

2026 DDAM Communications Toolkit

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Proclamation

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

March 2026

WHEREAS, millions of Americans with developmental disabilities are valued members of our communities today, and although too many were once excluded from full participation in community life, they have always been present, contributing to the fabric of our society; and it is important to acknowledge the truth about People with developmental disabilities not always living in their communities; and

WHEREAS, throughout our nation’s history, many individuals with developmental disabilities were hidden, segregated, or excluded from full participation in community life; and

WHEREAS, decades of advocacy, civil rights protections, and community-based supports have expanded opportunities for people with developmental disabilities to live, work, learn, and participate fully in society; and

WHEREAS, community living is about more than services or programs — it is about belonging, choice, independence, and the opportunity to live a whole life; and

WHEREAS, individuals with developmental disabilities strengthen our workplaces, enrich our neighborhoods, contribute to our economy, and help shape the future of the State of [State Name]; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of our state to continue fostering communities that value inclusion, remove barriers, and ensure that all people have the opportunity to pursue their goals and aspirations; and

WHEREAS, Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month provides an opportunity to reflect on our progress, recognize ongoing challenges, and reaffirm our commitment to policies and practices that support full participation in community life;

WHEREAS, this year’s theme, “**We’re Here: Then, Now, Always,**” recognizes the enduring presence, resilience, and contributions of people with developmental disabilities across generations; and

WHEREAS, the **[INSERT STATE NAME] Developmental Disabilities Council ([INSERT COUNCIL NAME])**, established under federal law, works to advance policies and practices that ensure individuals with developmental disabilities can live, work, and thrive in the communities of their choice; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, [Governor’s Full Name], Governor of the State of [State Name], do hereby proclaim March 2026 as

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

in [State Name], and encourage all residents to recognize the contributions of people with developmental disabilities and to promote communities where everyone belongs — then, now, and always.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of [State Name] to be affixed this [Day] day of [Month], in the year two thousand twenty-six.

Press Release

The following copy is a draft of a press release and can be submitted to your local papers. Please edit, review, and revise any language to ensure it’s aligned with your organization’s

mission and vision, along with compliance protocol. This can also be distributed to your internal Council mailing lists and community stakeholders.

[Name of Organization] Kicks Off *We're Here: Then, Now, Always.* to Celebrate Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

[CITY, STATE] — This March, **[ORGANIZATION]** is proud to celebrate Developmental Disabilities Month with the launch of *We're Here: Then, Now, Always* campaign. The national campaign recognizes a simple truth: people with developmental disabilities have always been part of our communities — and always will be.

The campaign builds on last year's successful *We're Here All Year* initiative and expands the message by connecting past, present, and future. Through powerful storytelling and visuals, *We're Here: Then, Now, Always* highlights how far the disability community has come and why continued advocacy efforts have strengthened the commitment to inclusion and community living.

QUOTE FROM ORGANIZATION

The campaign connects past, present, and future through a powerful storytelling framework:

- **Then:** A time when many people with developmental disabilities were hidden, segregated, or excluded from community life.
- **Now:** Individuals living full lives — working, building friendships, parenting, volunteering, participating in faith communities, and contributing to their neighborhoods.
- **Always:** A future where community living is protected, expected, and funded – and not viewed as a program, but as part of a whole life.

The community will also have an opportunity to participate. *We're Here* will launch a relationship-building campaign to provide individuals with DD, family members, and the community-at-large to build relationships with key decision makers in their communities, state, and federally. It will then open a national portrait collection to show the faces of the DD community across the country and sharing their "Always."

The campaign, organized by the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities, launches in March 2026 and runs till February 2027.

"People with intellectual and developmental disabilities have always been here — part of the fabric of our nation — even when systems kept them out of sight and out of community life," said Jill Jacobs, Executive Director of the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities. "This month is not about awareness as a one-time event. It's a reminder that people with IDD are

always here, and that all of us have a responsibility to keep learning, engaging, and building communities where everyone belongs – every day of the year.”

Community members, businesses, faith organizations, schools, and local governments are encouraged to participate by sharing campaign materials and local “Then / Now / Always” stories.

