

Director's Message

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Date: Feb. 24, 2026

To: I/DD community members and ODDS staff

From: Acacia McGuire Anderson, Director
Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS)

Subject: Celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

Hello,

I'm excited that my first ODDS message is to promote Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month. Before I share more about the month's events, I want to thank all of you who've welcomed me back to the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). It feels like coming home. I'm honored to serve you as director of ODDS. I've spent my career advocating for members of the intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) community. I look forward to working with all of you to support individuals to live the lives they want.

Since I started last week, I've been connecting with ODHS leadership and ODDS staff. I'm eager to meet with self-advocates and partners. I'll reach out

in the coming weeks and months as I get settled. In the meanwhile, let's celebrate DD Awareness Month!

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

The Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities (OCDD), the Oregon Self-Advocacy Coalition (OSAC) and The Arc of Oregon planned the state's celebration. They've chosen the theme: "Nothing About Us Without Us." This slogan has been a main rallying cry for self-advocates and the Disability Rights Movement since the 1990s. These words remind us that all we do in service of the I/DD community starts with self-advocates, their experience and, most importantly, their participation.

Here are some ways to get involved and promote DD awareness in March. Go to the [OCDD website for the full schedule and more resources](#).

Kickoff event March 3 online

Council Chair Kelly McCauley will read Governor Tina Kotek's DD Awareness Month proclamation. The council will share a toolkit and ways to promote DD Awareness.

- **Date:** March 3
- **Time:** Noon to 1 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (PST)
- **Attend remotely:** [Use this Zoom link to join the kickoff event](#).

Main event: In- person celebration March 10 in Salem

Join OCDD, community leaders and ODDS for a celebration in Salem. You can come in person or join online. Community Vision's Housing Access Director Allen Hines will give the keynote speech. OCDD will reveal the DD Awareness Month poster. Guests can mingle and eat cake. I look forward to seeing you there.

- **Date:** March 10
- **Time:** 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (PDT)
- **Attend in-person:** Lobby area, Barbara Roberts Human Services Building, 500 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR 97301
- **Attend remotely:** [Use this Zoom link to join the main event.](#)
- **Full event information:** [Go to the OCDD website to learn more.](#)

Panel discussions

OCDD is hosting online panels. Self-advocates and family members will share their experiences. They'll talk about self-advocacy across generations. They'll also discuss how people and groups can support advocacy. Please [check the council's website for the most updated information.](#)

- **Schedule:**
 - March 17 — Noon to 1:30 p.m. PDT
 - March 24 — 5 to 6:30 p.m. PDT

- March 31 — Time and topic are pending
- **Attend remotely:** [Use this Zoom link to join the panel discussions.](#)

Event accessibility, resources and information

We want everyone to feel welcome and safe. These events will have free support, including American Sign Language and Spanish interpreters. If you need any other support to participate fully, please contact OCDD at info@ocdd.org or 971-225-3659.

Get [more information about these events and resources on the council's DD Awareness Month web page.](#)

More ways to promote DD Awareness

Do you know someone who needs services?

- Show them the ODDS services and eligibility web page. It has information about our services and how to apply.
- Help them contact their county's community developmental disabilities program (CDDP). These programs do the intake and planning for services. Here is the contact information for CDDPs.
- Give them this link to sign up for ODDS updates.
- If you know about other DD Awareness Month events, please email them to us at dd.directoroffice@odhsoha.oregon.gov. We may share them on [our Facebook page](#).

Thank you, all, for promoting DD awareness. Thank you, OCDD, OSAC and The Arc, for leading the state's celebration. I'll see you at the big event on March 10.

I look forward to working with all of you in the coming years.

Sincerely,



Acacia McGuire Anderson, Director
[Office of Developmental Disabilities Services](#)
Oregon Department of Human Services

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Resources

- Sign up for [ODDS updates](#).
- Learn about [ODDS events](#).
- Sign up for [Oregon Department of Human Services updates](#).
- Read [messages from ODDS](#).
- Follow us on [Facebook @oregondhs.idd](#)