



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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GCD UPDATE

by Claudia Browner

Welcome to the February issue of the Governor's Council on Disability's (GCD) newsletter. Since the beginning of the year, our team has been gearing up for a number of GCD programs including the annual Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards, the Legislative Education Project and Legislative Update, the Virtual Leadership Summit and the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum. You can find details about these programs in this issue.

Our team was excited to learn that this year, many of Missouri's disability-related organizations and agencies are going to offer their programs and conferences in person again. While virtual events and programs are very beneficial and have improved so much over the last two years, in-person events still provide more opportunities for networking and building professional and personal connections. On page 4 of the newsletter, you can find a listing of some of the upcoming events hosted throughout the State of Missouri in the coming months. The GCD staff is excited about participating and/or collaborating in planning and promoting these events with our partnering agencies.

Another exciting announcement is the upcoming launch of the new Disability Web Portal, GCD Website, and GCD logo. Over the last few months, our team has been working with the Office of Administration's IT division to update the look of these websites and make them more user-friendly. Stay tuned for more information and a fresh look to come in the next few weeks!

DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGISLATIVE DAY 2022

by Claudia Browner

The date for the 2022 Disability Rights Legislative Day (DRLD) has been set—mark your calendars now for Wednesday, March 9th. In its 21st year, this important advocacy event will once again be held in person at the Missouri State Capitol, in the first floor rotunda, with a virtual option for those who choose not to travel to Jefferson City.

Interested individuals and organizations are invited to participate and hear from a variety of speakers about legislative topics important to the disability community and meet with legislators.



**THERE IS
POWER
IN THE
UNITY OF
HUMANITY**

MARCH 9, 2022 | MISSOURI DISABILITY RIGHTS LEGISLATIVE DAY | DRLD.ORG



To find out more details about the event, get answers to frequently asked questions, and register, please visit the DRLD website at drlld.org

You can follow the DRLD Facebook page for updates about the event at facebook.com/drlld_missouri

LEGISLATIVE INVOLVEMENT FROM HOME

by Laura Mueth

The 2022 legislative session is now underway. The General Assembly is in the Capitol and has been working on re-drawing the U.S. Congressional districts for Missouri as well as state budget issues and bills. They have also been filing and moving bills on a variety of topics impacting Missouri citizens.

If you are wanting to be involved but do not want to go to the Capitol, the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) has a way you can track disability related legislation and/or learn more about what goes on at the Capitol and various aspects of legislative advocacy from home. Through our Legislative Update and Legislative Education Project (LEP) you can do both these endeavors. You can find all disability related bills and their weekly status courtesy of the 2022 Legislative Updates on the [Legislative Updates](#) web page.

On the [LEP](#) page you will find videos and recorded modules which cover:

- Your Elected Officials and General Assembly
- Understanding How a Bill Becomes a Law
- Building Effective Relationships With Legislators
- Testifying at a House or Senate Hearing
- Navigating the House and Senate Websites

The videos have closed captioning and a separate audio description version for those who need those features.



If you have questions after watching, please contact me and I will answer them or provide additional guidance/suggestions. To schedule a time to ask these for yourself or a group, please contact me to request a **Virtual Q&A Session** at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

In addition, you will find a publication titled [Tips for meeting with your legislators](#) to prepare you for a visit with your elected officials, either in person or virtually.

TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED MISSOURIANS

by Chip Hailey, GCD Council Member

Designed to bring blind and visually Missourians 55 years of age and over into the world of computers, the Technology Association for Visually Impaired Missourians (TAVIM) offers refurbished computers, adaptive software, and training, at no cost to qualified applicants.

