

## **On Target**

Informing Indiana About Disability Issues  
Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities  
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## Indiana celebrates Disability Awareness Month

Hoosiers statewide are commemorating Disability Awareness Month, sponsored by the Governor's Council and themed "Disable the Label." March was proclaimed Disability Awareness Month by Gov. Mitch Daniels to celebrate and raise awareness of the many contributions people with disabilities make throughout Hoosier communities.

Lakeland High School, which was honored with a Council Community Spirit Award for its outstanding 2008 campaign, continued its efforts this year with unique activities that engaged the community.

Located in northern Indiana, the school hosted its annual Disability Awareness Relay for Life Walk on March 20. The hour walk includes nine school corporations and mimicks the American Cancer Society's (ACS) 24-hour walk, as well as offers games, activities and a special lunch.

Last year's event raised \$1,400 for the Relay for Life. Event leaders Sue Keenan from Lakeland High School, Stephanie Ray from Westview High School and Marty Hayward of ACS believe this year's event will be even more successful. All participants wore T-shirts displaying this year's theme, as well as distributed campaign stickers and posters throughout the participating schools.

Also targeting widespread community involvement in Disability Awareness Month is Peru resident Michael Hines, who leads a support group for people with disabilities in the greater Peru area. Hines and his team planned several activities and events across the community. Throughout March, the group will speak to elementary, middle and high school students in Miami County school systems. The presentations will include a portion on Braille, and students will receive campaign materials such as stickers, coloring books and educational information with this year's theme, "Disable the Label." Elementary students will also participate in a community-wide coloring contest.

In addition, Hines' group escorted the sheriff, fire chief, parks department chair and other city officials on a tour of the city on March 9, which was declared Community Awareness Day in Peru. The team visited public places, such as the local license branch, where accessibility has become a concern.

Lastly, the group is hosting a carry-out chicken noodle dinner on March 28 at St. John's Lutheran School to raise money for vibrating and talking signals for crosswalks in Peru. For more details, call (765) 473-6787 or (765) 472-0722.

In addition to these efforts, Hoosiers statewide are making great strides to influence positive attitudes about and perceptions of people with disabilities in their own

communities. For resources and materials to help you conduct your own Disability Awareness Month activities, visit [www.indianadisabilityawareness.org](http://www.indianadisabilityawareness.org), the Council's disability awareness Web site.

## New project to boost use of audio description

In January, The American Council of the Blind (ACB) announced a new project aimed at increasing the use of audio description throughout the nation. With the new Audio Description Project (ADP), the ACB hopes to raise awareness of audio description among the general public, as well as among people who have visual impairments and benefit from description services.

Throughout the year, ACB plans to implement a wide range of activities as part of the new project, such as trainings and disseminating information about audio description. The project is also expected to encourage studies about the service.

"Audio description uses words that are succinct, vivid and imaginative to convey the visual image from television, film, DVDs, theater, museums and many other settings," Mitch Pomerantz, president of the ACB, said in a news release.

"Without description, many elements of our culture are unavailable to us. Description helps people who are blind become more informed, more socially aware citizens."

To learn more about audio description, visit [www.adinternational.org](http://www.adinternational.org).

## New study tackles employment from employers' perspectives

In the United States, more than 470,000 companies — 19.1 percent — are employing people with disabilities, according to a new study from the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). The 2008 "Survey of Employer Perspectives on the Employment of People with Disabilities" also reported that more than 326,000 companies, 13.6 percent, are actively recruiting employees with disabilities.

This unique study collected data from employers' perspectives by comparing attitudes and practices of employers across 12 industry sectors, including government, manufacturing and construction, while also evaluating companies of varying sizes. These comparisons are intended to identify patterns in employment policies and practices. ODEP says it will use the data to formulate targeted strategies and policies for increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

There were 3,797 companies that responded to the survey, a sample size that represents almost 2.5 million employers. Key findings were divided into several categories:

### **Employing people with disabilities**

10.7 percent of small companies (five to 14 employees), 22.6 percent of medium-sized companies (15 to 249 employees) and 53.1 percent of large companies (250 or more employees) report employing people with disabilities.

### **Recruiting people with disabilities**

- 33.8 percent of larger companies actively recruit people with disabilities, while only 7.8 percent of smaller companies report doing so.
- Public administration organizations are more likely to actively recruit than their private sector counterparts.

