AFRICAN AMERICAN
CONFERENCE ON DISABILITIES

A celebration of 14 consecutive years bringing the disability community together.

2025 Conference Recap

June 13th, 2025

Hyatt Regency, Downtown

Phoenix, Arizona



Peer Leaders with Diverse Ability Incorporated: Savanna Palafox, Isacc Zwinger-Nathanson, Jordan Lewis, and Mateo TreeTop with Arizona Governor Katie Hobbs (center).

Conference Summary

Disability Rights Arizona proudly hosted 14th annual, in-person, 2025 African American Conference on Disabilities at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Phoenix. It is the premiere comprehensive disability conference in the United States and had a record number of sponsors, vendors and attendees from Arizona and several states. The conference's 22 unique disability related workshops covered topics that addressed the intersection between race and disabilities and examined avenues for self-advocacy to ensure the effective provision of services, resources, and enforcement of civil rights in the African American and disability communities with a focus in Arizona.

- **Link to the conference workshop presentations:** 2025 AACD Presentations

2025's Virtual Conference Disability Rights Arizona held a virtual conference in February in honor of Black History Month as a platform to reach a broader national and international audience and as a prelude to June's in-person conference.



DISABILITY RIGHTS ARIZONA

Message from…

J. J. Rico, CEO, Disability Rights Arizona

Even though I could not attend this year's conference in person, I want to give a heartfelt thank you to all our supporters, attendees, presenters, vendors, volunteers, and my staff, for putting on an amazing 14th Annual African American Conference on Disabilities. Once again, we were impressed by the turnout and the community engagement at this year's conference that continues to have a significant impact on the community, in Arizona and nationally.

I encourage all participants to take what they have learned from the conference to empower their community.

We remain committed to holding our conference in 2026. To make this vision a reality, ***we need your continued financial support and sponsorship***.

Again, thank you and we can't wait to see you at the conference in 2026.

-- J. J. Rico

Special Thank You To…

Closing Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Katie Hobbs, Governor of Arizona. Thank you for your continued advocacy for the disability community in the state of Arizona. We appreciate your support and pushing for inclusive policies.

Opening Keynote Speaker: Monica Wiley, National Disability Rights Network. Thank you for sharing your personal stories with us, and your passion for never giving up in the face of adversity.

Lunch Keynote: The Honorable Corey Woods, Mayor of Tempe and Jerry J. McPherson, Executive Director of the Arizona Commission of African-American Affairs. Thank you for your passionate discussion to attendees on the importance of voting, especially, at the local level.

Video Speakers:

