



## **Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Toolkit**

### **HOW TO ORGANIZE A LOCAL DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS DAY EVENT**

Organizing a local DD Awareness Day can be a highly effective advocacy tool.

A local event can: educate the community, especially elected officials, about issues important to individuals with I/DD, increase membership in local advocacy groups, encourage others to advocate, attract the press, and help spread your message.

Here are some ideas for organizing an event (note that you can select all or just a few from the list).

#### **1. Decide on the purpose/focus of the event.**

- What is your message? What are the critical needs in your community?
- See FDDC [Legislative Platform](#)
- See FDDC [“Our Care Matters”](#)

#### **2. Decide on a date, time and location.**

- Between the hours of 8:30 am- 4:30 pm is generally best.
- A reminder that March is Developmental Disability Awareness Month; however, you can hold a local DD Day that helps bring awareness to critical issues of Floridians with developmental disabilities in any month.
- If you’re holding your event in March, consider researching the history behind DD Awareness Month and have someone speak about that.

#### **3. Obtain approvals including any necessary permits.**

#### **4. Decide on an agenda.**

#### **5. Invite speakers.**

- Download “[How to Tell Your Story](#)”
- Download “[Contacting Your Legislators](#)”
- Consider state representatives and senators, county and city commissioners, school board representatives, local agency leaders, law enforcement agencies, and various disability-related organizations in the area.

#### **6. Select a moderator or host**

- Select someone who can keep the rally on track.

#### **7. Plan logistics**

- Create a timeline using your agenda.
- Have you printed a sign-in sheet so you know how many people attended and obtained their contact information so that you can invite them to a future event?
- Do you have enough volunteers to help with the event?
- Will you need a sound system?
- Will you want a projector and screen to show a PowerPoint?
- Do you want speakers to have a podium?
- Is there enough signage?
- What is the plan for parking?
- Will there be food (donated by a sponsor)? If so, how will the setup and cleanup process work? Be sure to check with the venue on what they allow regarding food and beverage.
- Will you have a resource table?
- Do you have chairs for seating?

#### **8. Invite the press, including TV news stations, radio, and newspapers**

- Download “[Contacting the Media](#)”

#### **9. Publicize your event:**

- Make a flyer (free versions of [Canva](#) can be a great place to start for making a flyer like the one shown below)



- Post details on social media
- You can include hashtags like #DDAwareness #DDDay with or without the year
- You might even want to create a [Facebook event](#)
- There may be local event pages in your area that could share your flyer
- Reach out to local organizations; you could provide them with printed flyers for their office location and/or ask them to post your flyer
- You could ask them to email the flyer to their listserv and/or include it in their newsletter
- You could ask them to post it to their website and/or share it on their social media
- Submit a letter to the Editor or Op-Ed
  - Download “[Contacting the Media](#)”
  - Download sample [Letter to the Editor](#)
  - Download sample [Op-Ed](#)
- Your town may have stores that offer a public bulletin board when you could post your printer flyer
- You could ask to present your event on a local news program. Many local news programs have opportunities for community members to share upcoming events.
  - Download “[Contacting the Media](#)”

#### 10. After the event

- Send out “Thank You” notes to your speakers and issue a press release.
  - Download a [sample](#) press release

#### 11. Let us know how it went!






- Email photos and information to [fddc@fddc.org](mailto:fddc@fddc.org)

## 12. Other ideas to consider:

- Request a proclamation
  - Download [proclamation](#) info

### Not ready for an in-person event? How about:

- Hold a letter-writing campaign, by providing sample letters for participants to sign.
  - Download a sample letter [here](#).
- Consider a “virtual rally.” You can follow many of the same steps above regarding how to plan and invite attendees.
- You will want to consider what online platform to use (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet)

<b>To</b>	 Person  Person  Person
<b>Cc</b>	 Person
<b>Bcc</b>	 Person
<b>Subject</b>	

- Your flyer should let people know this is a virtual event and have a process for obtaining event login information. This could be emailing a leader for the event or setting up an event registration to generate a link that can be included on your flyer. Some groups have used [Eventbrite](#) to develop a free registration process.

### Always remember to tell your story

- FDDC “[Our Care Matters](#)”
- A [video](#) message from Sarah Goldman

Be brave!

Be concise!

Be honest!