### **Hiring/advancing people with disabilities**

- 215,344 companies, 8.7 percent, report having hired people with disabilities in the past year.
- 72.6 percent of all companies said the nature of some types of work prevented the work from being effectively performed by a person with a disability. Attitudes of co-workers or supervisors are the least frequently cited challenges.
- The cost of employing people with disabilities and the belief that workers with disabilities lack the skills and experience necessary are the most often cited concerns for small and mid-sized companies, while supervisor uncertainty about how to take disciplinary action is cited most often for large companies.

### **Retaining employees with disabilities**

For companies that currently employ people with disabilities, visible commitment from top management is an important strategy in retaining people with disabilities. Small and mid-sized companies are more likely to cite employer tax credits as a retention strategy, while large companies most often cite mentoring as the top strategy for retention.

### **Knowledge of resources**

- One-Stop Career Centers provide a single point of assistance to job seekers and employers, including training referrals, career counseling and job listings. 25 percent of employers are aware of local One-Stop Career Centers, and 15.3 percent reported using the services.
- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN) is a service that provides information on job accommodations, entrepreneurship and related subjects. Of the 7.4 percent of companies that are familiar with JAN services, 27.7 percent report using the services.
- The Employer Assistance and Recruiting Network (EARN) is a service of ODEP that assists employers in locating and recruiting qualified workers with disabilities and provides technical assistance on disability employment-related issues. Of the 8

percent of companies that are familiar with EARN services, 12.4 percent use the services.

To read the full report, visit [www.dol.gov/odep](http://www.dol.gov/odep) and click on the “Research” tab. Or, call the Department of Labor at (866) 633-7365 (toll free) or (877) 889-5627 (TTY, toll free).

## Obama and Biden promise change

As we enter a historic year for America’s leadership, the anticipated changes for our nation are greater than ever. President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden composed a comprehensive plan to expand opportunities for American citizens with disabilities. The new plan focuses on four key areas:

### **Education**

Obama and Biden want to invest \$10 billion annually toward early education programs for children ages 5 and younger. Furthermore, they plan to make the first \$4,000 of a college education free for most Americans and will cover two-thirds of the cost of tuition at a standard public college or university.

### **Inclusion/equal opportunities**

Obama plans to appoint court judges and justices who will respect laws designed to protect people with disabilities. He is also a co-sponsor of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, which will help ban discrimination based on genetic information by employers and health insurers.

### **Employment**

Obama plans to reinstate an executive order, originally introduced by President Clinton, to hire 100,000 federal employees with disabilities.

### **Independent, community-based living**

Obama and Biden believe the federal government should provide grants to individual states to increase the supply of high-quality community-based settings. They also support Tom Harkin’s (D-IA) Community Choice Act of 2007, which would give people with disabilities the choice of living in their communities as opposed to institutions.

Visit [www.barackobama.com/issues/disabilities](http://www.barackobama.com/issues/disabilities) to view the entire plan. Scroll all the way to the bottom of the page and click on the hyperlink labeled “Read the Full Plan,” which is located just below the header that reads “For More Information about Barack’s Plan.”

## The Arc and UCP release 2009 legislative agenda

The 111th Congress began its first session Jan. 14, and The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy (UCP), in collaboration with four other organizations, developed a comprehensive legislative agenda that provides policymakers with in-depth recommendations in several critical areas, including:

- Medicaid. Rather than shifting more responsibility for Medicaid to the states and giving states more flexibility to reduce eligibility and benefits, Medicaid should evolve as a national program.
- Long-term individual community services and supports. Since Medicaid is the largest funding source for long-term supports, the Medicaid program must change to reflect the preference for community-based services over institutional services.
- Housing. Congress must increase the supply of affordable and accessible housing options by significantly increasing funding for programs such as Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher and HOME Investment Partnerships.
- Transportation. Significant expansion of public transportation is possible with the upcoming reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act — a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The agenda also recommends increasing funding for the Federal Transit Administration, including mass-transit and other programs, to increase accessible transportation options.

To access the full agenda, visit [www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org) and click on “Public Policy” under the “Resources” tab. Also, contact your Congressional representatives and make them aware of your concerns. To find your legislators, visit [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) and type in your ZIP code where it says “Find Your Officials.”

