

Disability History

1776-2021

This calendar highlights select events related to disability advocacy, education, and policy changes in United States and Utah

Created by the
Utah Developmental
Disabilities Council

Yearly Events

- January 4** World Braille Day
- March** Developmental Disabilities Month
- March 1** International Wheelchair Day
- March** Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month
- March** Brain Injury Awareness Month
- March 21** World Down Syndrome Day
- April 2** Autism Acceptance Day
- May 15-June 15** Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month
- May 21** Global Accessibility Awareness Day
- July 26** ADA Awareness Day
- September** Deaf Awareness Month
- October** National Disabilities Employment Awareness Month
- October** Down Syndrome Awareness Month
- October 6** World Cerebral Palsy Day
- October 8** World Blind/Sight Day
- December 3** International Day of Disabled Persons

1750-1799

July 4 1776 Stephen Hopkins signed the Declaration of Independence, making him the first known person with a disability to sign an American document.

July 16 1798 President John Adams signs First Military Disability Law

1800-1849

January 4 1809 Louis Braille was born in Coupvray, France

1817 First school for children with disabilities was established in Hartford, Connecticut

April 15 1817 Deaf education began in the United States

1829 Louis Braille invented raise point alphabet

1849 First sheltered workshop for the blind opened in Watertown, Massachusetts

1850-1899

January 6 1852 Louis Braille passes away in Paris, France.

1860 William Little, an American surgeon, made the first steps in identifying Cerebral Palsy.

April 8 1864 Gallaudet University was founded in Washington, D.C, as a school for deaf and blind children

1869 Horace Mann School for the Deaf was established in Boston, Massachusetts

1880 Local laws, called "ugly laws," were passed by cities that made the

appearance of certain types of people punishable by law

June 27 1880 Helen Keller, well-known American deafblind advocate, was born

August 25 1880 National Association of the Deaf was founded in Silver Spring, Maryland

August 26 1884 Utah School of the Deaf opens in Ogden, Utah

1885 Utah State Hospital opens in Provo, Utah

1890 Alexander Graham Bell established the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf in Washington, D.C.

1900-1949

1908 Eugene Bleuer, a swiss psychiatrist and eugenicist, first used the term Autism.

1919 Easter Seals was started. Easter seals is a nonprofit organization providing disability services with additional support areas serving veterans, military families, seniors and caregivers.

August 10 1922 Council for Exceptional Children was founded at Columbia University in New York

August 10-17 1924 First Deaflympics Games in Paris, France

August 29 1930 Justin Dart, who some call the "Godfather of the Americans with Disabilities Act," was born

August 14 1935 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act into law. Amendments to the Act

occurred in 1939, 1944, 1950, 1952, 1964, and 1965.

1936 Utah State Developmental Center in American Fork was established

January 23 1939 Ed Roberts, a self-advocate who is often called the Father of the Independent Living Movement, was born

November 16 1940 National Federation of the Blind was founded

August 11 1945 President Harry S. Truman signed a congressional resolution declaring October as Disability Employment Awareness Month

October 1947 Willowbrook State School in New York Opens

December 18 1947 Judith Heumann, who started the Section 504 protest, is born

1950-1969

1950 The Arc of the United States was founded

1957 The National Federation of the Blind in Utah was founded in Orem Utah.

June 1 1957 First National Wheelchair Games were held in New York.

September 18-25, 1960 First Paralympic Games are held in Rome, Italy

1961 National Association of Down Syndrome was founded in Chicago, Illinois

1961 President John F. Kennedy starts a President's Panel for People With Disabilities

1961 Cache Employment and Training Center opens in Logan, Utah

1963 Association of University Centers on Disabilities is founded

December 18, 1963 President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized the Vocational Education Act which helped people with disabilities acquire jobs.

1965 Autism Society of America is founded

1967 Disabled Sports USA was founded

1967 National Theater of the Deaf opened in Hartford Connecticut

1968 Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) in California became the first mass transit system to accept wheelchair users.

June 1 1968 Helen Keller passes away

June 6 1968 Columbus Community Center opens in Salt Lake City, Utah

July 20-August 3 1968 First Special Olympics World Summer Games are held at Soldier Field in Chicago and include events like track and swimming

August 12 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson enacts the Architectural Barriers Act. This act required buildings that were designed, built or altered with federal dollars or leased by federal agencies after August 12 1968 to be accessible for people with disabilities.

