



# ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT

YOUR POLICY TRAINING AND TECHNICAL RESOURCE

## Upcoming Initiatives

- Ensure Minnesota's Olmstead plan is implemented effectively.
- Coordinate with partners to support a 5 percent rate increase for direct support professionals.
- Ensure wheelchair accessible taxis meet STS standards.
- Make needed changes to apartment building code as well as disability parking laws.
- Continue work with stakeholders to improve non-emergency medical transportation.
- Advocate for greater transit access for citizens with disabilities in all Minnesota counties.
- Support Governor Dayton's bonding proposal for a \$50 million investment in affordable housing infrastructure and rehabilitation.

## Our Mission

We are a state agency providing leadership to empower and strengthen the rights of Minnesotans with disabilities. We collaborate with the public and private sectors as a policy, training, and technical assistance resource.

## Celebrating 40 Years of Service



MSCOD highlighted 40 years of advocating for Minnesotans with disabilities during 2013. Covering a broad range of issues, MSCOD has been a vital part of Minnesota disability issues in the past. And while we are proud of our work, we recognize the importance of the work that remains. We look forward to further collaboration with our partners to increase disability rights and employment opportunities, improve transportation access, and make Minnesota a great place for people with disabilities to live. For updates on the 2014 legislative session, please check out our website at <http://www.disability.state.mn.us>.



**What We Do**

**Policy:** MSCOD advises the Governor, state legislature, state agencies, and local units of government on issues affecting Minnesotans with disabilities. We analyze legislative initiatives and advise how proposed policies will impact the disability community. Our goal is to ensure all policymakers understand the effects of their decisions on Minnesotans with disabilities.

**Training:** MSCOD provides customized training on a variety of issues including disability awareness, emergency preparedness, building access, advancing the rights of people with disabilities, and more.

**Technical:** MSCOD is a technical expert on numerous disability matters, including disability parking, transportation access, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, building codes, assistive technology, accessibility, and employment rights.

**Message from  
MSCOD  
Council Chair**



MSCOD continues to utilize our strategic planning process to ensure we are meeting the needs of Minnesota. For example, we received an increased appropriation this year to conduct emergency preparedness trainings. By doing this, the legislature has acknowledged the importance of this work. In recent years we have prevailed through significant budget and staffing reductions. It was due to the commitment of MSCOD staff, council members and citizens of Minnesota that we still exist. I am extremely proud to be part of MSCOD, and you can be assured that you can treat us as an extension of your staff on disability issues...that's why we exist.  
-David Schwartzkopf

**Message from  
MSCOD  
Executive Director**



MSCOD has much to be proud for what was accomplished in 2013. We secured Legacy funds which will allow us to honor the heritage of the ADA civil rights legislation. Through an employment survey, development of an education tool, and an event commemorating the 25th anniversary, we intend to educate Minnesotans throughout the year. If you would like to volunteer for any aspect of this project, please contact us! MSCOD continued to lead on disability policy issues. We have been participating in the creation of Minnesota's Olmstead plan. At the legislature, we passed important parking laws, and received an increase in funding for emergency preparedness. We also maintained our presence at the Minnesota State Fair by passing out our recognizable emergency preparedness bags. A special thank you to Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsey for participating in emergency preparedness bag distribution!  
-Joan Willshire

## 2013 MSCOD Annual Awards Event Disability Employment Recognition Winners

### Minnesota Award:

#### Secretary of State Mark Ritchie

Through Sec. Ritchie's guidance, Minnesota's elections have provided greater access for all voters, including voters with disabilities.

### Access Award:

#### Midwest Outdoors Unlimited

The organization gives all Minnesotans a chance to enjoy nature. They provide outdoor recreational activities for people with disabilities.

### Above and Beyond Veteran's Employment Award:

#### Sue Wolds, Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans

Sue provides assistance to veterans and their families who are homeless or experiencing other life crises.

### Advocacy Award:

#### Aaron Holm, Wiggle Your Toes

Aaron began a non-profit that is dedicated to helping amputees and their families regain independence and mobility.

