



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL
ON DISABILITY

GCD: Governor's Council on Disability



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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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RECOGNIZING LEADERS IN INCLUSION AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP

by Claudia Browner

As the year 2023 is coming to a close, the Governor's Council on Disability is looking to honor and recognize this year's leaders in Inclusion and Youth Leadership through its annual Inclusion and Youth Leadership Awards programs.

The [Inclusion Award](#) recognizes and honors Missourians who demonstrate excellence in leadership for best practices in inclusion of individuals with disabilities.

The Inclusion Award and one Honorable Mention are presented annually to recognize private and public employers, individuals, businesses or organizations in Missouri that have worked toward greater disability inclusion by taking exceptional, proactive, and innovative measures to integrate and mainstream people with disabilities into their programs, activities, and operations.

Submit your nominations now for at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/inclusionawards>

The [Youth Leadership Award](#) recognizes exceptional Missouri youths (ages 16-26) with disabilities who exhibit remarkable leadership qualities and make a positive impact in the lives of others in their communities. A youth with a disability shall meet one or more of these criteria to be eligible for the award:

- Demonstrate leadership skills to improve the lives of individuals living with disabilities
- Advocate for positive changes and inclusive practices for the disability community
- Advocate for accessibility of programs or environments
- Engage in activities to promote disability awareness and etiquette

These leadership and advocacy efforts can be demonstrated at a local, regional, or state level.

Submit your nominations now at <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/youthleadershipawards>

New this year, in addition to receiving the recognition award, winners will receive a digital badge to showcase their accomplishments. The badge can be displayed on the winners' websites, letterhead, LinkedIn profiles, email signatures, and resumes.

Nomination deadline for both awards is January 31, 2024. The awards will be presented at the Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo in Columbia in April 2024.

Questions? Call 573-751-2600 or email gcd@oa.mo.gov

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL RESULTS

by Laura Mueth

The 2023 Legislative Priorities Poll (Poll) ended in early November. Five hundred ninety-eight people from 65 counties in Missouri completed it. The 2024 legislative priorities for the Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) will be:

1. The State of Missouri updating websites to include more language that is direct and easy to understand for those with reading or writing difficulties
2. The Personal Care Attendant/Aide/Direct Support Professional workforce providing critical services
3. The legislature providing funding for people to renovate or build homes which would allow them to age in place
4. The State of Missouri ensuring Person First Language is being used on all state associated websites
5. A freeze on property taxes for people with disabilities

The priorities were determined by the Poll questions receiving the highest combined strongly agree and agree response percentages.



The Legislative Priorities Poll report showing the results for all of the questions asked has been posted on the [Annual Legislative Priorities Poll page](#). The report and all open answer responses have been shared with representatives, senators, and elected officials prior to December 1. Thank you to everyone who took the time to contribute this year.

2024 LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION PROJECT COMING SOON

by Laura Mueth



Governor's Council on Disability Legislative Education Project (LEP)

Empower yourself to champion public policies that affect individuals with disabilities in Missouri. A comprehensive understanding of the legislative process can equip you with the necessary tools to effect lasting change.



LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION PROJECT
WEBINARS

REGISTER ONLINE

https://tinyurl.com/LEP-webinar-registration

Join us for one of our free
online webinars by
signing up now!

- January 11, 2024, 9:00-10:30 AM
- February 8, 2024, 7:00-8:30 PM
- March 7, 2024, 9:00-10:30 AM
- March 21, 2024, 1:00-2:30 PM



REGISTER ONLINE

Get Ready for the Webinar!
Visit the [LEP website](#) to access educational videos about the legislative process in Missouri and gather more information.