1970-1979

1970 Disabled in Action, which is a Civil Rights organization, was founded in New York.

1970 The Developmental Disabilities Act, which created state-based disability

councils, was passed by U.S. Congress and was signed into law by President Richard Nixon. It was revised in 1975, 1978, 1981, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1994, 1996, and 2000.

1971 Utah Governor Calvin Rampton established the Governor's Advisory Council for Handicapped and Developmental Disabled Children in Utah, an early version of the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council

1971 Special Olympics Utah was incorporated

1972 Center for Persons with Disabilities was established in Logan, Utah by Dr. Marvin Fifield at Utah State University in Logan Utah.

1972 Center for Independent Living was founded by Ed Roberts in California. This was established with funds from the rehabilitation administration and is recognized as the first center for Independent Living. This sparked the Independent Living Movement

1972 Hartvigsen School opened in South Salt Lake City, Utah. This was the first post transition secondary school in Utah.

January 1972 Journalist Geraldo Rivera started investigating Willowbrook School for human rights violations

March 17 1972 A class action lawsuit was filed against Willowbrook School for the poor conditions and mistreatment of people with disabilities at the school

September 1 1972 The National Center for Law and Handicapped opened at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend,

Indiana, the first legal advocacy center for people with disabilities in the U.S.

1973 Handicapped Parking stickers were introduced in Washington, D.C.

1973 Turn Community Center was founded in Salt Lake City, Utah. Turn Community Center offers residential and day programs along with employment supports, art center programs and summer camp.

1973 South Valley Enterprises opened. This workshop provided sheltered work opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Utah, one of the first that served adults residing in the southern portion of Salt Lake County. The center later moved from Murray to West Jordan, Utah.

1973 National Down Syndrome Congress was founded to provide information, advocacy, and support concerning all aspects of life for individuals with Down syndrome

1973 President Richard Nixon signed the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 into law, replacing previous rehabilitation acts and including new definitions of disabilities

1974 Section 504, an new section of the Rehabilitation Act that protects certain civil rights for individuals with disabilities, was signed into law, one of the first steps toward the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

1974 People First Movement begins in the United States and the first self-advocacy conference is held in Portland Oregon with self-advocates from Oregon and Washington State.

1974 Ugly laws were repealed by cities in the United States.

1974 Supplemental Security Income was created by Congress to provide income support to people ages 65 and older and blind or disabled adults.

1975 Tash, an international disability association, was founded in Washington D.C.

1975 Ed Roberts is asked to serve as the Director of the California Department of Rehabilitation

1975 Parent and Training Information Centers were formed as allowed by the Education of all Handicapped Children Act of 1975

1975 Jordan Valley School opened in Midvale, Utah

1975 American Coalition for People with Disabilities is founded in Washington, D.C.

1975 Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act becomes law and establishes protections and advocacy services.

January 4 1975 President Gerald Ford signed the Community Services Act into law, which created the head start program and required that at least 10% of openings would be given to children with disabilities

April 30 1975 New York Governor Hugh Carrey signs the Willowbrook Consent Decree to improve community placement after a 3-year battle between parents and the school

November 29 1975 President Gerald Ford enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act

December 9 1975 The United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons

1977 Joseph Cailfano, federal official over health education and welfare, refused to sign important changes to the regulations of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, but later signed both the Section 504 and the Education of All Handicapped Children Act

1977 Utah Down Syndrome Foundation was founded

February 5-11 1977 First Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in Steamboat Springs, Colorado

April 5 1977 Sit-in protests about Section 504 began, ending almost a month later on May 4. Protesters called for Joseph Califano to sign Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

1978 The Legal Center for People with Disabilities in Utah opens, later called the Disability Law Center

1978 Congress amends the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to include more opportunities for individuals with disabilities to lead and support the creation and operation of Independent Living Centers

1978 National Council on Disability was established

1979 Utah Department of Health established the Office of Handicapped Services

1979 Vermont disability groups start the First Independent Living Center in the state of Vermont.

1979 An adaptive, inclusive recreation company called SPLORE was founded in Utah to offer individuals with disabilities access to rock climbing, canoeing, river-rafting, and cross-country skiing

1980-1989

1980 The Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act is authorized by the United States Department of Justice. This act is intended to protect the rights of people in state or local correctional facilities, nursing homes, mental health facilities and institutions for people with disabilities.

