



# GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

## October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month

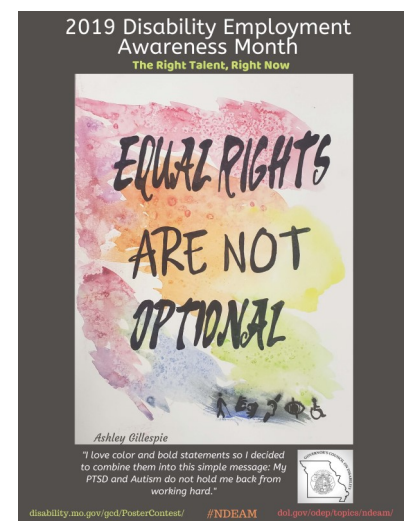
by Claudia Browner

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is observed nationwide during the month of October in celebration of the contributions of workers with disabilities to the workforce.

To raise awareness and spark conversation about the importance and value of an inclusive workforce, the Governor's Council on Disability initiated the [Disability Employment Awareness Month Poster Contest](#). The winner of the 2019 contest is Ashley Gillespie of Willard, Missouri. The winning poster and information about the contest can be found online at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest/>

Other activities during the month of October include:

- The Governor's Council on Disability's NDEAM Exhibit in the Truman State Office Building (2nd floor) in Jefferson City
- The [Missouri as a Model Employer Talent Showcase](#) for job seekers with disabilities
- Several high school transition fairs throughout the state including the [MPACT Tools for Life Transition Summit in Jefferson City](#)
- The Missouri DD Council's [Invite Your Legislator to Work](#) program



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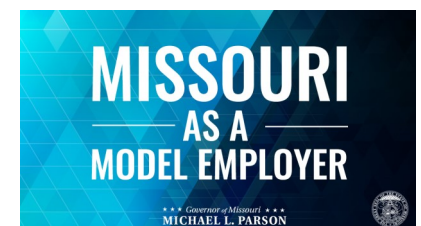
## Missouri As A Model Employer Initiative

by Claudia Browner

Governor Mike Parson signed [Executive Order 19-16](#) on September 9, 2019, announcing the Missouri as a Model Employer Initiative. The initiative is intended to help more people with disabilities obtain competitive, integrated employment and directs the Missouri state government to serve as a Model Employer of individuals with disabilities through improved recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies.

To help launch the initiative, the [Missouri as a Model Employer Talent Showcase](#) will be held October 10, 2019 in the State Capitol in Jefferson City. The talent showcase is a reverse career fair that provides individuals with disabilities the opportunity to seek employment with state agencies or community employers.

Information about the Missouri as a Model Employer initiative can be found online at <https://disability.mo.gov/model-employer.htm>



### National Disability Employment Awareness Month

## What are Your Legislative Priorities?

by Laura Mueth



The Governor's Council on Disability wants to hear from you! The 2019 [Legislative Priorities Poll](https://disability.mo.gov) is now available for completion. The GCD staff and council members encourage every Missouri citizen impacted by disability to complete it and tell us your priorities. Each response received is reviewed by staff and will be used as we shape the Council's legislative priorities and interactions with legislators for the 2020 legislative session. It is crucial that we hear **YOUR** thoughts.

Missouri is a state of diversity. Each person has ideas, concerns, and opinions. We want to ensure we hear voices from every county in this state. Help us hear those voices by completing the Poll and sharing it with others.

The Legislative Priorities Poll can be completed online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QNRSVQ2>.

It is also available in PDF formats which can be filled out electronically or printed and completed by hand. These versions can be accessed at [http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative\\_priorities\\_poll.htm](http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm) or by contacting the GCD office at 800-877-8249.

Please return all Polls by **Friday, November 8, 2019 at 5:00**. Hard copies can be returned via fax (573-526-4109), email ([gcd@oa.mo.gov](mailto:gcd@oa.mo.gov)), or mail (Governor's Council on Disability, 301 West High Street, Room 620, PO Box 1668, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1668). Assistance with completion is also available by contacting the GCD office.

## Recognizing Leaders in the Disability Community

by Claudia Browner

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) recognizes leaders in **Inclusion** and **Youth Leadership** through its annual awards programs and is accepting nominations now for the 2019 GCD Awards.

**We need to hear from you about the leaders in your communities!**

Please nominate Missouri residents, organizations agencies or businesses that demonstrate excellence in leadership in the inclusion of people with disabilities in education, employment, housing, leisure activities, universal design or website accessibility for the [Inclusion Award](#).

