



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability

Volume 8, Number 5, October 2022

[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

HONORING NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

by Claudia Browner

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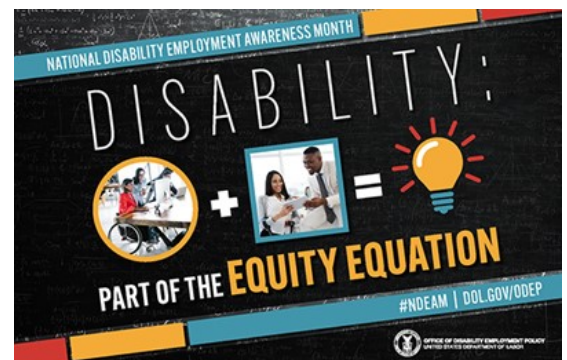
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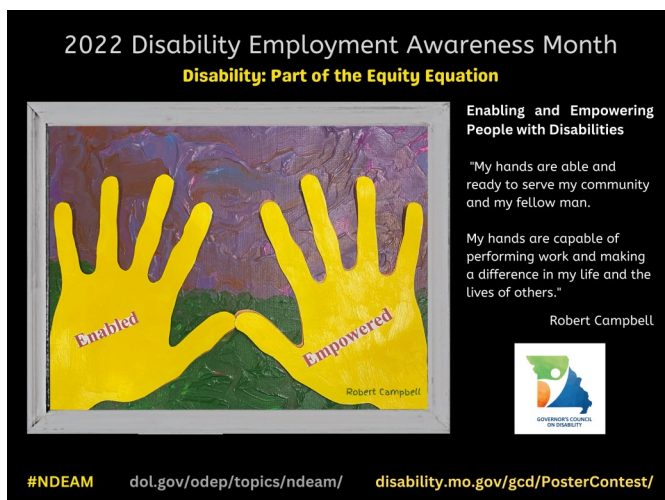
National Disability Employment Awareness Month – NDEAM is celebrated nationwide throughout the month of October to recognize the vital role that people with disabilities play in making the nation's workforce diverse and inclusive.

Initiated by the US Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment in 1945, NDEAM recognizes the contributions of employees with disabilities, brings awareness to employment issues and inclusive hiring practices, and reminds employers of the importance and value of an inclusive workforce. The theme for NDEAM 2022 is "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation."



In Missouri, the month of October is also recognized as Disability History Month to educate and raise awareness about the valuable contributions of people with disabilities and the proud heritage of disability history. Governor Michael L. Parson has issued two proclamations, designating October as [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) and [Disability History Month](#) in Missouri.

The Governor's Council on Disability recognizes and celebrates NDEAM by raising awareness about employment inclusion through its annual [Disability Employment Awareness Month poster contest](#) and hosting a [Virtual NDEAM Exhibit](#) on the Disability Web Portal. The exhibit provides information about the background and history of NDEAM, disability history, ideas to celebrate, employment resources for Missourians with disabilities, and other resources.



The winner of the 2022 poster contest is Robert Campbell from Forsyth, Missouri, who states that the motivation behind his artwork is showing "My hands that are able and ready to service my community and my fellow man. My hands are capable of performing work and making a difference in my life and the lives of others. My volunteer work for non-profit charities fulfill a need in my life to be productive and contributing to society. It provides significance!"

What can you do to celebrate NDEAM?

Visit the NDEAM virtual exhibit page on the Disability Portal <https://disability.mo.gov/NDEAM.htm>

Check out 31 Days of NDEAM for additional ideas <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam/ideas>

EXTRAORDINARY SESSION SERVES AS A REMINDER

by Laura Mueth

As you may be aware, in September the General Assembly convened in an Extraordinary Session more commonly known as a Special Session. The purpose was to address issues related to agriculture tax credits and income taxes. While these topics are not specifically targeted at assisting individuals with disabilities, Governor Parson [calling an Extraordinary Session](#) serves as a reminder that legislators work all year on issues: whether it be in a formal or non-formal setting.

Two House of Representatives committees also held hearings prior to the start of the Extraordinary Session. One included an update on the status of individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities who are currently boarding in hospitals because, despite efforts of the Missouri Department of Mental Health Division of Developmental Disabilities and residential providers, a residential provider placement which meets the needs of these individuals is not able to be found due to staffing issues.

To assist legislators in hearing about these and other types of issues impacting the lives of Missouri residents with disabilities, the GCD conducts an annual [Legislative Priorities Poll](#). The results are shared with our state legislators.