1980 The National Council on Independent Living is founded

1981 Special Olympics Law Enforcement Torch Run was founded. This event helps Law enforcement to be active in the community and to support special olympics.

1981 Barbara Toomer and Debra Mair established the Utah Independent Living Center

1982 National Organization on Disability is founded

1982 Cache Handicap Action Council was founded in Logan, Utah. This council was a volunteer organization and it consisted of people with disabilities and their friends.

April 1982 Utah Independent Living Center opened in Salt Lake City, Utah

1983 Utah Department of Social Services, the Office of Handicapped

Services, and the Department of Developmental Disabilities and Mental Retardation were merged to form the Division of Services for People with Disabilities.

1983 Americans Disabled for Accessible Public Transit was established in Denver, Colorado

1983 Utah Parent Center was founded by Helen Post.

1983 Americans Disabled for Accessible Public Transit protested Utah Transit Authority to make their buses more accessible for people with disabilities

1983 First Deaf Community Center in Utah opened in Bountiful, Utah.

1983 Worldwide Institute on Disability was founded by Ed Roberts, Judith Heumann, and Joan Leon was started in the United States

1984 Art Access was founded in Salt Lake City Utah. Art Access is an inclusive and diverse arts community for people with disabilities and other marginalized communities through public engagements in the arts.

1985 South Valley Enterprises was changed from a sheltered workshop to a post-transition secondary school within the Jordan School District and is renamed South Valley School

1985 South Valley Training Company in Sandy Utah opened to serve adults with disabilities. This program began as a service for individuals who were aging out of school. They offer Day Services, Employment and Transportation.

1985 Chrysalis was established in Heber City Utah. Chrysalis is a residential home program for people with disabilities. They offer Autism Services, Host Homes and 24 Hour Residential Care.

1985 National Ability Center in Park City Utah is founded. The National Ability Center adapts to make recreation and outdoor activities accessible to people of all abilities across the state of Utah.

March 24-29 1985 The Special Olympics Winter World Games are hosted in Park City, Utah

May 23 1986 Protection and Advocacy for Mentally Ill Individuals Act of 1986 becomes federal law was passed by Congress and then signed into law by President Ronald Regan

November 10 1986 Employment Opportunities for Disabled Americans Act was signed into law.

1987 Rise Services is founded by Gerald Nebeker. Rise provides services to people with disabilities including residential services, day programs, employment assistance, managed care and home and community based services.

September 17 1987 Willowbrook State School is closed

1988 Disability Employment Awareness Month is changed to National Disability Employment Awareness Month nationwide

1988 Cache Handicap Action Council changed its name to Options for Independence and became an Independent Living Center for

self-advocates in Rich, Cache and Box Elder Counties.

March 6-13 1988 Students at Gallaudet University protested after the university hired the first non-deaf president. The protests, called Deaf President Now, lasted 7 days; the university responded by naming Irving King Jordan, who was deaf, as the new University President.

August 19, 1988 Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act is signed into law, and was amended in 1994 and again in 1998

1990-1999

1990 First Disability Pride Day held in Boston, Massachusetts

1990 Neurobehavioral Home Program in Salt Lake City Utah opens for Children and Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to provide mental health care to people with developmental disabilities who also experience mental health needs

1990 Congress passed legislation to include Autism in the category of education disability, providing individuals with Autism a chance to qualify for special education opportunities

1990 Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered, a self-advocate group focusing on self-advocacy and leadership, is formed in Estes Park, Colorado.

January 1 1990 The Education of Handicapped Children Act added new disability categories such as Autism and Traumatic Brain Injury

March 12 1990 ADAPT, a grassroots disability rights organization, organized a capital crawl on the U.S. Capitol steps to protest the lack of accessibility at the federal level and to promote the passing of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

July 26 1990 President George H. W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act. This act prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of life including jobs, schools, transportation and all public and private places that are opened to the general public.

