

# 2009 Annual Report

Fiscal Year June 30, 2008 – July 1, 2009



Minnesota State Council  
on Disability

**Your Policy, Training  
and Technical Resource**

*Celebrating over 35 Years*

*1973-2009*



"The Minnesota State Council on Disability is an agency that advises, provides technical assistance, collaborates and advocates to expand opportunities, improve the quality of life and empower all persons with disabilities."

Mission



## **ABOUT US**

MSCOD is a state agency that advises the governor, the state legislature, state agencies and the general public on public policy issues affecting persons with disabilities. We work to advance the rights of Minnesotans with disabilities.

### **Message from the Executive Director**

The Minnesota State Council on Disability has improved the quality of life and promoted the disability community since its founding in 1973.

Our work with the Governor, legislators, other disability organizations, and the public has accomplished much: From accessible voting booths and parking spaces, to curb cuts and emergency plans...even light rail stations that can be navigated by individuals who are visually impaired and persons using wheelchairs.

My work here, first as Board Member, then as Chair of the Council, and now as Executive Director, spans 17 years, almost half the history of the Council. These years represent the most challenging and rewarding times of my career. We've weathered state budget cuts that led to staffing losses. Now we do more with less, with our eyes fixed on our guiding principle of being there when the community needs us.

We've fought the good fight of disability public policy, pushing for the ADA and the new ADA Restoration Act, and now we strive to insure those laws produce the intended results. In our legislative work, we toil over the details of the letter of the law and, once the particular legislation is passed, exercise vigilance over practical quality-of-life benefits and on the broader societal attitudes advanced by the spirit of the law. We're in the business of culture change.

As we look back and think forward, grateful and proud of so many accomplishments, and prepare for the challenges ahead. The reality that budget cuts fall disproportionately on Access is always an issue. Our philosophy of inclusiveness reminds us that no one can be forgotten.

We can do better as a society. As a Council, we will continue to work for better lives for all children and adults with disabilities.

**Joan Willshire, Executive Director**

## Message from the Council Chair

In its history MSCOD has dealt with many challenges, accomplishing innumerable achievements for the people of Minnesota. MSCOD has always had the ability to correct its course, along with the forethought to do what is best for all people with disabilities.

In recent years we have prevailed through significant budget reductions. We've seen our staffing reduced by over 50%. Not long ago our very existence was in question, but we have prevailed. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of MSCOD staff, council members, and volunteers, we're still here playing a vital role in our disability community.

I am extremely proud to be part of the Minnesota State Council on Disability.

**David Schwartzkopf, Council Chair**



Photo 1: Executive Director Joan Willshire and Council Chair David Schwartzkopf after meeting with Governor Tim Pawlenty at the Capitol.

## **Community Collaborations**

As part of our advisory capacity, staff and council members served on the following board and commissions during fiscal year 2009:

- Access Resource Network Committee
- Access Review Board
- Accessible Pedestrian Signal Advisory Committee
- Accessibility and Usability Committee
- ADA Celebration Committee
- Business Leadership Network
- Capitol Restoration Committee
- CMIST Emergency Preparedness Committee
- Complete Count Census Committee
- Diversity Discussion Group
- Emergency Preparedness Response Committee
- Emergency Shelter Taskforce
- Housing Lobbyists Group
- Interagency Committee on Transportation Coordination
- Interagency Planning for Transition in Minnesota
- Library Access Committee
- LRT Central Corridor Advisory Council
- MACOPWD Access Committee
- Minneapolis Advisory Committee on People with Disabilities
- Minneapolis Cab Access Committee
- Minneapolis Emergency Preparedness
- Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (MnCCD) Housing Committee
- MnCCD Civil Rights Committee
- MnCCD Grassroots Committee
- MnCCD Transportation Committee
- Minnesota Management & Budget ACCESS Committee
- Mn/DOT Stakeholder Committee
- Northstar Commuter Rail Access Committee

- Pathways to Employment - Staff and Coordinating Team
- Secretary of State's Disability Election Committee
- State Rehabilitation Council
- State Transition Coordination Committee
- Statewide Review Committee 5310 Grant
- Transportation Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Twins Stadium Access Committee

## **Assistive Technology Study**

In 2007, MSCOD was mandated by the Minnesota State Legislature to conduct a review of assistive technology in Minnesota. The study includes information about the types of assistive technologies, demographics of people with disabilities, employment & statistical overview of people with disabilities, AT providers, community-based providers of AT, and data on public funding for AT. The study was completed in January of 2008 and is available online at the following link: <http://www.disability.state.mn.us/state-legislation/mscod-legislative-reports/>

## **Annual Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Every year, MSCOD conducts a Customer Satisfaction Survey to gather the most important issues facing the disability community. The survey also helps MSCOD determine ways to better achieve its mission.