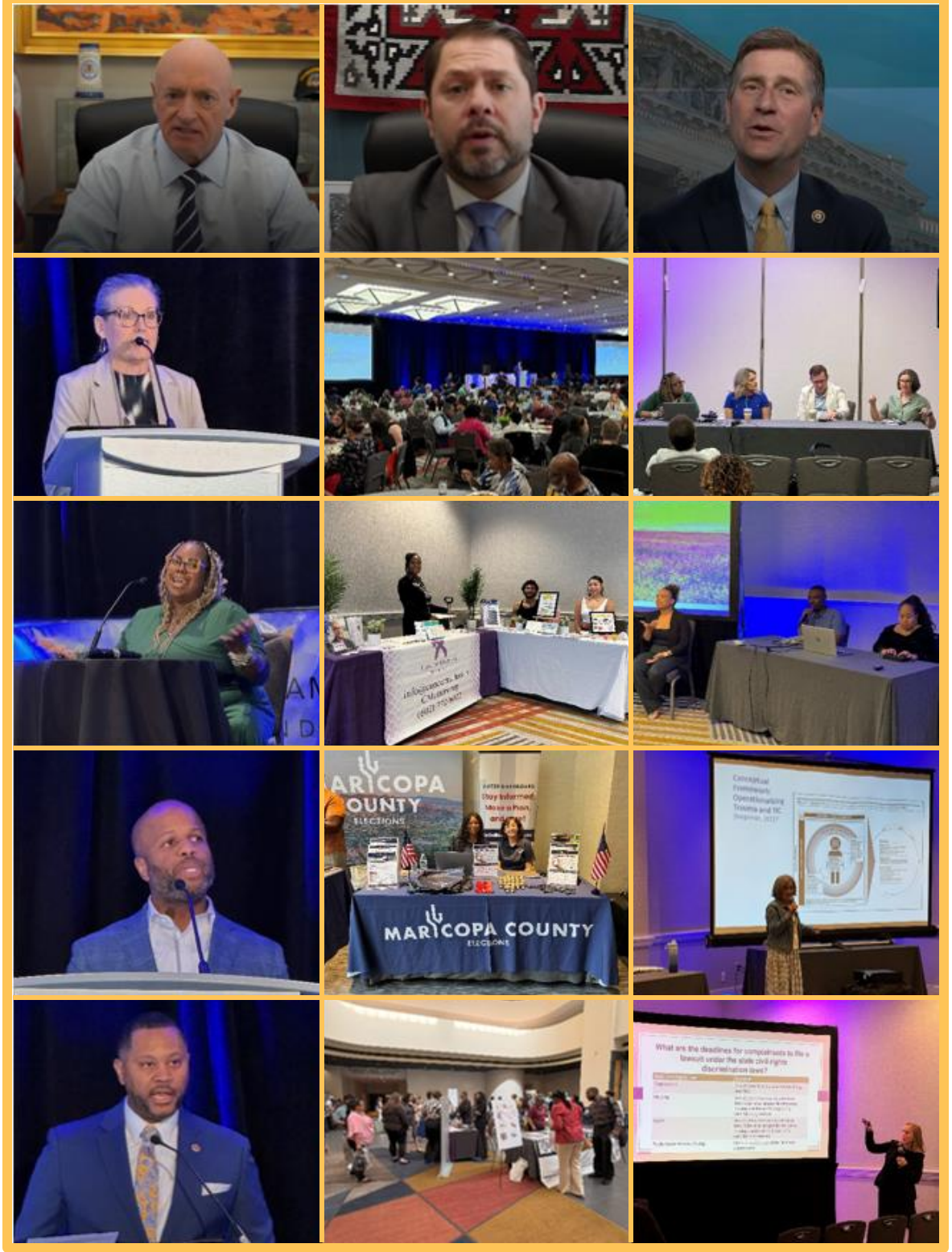
- **The Honorable Mark Kelly, U.S. Senate, Arizona.** We deeply appreciate your continued support and commitment to improving the lives of the disabled community.
- **The Honorable Ruben Gallego, U.S. House of Representatives, Arizona.** Thank your continued support to protect benefits for veterans with disabilities.
- **The Honorable Greg Stanton, U.S. House of Representatives, Arizona.** Thank your support to enhance transportation and mobility for individuals with disabilities.
- **J.J. Rico, CEO, Disability Rights Arizona.** Thank you for your continued support to host the conference as a platform to advocate for the disability community.

Master of Ceremonies: Michael Kelly, Kelly Consulting Alliance. Thank you for providing dynamic narration and highlighting the conference's focus on informing, advocating, and collaborating on disability related issues.

To all the ASL and CART interpreters: Thank you for making the conference fully accessible to all our attendees.

Our Sponsors and Vendors. We are so grateful for your generous support. You are the reason we are able to hold the conference and inform our community

The Hyatt Regency Phoenix Staff. Thank you, Jamie, and the Hyatt staff for your exceptional service and outstanding support of our conference.


MARICOPA COUNTY
ELECTIONS

Conference Host

DISABILITY RIGHTS ARIZONA

Principal Sponsors

United Healthcare Community Plan

A special thank you to Jolie Keys, VP Long Term Care, Untied Healthcare Community Plan for not only serving as a sponsor but for providing additional funding for scholarships. Your generosity enabled 50 healthcare professionals and individuals to attend the conference at no cost. We deeply appreciate your continued support of the conference and your commitment to the disabled community.

Arizona Commission for the deaf and the hard of hearing

arizona complete health

SCFA Sickle Cell Foundation of Arizona

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON
Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities
Education | Research | Service
Expanding Possibilities | Enhancing Independence

Comments by Attendees

"First time attending and I am surprised with every speaker and presenter. I gained valuably knowledge and would love to be back."

