

Louisiana's Disability History and Legacy Makers

Concept Paper submitted by Disability Access Solutions to the LADDC, March 2025

Issue to be addressed: Disability Access Solutions (DAS) submits the current Concept Paper in anticipation of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council's support to create a web-based archive entitled "Louisiana's Disability History and Legacy Makers." The archive will detail the history of Louisiana's disability community with accounts of community members (living and deceased) and their contributions, notable legislation, and societal changes. Multimedia artifacts (photos, audio and video clips, and/or publications) will be included to enhance the users' experience. It is our belief that this project is in alignment with the LADDC's mission, "to increase independence, self-determination, productivity, integration, and inclusion for Louisianans with developmental disabilities by engaging in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change" (<https://laddc.org/>). We, as a community, need to have a working knowledge of our history in order to be more informed advocates and fulfill the council's mission of **"engaging in advocacy, capacity building, and systems change."** The American History in Schools and Colleges (1944, Chapter 2) states: "...knowledge of the past is the guide to acting in the present and planning for the future. It is hard to see how a community could exist without a sense of its past" (Retrieved from: <https://www.historians.org/resource/american-history-in-schools-and-colleges-why-should-americans-know-their-own-history/>).

This project should increase the understanding of the history of Louisiana's disability community leading to more informed advocates for personal and systems change.

Plan for addressing the issue: The work outlined in this Concept Paper offers opportunities for the employment and engagement of people with disabilities throughout the entirety of the development process. The contractor must respect the words and events included in this project by adhering to research practices that are in-depth and methodical and, as such, this project is anticipated to take 3 years to complete. For each year, there should be an expectation of the completion of 20 profiles of individuals, locations, and/or legislation/policies (inclusive of photos, videos, and/or publications when available).

Community partners: The team at DAS has met and discussed this project with The Guilbeau Center for Public History at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in anticipation of a partnership utilizing their expertise and technology resources to create the highest quality archival product. Additionally, we have consulted with Ms. Connie Milton, Reference and Instruction Librarian, regarding the research process, timelines, and common research challenges. She has offered ongoing consultation in this project.

Research process inclusive of the statewide disability community: A portion of the information included in the archive should be crowdsourced to ensure representation of the diversity of Louisiana's disability community. A request for submissions should be distributed through the statewide disability support organizations' listserv, social media, and websites. Submissions should be reviewed using a rubric with standardized inclusion criteria. When possible, in-person interviews should be conducted with contributors and/or their families. Available photos, audio and video clips, and/or publications should be scanned and uploaded to be embedded in the archive. With the guidance of The Guilbeau Center for Public History at UL Lafayette, or similar entity,

archival research should be conducted to include information that has already been collected and archived in state and university databases.

Overcoming barriers to access: By hosting this archive on a website, the information should be available to anyone with internet access. The project design should incorporate accessibility strategies including adherence to Section 508 (which outline accessibility features for digital content), plain language guidelines, use of alt text, and screen reader compatibility. The project aims to increase access to information and minimize barriers of transportation, physical accessibility, and access to understanding.

Expected outcomes: The archive should be fully accessible and housed on LADDC's website; serve as a reliable, accurate, and unbiased source of information about Louisiana's disability history; and increase access for everyone to Louisiana's disability history.

Anticipated Costs (To be replicated in Year 2 and Year 3, if funded):

The anticipated cost is \$2000 per fully developed profile. This is inclusive of all costs necessary to complete the profile. With the expectation of 20 profiles per year, the total anticipated cost is \$40,000 per year.

Cost of processing/assimilating technology: This is anticipated to be minimal if there is a partnership with The Guilbeau Center for Public History at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette or similar entity. The contractor should utilize the publicly available equipment to reduce expenses, such as video and still cameras, a podcast studio and conference room, sound and video editing software, and historical collection software.