###

About {YOUR ORGANIZATION}: Add a mission statement here.

About NACDD: The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) is the national membership association for the 56 Governor-appointed State Councils on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD or DD Councils) across the United States and its territories. The DD Councils receive federal funding to support policy change and programs that promote self-determination, integration, and involvement in everyday life for all people in the United States with intellectual and developmental disabilities. www.nacdd.org

Spanish

[Nombre de la organización] lanza "Estamos aquí: Antes, Ahora, Siempre" para celebrar el Mes de la Concientización sobre las Discapacidades del Desarrollo.

[CIUDAD, ESTADO] — Este marzo, **[ORGANIZACIÓN]** se enorgullece de celebrar el Mes de la Concientización sobre las Discapacidades del Desarrollo con el lanzamiento de la campaña "Estamos aquí: Antes, Ahora, Siempre". Esta campaña nacional reconoce una verdad simple: las personas con discapacidades del desarrollo siempre han formado parte de nuestras comunidades y siempre lo serán.

La campaña se basa en la exitosa iniciativa "Estamos aquí todo el año" del año pasado y amplía el mensaje conectando pasado, presente y futuro. A través de una narrativa impactante y elementos visuales, "Estamos aquí: Antes, Ahora, Siempre" destaca el progreso de la comunidad con discapacidad y por qué los continuos esfuerzos de defensa han fortalecido el compromiso con la inclusión y la vida en comunidad.

CITA DE LA ORGANIZACIÓN

La campaña conecta pasado, presente y futuro a través de un poderoso marco narrativo:

Antes: Una época en la que muchas personas con discapacidades del desarrollo estaban ocultas, segregadas o excluidas de la vida comunitaria.

Ahora: Personas que viven vidas plenas: trabajando, forjando amistades, criando hijos, haciendo voluntariado, participando en comunidades religiosas y contribuyendo a sus vecindarios.

Siempre: Un futuro donde la vida en comunidad se proteja, se espere y se financie, y no se considere un programa, sino parte de una vida integral.

La comunidad también tendrá la oportunidad de participar. Estamos Aquí lanzará una campaña para fortalecer las relaciones que permitirá a las personas con discapacidades del desarrollo, a sus familiares y a la comunidad en general, establecer vínculos con los principales responsables de la toma de decisiones en sus comunidades, a nivel estatal y federal.

Posteriormente, se inaugurará una colección nacional de retratos para mostrar los rostros de la comunidad con discapacidades del desarrollo en todo el país y compartir su "Siempre".

La campaña, organizada por la Asociación Nacional de Consejos sobre Discapacidades del Desarrollo, se lanzará en marzo de 2026 y durará hasta febrero de 2027.

“Las personas con discapacidades intelectuales y del desarrollo siempre han estado aquí, formando parte de la esencia de nuestra nación, incluso cuando los sistemas las mantenían alejadas de la vista y de la vida comunitaria”, dijo Jill Jacobs, directora ejecutiva de la Asociación Nacional de Consejos sobre Discapacidades del Desarrollo. “Este mes no se trata de concientizar como un evento puntual. Es un recordatorio de que las personas con discapacidades intelectuales y del desarrollo siempre están aquí y que todos tenemos la responsabilidad de seguir aprendiendo, participando y construyendo comunidades donde todos pertenezcan, todos los días del año”.

Se anima a los miembros de la comunidad, empresas, organizaciones religiosas, escuelas y gobiernos locales a participar compartiendo materiales de la campaña e historias locales de "Antes / Ahora / Siempre".

Social Media

NACDD Social Media Channels – please tag NACDD in your posts.

[Facebook](#)


[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[BlueSky](#)

Hashtags: #DDAM2026 #WeReHere #ThenNowAlways

Launch: March 2 – March 5

 [Organization Name] kicks off Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month with *We're Here. Then, Now, Always.*

People with developmental disabilities have always been part of our communities — and always will be.

This month, we're sharing stories that connect past, present, and future.

Join us.

