

**Governor's Office of Disability Affairs (GODA)**  
**Office of Governor Jeff Landry**  
**Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council**  
**April 2024**

**New GODA Staff Announced!**

Jamar Ennis was hired as the GODA Executive Director April 8, 2024. Jamar served in various roles within the Office of the Governor and GODA during the past three consecutive gubernatorial administrations. Jamar returns to GODA after serving as the Executive Director of The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) of Louisiana, a non-profit 501(c)(3) formerly housed within the Office of the Governor.

Liam Doyle has been serving as GODA Assistant Director since March 18, 2024. Liam is longtime disability affairs advocate and nationally certified ADA Coordinator. Prior to the Assistant Director role, he served as the first Disability Affairs Coordinator for Lafayette Consolidated Government from 2017-2020. Most recently Liam held the position of GODA Senior Coordinator from March 2023-March 2024.

A frequent public speaker, Doyle has given talks around the country that include giving a 2016 Tedx Talk entitled "The View From Here: My Path to Disability Advocacy", serving as a panelist at the 2017 GODA ADA Symposium, and being selected as a featured speaker for the Pacific Rim International Conference on Disability and Diversity in 2020.

**GODA Encourages The Council To Connect with Us**

The Landry Administration would like to interface with constituents, advocates, and members of the DD Council in perpetuity. To this end, GODA has an open door policy for members of the DD council to discuss all matters relative improving services for the disability community, including but not limited to disability related legislation, policy, programs, events, etc. Please reach out to Jamar or Liam via email to schedule an appointment.

Jamar Ennis  
[jamar.ennis@la.gov](mailto:jamar.ennis@la.gov)  
(phone number tbd)

Liam Doyle  
[liam.doyle@la.gov](mailto:liam.doyle@la.gov)  
225-219-7753

GODA Office  
1051 N Third St  
Baton Rouge, LA 70801

### **GODA Newsletter and Request for Content**

Please transmit any updates, events, programs on behalf of the DD Council for inclusion in our monthly newsletter. Please email content in an accessible digital format to [disability.affairs@la.gov](mailto:disability.affairs@la.gov) by the 23<sup>rd</sup> of each month.

### **GODA Website**

The GODA webpage is in the process of being updated to reflect the most recent changes and updates in staff.

### **GACDA Updates**

Governor Landry recently signed Executive Order JML 24-42 that extends The Governor's Advisory Council for Disability Affairs (GACDA) through the current administration.

### **March GACDA Meetings:**

Accessibility Committee- Monday March 18

Legislative Committee- Friday March 15

Education Committee- Friday March 15

Full Council Meeting- Wednesday March 20

Upcoming Full GACDA Meeting Scheduled for Wednesday June 19 1-4 PM

The main focus of these meetings were the current legislative session. Additionally our members and stakeholders offered updates for ongoing projects and updates from our state agency partners.

*Link to GACDA Executive Order:*

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/ExecutiveOrders/2024/JML-Executive-Order-42.pdf>

GACDA is currently accepting applications for membership, if you are interested please apply via the Louisiana Boards and Commissions webpage:

*Boards and Commissions Webpage:*

<https://gov.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/form/home/14>

## **2024 Regular Legislative Session**

GODA continues to monitor and track disability related legislation stemming from the 2024 Regular Legislative session. Please contact Jamar to discuss concerns relative to pending legislation at any time.

Please find the latest legislative tracking tool:

<https://bit.ly/24GODALegis>

## **GODA partners with Old Governor's Mansion for Disability Advocacy Exhibit**

Discover an overlooked moment in U.S. history when people with disabilities occupied a government building to win their rights. The exhibit Patient No More: People with Disabilities Securing Civil Rights will be on display at Louisiana's Old State Capitol from April 2-May 25, 2024.

The exhibition uncovers the stories behind a turbulent April in 1977, when people with disabilities successfully launched protests across the nation to get Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 signed into law.

Section 504 made it illegal for any federally funded facilities or programs to discriminate against people with disabilities, but as of 1977, one missing signature stood in the way of the law taking effect. After a 26-day occupation of the Federal Building in San Francisco, the occupiers emerged victorious from the longest unarmed take-over of a federal building in U.S. history when the Head of Health Education and Welfare finally added his signature to the 504 regulations.

In this exhibition, visitors will get a chance to appreciate how the occupiers-built networks of support, from unions to the Black Panthers; how protesters influenced the media and changed the language used to cover the protest; and the controversies of 504, especially in regard to race and deafness.

Above all, this exhibition reminds all of us that disabilities are a source of creativity and innovation, not pity or tragedy.

Patient No More is presented by the Paul K. Longmore Institute on Disability at San Francisco State University, made possible with support from California Humanities, and traveled by Exhibit Envoy.

Louisiana's Old State Capitol is a free museum open Tuesday-Friday from 10-4 and Saturday from 9-3.

It is located at 100 North Blvd, Baton Rouge, LA 70801.  
Call 225-342-0500 for more information.