If you have any questions, please contact us at 573.751.2600 or visit disability.mo.gov/gcd/LEP.htm

The Legislative Education Project (LEP) webinars will be offered again in 2024. These are 90 minute sessions via WebEx discussing Missouri's legislative process, tips for communicating with legislators, and some disability related bills which have been filed. Individuals and groups are welcome to participate. The dates and times are:

- Thursday, January 11, 2024 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM
- Thursday, February 8, 2024 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM
- Thursday, March 7, 2024 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM
- Thursday, March 21, 2024 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM

These are free. However, registration is required. To sign up, complete the [LEP Registration Form](#). If you require accommodations to participate, please register a minimum of two weeks prior to the webinar you will be attending.

If you would like to discuss the offerings, contact Laura Mueth at Laura.Mueth@oa.mo.gov.

To learn more about the LEP or to view related videos, modules, and/or documents, visit the [LEP web page](#).

APPLY NOW FOR THE 2024 MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM

by Rachel Rackers

The [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) planning committee is already gearing up for the 2024 MO-YLF, which will be held July 16–20 at the University of Missouri, Columbia campus.

Each year, the MO-YLF provides high school students with disabilities (ages 16-21) a five-day college setting experience. It brings together approximately 30 students from across Missouri to develop leadership skills and career awareness. Through interactive sessions, delegates gain a deeper understanding of their disabilities and those of their peers, while analyzing strengths and weaknesses to become self-determined individuals. MO-YLF also equips students with knowledge of the legislative process and disability laws, empowering them to advocate for themselves and others.

With visits to the state Capitol and a mock legislative session, delegates learn firsthand how laws are made. The program fosters self-advocacy skills and promotes disability awareness, and connects students with community resources for independent living. Fun group activities facilitate networking and the formation of lifelong friendships. MO-YLF ultimately leaves students with renewed confidence and a clearer vision for their post-secondary goals in education, employment, and independent living. Join MO-YLF for an unforgettable journey of self-discovery and leadership development, together transforming the future for young leaders with disabilities.



MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM
July 16-20, 2024
 University of Missouri
 in Columbia, MO

What topics are covered?

- ✔ SELF-ADVOCACY
- ✔ DISABILITY PRIDE
- ✔ ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY
- ✔ INDEPENDENT LIVING
- ✔ EMPLOYMENT SKILLS
- ✔ HIGHER EDUCATION
- ✔ LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY
- ✔ MENTORSHIP
- ✔ COMMUNITY SERVICE
- ✔ AND MORE!

The Youth Leadership Forum is designed for young adults with disabilities to learn from successful leaders and role models. Participants gain knowledge about their own and others' disabilities, develop self-determination skills, and learn about leadership styles, disability laws, and the legislative process. The forum equips students with the tools to achieve their post-secondary goals in education, employment, and independent living; All while having fun and making lifelong friends!

TO LEARN MORE AND APPLY, VISIT
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/2024YLF](https://tinyurl.com/2024YLF)

APPLICATION DEADLINE IS
 MARCH 31, 2024 **APPLY NOW**

Questions? 573-751-2600 gcd@oa.mo.gov

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

The application deadlines are March 31, 2024, for delegates (youth) and April 15, 2024, for staff/volunteers. There is no cost for accepted delegates to attend the program. The program is funded through sponsorships and donations.

For more information or to apply, visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/yfl>. 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!

MISSOURI YOUTH LEADERSHIP FORUM INFORMATIONAL WEBINARS

by Rachel Rackers



Sign up today for our
LAST MO-YLF webinar
 of 2023!

WEDNESDAY
 December 13, 2023
 6:00-7:00 PM

REGISTER HERE



The Governor's Council on Disability is offering free informational webinars for the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum \(MO-YLF\)](#). Each webinar will include information on what takes place during MO-YLF, what the benefits are for a student to attend, and information on the application process.

All prospective delegates, educators, service providers, and families are welcome to register and attend!

The next webinar will be offered on Wednesday, December 13, 2023, from 6:00-7:00 PM. Registration is required to attend. Please complete the Webinar Registration Form at <https://tinyurl.com/moylwebinar>

Additional webinar dates and times will be added after the new year.

Please visit the [MO-YLF website](#) to register for one of the upcoming dates.

