

“ADVANCING EQUAL ACCESS!”

Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act



**U.S. Department of Education
Lyndon Banes Johnson Building
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202**

On **Friday, July 24, 2015**, in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights will bring together policy and program leaders, community organizations, and youth to examine current implications of the ADA's implementation and cross-cutting issues with other federal civil rights laws, and plant the seeds for the next 25 years of achieving new milestones to advance civil rights for people with all types of disabilities. To unite thought leaders with today's up-and-coming generation of youth and young adults with disabilities, the event will consist of three parts.

1. Indoor Policy Panels:

From **9:00am to 10:20am** on Friday in the Department of Education's Barnard Auditorium, two panel discussions will focus on the ADA's impact on our nation's education system. The first panel is to include Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Michael Yudin, Association for University Centers on Disabilities Executive Director Andrew J. Imparato, and Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Catherine E. Lhamon. The second panel will be composed of youth leaders, moderated by Janet LaBreck, Commissioner of the Department's Rehabilitation Services Administration. Panelists are to include accomplished athlete and six-time national champion in wheelchair racing and archery, Casey Followay of Ohio; National Council on Independent Living activist, Jaggar DeMarco of New Jersey; Founder of Social Justice Media Services and Disability Rights Blogger, Emily Ladau of New York; National Association of the Deaf (NAD) activist, Nia Lazarus of California; and Autistic Self Advocacy Network Leadership Programs Coordinator, Natalia M. Rivera Morales of Maryland.

At the conclusion of the panels, audience members will be encouraged to go **outside** to the plaza on the Maryland Avenue side of the building to participate in the next two event elements.

2. Outside Ceremony:

At **10:25am** on the Department of Education's plaza, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is to lead a short ceremonial event for the assembled crowd lasting no more than 30 minutes. This ceremony will also feature a flag ceremony by Boy Scouts with disabilities as selected by National Capital Area Council of Boy Scouts of America and remarks by Active Policy Solutions Chief Executive Officer Terri Lakowski.

3. Outside Activities:

Both from 10:00am to 10:30am and immediately following the ceremonial element, from approximately **11:00am** until **noon** on the Department of Education's plaza, students with and without disabilities from around the region will be on hand to participate in a series of outside activities to highlight how students with disabilities can integrate themselves into various aspects of educational life, including through participation in athletics such as basketball, bocchia, and track and field as set up by Athletics for All task force organizations including Disabled Sports USA, Wheelchair & Ambulatory Sports USA, American Association of Adapted Sports Programs, Inc. (AAASP), and Bridge II Sports.

Various information tables will also be set up for event attendees to identify even more ways to participate in the life of our community.

And finally, as a way to help memorialize participation in this special ADA celebration, attendees will be invited to share their thoughts on video for possible inclusion in a "Know It 2 Own It" blog or series of blogs that spotlight individual stories and help chronicle how far we have collectively come in building a society that is free from the physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers to full societal participation by people with all types of disabilities.

By incorporating immediate opportunities for youth and adults with and without disabilities to participate in different ways together, we symbolically unite to continue to build the ADA legacy for many years to come!