For more information visit: tavi-mo.org or contact Chip Hailey at 417-540-9703 or e-mail: chiphailey52@gmail.com

COVID—19 INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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>

Information about free In-Home Test Kits—<https://www.covidtests.gov/> or call 1-800-232-0233

UPDATE ON THE 2022 MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Rachel Rackers

Kelsey Tainsh, a nationally recognized speaker, is this year's keynote speaker for the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) and is scheduled to speak to the delegates and alumni on Tuesday, July 12th. Kelsey's story is inspiring and encourages others to achieve their goals, no matter what obstacles they may face. We look forward to having Kelsey kick off our week that will be filled with various activities and opportunities for growth!



As a reminder, the dates for 2022 MO-YLF are July 12-16th and the event is held at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. While at MO-YLF, the delegates will gain leadership skills, knowledge, self-confidence, and much more.

During the week, delegates will learn a lot of valuable information. Some activities the delegates participate in include a community service project, a visit to the State Capitol, an employment event focusing on career exploration, mock interview exercises, networking, and tips on when and how to disclose disability status, information on volunteer opportunities, and a resource fair. Throughout the week they will also engage in fun social events including adaptive sports night, a talent show, and a dance. At the end of the week, the teams have a chance to present their experiences and what they learned to family members, staff and sponsors at the closing banquet. Also on the last day, there's a resource fair and parent information session.

Applications for delegates and volunteer staff are now being accepted and available on our website at <http://disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf.htm>. The deadline for delegate applications is April 15, 2022.

If you know of a student with disabilities who has leadership potential, please share the information about this exciting program with them. GCD is looking for applicants from all areas of the state. MO-YLF is free to the students who are selected. This is all made possible because of donations and sponsorships.

For questions, please contact the Governor's Council on Disability at (800) 877-8249 or (573) 751-2600.

GCD is preparing for its 2nd Virtual Leadership Summit



The planning committee is getting geared up for the 2nd Annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](#) (VLS) to be held virtually on February 26, 2022. GCD staff along with multiple partnering organizations have been busy planning over the past year.

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.

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

The application deadline for this year's Virtual Leadership Summit has already passed. Be sure to watch for announcements and the application this fall for the 2023 event.

For more information on the Virtual Leadership Summit please visit our website at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>

For updates information on both the MO-YLF and VLS, you can also follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/MOLeadershipForum>

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council 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

BICENTENNIAL BRIDGE OPENS IN JEFFERSON CITY

by Claudia Browner

Next time you plan a trip to Jefferson City, be sure to allow some extra time to check out the new Bicentennial Bridge that opened in December.

This newest tourist attraction is an accessible bridge for pedestrians and bicyclists that leads you from the north side of the capitol grounds across the railroad tracks and down to a new park by the Missouri River, called Deborah Cooper Park. The park features paved walking trails located on the southern bank of the river on a piece of land called Adrian's Island. An additional forest loop trail (unpaved) leads you east along the railroad tracks and the river. Park benches, a pavilion and outdoor games/activities are planned in the near future.



This new park offers stunning views of the Missouri River, the Missouri River Bridge, the Governor's Mansion and the state capitol.

For additional information, please visit <https://www.jcparks.com/park/deborah-cooper-park/>

Photo:

View of the Bicentennial Bridge and Missouri River Bridge from Deborah Cooper Park

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **2022 Virtual Technology Summit—February 3, 17, and 24**
<https://dmh.mo.gov/dev-disabilities/technology-first/2022-virtual-summit>
- **Disability Rights Legislative Day—March 9—State Capitol, Jefferson City**
<https://drlrd.org>
- **Power Up Assistive Technology Conference —April 4-5, Blue Springs**
<https://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/>
- **Independent Living (IL) Summit—May 22-24, Branson**
<https://mocil.org>
- **Youth Programs for transition age high school students with disabilities**
 - February 26—[Virtual Leadership Summit](#)
 - June/July—[Center for Independent Living \(CIL\) summer experience](#)
 - June/July—[Starkloff Disability Institute \(SDI\) Dream Big Camp, St. Louis](#)
 - June/July—[VR Summer Work Experience Programs](#)
 - July 12-16—[Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#)

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.