



GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

SEASONS GREETINGS

by Claudia Browner

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The GCD team is extending best wishes for the upcoming holidays to our readers, colleagues, and friends. We wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas, happy holidays, and happy and healthy New Year!

For many people, the end of the year is a time to reflect on the events, challenges, and accomplishments of the year and set goals for the new year that lies ahead. I am grateful that the GCD was able to host the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MO-YLF) again in 2022, after a two year break due to the pandemic. It is a life-changing, rewarding program, and I invite you to read more about the outcomes of the MO-YLF on page 4. I am thankful for the partnerships and collaborations with other state agencies and disability organizations to continue our work of promoting inclusion and accessibility for the disability community.



I am also grateful for our new team member Jennifer Pettit, who joined the GCD as our lead administrative assistant in August. Jenn celebrates 20 years of service to the State of Missouri in December and we are very happy to have her on our team! Congratulations, Jenn!

For the upcoming year, I am excited and looking forward to some new opportunities and continuing programs. Read on page 2 about the new Legislative Education Project webinars the GCD will be offering during the upcoming legislative session, and find out about the opportunities for Missouri high school students with disabilities on page 3.

SUBMIT NOMINATIONS NOW FOR LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

As we close out the year 2022, I would like to remind you that the GCD needs your help in recognizing Missouri's leaders in Inclusion and Youth Leadership. The GCD is now accepting nominations to award individuals, organizations, employers, or agencies for their work in including people with disabilities in all aspects of life, and for young leaders who are making a difference in their communities.

Nominations for the 2022 [Inclusion Award](#) and [Youth Leadership Award](#) can be submitted online now until January 31.

The awards will be presented at the Power Up Assistive Technology Conference and Expo in April 2023.

2022 INCLUSION & YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS

31st Annual Inclusion Award

The Governor's Council on Disability is seeking nominations to recognize a Missouri resident, organization, agency or business that has demonstrated excellence in leadership for best practices in inclusion of people with disabilities!

Submit your nominations now for the 2022 awards.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION, PLEASE VISIT:

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

10th Annual Youth Leadership Award

The Governor's Council on Disability is seeking nominations for outstanding Missouri youths (ages 16-26) with a disability who are GREAT leaders and make a difference in their communities. Who are the leaders you know?

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT A NOMINATION, PLEASE VISIT:

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

LEARNING ABOUT THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IN MISSOURI

by Laura Mueth

The Governor's Council on Disability will be offering five webinars for the 2023 [Legislative Education Project](#) (LEP) during the upcoming legislative session. The purpose of the LEP is to educate and motivate individuals by providing opportunities to become more active in creating positive public policies for people with disabilities.



The LEP webinars are open to individuals or organizations that are new to the legislative process, or those who need additional information about disability policies or proposed legislation that impact people with disabilities.

Each webinar will include information on the legislative process, communicating with legislators, and current state bills related to disability. Webinars will be offered on the following dates:

- Monday, January 9, 2023 10:00 AM
- Monday, January 9, 2023 2:00 PM
- Wednesday, February 1, 2023 7:00 PM
- Thursday, March 16, 2023 10:00 AM
- Thursday, March 16, 2023 7:00 PM

The webinars will be provided at no cost to participants. WebEx software will be used to conduct each webinar. Registration is required to attend. Please complete the [LEP Registration Form](#). If accommodations are needed, please register at least two weeks prior to the webinar date so accommodations can be arranged in a timely matter.

For more information about the LEP, please visit the [LEP web page](#) at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/LEP.htm>

2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL RESULTS

by Laura Mueth

The 2022 Legislative Priorities Poll (Poll) results are now available. Four hundred fifty-two people completed the Poll. The 2023 legislative priorities for the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) will be:

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. Updating State of Missouri websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties.
4. The Direct Support Professional workforce providing critical services
5. Ban on drivers' texting while driving

These were the Poll questions which received the highest combined strongly agree and agree response percentages.

A report showing the results for all of the questions asked has been posted on the [Annual Legislative Priorities Poll page](#).

It will be shared with all representatives and senators in January once the 102nd General Assembly begins. It will also be sent to state elected officials at that time. All of these individuals will receive the responses to the Poll's open answer questions.

The GCD Council members and staff appreciate everyone's participation.



DATES SET FOR 3RD ANNUAL VIRTUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT—APPLY Now!

by Rachel Rackers



The Governor's Council on Disability and its partnering agencies will be hosting its 3rd Annual [Virtual Leadership Summit](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm) on March 4, 2023!

Missouri high school students with disabilities (16-21 years old) will have the opportunity to meet virtually with leaders in the disability community and hear from 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.

