

CELEBRATING

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CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF
THE OLMSTEAD DECISION:
A MILESTONE IN
DISABILITY RIGHTS

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the landmark *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision, a monumental ruling by the United States Supreme Court that has profoundly influenced the lives of individuals with disabilities. The *Olmstead* decision, rendered on June 22, 1999, mandated that people with disabilities have the right to receive care in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. This decision has not only enhanced the quality of life for countless individuals but also strengthened the push for equality and inclusion within our society.

THE JOURNEY TO OLMSTEAD

The case began when Lois Curtis and Elaine Wilson, two women with mental health disabilities, were voluntarily admitted to a psychiatric unit in Georgia. After their treatment teams determined that they were ready to move into a community-based setting, they remained confined in the institution due to a lack of community-based services. This unnecessary segregation led to a legal battle that culminated in the Supreme Court's decision.

CELEBRATING PROGRESS AND
LOOKING FORWARD

As we celebrate this milestone, it's important to recognize the progress made and the ongoing challenges. Many states have developed innovative programs and services to support individuals in community settings. These initiatives have demonstrated that with the right supports, people with disabilities can lead fulfilling and productive lives outside of institutional settings. However, the journey is far from over. Many individuals with disabilities still face barriers to accessing the community-based services they need. Issues such as funding constraints, lack of affordable housing, and insufficient availability of direct support professionals continue to pose significant challenges.

THE IMPACT OF THE DECISION

The *Olmstead* ruling affirmed that unjustified segregation of people with disabilities constitutes discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It called for states to provide community-based services when such placement is appropriate, the affected individuals do not oppose it, and the provision can be reasonably accommodated.

Over the past 25 years, this decision has driven significant changes in public policy and service delivery, promoting deinstitutionalization and the development of community-based supports. These changes have empowered individuals with disabilities to live more independently, participate more fully in their communities, and enjoy the same rights and opportunities as others.

COMPLETION OF NORTH DAKOTA'S
OLMSTEAD PLAN REVISION

We are thrilled to announce the completion of the North Dakota *Olmstead* Plan revision! This updated plan underscores our ongoing commitment to ensuring that individuals with disabilities can live, work, and thrive in the most integrated settings possible. The revised *Olmstead* Plan incorporates the latest best practices and addresses current challenges, reflecting our dedication to promoting inclusivity and enhancing community support systems. We extend our gratitude to all the stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, their families, advocates, and service providers, whose valuable input and collaboration made this achievement possible. Together, we have crafted a comprehensive plan that will guide our efforts to build a more inclusive North Dakota.

For more details on the revised *Olmstead* Plan and its initiatives, please visit our website at www.olmstead.nd.gov.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to making North Dakota a place where everyone belongs!



JOIN US IN CELEBRATING

We invite everyone to join us in commemorating the 25th anniversary of the *Olmstead* decision. This is not just a celebration of a legal victory, but a recognition of the strides made towards a more inclusive society. Together, we can continue to advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that the promise of *Olmstead* is fully realized for all. As we reflect on the past 25 years, let's renew our commitment to creating a society where every individual, regardless of their abilities, can live with dignity, independence, and equal opportunity. Here's to celebrating the spirit of *Olmstead* and the enduring pursuit of justice and inclusion for all.

Thank You

TO OUTGOING OLMSTEAD COMMISSION MEMBERS

As we move forward with the newly revised North Dakota *Olmstead* Plan, we want to extend our deepest gratitude to the current members of the *Olmstead* Commission for their dedicated service. Your hard work, commitment, and invaluable contributions have been instrumental in shaping a more inclusive and supportive community for individuals with disabilities.

Your term on the Commission may be coming to an end, but the impact of your efforts will be felt for years to come. We sincerely appreciate the time, energy, and expertise you all have invested in this critical work.

We look forward to continuing this important journey with new members, building on the strong foundation you have helped establish. Together, we will keep striving toward a more inclusive future for all. Thank you for your service and dedication to the people of North Dakota.

LET'S STAY CONNECTED!

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WWW.OLMSTEAD.ND.GOV



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