NORTH DAKOTA | OLMSTEAD COMMISSION

SEPTEMBER 2026

The Olmstead Commission's goal is to move North Dakota towards greater integration and inclusion for individuals with disabilities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING AND ENGAGEMENT

Understanding Disabilities: Addiction and how it affects your mental health
September 15th at 1pm

ND Brain Injury Network 2026 Virtual Concussion Symposium
September 18th at 8:30am

Walking Beside You, Family and Caregiver Support Group
September 22nd at 6:30pm

Family Voices Parent Leadership Institute
Register by September 25th

Walk for Down Syndrome
September 26th at 11am

NEXT OLMSTEAD MEETING:

Wednesday, Nov. 4th
1-3pm in the
Peace Garden Room
at the Capitol

Discussion Topic:
Goal #4- Housing

Join meeting **here**.

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH

September is Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Month, a time to increase understanding, reduce stigma, and recognize the experiences of individuals and families affected by FASD. FASD is a lifelong disability that can affect brain development and may impact learning, memory, communication, attention, emotional regulation, decision-making, and daily living. Because FASD can look different from person to person, individuals may have different strengths, challenges, and support needs.

For individuals with FASD, having the right supports can make a meaningful difference. Understanding that behaviors may be related to the effects of FASD, not simply a lack of motivation or willingness, can help families, educators, employers, service providers, and communities respond with greater patience and understanding. Awareness also means recognizing the importance of individualized, person-centered supports. Individuals with FASD deserve opportunities to live in their communities, build meaningful relationships, pursue education and employment, make choices about their lives, and participate fully in the places they call home.

This month, we encourage everyone to learn more about FASD, challenge misconceptions, and consider how we can create more supportive and inclusive communities. Awareness leads to understanding. Understanding leads to better support. And better support creates greater opportunities for individuals with FASD to thrive.

Check out these great FASD related trainings this month!

Differential Diagnosis Across Trauma, FASDs & Toxic Exposures
September 3rd at 11am

Neurodevelopmental Profiles in FASD & Autism
September 18th at 11am

Advancing Community Screening for Prenatal Alcohol Exposure and FASDs
Septmber 25th at 11am

DIRECT SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS RECOGNITION WEEK

September 13th - 19th

DSP Recognition Week is an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the dedicated professionals who provide essential support to individuals with disabilities every day. Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play a vital role in helping people live independently, make their own choices, pursue their goals, and participate fully in their communities they choose.

The work of a DSP goes far beyond providing day-to-day assistance. DSPs build meaningful relationships, encourage independence, support self-advocacy, and help people have greater control over their own lives. They may provide support with employment, education, transportation, daily living, community activities, and countless other areas that help individuals with disabilities live the lives they choose.

Thank you to all of the Direct Support Professionals for the compassion, dedication, and commitment you bring to your work every day. Your support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of the people you serve and in the communities we all share.

Looking Toward the Future

The Olmstead Commission is working with the The Arc of Cass County and Minot State University to develop a DSP career pipeline that introduces high school students to the field and encourages them to consider DSP work as a meaningful career. By connecting students with the profession early, we hope to build awareness, create opportunities, and strengthen the future DSP workforce.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

Sign up to receive Olmstead news and updates. Visit our website and social media for more information and resources.

Stephanie Bouche
Olmstead Coordinator
WWW.OLMSTEAD.ND.GOV