If you have not already completed this year's Legislative Priorities Poll, you still have time to do so as it continues to be open until 5:00 p.m. Friday, November 4, 2022. Go to https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm or <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WF5Z355> to participate in the poll.

GEARING UP FOR 2023 YOUTH LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

by Rachel Rackers



The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for the 2023 MO-YLF, which will be held July 18th-22nd at the University of Missouri Columbia campus.

Each year, MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities a week-long college setting experience, where they learn about disability history, advocacy, the legislative process, transition to employment or higher education, adaptive technology and adaptive sports.

It is important for students with disabilities to learn skills by example and interactions with others who share similar experiences, which is what MO-YLF provides. The program is designed specifically to help students grow into leaders. Students are selected to become delegates at the forum based on an application process. In addition to leadership skills, the delegates learn to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to the community.

Applications for staff, volunteers and delegates will be available on our website by mid-October. The deadline for delegate applications is April 15th and staff applications are due May 1st.

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/ylyf.htm>

The Governor's Council on Disability will be hosting its 3rd Annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](#) on March 4, 2023!



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, 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.

The event is open to transition age high school students and must be a Missouri resident to qualify. For more information or to apply, visit our website <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>. Applications will open in October.

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

WEB ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS AND TRAINING IMPROVES OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Article by Lainie Strange, Office of Administration, Information Technology Services Division

In our day-to-day work, nobody purposely excludes people, especially those with disabilities. Many times, people just fail to see the connection between accessibility and immediate goals, commitments, or priorities. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), 26 percent of adults in the U.S. have a disability. In Missouri, this number increases to 28.4 percent (1.4 million adults).



According to 2017 research by the [Federal government's Section 508 Governance Committee](#), 71 percent of users with a disability will immediately leave a website that is not accessible. In a dominant self-service world, these barriers result in citizens going without needed services or losing independence due to reliance on others.

What are the results of web accessibility awareness and education? When accessibility awareness and education permeates the organization's culture, it creates a shared responsibility and understanding as well as a perception of being transparent and fair. Accessibility results in wider audience reach to information and services, improves search engine ranking, creates a more trusted brand and avoids lawsuits and complaints. An added benefit is that improvements aimed at accommodating disabled users actually improve the overall user experience.

What can we do as citizens of Missouri? Develop empathy through web accessibility awareness as well as develop skills in creating accessible content and documents.

Web Accessibility Training Recommendations:

LinkedIn Learning ([free access from many libraries](#), contact your local library)

- [Web Accessibility Awareness Training](#) (50 minutes)
- [Document Accessibility 101 Training](#) (5.5 hours—Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, Creating an Accessible PDF)

Missouri Assistive Technology

- [ICT & Accessible Documents Training YouTube Channel](#)

AT3 Center

- [ICT Accessibility Training YouTube Channel](#)



Visit the State of Missouri web accessibility resource page for more information at <https://at.mo.gov/it-access/>

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council Members

- Ronald Hack, Council 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
- Jennifer Pettit, Lead Administrative Support Assistant

HIGHLIGHTING BEST PRACTICES IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

by Claudia Browner

Diversity and Inclusion efforts are increasingly becoming a priority for employers, organizations and agencies. It is critical that disability is seen as an aspect of diversity, and that the perspectives and voices of people with disabilities are valued in order to provide a more accessible, inclusive and diverse work environment and customer experience.

To help raise awareness about the importance of disability inclusion, the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) invites you to highlight and recognize best practices in inclusion by submitting a nomination for the annual Inclusion Award.

Likewise, if you encounter a young individual with disabilities who serves as a leader and change maker in their communities, the GCD invites you to nominate them for the Youth Leadership Award.

Let's celebrate the strides being made by those who truly embrace inclusion and youth leadership. Visit the websites below to find out more about the GCD awards programs.

Nominations for the 2022 [Inclusion Award](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm) can be submitted at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclwin.htm>

The 2022 [Youth Leadership Award](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm) nominations can be submitted at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipaward.htm>

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **October 5-7, 2022**
MACDDS Annual Conference, Columbia
<https://macdds.org/2022-macdds-annual-conference/>
- **October 25-26, 2022**
Equity Summit, Dept. of Higher Education & Workforce Development, virtual
<https://eduvents.dhewd.mo.gov/>

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

Nominate online by January 31 or postmarked 1/31/23

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>