



The Governor's Office of **DISABILITY AFFAIRS**

GODA Executive Director's Report 7/30/26

GODA:

The 2026 GODA Conference is scheduled for Aug 5-6 at the W.C.C. Claiborne building in The Louisiana Purchase Room. The conference is in-person only and will run from 8:30 AM-3:15 PM.

Accessible parking will be limited to first come first serve at the Claiborne.

(Conference Agenda on page 2)

GODA recently welcomed student intern Douglas Dupree who will be working in our office until August. Doug's main project during his time in the office is working on a reform of the statewide accessible parking procedures and practices.

GODA put out a PSA in partnership with LDH that deals with summertime water safety for children with exceptionalities and their families that can be found on the LDH Facebook page and GODA website.

GACDA:

The Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) has been participating in its roadshow program where GODA staff and GACDA members meet with members of various disability awareness committees and local stakeholders. The intent of these meetings is to meet the community members where they are and assess how we can be of assistance with their projects as a state agency.

Additionally, the GACDA meeting following these visits serves as a way for the local agencies and stakeholders to come together in one meeting and share their projects and progress with one another and remove some of the natural silos that can occur.

Our stops thus far have included Lafayette and Lake Charles with plans to visit Shreveport and New Orleans soon.

The next GACDA meeting will focus primarily on the Lake Charles region and is scheduled for Wednesday August 19, from 9:00 AM-12:30 PM at the Louisiana State Capitol 4th floor Governor's Press Room.

The Governor's Office of Disability Affairs

1051 N Third Street Baton Rouge, LA 70801

225-219-7553 disability.affairs@la.gov

Day 1 – Wednesday, August 5, 2026

8:30 – 9:00	Registration & Welcome
9:00 – 10:00	Session1: Disability-Specific Strategies for Emergency Preparedness (Nicole DeJean & Jessica Michot)
10:00 – 10:10	Break
10:10 – 10:45	Session 2: Benefit Programs for Louisiana’s Disabled Veterans (Larry Williams)
10:45 – 11:00	Break
11:00 – 12:00	Session 3: Louisiana Guidelines for Working with Deaf/Hard of Hearing Students: How to Provide Specialized Services for Your D/HH Learners (Dr. Ashley Argrave-Smith & Dr. Rachel Speed)
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	Session 4: Beyond the Checklist: Inclusive & Accessible Journeys (Adrienne Thomas & Tennille Harrison)
2:00 – 2:10	Break
2:10 – 2:40	Session 5: From Silos to Solutions: When Well-Meaning Policies Fail Neurodivergent Families (Drew Walker)
2:45 – 3:15	Session 6: Winning with What You Have: Turning Obstacles into Opportunities (RaShad Bristo)

Day 2 – Thursday, August 6, 2026

8:30 – 9:00	Registration & Welcome
9:00 – 10:00	Session1: 988 & 211 in Louisiana: Navigating Resources and Support with Ease (Sherrard Crespo)
10:00 – 10:10	Break
10:10 – 10:45	Session 2: How to Effectively Tell Your Disability Story to Policymakers (Dr. Ashley Volion)
10:45 – 11:00	Break

11:00 – 12:00	Session 3: From Early Intervention to Graduation: How Louisiana Supports Deaf and Hard of Hearing Individuals (Ivette Perez)
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	Session 4: Connecting Through Communication: Practical Strategies for Engaging Families of Children with Disabilities (Christina Kozik & Julie McKinney)
2:00 – 2:10	Break
2:10 – 2:40	Session 5: Families Helping Families: Who We Are & What We Do (Jacki Pierce)
2:45 – 3:15	Session 6: Be Prepared: Postsecondary & Beyond (Lettie Goings)