#DDAM2026

Alt-Text:

Campaign graphic reading “We’re Here. Then, Now, Always.” featuring a historic black-and-white photo of disability rights activists at the U.S. Capitol and color photos of people with developmental disabilities advocating and smiling in community settings.

Then: Post 2

Image choice: Capitol Crawl

There was a time when many people with developmental disabilities were hidden, segregated, or excluded from community life.

History matters.

Not for nostalgia — for understanding.

#DDAM2026

Now: Post Option 1

Image choices: Use Beach, Coffee, or 5K

People with developmental disabilities are living full lives — working, building friendships, volunteering, parenting, and contributing to their communities.

Same community. Same goals. Same future.

#CommunityLiving #DDAM2026

Now: Post Option 2

Image choices: Use Beach, Coffee, or 5K

Community living is not just a program.

It means:

- ✓ Choosing where you live
- ✓ Having a job you care about
- ✓ Building relationships
- ✓ Being part of your neighborhood

It's a whole life.

#DDAM2026

Relationship-Building Effort – Week 2 or 3

This #DDAM2026, we're launching a relationship-building effort.

People with developmental disabilities, families, and community members can connect with key decision-makers locally, statewide, and federally.

Your voice matters. Your story matters.

Introduce yourself to your lawmakers here: <https://nacdd.quorum.us/DDAM2026/>

#DDAM2026

Portrait Collection – Week 3

Coming soon: A national portrait collection! 📷

We'll be inviting individuals and families to share their photo and answer one question about their future — their "Always."

Because we're here.

Then, Now, Always.

Stay tuned.

#DDAM2026

Image Library & Alt-Text

Launch Image _ English / Spanish

Alt-Text: Campaign graphic reading "We're Here. Then, Now, Always." featuring a historic black-and-white photo of disability rights activists at the U.S. Capitol and color photos of people with developmental disabilities advocating and smiling in community settings.

Texto alternativo: Gráfico de la campaña que dice "Estamos aquí. Antes, ahora, siempre". Presenta una foto histórica en blanco y negro de activistas por los derechos de las personas con discapacidad en el Capitolio de los Estados Unidos y fotos a color de personas con discapacidades del desarrollo abogando y sonriendo en entornos comunitarios.

NACDD_Capitol Crawl

Black-and-white photo from March 12, 1990, showing disability rights activists during the Capitol Crawl protest at the U.S. Capitol. Activists left their wheelchairs and mobility devices and crawled up the Capitol steps while photographers and supporters looked on. The U.S. Capitol dome is visible in the background. Text on the image reads, "March 12, 1990. Disability rights activists abandoned wheelchairs and mobility aids to crawl up the U.S. Capitol steps." The graphic also includes the campaign message, "We're Here. Then, Now, Always." and the NACDD logo.

NACDD_Coffee

Three women sit together at a wooden counter inside a coffee shop, smiling and holding drinks. One woman in the foreground wears glasses, an orange baseball cap, and a red plaid jacket while holding a takeaway coffee cup. The two women beside her wear glasses and jackets, one holding a hot coffee and the other an iced drink. The café has large windows and warm lighting. Text on the image reads, “We’re Here. Then, Now, Always.” with the NACDD logo in the bottom right corner.

NACDD_Beach

Alt-Text: A woman sits comfortably in a blue beach wheelchair on a sandy beach, smiling and enjoying the day. She is wearing sunglasses, a bright blue sleeveless top with a matching blue lei around her neck, white patterned pants, and black sandals. The beach wheelchair has wide gray wheels designed to move easily across sand. Behind her are sand dunes and a wooden fence under a clear sky.

In the lower right corner, the graphic reads, “We’re Here. Then, Now, Always.” alongside the NACDD (National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities) logo.

NACDD_5K

Three men laugh together at an outdoor 5K event. Two of the men use wheelchairs, and one kneels between them. All three wear matching green shirts that read “Lead From the Front.” One man’s race bib is visible. Other participants, trees, and event signage can be seen in the background. Text on the image reads, “We’re Here. Then, Now, Always.” alongside the NACDD logo.