YLF ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT ON DANIEL ANDERSEN

by Rachel Rackers

This month's Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) alumni spotlight is on Daniel Andersen. In July of 2015, Daniel attended the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, a leadership program for students with disabilities. Daniel has a strong mission to connect people with disabilities with those who don't, and to help others better understand life with a disability.

Daniel is the current Co-Chair of the MYLIFE Alumni Association. He and his brother, Samuel, have served in this role for several years and hope to build the association into a strong network for young leaders with disabilities as they become advocates in their communities. Daniel is graduating this year from Brigham Young University with a degree in Journalism and looks forward to law school as he applies this year.

Daniel is a staunch supporter of disability advocacy, speaking to groups about inclusions and accessibility since he graduated high school. He has spoken to many universities nationwide as a university ambassador for on-campus housing and has attended advocacy conferences in Washington D.C. He plans to continue this effort as he builds his network to become an author and public speaker.

He is currently the host of a school news podcast and hopes to use his journalism skills to promote the stories of people around him so that everyone can enjoy the benefits of learning from many diverse and distinct perspectives.



## REGIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUM—APPLY NOW

by Rachel Rackers

**MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM**

**REGIONAL LEADERSHIP FORUMS**

MARCH 13, 2021	JEFFERSON CITY
MARCH 20, 2021	CAPE GIRARDEAU
APRIL 10, 2021	KANSAS CITY
APRIL 17, 2021	SPRINGFIELD

A ONE-DAY LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

*Apply Today!*

573-751-2600

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>

To ensure the health and safety of all participants, safety precautions will be taken at the RLF to include PPE and social distancing.

The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) is still accepting applications for four, one-day Regional Leadership Forums (RLF) for students with disabilities (ages 16-21)! **Don't miss the deadline for applications—January 31, 2021!**

Our team is looking forward to connecting with youth throughout the different parts of the state. During each RLF, the youth will get a small glimpse into what the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is and build connections with local alumni, agencies, employers, etc.

These one-day events were originally scheduled for fall 2020, but the safety and health of our program participants and staff are a priority. Therefore, we had to postpone the RLFs to the spring of 2021 due to the recent increase in COVID cases in schools and communities. Those who applied for the fall events are still invited to participate in the spring, along with new applicants.

The tentative dates for the Regional Leadership Forums (RLF) are:

March 13, 2021	—	Jefferson City
March 20, 2021	—	Cape Girardeau
April 10, 2021	—	Kansas City
April 17, 2021	—	Springfield

**Please help us share this exciting opportunity with students, parents, teachers and colleagues!**

For more information about the Regional Leadership Forums and apply, visit our website at:

<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm> Questions? Call 573-751-2600.



## Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Yvonne Wright, Chair, New Bloomfield
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D., Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Ronald Hack, St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- DeAnna Noriega, Columbia
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- Opeoluwa Sotonwa, Jefferson City
- James Trout, St. Louis
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

## Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Executive Director
- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Senior Program Specialist
- Jessica Zimmer, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

## GCD TEAM MEMBER RECEIVES AWARD

by Claudia Browner



The Missouri Council of the Blind has recognized GCD team member Laura Mueth with the 2020 Ellis M. Forshee Award for Outstanding Legislative Work. The award recognizes Laura's efforts in keeping individuals living with disabilities informed about pending legislation affecting the disability community.

During the legislative session, Laura publishes a weekly [Legislative Update](#) to summarize disability-related pending legislation. She also educates individuals and organizations about the legislative process in Missouri and how to become involved in policy-making through the [Legislative Education Project](#) (see page 2).

Congratulations, Laura!

## CELEBRATING SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations on your work anniversary with the Governor's Council on Disability!

**10 years**

Laura Mueth

**15 years**

Claudia Browner

## RECOGNIZING CAREGIVERS

by Claudia Browner

Being a caregiver can be demanding and challenging, especially during a pandemic.

The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has a web page dedicated to resources and other helpful tips for those who are providing care to their family members or other loved ones.



DHSS is also asking for nominations for the Missouri Caregiver of the Year, an initiative that recognizes and honors those invaluable unpaid caregivers in our Missouri communities.

To learn more about the Caregiver of the Year initiative, and to find caregiving resources, please visit the website at

[www.health.mo.gov/seniors/caregiver.php](http://www.health.mo.gov/seniors/caregiver.php).

## Tips for Holiday Celebrations and Small Gatherings

Read information and guidelines issued by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>