1991 First Disability Pride Parade was held in Boston, Massachusetts

1991 Utah Barbara Toomer starts the national Disabled Rights in Action Committee.

1992 Sanderson Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing opened in Taylorsville, Utah

1992 First Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) Conference was held in Nashville, Tennessee. SABE is a national board of self-advocates from every state in the U.S.

March 14 1995 Ed Roberts passed away in Berkeley, California

July 25 1995 American Association of People With Disabilities was created

February 8 1996 Congress passed the Telecommunications Act of 1996. This act involved two provisions for people with disabilities. The first one was access by people with disabilities section 255. This section stated that "all manufacturers of telecommunications

equipment and providers of telecommunications services to ensure that such equipment and services are designed and developed to be accessible and usable for people with disabilities". The second one was Video Programming accessibility section 713. This section aimed to ensure that video services are accessible to individuals with hearing and speech disabilities in other words closed captioning.

June 4 1997 The Education of All Handicapped Children was renamed as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and reauthorized by President Bill Clinton with several new key elements

1998 The Legal Center for People with Disabilities, which is the Protection and Advocacy organization in Salt lake City, Utah, changed its name to Disability Law Center

1999 Red Rock Center for Independence opened in St. George, Utah

2000-2009

October 2000 Roads to Independence opened in Ogden, Utah

2001 Utah Regional Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities was founded

January 2001 Ability First Independent Living Center opened in Provo Utah

June 22, 2002 Justin Dart passes away

2003 Disability History Foundation was founded

2003 First Disability Pride Parade is held in Chicago, Illinois

October 25, 2004 President George H.W. Bush signed the Assistive Technology Act of 2004 in order to provide assistive technology to people with disabilities, so they can fully participate in education, employment, and other daily activities

2005 Autism Council of Utah was founded in Salt Lake City, Utah

February 11, 2005 Autism Speaks was founded, becoming one of the largest autism organizations in the United States by sponsoring Autism research, education, and advocacy efforts that benefit individuals and families

2006 Gallaudet University Students start the Unity for Gallaudet protest movement over the new president's perceived deafness. Protests lasted three months till the school decided to find a replacement president.

March 21 2006 First World Down Syndrome Day

November 13 2006 Autistic Self-Advocacy Network is founded in Washington, D.C.

December 13 2006 The United Nations General Assembly started the International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

2007 Active Re-Entry opened in Price Utah

February 3-10 2007 Winter Deaflympic games are held in Salt Lake City, Utah

August 12 2008 People with Disabilities started protesting Tropic Thunder

September 25 2008 President George H.W. Bush enacts ADA Restoration Act. This act made amendments to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other disability nondiscrimination laws at the federal level of the United States.

2010-2019

2011 DD Councils celebrate 40 years of the passage of the Developmental Disabilities Act

2011 Utah State Legislature passed a law changing state legal documents to remove outdated terms for disabilities from state laws, which was then signed by Governor Gary Hebert. Lawmakers also passed a joint resolution to encourage state agencies to also use more respectful terms in their programs.

2020-

2021 Utah Developmental Disabilities Council and other councils across the country celebrate 50 years of advocacy and community service

Selected Resources

Disability Awareness Calendar

<https://www.disabilitytalent.org/single-post/2019/12/31/2020-Diversity-Inclusion-Disability-Awareness-2020Calendar>

Timeline of Disability History

<http://mn.gov/mnddc/parallels/index.html>

Disability Rights in the United States

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_disability_rights_in_the_United_States

Disability History and Awareness Timeline

<https://www.paec.org/disabilityhistoryawareness/pdfs/Timeline.pdf>

Disability Activism

<http://whitneylewjames.com/disability-activism/>

Encyclopedia of American Disability History

<https://www.handicapcenter.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Encyclopedia-of-American-Disability-History.pdf>

Featured Documents Related to Americans with Disabilities from Presidential Library Collections at the National Archives.

<https://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries/disabilities/featured-list.html>

Disability History Timeline on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQcncTn4rBw>

Disability History

<https://www.copower.org/leadership/disability-history>

Independent Living Center History

<https://www.accessliving.org/newsroom/blog/independent-living-history/>

Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered

<https://www.sabeusa.org/meet-sabe/>