## IU offers programs for students with disabilities

The Indiana University School of Continuing Studies (SCS) offers a distance education program for students with physical and cognitive disabilities. Through the program, students can choose from a variety of educational options, including high school and undergraduate studies, and can obtain a high school diploma, or an associate’s or bachelor’s degree in general studies.

Students can register for classes year-round, and they have one year to complete a course, although extensions are available under certain circumstances. Throughout the year, they’ll receive personalized feedback and support from their instructors. SCS also provides disability support services and/or auxiliary aids to help students take their courses. Services provided are based on the course’s academic requirements and individual needs, supported by documentation (IEP, 504 Plan or psycho-educational evaluation).

For more information about this program, visit [scs.indiana.edu](http://scs.indiana.edu) or contact Eileen Balliet, SCS disabilities coordinator, at [scs@indiana.edu](mailto:scs@indiana.edu), (800) 334-1011 (toll free) or (866) 270-2901 (TTY, toll free).

## Of Note

### Multiple Perspectives annual conference

The ninth annual Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion and Disability Conference will take place April 28 and 29 at Ohio State University (OSU) in Columbus. This year's theme is "Change, Challenge and Collaboration." The conference continues OSU's efforts to bring together a diverse audience to explore disabilities on a personal and social level. For more information, visit [ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm](http://ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm), or call (614) 292-6207 or (614) 688-8605 (TTY).

### Online payee program for Social Security/SSI

Representative payees of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) now have the option to complete their accounting report forms online. Payees can go to [socialsecurity.gov/payee](http://socialsecurity.gov/payee) and follow the instructions to complete and submit the accounting report. The Social Security Administration's Representative Payee

Program is a way for Social Security and SSI beneficiaries to receive help managing their payments if they cannot do so themselves. For more information, call (800) 772-1213 (toll free). Individuals with hearing impairments can call (800) 325-0778 (toll free), Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

### IPAS seeking committee members

Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services (IPAS) is looking for individuals who have received mental health treatment, or family members of such individuals, to serve on its Mental Illness Advisory Committee (MIAC). The MIAC helps shape IPAS services for individuals with mental illness and reports annually to the IPAS federal funding source. Members, who are approved by the governor, will need to attend quarterly meetings, and expenses are reimbursed. Those who are interested in applying should contact David Boes, assistant director of client services, at (800) 622-4845, ext. 229 (toll free), or [dboes@ipas.in.gov](mailto:dboes@ipas.in.gov).

On Target is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council. On Target is made available in accessible formats upon request.

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS SPECIAL INSERT

In the Midwest, the weather is almost always unpredictable. The likelihood of tornadoes, ice/snow storms and floods isn't something we should ignore. Many of these natural disasters can strike with little or no warning. Will you be prepared?

### When disaster strikes: Prepare for the unexpected

In 2008, several parts of Indiana received an overwhelming amount of rain, resulting in severe flooding and damage. In January 2009, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reported that 26,033 Hoosier homeowners, renters and business owners had applied for federal assistance, totaling \$75.1 million.

Planning ahead is crucial to ensuring your safety during and after such disasters. Below are important steps you can take to prepare for emergencies. Inside, you'll find a checklist that will help you follow these steps.

#### **Create a written plan.**

The first step to prepare for a disaster is to create a plan. The plan should include all emergency contact information and a primary escape route for evacuating your home. You should also include a list of things to do and items to gather that will help you quickly get to safety during a disaster. Be sure to have one or two alternate evacuation routes that are free of any obstacles, just in case the first path is blocked. Review your plan at least twice a year and make updates as needed.

#### **Find out what help is available.**

Contact your local government's emergency information management office to find out what assistance they provide and how they will help in the event of a disaster or an evacuation. Is there an emergency alert system that notifies you of a disaster? Are there offices or local groups you should contact that can provide assistance?

In some cities and counties, the local government office keeps a list of people with disabilities on file so they can check on these individuals in the event of an emergency. Contact your government office to see if this list exists and, if so, make sure your name is included.

#### **Be prepared for evacuation.**

If you are evacuated from your home, you should be welcomed at a local emergency shelter. Keep in mind the shelter may not be equipped with everything you need, so it's important for you to be as prepared as possible, which will help the shelter staff better assist you. Consider your personal needs to ensure you're prepared for an evacuation. Be sure to collect essential items that you will need, taking only what's necessary, as space at a shelter may be limited.