NEWS AND UPDATES FOR THE DISABILITY COMMUNITY

by Claudia Browner

U.S. Department of Transportation publishes Airline Passengers Bill of Rights

The U.S. Department of Transportation, in collaboration with Air Carrier Access Act Advisory Committee to create the **Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights**, which summarizes the fundamental rights of airline passengers with disabilities.

Those rights are:

1. The right to be treated with dignity and respect
2. The right to receive information about services and aircraft capabilities and limitations
3. The right to receive information in an accessible format
4. The right to accessible airport facilities
5. The right to assistance at airports
6. The right to assistance on the aircraft
7. The right to travel with an assistive device or service animal
8. The right to receive seating accommodations
9. The right to accessible aircraft features
10. The right to resolution of a disability-related issue



Watch the [Airline Passengers Bill of Rights YouTube Video](#)

To get more information about the Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights, visit transportation.gov/disabilitybillofrights

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services invests in improving Health Care Access for People with Disabilities

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced more than \$8 million through 18 awards to train primary care medical students, physician assistant students, and medical residents in providing better more appropriate care for individuals with physical, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, and those with limited English proficiency.

More information is available in the complete [news release](#).

Justice Department Issues Guidance on Americans with Disabilities Act and Employment Services for People with Disabilities

The Justice Department's Civil Rights Division has issued this guidance to help state and local governments understand their roles and responsibilities, and people with disabilities understand their rights under the federal law in this area. The guidance provides an overview of the ADA, the ADA's integration mandate, and the types of employment and day services that are often offered to people with disabilities. It then answers nine questions about how the ADA applies to those service systems.

The guidance may be found on [ada.gov](https://www.ada.gov/resources/olmstead-employment-qa/) at <https://www.ada.gov/resources/olmstead-employment-qa/>

Google unveils new accessibility features for Maps, Search & more

Google has recently announced new accessibility features for its Maps, Search, Assistant, Chrome, and additional products. By updating those apps, it will provide features that help individuals with disabilities accomplish tasks easier, such as taking selfies, getting walking directions on Maps, and searching the web. Business owners can now update their business profile to indicate they are "disabled-owned", which could help reach a broader customer base. Additional features include wheelchair-accessible information for more places, new customization options for Assistant routines, and enhanced screen reader capabilities.

More information is available at <https://about.google/belonging/disability-inclusion/product-accessibility/>

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

MO-YLF IS CELEBRATING ITS 20TH PROGRAM YEAR

by Rachel Rackers

The [2024 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) (MO-YLF) will be the state's 20th program year since it was brought to Missouri in 2001.

To celebrate this milestone, the MO-YLF planning committee will be hosting an **Alumni Reunion** in July 2024 at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

We would like to invite all 391 MO-YLF alumni to join us for this exciting event! There will be more details and RSVPs in the upcoming weeks. We hope to see all of you there!

For more information on the [Missouri Youth Leadership Forum](#) program and events, please visit our MO-YLF website at disability.mo.gov/gcd/ylf



Smart Home Technology to meet your goals

by Claudia Browner

The Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation has created a website highlighting their [Smart Homes Made Simple](#) project to raise awareness about how individuals with disabilities can gain control over their environment and live more independently and safely in their own homes using smart home technology.

The website features a Guide to Smart Home Technology and a number of goals to choose from, including communication, controlling the environment, remote supports from a caregiver, personal assistant, safety/security, telehealth/health. A self-assessment is also available for those who are unsure what technologies might assist them in reaching their goals. Find out more at <https://smarthomesmadesimple.org>



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January 3, 2024**
Missouri Legislative Session begins
- **January 11, 2024**
[Emergency Management Disability Awareness Training Follow-Up Webinar](#)
- **March 13, 2024**
[Disability Rights Legislative Day](#)
- **April 8—9, 2024**
[Power Up Assistive Technology Conference & Expo](#) and GCD Awards presentation

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