Annual Public Forums on the Concerns of People with Disabilities & Their Families

RI Governor's Commission on Disabilities
ABOUT THE COMMISSION

Founded in 1956, the Rhode Island Governor’s Commission on Disabilities (RIGCD) ensures that all people with disabilities are afforded the opportunities to exercise all the rights and responsibilities accorded to citizens of this state, and that each person with a disability is able to reach their maximum potential in independence, human development, productivity and self-sufficiency.

ANNUAL PUBLIC FORUMS

Since 2001, the Commission has invited state and community agencies, consumer and parent advocacy organizations to jointly sponsor a week-long series of public forums on the concerns of people with disabilities and their families. Held throughout the state, the forums serve as the starting point for developing legislation for the following year. Held during the week of the anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, these forums have led to a broader legislative agenda and highlight the fact that individuals with disabilities often need services from multiple agencies at the same time.
This toolkit contains the following resources to help promote our annual forums:

1. Public Forums Schedule
2. Social Media Toolkit, including ideas for Facebook and Twitter posts
3. Annual Public Forum press release
4. Outcomes from past forums
5. How to sponsor the forums
PUBLIC FORUM SCHEDULE

Monday, July 22nd
Rogers Free Library
525 Hope Street, Bristol RI 02809
2:30-4:30 P.M.

Tuesday, July 23rd
Peacedale Public Library
1057 Kingstown Rd, Wakefield RI 02879
3:30-5:30 P.M.

Wednesday, July 24th
Warwick Public Library, Central Branch
600 Sandy Lane, Warwick RI 02886
3-5 PM
AND

Wednesday, July 24th
Woonsocket Harris Public Library
303 Clinton St, Woonsocket RI 02895
5-7 PM

Wednesday, July 31st
CCRI Liston Campus
1 Hilton St, Providence RI 02905
3-5 PM

Wednesday, August 7th
Middletown Public Library
700 W. Main Road, Middletown RI 02842
4-6 PM
SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

- Come join us at one of our events near you this July! Share your ideas to better your community for individuals with disabilities and their families.
- We invite you to our forums this July to continue breaking barriers to make the community more accessible for people with disabilities.
- Mark your dates! We will be having a week long series of public forums in July to listen to you. We are here to help.
- Celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act anniversary with us at our forums. These events are about your issues and concerns for the community.
- This July, we are once again hosting a week of forums to hear your voice and provide resources for your needs.
- During the last week of July, the RIGCD is hosting forums in different locations to listen to the concerns of individuals with disabilities. Check their website http://www.gcd.ri.gov to find the dates and times for each event!
- There will be several forums held by the RI Governor’s Commission on Disabilities to hear from you and your community. They want to hear your ideas and goals to better your community. The dates and times for each meeting will be posted to their calendar. Visit http://www.gcd.ri.gov for more information.
PRESS RELEASE

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed by President George Bush on July 26, 1990. The ADA protects the civil rights of people with disabilities. In 2001, the RI Governor’s Commission on Disabilities (GCD) organized a week of public forums to listen about the concerns that families and individuals had. The forums were held in different communities in Rhode Island to be able to get a wide range of issues and needs. State and community agencies, consumer and parent advocacy organizations sponsor these meetings. They join us to provide the necessary resources to help individuals and their families. The GCD welcomes everyone to come to the forums. They are held in the last week of July. These gatherings are meant for your voice to be heard. The commissioners want to continue to make a difference for people of disabilities. Everyone deserves equal opportunity and rights.

You can find out more about the public forums at our website www.gcd.ri.gov. On the homepage, you will find a calendar that will show the dates and times for each event. If you have any more questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at 401-462-0100 or email Alyssa Gleason at Alyssa.gleason@gcd.ri.gov.

Sign the ADA Pledge!
Become a part of our nationwide community of advocacy for people of disabilities.
https://www.adaanniversary.org/pledge
REMARKABLE OUTCOMES FROM PAST FORUMS

- Establishing a Medicaid Managed Care option for adults with disabilities, which will assist families in navigating through the chronic health care systems;
- Providing a cost of living adjustment for (Medicaid) personal care attendants;
- Establishing a crisis intervention service for adults with severe impairments who have been abused or assaulted by a care giver;
- Funding comprehensive instate transitional services for individuals with traumatic brain injury;
- Allowing accessory family dwelling unit in a single-family residence as a reasonable accommodation for family-members with disabilities in any residential area;
- Creating a network of wheelchair accessible taxicabs, funded by the federal New Freedom Initiative;
- Extending the RI Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Elderly co-payments to people on SSDI between 55 and 65;
- Funding through the Neighborhood Opportunities Program to create more affordable and accessible housing;
- Establishing a Medicaid Buy-In Program for persons with disabilities who are eligible for Medicaid allowing them to return to work while retaining Medicaid coverage;
- Requiring the installation of curb cuts and/or ramps at both ends of any pedestrian crosswalk;
- Providing a community living option to all persons who have a disability and are sixty-five (65) years of age or younger in order to allow those individuals the choice to live in a less restrictive community-based environment or their own home environment;
- Extending the RI Pharmaceutical Assistance for the Elderly to include state co-payments to people on SSDI between 55 and 65;
- Authorizing the Secretary of State to utilize "state-of-the-art" voting technology to expand special ballot services to a wide range of voters with disabilities;
- Requiring zoning ordinances to provide standards and requirements for the review and approval of drive-through windows (of any type), including taking into account pedestrian safety and access for people with disabilities;
SPONSORSHIPS

INTERESTED IN SPONSORING A FORUM?
SPONSORSHIP FORMS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.GCD.RI.GOV

Sponsorship Levels:

**Friends of the Forums ($50-$100):**
- Your organization listed in the forums' brochure as a Friend of the Forums
- Opportunity to have an organization representative as a panelist at the forum of your choice

**Forum Sponsor ($100+):**
- Opportunity to have an organization representative as a panelist at the forum of your choice;
- Opportunity to participate in one of the working groups reviewing the testimony, identifying concerns voiced at the forums and drafting recommendations that will be sent to the Governor, General Assembly, Congressional Delegation and agency directors;
- A description of your organization’s services in the forums' brochure

Unable to sponsor, but would still like to distribute information about the forums to your network? Please contact Alyssa Gleason at Alyssa.Gleason@gcd.ri.gov.