#### **Stock up on medications and supplies.**

Create an emergency supply kit with essential items for maintaining your safety during a disaster (see list of supplies on the back of this insert). Keep a sufficient amount of your medications on hand, as well as any other medical-related items that may be needed, such as oxygen or batteries. You should have enough for at least seven days. Work with your physician to obtain an extra supply of medications and copies of your prescriptions. Be sure to ask your physician about the medication shelf life and recommended storage temperature. Also, maintain a minimum of a three-day supply of food and water. Food should be "ready-to-eat" and have a long shelf life.

### **Secure crucial documents.**

Make multiple copies of vital information and store them in a designated, waterproof location, along with your emergency supply kit. Documents you may want to include are:

- Insurance papers/cards, including your Medicaid card
- Birth certificate
- Proof of ownership or lease of residence
- Proof of ownership for assistive equipment/technology
- Photograph of service or companion animal
- Medical information (prescriptions, physician information, etc.)
- Descriptions and instructions for personal assistance equipment
- List of friends and relatives who need to be contacted
- Photographs of valuables, copies of family records, and marriage and death certificates

### **Create a support network.**

Establish a group of at least three people who are reliable and willing to assist you during emergencies. Since time is crucial during a disaster, choose individuals who live nearby. These individuals should be trustworthy and familiar with your home, as well as the location of your vital information and emergency supplies. At least one of these trusted individuals should have a key to your home.

### **Help others help you.**

Practice how to instruct people who may be giving you assistance during a disaster. Be sure to give clear and concise instructions so individuals who are helping you will do so properly.

### **Other tips:**

- Store any assistive equipment and supplies, such as a walking cane, extra eyeglasses or hearing-aid batteries, in a convenient place. These items may need to be reached in an urgent situation. Throughout the year, be sure to preserve back-up equipment to ensure the best possible equipment is available in a disastrous circumstance. Also, be sure to keep specifications of any assistance equipment, in case something needs to be replaced.
- Make sure you know the make, model and license plate numbers of any vehicles registered in your name.
- If your budget allows, consider purchasing a cell phone. There are a variety of wireless phone carriers that provide several plans that can meet your needs.
- Know how to shut off any utilities in the home. Also, keep a fire extinguisher in the home and know how to use it.

### **Help others, too**

During and after a disaster strikes, community members play an important role in restoring the damaged area(s). To learn how you can volunteer your time and efforts, visit [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) and click on "Volunteer Time." Type in your ZIP code to find opportunities to help in your community.

People with disabilities can also take part in helping their communities plan for disasters. Call local government emergency personnel to ensure that people with disabilities are included in the disaster preparedness plan or are being considered in a plan that's underway. Volunteer to serve on a planning committee or offer to review the plan.

In addition, if you live in a location that has been declared a disaster area due to the 2008 floods or other incidents, and monies are being allocated to restore buildings and infrastructure, you have a unique



opportunity to ensure that the Americans with Disabilities Act is followed. You may contact the Office of Disaster Recovery with questions or comments at [odr@gov.in.gov](mailto:odr@gov.in.gov) or (317) 234-4302 (voice).

## Planning resources

Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services (IPAS)

[www.in.gov/ipas](http://www.in.gov/ipas)

(800) 622-4845 (toll free) or (800) 838-1131 (TTY)

Ready America

[www.ready.gov/america/index.html](http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html)

(202) 282-8000 (voice)

[ready@dhs.gov](mailto:ready@dhs.gov)

Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities

[www.disabilitypreparedness.gov](http://www.disabilitypreparedness.gov)

[disability.preparedness@dhs.gov](mailto:disability.preparedness@dhs.gov)

## Create an emergency information card

If a disaster occurs, you should have important health information, emergency contact numbers and other helpful resources on hand. To create a list of these items, complete the emergency information card on the following page. Make as many copies as you'd like and store them in your emergency supply kit, in a purse or wallet, and any in other secured location that's readily accessible.

## Disaster Preparedness Resources

In an emergency, you may not have access to Internet, phone books, convenience stores or other daily resources. To make sure you're prepared for a disaster, complete the following checklists and information forms. You can detach and make copies of these resources so they can be stored in convenient locations, such as on the refrigerator, by the phone or in your purse or wallet.