- Conference Attendee

"It was well organized and all of the attendees were so engaged. Often at conferences, there's an underlying "I have to be here to get my CEUs" feeling – you can tell you did such a great job lining up speakers, etc. Everyone was enthusiastic about participating.
Thanks again. I just wanted to let you know your efforts certainly paid off… it was fantastic. Looking forward to next year!"

- Alicia

"I wanted to drop a note to let you know how much Shannon and I enjoyed the conference. We were able to make some great connections. I also wanted to let you know again just how impressive the conference was and how amazing it felt to be in a space that focused on Black Health…"

- Shun

"We had a very active class today and lot of questions were asked and very engaging audience. We used every possible minute of it and it was amazing."

- Branislav

"The 14th Annual African American Disability Conference was an amazing experience!…I want to sincerely thank you for the kindness and opportunity to be part of such an outstanding community event. We were honored to sponsor in-kind service and support for this important gathering…"

- Jessica

Conference by the Numbers

- **Workshops:** 22
- **Sponsors and Vendors:** 51
- **Attendees:** 450 plus from throughout Arizona and several states
- **Voter Registration Table:** Registered numerous attendees and demonstrated the latest 'accessible' voting machines

Conference 'Shout –Outs'

Free Health Screenings

The free health screenings received glowing feedback from conference attendees - featured men's prostate cancer blood test screening given by Cancer Matters and free blood test screening from The University of Arizona, College of Public Health. The vendors provided valuable preventative care information in a supportive, private setting, and more than 50 men received a prostate cancer blood test.

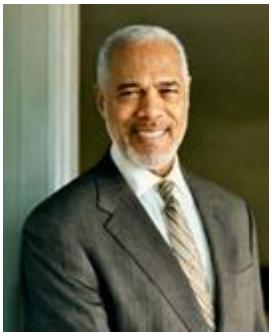
Arizona Sickle Cell Foundation

At this year's AACD Conference, a powerful new partnership was formed with the Arizona Sickle Cell Foundation to expand opportunities for individuals living with sickle cell disease. Through this collaboration, the Chronic Health Symposium featured four engaging workshops led by experts, advocates, and individuals with lived experience as a dedicated space to explore the intersections of chronic illness, disability, and advocacy. Thank you to all of the speakers and panelists.

Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of hearing and the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind

We extend our heartfelt thank you for your generous support and partnership. Your provision of ASL and CART services was instrumental in ensuring an inclusive and accessible experience for all participants.
We deeply appreciate your ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion — your efforts truly made a difference.

Master of Ceremonies: Michael Kelly, Manager, Kelly Consulting Alliance



Michael is the Manager of Kelly Consulting Alliance, a Phoenix-based firm specializing in economic development, PR, marketing, and networking. He previously served as Sr. Policy Advisor to former Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza, playing a key role in the city's downtown revitalization. He currently chairs the Arizona Community Foundation's (ACF) Ellis Center for Education Excellence and serves as President of The Leadership Consortium. A member of Valley Leadership Class XXI, Kelly holds degrees in Teaching, Sociology, and Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh and Allegheny Community College. His multifaceted career also includes award-winning work in radio, voice-over, and television.

Opening Keynote Speaker: Monica Wiley, Voter Engagement Specialist, National Disability Rights Network



She has over 15 years of experience as a Disability adviser and Organizational and Relationship Management in the public and private sector, working with state government and federal organizations, including the White House, on protecting and advancing the rights of people with disabilities and other underrepresented communities.

Her passion from this work comes from her lived experience as a person with disability, stemming from an incomplete spinal cord injury caused by a drunk driver when she was 9. She believes voting is the bedrock of our democracy–it is the freedom, ability, and independence to exercise our voice through voting without challenges and barriers. She is fighting to include voters with disabilities in the process, because in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "the time is always right to do what is right."

Lunch Keynote: Jerry J. McPherson, Executive Director, Arizona Commission of African American Affairs



As Executive Director of the Arizona Commission of African-American Affairs, Jerry is leading statewide initiatives focused on social, economic, and cultural equity. He is also a Certified Public Accountant and is a Managing Partner of The Mathias Group, a firm specializing in nonprofit accounting, consulting, and tax resolution.

