

**Governor's Office of Disability Affairs**  
**Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**October 2023**

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

**2023 GOLD Awards and Inclusive Arts Contest**

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs is both the [Governor's Outstanding Leadership in Disabilities \(GOLD\) Awards](#) and the [Inclusive Art Contest](#) on Monday, November 13 at the Old State Capitol. The GOLD Awards recognizes extraordinary people and organizations who have contributed their time and talents to benefit the lives of people with disabilities in Louisiana. The award categories are:

- Distinguished Merit Award
- Patsy Barrett Memorial Award
- Ken Vince Memorial Award
- April Dunn Youth of the Year
- Educator of the Year
- Family of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year
- Employer of the Year
- Service Provider of the Year
- Direct Support Professional of the Year
- Veteran of the Year
- Service Animal of the Year
- Elected Official of the Year
- Public Servant of the Year



The [Inclusive Art Contest](#) enables participants to increase awareness of the importance of inclusion in today's society through artistic expression. Entries should illustrate or describe ideas related to this year's theme: "Nothing About Us Without Us" The Inclusive Art Contest is open to any resident of Louisiana, with and without disabilities of any age. A medal and special recognition from Governor John Bel Edwards will be presented to the winners.

*The nomination form for the 2023 GOLD Awards can be found at <https://bit.ly/GOLDnomination>. **The deadline for submissions for both the 2023 GOLD Awards and Inclusive Art Contest is October 31st!***

## **Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA) Conference**

The GODA Conference was held virtually July 24 – 27. For all of the session recordings, go to <https://bit.ly/GODAconf23sched>.

## **Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition (EMDAC)**

[The Louisiana Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition](#) (EMDAC) has updated the Louisiana Guide to Supports & Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Elders and Their Families Affected by Disasters. This guide provides the description and contact information of state agencies, education services, communication, transportation, advocacy and support groups, and disability specific organizations. To view this guide, click this [link](#).

In August and September, EMDAC Members presented “Let’s Make a *Real* Emergency Preparedness Plan” to Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) providers at each of their regional meetings.

EMDAC has been hosting monthly Lunch & Learns. Find the links to the recordings, information on upcoming Lunch & Learns, and other useful information at <http://www.bit.ly/EMDACinfo>.

## **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**

[The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) (ODEP) has chosen “Advancing Access and Equity” as its theme for [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#) in 2023. Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of America’s workers with disabilities past and present and showcases supportive, inclusive policies and practices that benefit employees and employers alike. Similarly, ODEP will use “**Advancing Access and Equity: Then, Now and Next**” to celebrate the passage of the Rehabilitation Act a half-century ago and its importance in prohibiting discrimination based on disability in employment by federal agencies, federal contractors and recipients of federal funds, and in the delivery of federally funded programs and activities. ODEP will use the theme to promote activities to mark passage of the act, the first federal legislation to address access and equity for people with disabilities.