Applications are available on our website now until January 15th. The Virtual Leadership Summit is free to program participants. Apply now and get more information at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>

APPLY NOW FOR THE 2023 MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Rachel Rackers

The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for the 2023 MO-YLF, which will be held July 18–22 at the University of Missouri, Columbia campus.

Each year, the MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities (ages 16-21) 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. In addition to leadership skills, the student delegates learn to set life goals, advocate for their needs, and give back to their community.

Applications for delegates, staff, and volunteers are now available on our website.

There is no cost for accepted delegates to attend the program. The program is funded through sponsorships and donations.

The application deadlines are April 15, 2023 for delegates and May 1, 2023 for staff.

MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM
JULY 18-22, 2023
Apply Today!
A unique career leadership training program for high school students with disabilities, ages 16-21.
—▶ **AND IT'S FREE!** ◀—
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>
573-751-2600
APPLY BY APRIL 15, 2023

For more information or to apply, visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>. If you have any questions about the GCD's youth programs, 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!

CELEBRATING SUCCESSES OF MO-YLF ALUMNI

by Rachel Rackers



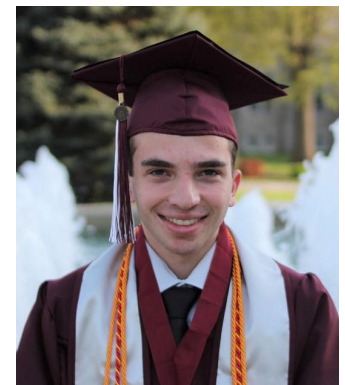
One of the pleasures that comes from being involved with the Missouri Youth Leadership Forum is getting to see alumni take leadership skills and self-determination away the Forum, and seeing how they use these skills to continue their growth and get involved in their community.

We would like to recognize some of the alumni's recent achievements:

- * Abby Bax (2022 alum) was one of only seven swimmers in Missouri to qualify for the USA games in Orlando, Florida. She competed in three events, and came home with two medals. Recently, Abby was named as a Special Olympics Player of the Year.
- * Craig Aslin (2006 alum) now works for the State of Missouri as a disability determination counselor in St. Louis.
- * Jonathan Thornburgh (2019 alum) graduated from Missouri State University's Bear Power program in May and recently got his first car
- * Izzy Collins (2019 alum) is attending college at SEMO in Cape Girardeau and has recently become a member of a sorority
- * Luke Friedel (2022 alum) is in the UMSL Succeed program and has his own radio show segment called "Luke-ing Back" on the UMSL radio station
- * Piper Earhart (2019 alum) recently won a gold medal in a Special Olympics bowling tournament

As you can imagine, it can sometimes be difficult to keep up with the latest accomplishments from all 359 alumni that have gone through the program since 2001. To hopefully make it easier to learn and recognize the achievements of more alumni, we are in the process of creating a short online form to be posted on the GCD website. If you are a MO-YLF alum, we would love to hear from you and learn what you have been up to. It is important for all alumni to remember that their accomplishments not only have an impact in their own lives, but for other individuals that have disabilities. As they are leading by example, they are making a difference and encouraging others to see their own potential, whether they realize it or not.

Keep up the great work, alumni! We are very proud of your accomplishments.



Pictured above are (from left to right): Abby Bax, Piper Earhart, Izzy Collins, and Jonathan Thornburgh

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

DISABILITY BENEFITS 101 ONLINE TOOL

Information provided by the Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council



The Disability Benefits 101 (DB101) online tool assists people with disabilities, and their circles of support, in making informed employment decisions.

DB101 is a comprehensive, state-specific online digital resource that

helps people with disabilities to make informed decisions about employment. With the redesigned site, users in Missouri will find a modern design that is mobile-friendly and easier to navigate. The enhanced site features:

- 24/7 Access to Interactive, Self-Directed Planning Tools
- Real-Time Support
- Personalized Results - Just for You

The accessibility enhancements ensure that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) can calculate their information on their own, or with the help of a benefit counselor. The tool generates a report that illustrates future earnings and how benefits change over time.

Get started at [MO.DB101.org](https://mo.db101.org)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **March 1, 2023**
Disability Rights Legislative Day, State Capitol, Jefferson City and virtual
<https://drld.org>
- **March 4, 2023**
Virtual Leadership Summit
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/vls.htm>
- **April 3-4, 2023**
Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo, Columbia
<https://at.mo.gov/power-up-conference/>
- **May 2-4, 2023**
Annual Charting the LifeCourse Showcase, Kansas City
<https://www.lifecoursetools.com/events/showcase-2023>
- **July 18-22, 2023**
Missouri Youth Leadership Forum
<https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yf.htm>

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