He has served on various boards and advisory councils and co-founded YP CoNEXT @ ASU to foster mentorship and professional development.

Jerry is a U.S. Army National Guard veteran and has been recognized with "40 Under 40" honors and the 2025 MLK Living the Dream Award.

Keynote Panelist: The Honorable Cory Woods, Mayor, City of Tempe



Corey Woods was elected mayor of Tempe in March 2020 and serves as Executive Director of Community Relations at ASU Preparatory Academy. Nationally, he is Vice Chair of the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Housing and Community Development Committee and Co-Chair of the National League of Cities' Housing Supply Accelerator.

As a former Tempe City Council member (2008–2016), Woods championed affordable housing, community development, and human rights.

Recognized as the Arizona Housing Coalition's 2022 Advocate of the Year, Woods is also a strong proponent of climate resilience.

Closing Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Katie Hobbs, Governor of Arizona



Born and raised in Arizona, Governor Hobbs has spent her life exemplifying hard work and public service. After putting herself through college at both NAU and ASU, she began her career as a social worker, working with homeless youth and later helped run one of the largest domestic violence shelters in the country. After seeing her fellow Arizonans continue to struggle with little action from the government, Governor Hobbs decided to take matters into her own hands and run for office.

ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
KATIE HOBBS

After being elected to the Arizona House in 2010, Governor Hobbs went on to service in the Arizona State Legislature for four terms. In 2018, she was elected Secretary of State, where she successfully oversaw a contentious election cycle and forcefully defended the votes and voices of every single Arizonan. Governor Hobbs made the decision to run for Governor, and in 2022 was elected the fifth woman, and also the fifth Arizona native, to the state.

Governor Hobbs see her role in Government as a continuation of her social work. In her first term, she, has already moved the needle forward on some of our state's most critical issues. Governor Hobbs approaches every situation and every challenge with a desire to make people's lives better and give every Arizonan an opportunity to thrive.

Office of the Governor Katie Hobbs

Workshop 1: Police Interactions and the Disability Community: An Examination on Past Problems and Discussions on Moving Towards a Collaborative and Just System

Sey In, Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Arizona

Sey explored best practices tailored to various types of police interactions, emphasizing the importance of communication, de-escalation, and awareness. He gave attendees collaborative strategies aimed at fostering more informed, respectful, and inclusive encounters between law enforcement and the disability community, underscoring the need for continued advocacy and education.

Workshop 2: Chronic Health Symposium - Session 1 Sickle Cell Patient Population and Clinic Processes

Courtney McCellan, Associate Director, Pediatric HEM/Onc/BMT, Banner Health Diamond Children's Hospital, Tucson, AZ
Fran Altmaier, BSW, Arizona Department of Health Services

The panel discussed the unique needs of the sickle cell patient population and the importance of effective clinic processes in delivering quality care. They highlighted critical care approaches and the essential role nurses play in advocating for and supporting these patients, emphasizing their expertise and compassionate presence, while emphasizing the importance of newborn screening and timely follow-up.

Workshop 3: Building Bridges for Our Community: Improving Access to Mental Health Providers of Choice

Buffy T. Wooten, Ph.D., Executive Clinical Director, Wooten & Associates
Antoinette Ford, Licensed Professional Counselor

Buffy shed light on the urgent need for accessible mental health services within the African American community and the five major barriers that continue to hinder care—stigma, lack of culturally competent providers, financial limitations, limited access, and mistrust of the healthcare system. She introduced a practical model for navigating these challenges, emphasizing the importance of community education around levels of care and interventions to better provider collaboration.

Workshop 4: Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the Workplace: Friend or Foe?

Lindsey Stevens, Staff Advocate, Disability Rights Arizona
Skylar Colavito, , Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Arizona
Rebecca Sobie, Senior Staff Attorney, Disability Rights Arizona

The panelists discussed how AI-driven pre-screening tools can unintentionally disadvantage candidates with disabilities and other protected classifications, raising important concerns around fairness and accessibility. Lindsay answered questions on how AI can offer innovative assistive technologies and resources to support workplace accommodations. The panelists provided a balanced overview of legal protections and inclusive approaches to using AI in hiring and employment practices.

