

Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

Report to the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council

April 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.

Call for Proposals: 2023 GODA Conference

GODA has begun planning for its 2023 Conference! Proposals to speak are being accepted at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GODAproposals23>. If you have more than one idea, please submit a separate proposal for each. Priority selection will be given to proposals that include people with disabilities. The Annual GODA Conference is scheduled the week of July 24 – 27, 2023, to coincide with the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Email us if you're interested in being a panelist on any of the following panels:

- Multi-generational caregiving panel (i.e. child and spouse, or child and parent, etc)
- Single fathers to children with disabilities
- Experience of women with disabilities accessing healthcare
- Intersectionality of disability and any of the following:
race, language, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, etc.

Contact KJ Henry, Assistant Director of Disability Affairs, at keandria.henry@la.gov or 225.936.1742 if you have any questions. Proposals to speak are due by **April 24th, 2023**.

Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs 2023 Legislative Items

GACDA has released its legislative recommendations for the 2023 Louisiana Legislative Regular Session, which will convene on Monday, April 10th. With this year's session being an odd-numbered year, the 2023 Louisiana Legislative Regular Session is generally limited to fiscal matters- although each legislator may file up to five non-fiscal bills.

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs created a spreadsheet at <https://bit.ly/23GODALegis> to track disability-related legislation. The link is updated multiple times a day. At the last quarterly meetings, the Governor's Advisory Council took position (support/oppose) on approximately 25 legislative instruments. You can find this information, along with the positions of other disability-focused organizations, in Column F of the spreadsheet.

HCR14 of 2022 Disability Voting Task Force Legislative Items

Representative Willard authored [HB449](#) which provides relative to the rights of voters with disabilities and Representative Glover authored [HB553](#) which provides for appointment of a voter with disabilities to the State Board of Election Supervisors.

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SR147 of 2022 Remote Operations of Public Meetings Task Force

Legislative Items

Senator Hewitt has authored [SB201](#) which provides for meetings of boards and commissions via electronic means.

Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) for EarlySteps

The Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council's last meeting took place on January 12, 2023. They received their quarterly reports and discussed updates. The next quarterly Statewide Interagency Coordinating Council will occur on April 13, 2023. Outreach Specialist Kristie Curtis with Families Helping Family, Region 4, will be the guest speaker. This meeting will be held in a hybrid format; if you choose to attend in person, the meeting will be in the Thomas Jefferson in the Claiborne Building. Please contact Alishia Vallien, Executive Director of SICC, at alishia.vallien@la.gov for more information.

Louisiana Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition (EMDAC)

The Louisiana Emergency Management Disability and Aging Coalition (EMDAC) will host a Lunch & Learn on Access to Assistive Technology in Disasters. The Lunch & Learn will be presented by Yakima Black, Executive Director of [Louisiana Assistive Technology Access Network \(LATAN\)](#). The Lunch & Learn will be held via zoom on Thursday, May 4 from 12pm to 1pm. Register at <https://bit.ly/emdac-latan>

Louisiana Commission for the Deaf

The Louisiana Commission for the Deaf (LCD), is excited to announce its latest development of a public-facing, statewide American Sign Language Interpreter Registry in an effort to provide an easily accessible, centralized platform to identify and locate interpreters in your area! We are inviting all Interpreters to join the registry by completing the application process and creating your own personal account online. Once the application has been successfully submitted, an LCD administrative staff will review and process your application. LCD is encouraging all interpreters regardless of your availability status to join the growing roster of Registered Interpreters in Louisiana. We are kindly requesting consumers, providers, and interpreters to bear with us as we grow the list of interpreters in the state of Louisiana. You can access the registry by visiting the LCD's Program website [here](#). The LCD upcoming meetings for year of 2023 are on the following Fridays from 9:00am - 1:00 pm: April 21, July 21, and October 20.

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Special School District

The Special School District named Dr. David Martin as the New Superintendent. Before serving as the superintendent at the Tennessee School for the Blind for six years, Dr. Martin worked in the Department of Defense School System for seven years as an elementary school principal and in various other administrative roles since starting his administrator career in 2010. Dr. Martin stated that relationships are essential to him, so he believes in leading through and building relationships with the communities he serves. His goal is to create a solid network of support for the school district and the students being operated, with the broader special education and disability advocacy groups. It is important to him that every decision made is student-centered. In February of this year, Dr. Martin met with members from the Louisiana Commission Deaf (LCD) and Louisiana Association of the Deaf (LAD). He will also speak with some National Federation of the Blind (NFB) members during their state conference on April 15, 2023.

Autism Acceptance Month

Governor Edwards Proclaims April as Autism Acceptance Month Governor John Bel Edwards has proclaimed April as Autism Acceptance Month! The shift in verbiage from "Autism Awareness Month" to "Autism Acceptance Month" represents a shift in focus from awareness to acceptance of autism as a natural part of human diversity. Join us as we celebrate autistic people/people with autism for who they are and the value they bring to our community. View the proclamation at following link: [Autism Acceptance Month Proclamation](#)

Welcoming Liam Doyle, Senior Coordinator

GODA welcomes new Senior Coordinator, Liam Doyle. Liam is a political science graduate of UL Lafayette and a longtime disability affairs advocate and nationally certified ADA Coordinator. He has worked with the Mayor-President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities for nearly three years. Doyle became the first Disability Affairs Coordinator for Lafayette Consolidated Government. Liam was able to become a frequent collaborator and partner to the GODA staff in various iterations. In 2019, Liam decided to become a certified ADA Coordinator, working through the Great Plains ADA Center.