For the [Youth Leadership Award](#), GCD is seeking nominations of youth with a disability that demonstrate exemplary leadership by engaging in social activism or activities that improve the quality of life of people with disabilities in their communities in Missouri.

Visit the awards programs online for more information and the nomination forms:

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

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

How can you submit your nomination? It's quick and easy—complete and submit the nomination form online, or, print and mail/fax the nomination, or complete it electronically and submit by email. If you need assistance, please contact the GCD office at 573-751-2600.



## Meet Council member Lesia Shelton

by Claudia Browner

Lesia Shelton was appointed as a Council member to the Governor's Council on Disability on July 9, 2019.

Ms. Shelton has been employed with Preferred Employment Services in Springfield, Missouri since 2001, where she manages the specialized employment programs for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Blind and Low Vision.

Ms. Shelton grew up on a rural Missouri farm with family members who are deaf, including her mother, whose hearing deteriorated to profound hearing loss later in life. Her nephew, who lived in the same home, is profoundly deaf since birth, and was one of the reasons she chose a career specializing in service to the Deaf Community.

Ms. Shelton pursued education with Drury University, Missouri State University, and William Woods University. She completed training through the State of Missouri to serve individuals with minimal language skills and received certification as a Communication Development Specialist. She continues her education through independent study and mentorship from members of the Deaf Community.

Ms. Shelton advocated and served as a consultant during development of an exclusive Independent Supported Living (ISL) program for the Deaf. In 2010, she learned of a producer, Hilari Scarl, in California filming a documentary of four deaf entertainers. She coordinated with Ms. Scarl to bring the film, *See What I'm Saying*, to Springfield, Missouri for a community screening. Outreach projects Ms. Shelton is, or has been involved with, include Deaf Awareness Group of Southwest Missouri, Horses of Hope, Domestic Violence Task Force, and Excel Alternative School for at risk youth. In addition to providing vocational services to individuals in their communities, she provides consulting and referral services for rural school districts, emergency responders, law enforcement, and business leaders.

Ms. Shelton recognizes that any activity or community encounter is an opportunity to advocate and improve awareness for the Deaf Community, and for individuals with disabilities. Her goal is to serve in a way that empowers individuals to achieve independence.



### October Awareness Events

[National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)

[Breast Cancer Awareness Month](#)

[Down Syndrome Awareness Month](#)

[National Bullying Prevention Month](#)

[Liver Cancer Awareness Month](#)

### November Awareness Events

[Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month](#)

[COPD Awareness Month](#)

[American Diabetes Month](#)

[Family Caregivers Month](#)

[Epilepsy Awareness Month](#)



### 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
- Mary Ann Harter, St. Louis
- 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, Disability Program Specialist
- Rachel Rackers, Disability Program Specialist
- Vacant, Administrative Office Support Assistant

## Dates Set for 2020 MO-YLF

by Rachel Rackers



The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for 2020 MO-YLF, which will be held July 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> at the University of Missouri Columbia campus.

Applications for staff, volunteers and delegates will be available by mid-

October. The deadline for delegate applications is March 31<sup>st</sup> and staff applications are due May 1<sup>st</sup>.

The MO-YLF planning committee encourages you to spread the word about MO-YLF and to come experience this life-changing week!

For more information and the online application, please visit <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>

Throughout the year, the MO-YLF alumni have the opportunity and are encouraged to expand their leadership skills by participating in MO-YLF panel presentations and transition fair exhibit booths throughout the state as well as promoting the program in their schools and communities.

At the Governor's Council on Disability's quarterly Council meeting in August, three MO-YLF alumni joined program coordinator Rachel Rackers in a panel presentation about the program, providing testimonials about the program's impact on their lives.

*Photo: Rachel Rackers and MO-YLF alumni Andrew Sartorius, Piper Earhart and Zamira McConnell present to the Council.*



## Upcoming Events

- October 1-31, 2019 National Disability Employment Awareness Month exhibit, Truman State Office Building, Jefferson City
- October 2, 2019 [MPACT Tools for Life Transition Summit](#), Joplin
- October 10, 2019 [Talent Showcase Career Fair](#), Jefferson City
- October 15, 2019 [MPACT Tools for Life Transition Summit](#), Jefferson City
- October 17-18, 2019 [MACDDS Annual Conference](#), Columbia
- Oct. 25-28, 2019 [APRIL Conference](#), GrandRapids, Michigan
- October 30, 2019 [Equity in Missouri Higher Education Summit](#), Columbia