Workshop 5: Addressing the Need for and the Challenges to Develop a Collaboration Mindset within the Black Community

Roy Dawson, Executive Director, Arizona Center for African American Resources (AZCAAR)
Matthew Stewart, CEO, Our Sister Our Brother

Roy and Matthew spoke passionately about how African Americans possess immense economic power and potential. Through love, faith, and righteous action, they emphasized how Black communities have historically overcome systemic barriers—and how continued collaboration can lead to true freedom and justice. The discussion left many attendees inspired to take action and build stronger, united efforts for change.

Workshop 6: School Discipline in 2025: Educator and Attorney Perspectives

Amanda Glass, **Esq.**, Managing Attorney, Education Team, Disability Rights Arizona
Dr. Ovett Chapman, Western Regional Director, Arizona Association of School Psychologists

Dr. Chapman shed light on how students of color and those with disabilities face disproportionate school discipline, often with lasting negative effects. Amanda shared practical strategies, legal insights, and discussed recent federal policy changes, underscoring the need for fairer, more supportive practices.

Workshop 7: Protecting the Rights of Parents with Disabilities in Child Welfare Proceedings

Moderator: Rose Daly-Rooney, Legal Director, Disability Rights Arizona
Panelists
Jessica Jansepar Ross, Attorney Consultant, Disability Rights Arizona
Jacob D'Annunzio, Managing Attorney, Washington State Office of Public Defense

Participants for the topic both eye-opening and deeply informative. The panelist highlighted the troubling reality that parents with disabilities are disproportionately referred to child welfare services and often face permanent separation from their children. They discussed key federal legal protections, including recent disability discrimination findings by the U.S. Department of Justice against the Department of Child Safety. The workshop emphasized the need for reasonable accommodations during proceedings to ensure fairness and equal opportunity. Practical tips and resources were also shared for attorneys advocating for these parents. The session concluded with thoughtful ideas on how Arizona can improve its child welfare system to better support and protect the rights of parents with disabilities.

Workshop 8: Chronic Health Symposium – Session 2
It Takes Everybody to Overcome a Life of Sickle Cell Disease Challenges

Chanelle Grismore, Senior Manager, Patient Affairs Liaison for the West Coast, Pfizer
Courtney Slanaker, Executive Director, Southern Arizona Red Cross Chapter
Crystal Jackson, Red Cross Advocate and Community Leader

The panel discussion provided meaningful insights into tools for self-advocacy, helping individuals with sickle cell disease and their families better navigate healthcare and support systems. "A Vision of Resilience" was especially inspiring, highlighting stories of strength and perseverance within the sickle cell community. Additionally, attendees learned about Arizona's Sickle Cell Data Collection Program emphasized the importance of accurate data in shaping policy, improving care, and addressing disparities. The panelists reinforced the values of advocacy, resilience, and community-driven efforts in improving outcomes for those affected by sickle cell disease.

Workshop 9: Designing a Trauma-Informed Curriculum: Focus on Safety, Empowerment, and Application

Lynne Tomasa, Ph.D., MSW, Associate Professor, University of Arizona Family and Community Medicine
Celina Urquidez, MPH, University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities
Paulette Nevarez, MPH, University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities

Attendees were treated to valuable insights into the critical need for trauma-informed care (TIC) tailored to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The panelists walked through the thoughtful curriculum development process, highlighting how trauma can uniquely impact this population. They explored effective training strategies and key topics essential for delivering accessible, inclusive, and meaningful content. Lynne emphasized the importance of collaboration across organizations and clinical settings to successfully integrate TIC principles. They left attendees with a deeper understanding of the prevalence of trauma and how person-centered, healing-focused approaches can significantly improve care and support outcomes.

Workshop 10: Empowered Through Connection: How Belonging Strengthens Emotional Autonomy

Carlian Dawson, Ed.D., Arizona Center for African American Resources (AZCAAR)

Carlian gave a powerful and moving experience for attendees and explored the deep connections between identity, resilience, and the sense of belonging, all grounded in trauma-informed and culturally relevant insights. Through her heartfelt storytelling and meaningful reflection, she examined how emotional autonomy can be reclaimed by connecting to self, family, culture, and faith. Carlian shared practical strategies that offered not just pathways to healing, but to thriving—empowering the Black community to rise above systemic challenges with strength and unity.

