

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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CONTACT: Doxie McCoy (EOM) 202.727.9691; doxie.mccoy@dc.gov
Jocelyn Harris (DDS) 202.730.1687; Jocelyn.harris2@dc.gov

Mayor Gray Celebrates Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act

Acknowledges the D.C. Department on Disability Services for its Vigilance

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – Mayor Vincent C. Gray today encouraged all District residents to join him in celebrating the 24th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990. The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. The purpose of the law is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

In celebrating this milestone, Mayor Gray applauded the work done by the D.C. Department on Disability Services (DDS). ***“Director Laura Nuss and the staff of DDS have done an outstanding job ensuring that District residents with disabilities have every opportunity to live full, productive lives. The anniversary of the ADA and the work of DDS serve as reminders to all to look beyond what appears to be a limitation and embrace the unique skills, talents, and capabilities of individuals with disabilities,”*** said Mayor Gray.

The District of Columbia is one of several states leading the nation in implementing Employment First, an initiative to facilitate the full inclusion of people with the most significant disabilities in the workplace and community. Director Nuss attributes the success of the program to the Mayor’s support and collaborative efforts across agencies and systems to open doors to customized or competitive jobs, paying at the prevailing wage, for people with disabilities. While great strides have been made, challenges remain in efforts to foster better community integration and inclusion of people with disabilities.

“DDS operates with a person-centered philosophy, championing everyone’s right to determine the direction of his or her own life. Essential to this philosophy is greater public awareness that the primary responsibility of disability services is not accommodating a person because of their perceived limitations, but empowering individuals with disabilities to hone their strengths and talents to more fully participate in their communities, acquire better jobs, and contribute to the growth of this great city,” said Nuss.

DDS was established in 2007 to address widespread deficiencies in services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is comprised of two distinct administrations: the Developmental Disabilities Administration and the Rehabilitation Services Administration. DDS also manages the Social Security Disability Determination Division. Through collaborative efforts with community organizations, businesses, and local

education agencies, DDS excels in its mission to provide first-rate services that enable people with disabilities to lead fuller lives as vibrant members of their families, schools, workplaces and communities in every neighborhood in the District of Columbia. To learn more about DDS, visit www.dds.dc.gov.

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