

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

October 2021

[Click here for Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Monthly Newsletters](#) or find newsletters located on the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs webpage.

GODA Conference

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs hosted its annual conference via Zoom during the week of July 26 - 29, 2021. This year's conference consisted of 18 informative sessions and garnered over 700 attendees. You can access all conference information, including recordings, at this [link](#).

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA)

The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs held their quarterly meetings via Zoom on September 21 and 22. GACDA voted to send a letter to the Louisiana Congressional Delegation requesting support of the ABLE Age Adjustment Act, Build Back Better Act, and Better Care Better Jobs Act.

Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

The Statewide Independent Living Council held their quarterly meetings on August 5 and 6. More recently, SILC held an emergency meeting on September 17, 2021 to finalize matters essential to their goal of being an independent entity outside of a government agency. Approval of bylaws, and the appointment of a Secretary and Vice Chair were completed.

Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition (EMDAC)

Since Hurricane Ida's landfall in late August, the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs has been leading EMDAC meeting to address the ever-evolving needs of the disability and aging communities. EMDAC met three times a week throughout September, and is now meeting weekly.

State as a Model Employer (SAME) Taskforce

In the month of August, the annual SAME survey was sent to all state employees to complete anonymously. 2021 marks the highest participation rate in the annual SAME survey. Master level students are currently putting the SAME data together. Governor Edwards (and other state department heads) also participated in the creation of videos to promote the SAME initiatives. Due to Hurricane Ida, the SAME Taskforce did not meet during the month of September.

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2021 GOLD Awards & Inclusive Art Contest

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is proud to continue its rich tradition of hosting both the Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities (GOLD) Awards and the Inclusive Art Contest. The nomination form for the 2021 GOLD Awards can be found [here](#). The 2021 Inclusive Art Contest flyer can be found [here](#). The deadline for submissions for both programs is November 1st, 2021.

The 2021 Inclusive Art Contest has expanded its submission categories! In addition to the visual art categories, there will be categories for written art. Contest participants may submit literary works (such as poems, essays, speeches, etc., limited to 300 words) that illustrate or describe this year's theme, "Accessibility of the Future."

REV UP & National Disability Voter Registration Week

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is taking the lead to form a Louisiana's REV UP Coalition. Because of this, GODA participated in National Disability Voter Registration Week (NDVRW)! NDVRW took place from September 13-20, 2021 and is a national, nonpartisan campaign to register, educate, and prepare voters with disabilities for the 2021 elections and beyond. While in-person events were not possible due to COVID-19, GODA reached out to 20+ disability and non-disability organization requesting their help in promoting NDVRW and the disability vote.

Disability Employment Awareness Month

Governor John Bel Edwards has proclaimed October as "[Disability Employment Awareness Month](#)" in Louisiana! Every October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) offers us an opportunity to celebrate the many contributions of people with disabilities to America's workplaces and economy. This year's NDEAM theme, "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion," reflects the importance of ensuring that people with disabilities have full access to employment and community involvement during the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.