### Employer of the Year (large):

#### Pitney Bowes

Through the initiative of Vice President, Mike Wright, and Operations Manager, Scott Bersheid, 41 employees with disabilities have been hired at their Fridley facility.

### Employer of the Year (small):

#### Azule Staffing

In the last year, owner, Mike Wolbrink, has found employment opportunities for over 50 veterans. Azule has a goal that 80% of their placements go to veterans.

### Friend of the Council Award:

#### Kathy Hern, Human Development Center – Cloquet

Kathy finds competitive employment for individuals who have mental illness, and she has an 85% placement rate.

### Media Award:

#### Dan Voss, RP Broadcasting

Dan hired an individual with a disability and nurtured his talent to the business' and individual's benefit.

### Mentorship Award: Bridget Siljander, Youth Legacy Foundation

Bridget engages youth with disabilities in humanitarian, charitable, and service activities to empower them exemplary lives and change their communities.

## Stay Updated on Legislative Issues

We are looking to better connect with Minnesota's disability community during the 2014 legislative session. As always, subscribe to our email lists to receive weekly legislative updates. If you want more, please like our page on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@MSCOD). Every Friday from 2 – 3 p.m. during session, our legislative specialist will answer your questions about what's going on at the legislature. Join in on the conversation!

## Celebrating the ADA's Legacy

During the 2013 legislative session, MSCOD received a \$400,000 Arts and Cultural Heritage Legacy grant, in partnership with the Minnesota Humanities Center, to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act's 25th anniversary in 2015. The grant will be used to fund an ADA survey, a history of Minnesota's role in achieving ADA passage, a theatrical production highlighting disability employment issues, and a training/education event celebrating the ADA's 25th anniversary. Please keep in touch with MSCOD through our email list or social media in order to receive updates on these projects and information on the 25th anniversary celebration.

## A State Resource

One of MSCOD's most important duties is being a resource for other state agencies and government committees. Since its inception, MSCOD has served on hundreds of committees that impact Minnesotans with disabilities. That work continues today. MSCOD sits on the Metropolitan Council Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee, the MnCHOICES Steering Committee, the Secretary of State's Disability Advisory Committee, committees focused on accessibility of the new Vikings stadium, Saints ballpark, and the Capitol complex, and many others. Serving on state and community committees allows MSCOD to stay abreast of current issues and collaborate with stakeholders on many issues.

## Who We Are Staff

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## Council Members

Council Chair

Dave Schwartzkopf, Rochester

Vice Chair

Barb Stensland, Bemidji

## Executive Committee Members

Bob Johnson, Fergus Falls

Kathy Peterson, Warren

## Members

Nathan Aalgaard, Moorhead

Dean Ascheman, Rosemount

Stephen Grams, St. Peter

Bryce Samuelson, Hayfield

Jim Thalhuber, Blaine

Kim Tyler, Hibbing

Nancy Rosemore, Crosby

Carlos Vasquez, Minneapolis

Christine Versavel, Marshall

Kathy Wingen, Saint Cloud

## MSCOD'S 2013 HIGHLIGHTS



MSCOD State Fair Booth

- Received an increased appropriation to fund emergency preparedness activities.
- Worked to ensure the new Vikings stadium, Saints ballpark, and legislative office building are accessible.
- Created two changes in parking laws that will help Minnesota drivers with disabilities.
- Hosted a US State Department fellow from Azerbaijan and introduced him to Minnesota's disability community.
- Supported a bill that brought Minnesota law regarding service animals into federal ADA compliance.
- Received a \$400,000 Minnesota Legacy grant to fund activities surrounding the ADA's 25th anniversary in 2015.
- Supported a law that created no-excuse absentee voting.
- Distributed over 13,000 emergency preparedness bags at the Minnesota State Fair to help Minnesotans to be prepared in case of an emergency.
- Received over 80% satisfaction rating as measured by our annual satisfaction survey.