Workshop 11: Embracing Identity – Arizona Young Leaders

Savanna Palafox, Young Adult Leader
Jordan Lewis, Young Adult Leader
Mateo TreeTop, Young Adult Leader
Isaac Zwinger-Nathanson, Peer-Based Services Professional
Reggie Mitzel, Diverse Ability Inc

The youth panelists gave the audience a truly inspiring and thought-provoking workshop. They shared their personal experiences, that gave attendees a deeper understanding of how disability and other aspects of diversity shape self-perception and identity. Their honesty and insight highlighted the importance of embracing one's full identity with pride and resilience. The panel also offered empowering strategies for managing bias and celebrating diversity in all its forms. It was a powerful reminder of the strength that comes from self-acceptance and community, and the importance of lifting up young voices in the disability advocacy space.

Workshop 12: Chronic Health Symposium – Session 3
Sickle Cell Disease: Shattering Stigma

Sarah Spiekermeier, Executive Director and Interim CEO, Banner Plans and Medicare Regulations
Eric Stark, Community Outreach Specialist, Banner Health Plans
Mindy McEntee, Assistant Professor, College of Health Solutions, Arizona State University, and Program Director, Arizona State University Community Health Worker Training Program

The panelists emphasized the vital role community health workers play in bridging gaps in care, providing culturally responsive support, and advocating for patients living with sickle cell disease. Equally powerful was the listening session, which centered on hearing individual attendees tell their stories on how they were directly impacted, reminding us how essential it is to create spaces where their experiences guide improvements in care. The workshop was a meaningful reminder that community-led solutions are key to driving lasting change.

Workshop 13: Everything You Need to Know About Handling Discrimination Complaints Before the Arizona Attorney General's Civil Rights Division

Rose Daley-Rooney, Legal Director, Disability Rights AZ
Natalie Trouard, Assistant Attorney General, Arizona Attorney General's Office

Natalie and Rose clearly explained the fundamentals of filing discrimination complaints, including how to file, important deadlines to keep in mind, and the types of cases the Division typically accepts. Attendees appreciated the detailed overview of what happens after a complaint is filed, as well as the different resolution options like mediation and conciliation, and best practices to file complaints.

Workshop 14: Empowering Parents: Bridging the Gap Between Schools, Healthcare, and Disability Rights

Natassia Williamson, Family Nurse Practitioner, Owner, Aurora Maternal Family Healthcare
Madisyn Puchebner, Staff Attorney, Equal Justice Works Fellow Sponsored by Martha Huckins, Disability Rights AZ

Natassia and Madisyn reviewed key laws—including the IDEA, Section 504, the ADA, and relevant Arizona statutes—highlighting the responsibilities schools have in meeting students' medical needs. The session reinforced the importance of collaboration between schools, families, and medical professionals to ensure students receive the support they need to thrive in their education.

Workshop 15: Black Deaf Individuals in the Black Hearing Community

Bibi Ashley, MA, Deaf Mentor Program Administrator, Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind

Bibi shed light on the unique experiences and challenges faced by Black Deaf individuals, particularly within their own cultural community. She emphasized the importance of recognizing and valuing diverse modes of communication, and the need for collaboration to bridge gaps in understanding and inclusion. Attendees appreciated the power of shared knowledge to create more connected communities.

Workshop 16: Your First Steps to Building Your Credit

Branislav Vujic, Assistant Vice President, Community Lending Market Manager, Bankers Trust

Branislav explained to attendees how credit works, by breaking it down into the basics, and why it plays such a crucial role in our financial health—from qualifying for loans to securing better interest rates. He appreciated questions from attendees asking how to build credit responsibly and how to monitor and manage it over time. Workshop participants left feeling more confident and better equipped to take control of their financial future with a better understanding of credit.