### **Disaster Preparedness Checklist**

To help you prepare for a disaster, use the following checklist to guide you through the necessary steps. Complete and update these precautionary measures on a regular basis to make sure you're ready for unexpected emergencies.

- ★ Create a written disaster preparedness plan that includes emergency contact information, a primary escape route and alternate routes. Include a list of things to do and items to gather during a disaster.
- ★ Research what help may be available during a disaster, either from your local government or other community groups.
- ★ Collect and save essential items you may need in the event of an evacuation, such as a change of clothing and necessary toiletries.
- ★ Make copies and secure vital documents.
- ★ Create a personal support network.
- ★ Write out and practice giving instructions that you would give to individuals who may be helping you during a disaster.

- ★ Maintain a seven-day supply of essential medications, as well as a minimum three-day supply of food and water.
- ★ Create an emergency contact list.
- ★ Create an emergency supply kit (see back page).
- ★ Keep important equipment and assistive devices in a convenient place.
- ★ Make an emergency health information card.
- ★ Store copies of your emergency health information card, contact list and emergency documents in your wallet/purse, emergency supply kit and safe deposit box, if available. Give copies to members of your personal support network.

**Emergency Information Card**

name \_\_\_\_\_

street address \_\_\_\_\_ city, state \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP code \_\_\_\_\_

home # \_\_\_\_\_ work # \_\_\_\_\_ cell # \_\_\_\_\_

birth date \_\_\_\_\_ SSN # \_\_\_\_\_ blood type \_\_\_\_\_

health insurance carrier \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_ group # \_\_\_\_\_

primary care physician \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

condition or disability \_\_\_\_\_

medication \_\_\_\_\_ dosage \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) taken \_\_\_\_\_

medication \_\_\_\_\_ dosage \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) taken \_\_\_\_\_

medication \_\_\_\_\_ dosage \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) taken \_\_\_\_\_

pharmacy \_\_\_\_\_ location \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

allergies \_\_\_\_\_

previous immunizations \_\_\_\_\_ date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

member of your support network \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

relatives/friends outside of immediate area (100 miles) who can be useful resources following a disaster (include addresses and phone numbers)

equipment vendors \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

utility companies \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

employer(s) \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

schools/day care centers \_\_\_\_\_ phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### **Emergency resources**

Indiana Department of Homeland Security (IDHS)

[www.in.gov/dhs](http://www.in.gov/dhs)

(317) 232-3986

Ask IDHS for your local emergency management office's contact information.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

[www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

(800) 621-3362 (toll free) or (800) 462-7585 (TTY, toll free)

American Red Cross

[www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) and [www.prepare.org](http://www.prepare.org)

(800) 733-2767 (toll free)

### **Emergency phone numbers**

First responders for emergencies: 911

Information and resources for non-emergencies: 211

TTY relay: 711

Speech-to-speech relay: (877) 743-8231

Be sure to review your preparedness checklist, emergency supply kit and information card on a regular basis. Keep information up-to-date, and check your supplies and medications regularly to replace any items that may have expired. These handy resources can help you be prepared for the unexpected. They are perforated for easy removal.

### **Create an Emergency Supply Kit**

It's easy to create and store an emergency supply kit. Important items to include are:

- ★ Prescription medications, including dosages and a list of allergies
- ★ Over-the-counter medicines, in case you become sick, and vitamins to help fight off illness
- ★ An extra pair of eyeglasses, if needed
- ★ Battery-operated radio and corresponding batteries
- ★ A change of clothes, shoes and rain gear
- ★ Extra oxygen, if needed
- ★ The style, serial number and proof of ownership of assistive devices, if needed
- ★ Medical insurance cards, including your Medicaid card and emergency health information card
- ★ Pre-printed cards containing communication phrases such as "I use sign language (ASL)"
- ★ Nonperishable food and bottled water
- ★ A small flashlight and signaling device, such as a whistle, bell or beeper with corresponding batteries

- ★ Blankets and towels
- ★ Paper and writing utensils
- ★ Plastic bags
- ★ First aid supplies
- ★ Repair materials for a flat wheelchair tire, if needed
- ★ Candles and matches
- ★ A toy for a service animal, if needed
- ★ Backpack or overnight bag with a change of clothing, toiletries, medicines and other essentials

Consider your personal needs when building your kit and be sure to include any other items that may be necessary during a disaster.