



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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SEASONS GREETINGS

by Claudia Browner



The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) wishes you a Merry Christmas, joyful holidays, and a healthy and happy new year.

Reflecting on the year 2021, the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD), like many others, continued to face challenges due to the ongoing pandemic. We had to rethink

how to deliver our programs and find new ways to serve our customers. For the first time ever, we held a virtual leadership program for high school students with disabilities, which had such a positive response that we will continue the program in 2022. We also provided the Legislative Education Project in a virtual format, and will continue to do so during the upcoming legislative session. And last but not least, in November, we hosted a new leadership program for high school students who are deaf or hard of hearing for the first time. I invite you to read more about all of these programs inside this newsletter.

As we approach the new year 2022, we look forward to continuing and growing our programs, whether they are in a virtual, hybrid, or in-person format, in collaboration with our partnering agencies.

RECOGNIZING LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

by Claudia Browner

Looking back at the year 2021, who stood out to you as a leader in inclusion or youth leadership?

Awarding Missouri's leaders in inclusion and youth leadership recognizes and honors their accomplishments, and raises awareness about the importance of inclusion in all aspects of community living and advocacy on behalf of the disability community.

Please help the GCD recognize best practices in [Inclusion](#) and [Youth Leadership](#) by nominating deserving individuals, businesses, organizations, or agencies. It only takes a few minutes to complete and submit the online nomination form.

The GCD is accepting nominations now through January 31, 2022. To find out more about the awards and submit a nomination, visit:

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

Youth Leadership Award—

<https://disability.mo.gov/youthleadershipaward.htm>



**Don't miss the deadline -
nominate by January 31!**

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON
DISABILITY

**ANNUAL
AWARDS
PROGRAM**

Recognizing Leaders in Inclusion
and Youth Leadership

Questions? Call 573.751.2600

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

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

Please share this information with your colleagues and networks and encourage them to submit a nomination.

GEARING UP FOR THE 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

by Laura Mueth

The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) recently conducted its annual 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 members of the executive branch have also received the results to help them prepare for the upcoming legislative session. The report detailing all the results can be accessed at [2021 Legislative Priorities Poll Report](#).

The Council used the results from the Poll which included five hundred twenty-eight responses from individuals in sixty-three counties to determine our legislative priorities for the 2022 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



These are the same priorities as in the 2021 legislative session though the percentages differ. GCD staff will track any bills filed by state legislators on these topics. The status of each one will be available in our weekly Legislative Updates. If these issues or any others in the full report are important to you, the GCD staff and Council members encourage you to contact your representative and senator to discuss them.

If you are unsure how to communicate with legislators or are unfamiliar with aspects of the state legislative process or advocacy, the GCD offers modules and videos on the [Legislative Education Project](#) (LEP) web page. These are available year round and viewing is encouraged throughout the year. Beginning in January and continuing through the conclusion of the legislative session in mid-May, a GCD staff member will again be offering virtual Q&A sessions for individuals or groups who have watched at least one video or module. The in-person options of LEP at the Capitol and LEP on the Road will not be offered due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. If you have questions or would like to schedule a Q&A, please contact Laura Mueth at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

COVID—19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

[FREE COVID-19 VACCINATION IS NOW AVAILABLE FOR ANYONE AGE 5 YEARS OR OLDER](#)

[FREE COVID-19 VACCINE BOOSTER NOW AVAILABLE FOR VACCINATED ADULTS AGE 18+](#)

COVID-19 Free Testing Information—<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/community-test.php>

COVID-19 Vaccine Information—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov>

COVID-19 Information Hotline—Call 877-435-8411

Need Transportation to get the vaccine? Get a Ride Resources—<https://covidvaccine.mo.gov/ride/>

Disability Web Portal—COVID-19 Resources page—<https://disability.mo.gov/covid-19.htm>

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR DEAF/HARD OF HEARING A SUCCESS

by Rachel Rackers



GCD staff and planning team members from our partnering agencies spent the last several months preparing for the first [Leadership Development Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LDPDHH.htm) high school students.

On November 1–4, Missouri School for the Deaf students participated four evenings in a leadership and career development training. They learned about the importance of self-advocacy, mentorship, career development and setting goals.

To kick off the program, students heard from keynote speaker Clark Corogenes about the importance of setting goals for their future. They also learned about important interpersonal and interview skills, followed by an opportunity to practice those skills.

On the second evening, students met with mentors to learn about overcoming barriers and reaching life and career goals. During a Q&A panel, they heard from entrepreneurs, VR counselors, and business owners about what employers are looking for in job applicants. The students also created vision boards for their own future goals.

During the third evening, students learned about college disability services, disability disclosure, self-advocacy, and asking for accommodations in college. They also heard from an individual from Journey 2 College, who gave lots of great tips and information on selecting the right college. Students also learned about tips for a successful job interview.



On the final evening, students learned about options for postsecondary education that are different from attending a traditional college or going straight into employment after high school (supported employment services, apprenticeships and tech school). To wrap up the event, students reviewed and tested their knowledge about what they learned throughout the week. They also had an opportunity to give feedback on what their highs and lows were for the program.

A special thank you goes to the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Missouri School for the Deaf, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services and Paraquad, for their involvement in the planning and staffing of the event.

The planning team will soon start discussing plans for next year's Leadership Development Program. With this being Leadership Development Program's (LDP) first year, it was only offered to MO School for the Deaf students. Be sure to watch for announcements about the 2022 LDP and also the possibility of expanding this wonderful program to other deaf and hard of hearing students from all of Missouri.

To find out more about the program, please visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LDPDHH.htm>

Photo: Student participants of the LDP are standing on stage inside the auditorium at Missouri School for Deaf

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability Members

- Ronald Hack, Interim Chair, St. Louis
- Joan Bergstrom, Ed. D., Lee's Summit
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Traci Ritter, Cape Girardeau
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- 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

2022 MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

by Rachel Rackers

The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for the 2022 MO-YLF, which will be held July 12th-16th at the University of Missouri Columbia campus.



The MO-YLF is a 5-day leadership training for high school students with disabilities.

Applications for staff, volunteers and delegates are available now on our website. The deadline for delegate and staff applications is April 15th.

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/yf.htm>

APPLY NOW FOR VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The Governor's Council on Disability is accepting applications now until January 15th for the second [Virtual Leadership Summit](#), held February 26, 2022!

The Virtual Leadership Summit (VLS) is a one-day leadership training for high school students with disabilities, ages 16—21. It's hosted by the Governor's Council on Disability, Vocational Rehabilitation, MU Pre-Employment Transition Services, and Paraquad.



Participants will meet virtually with leaders in the disability community and hear from employers, mentors, alumni, and keynote speakers about the importance of goal setting, self-advocacy, and leadership and independent living. It's also a chance for students to get a glimpse of our five-day program, the annual Missouri Youth Leadership Forum, which is held at the University of Missouri campus in Columbia.

Apply now and get more information at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>.

For questions about the VLS, please contact Rachel Rackers at Rachel.rackers@oa.mo.gov or 573-751-2600.

Please help us share both of these exciting leadership training opportunities with students, parents, teachers and colleagues!