The 2009 Survey had a good response rate overall with a 98% customer satisfaction rate. In the coming year, MSCOD will explore how to use the survey to reach a more representative section of the broad disability community in Minnesota.

## **Top Successes for 2009**

### **Legislative**

- Safe Patient Handling Bill was introduced and signed into law
- MSCOD's annual budget was maintained at this year's annual funding level
- Met with the new State Senators and Representatives and presented them with an updated handbook on disability issues

### **Events, Conferences & Trainings**

- Co-sponsored Options Too conference with Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL) regarding mental illness
- Held Advocacy Day in conjunction with MCIL & Minnesota Association for Independent living at the Capitol with over 150 participants
- Held Town Hall Forum on transportation, pedestrian walkways and the ADA regarding the inaccessibility of persons with disabilities
- Annual Legislative Forum via videoconference that was closed captioned and web streamed statewide with over 150 participants
- Senator Larry Pogemiller and Representative Paul Thissen spoke at this event
- Conducted 26 trainings

### **New Program for MSCOD**

- The public is more informed about emergency preparedness as a result of the materials developed in conjunction with Pathways to Employment. MSCOD has been quoted in the media during crisis events due to the creation of the checklist for emergencies
- MSCOD delivered over 10 trainings on emergency preparedness
- The final product created this year was the emergency preparedness consumer piece, which was printed on water resistant paper

## Accomplishments



### Pathways to Employment

MSCOD is currently a partner in the Pathways to Employment Grant. This is a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. This is a comprehensive Strategy to increase the competitive employment of Minnesotans with disabilities and meet Minnesota's workforce needs. The Pathways to Employment initiative is a partnership between the Department of Human Services, Department of Employment & Economic Development and the Minnesota State Council on Disability.

MSCOD hired three graduate level student interns to work on Pathways to Employment initiatives.

July 1, 2008-December 31, 2008 Activity

### Minnesota State Fair

MSCOD distributed materials from organizations including: Department of Human Services, Disability Services Division, Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities and many more.

### Transportation Dialogues

In October 2008, MSCOD partnered with two Centers for Independent Living and held Employment and Transportation Dialogues in Crookston and Fergus Falls. The purpose of the dialogues was to bring together individuals with disabilities, transit providers and major area employers to discuss the challenges and solutions of transportation and employment for people with disabilities.

### Outcomes

- **Crookston** – Community leaders applied for a Joint Access Reserve Commute grant to start six new transit lines in Northwest Minnesota.
- **Fergus Falls** – Wal-Mart and transit providers agreed that Wal-Mart would put information in their weekly ads about which transit providers people should contact if they need transportation to shop or work at Wal-Mart.

MSCOD began planning with the partnership of three Centers for Independent Living to hold Transportation Dialogues in the Fall of 2009.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

Emergency Preparedness Employer Guides were developed in 2007 and printed in 2008 for the emergency preparedness toolkits. The employer guides address disability issues in workplace emergency planning and contain useful information for both employers and employees.

## **Disability Rights**

“Understanding your Rights and Responsibilities” has been updated and includes Federal and State Disability laws covering the American’s with Disabilities Act and the Human Rights Act.

January 1, 2009-June 30, 2009 Activity

MSCOD translated “Understanding Your Rights and Responsibilities” to Spanish and began distributing this publication to the Hispanic population in Minnesota.

## **Year-at-a-Glance**

### **Top 5 Information & Referral Issues for 2009**

1. Accessibility
2. Americans with Disabilities Act
3. Laws and Regulations
4. Employment Rights
5. Transportation Policy

### **Most Requested MSCOD Publications**

- Emergency Preparedness
- Legislative Summary
- Disability Parking
- Understanding Your Rights
- Building Access Survey
- Question of Attitude

### **Critical Issues for 2010**

- Healthcare
- Rights & ADA
- Transportation
- Employment
- Accessibility
- Disability Awareness
- Disability Parking
- Emergency Preparedness



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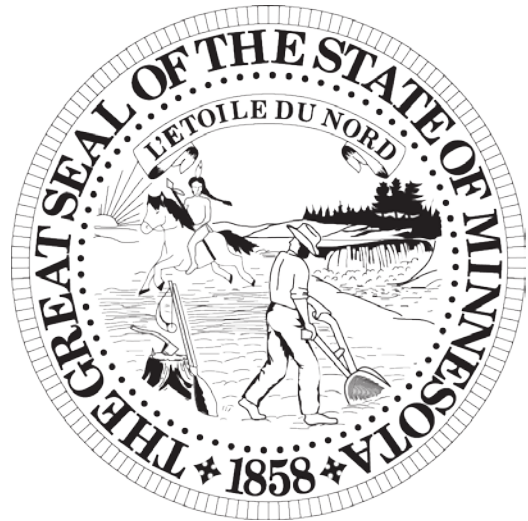
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