Workshop 17: How Do We Manage Our Trauma Triggers? Veterans and Civilians Speak Out

Dr. Danita Applewhite, Founder., White Apple Institute

Dr. Danita Applewhite's workshop was both powerful and deeply moving. Attendees were struck by how she connected the historical trauma of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome (PTSS) with the modern-day experiences of PTSD, especially in professional and educational settings. She shed light on the unique challenges African American men and women face and how these traumas shape our responses to social and disability justice issues. Dr. Applewhite's compassionate and knowledgeable approach gave attendees the tools to manage triggers more effectively.

Workshop 18: Chronic Health Symposium – Session 4 Introducing 360 (SCD) Sickle Cell Disease

Lisa Wynja, Vice President, Thought Leader, Patient & Industry Engagement, Bluebird Bio

Panel Discussion

Attendees enjoyed the panelists' unique perspective on sickle cell disease and gene therapy, from explaining the basics of gene therapy to discussing the real-life transitions patients face while living with sickle cell. Lisa led conversations and gave insights on the complications children experience and how treatments are evolving. She also discussed Bluebird Bio's advancements in gene therapy that give hope for the future—especially for families affected by sickle cell disease.

Workshop 19: Crisis and Behavioral Health: Making a Plan and Accessing Support, Learning from Each Other

Jacy K. Farkas, Ph.D., Director, University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities
Barbara Brent, Community Systems Change Liaison, University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities
David Taylor, Peer Support Mentor, Community Drive, Inc.

Attendees found the workshop on accessing behavioral health services in Arizona was incredibly helpful and empowering. The team presented data on issues people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IID) and their supporter have in navigating the system more effectively and how crucial self-advocacy and peer support are for individuals with people with IID who need behavioral health care. The workshop was interactive and practical—as the panelists gave real-life scenarios and left attendees feeling more equipped to support themselves and others in advocating for the care we deserve.

Workshop 20: Disability and Aging: The Importance of Planning Throughout the Lifespan

Mellie Aud, Chief Executive of Strategy and Innovation, Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council
Melanie Mills, State Director, The ARC of Arizona
Calvin Cook, Self-Advocate and Disability Rights Arizona Board Member

The workshop offered practical tips on planning for the future, whether you're aging into a disability or living with one long-term. Participants especially appreciated the focus on maintaining dignity and independence as we age—something that often gets overlooked. The discussion also shed light on the unique challenges faced by the African American community, which resonated with the attendees. It was a thoughtful and necessary conversation that left attendees feeling more prepared and informed about the aging throughout their lifespans.

Workshop 21: Blind Leadership: Defining Our Future Through Collective Action, Determination, and Diversity

Donald Porterfield, President, National Federation of the Blind of Arizona
Jordan Moon, 1st VP, National Federation of the Blind of Arizona, and Phoenix Center Director, SAAVI Service for the Blind
Sharonda Good, Member of the Board of Directors, National Federation of the Blind and Student Resource Manager, SAAVI Service for the Blind

Attendees found the workshop was truly inspiring. Through personal stories and historical context, the presenters challenged traditional ideas of leadership and encouraged us to embrace a more inclusive, collaborative approach. Hearing from members of the National Federation of the Blind and SAAVI Services for the Blind informed the attendees on the strength and capability within the blind community. The message was clear: leadership should reflect diverse voices and lived experiences. Attendees left the session feeling motivated to rethink how to define leadership and become more committed to supporting inclusive spaces where everyone can thrive.

Workshop 22: Access to the Electoral Process in a Partisan Environment

Tom Collins, Executive Director, Citizens Clean Elections Commission
Marlene Sallo, Executive Director, National Disability Rights Network
Monica Wiley, Voter Engagement Specialist, National Disability Rights Network
Celina Olivas Iglesias, Community Outreach Director, Arizona Secretary of State

The panelists provided eye-opening and thought-provoking insight into the real challenges officials face when trying to uphold fair and secure elections amid growing political division. What stood out most was the intersectional approach—connecting systemic injustice, social inequality, and the vital role of grassroots advocacy. The panelist helped attendees see how legal and policy decisions impact marginalized communities and reinforced the importance of staying engaged and informed in the fight against discrimination in our democracy.

To all Conference Sponsors and Vendors. Thank you! Your generous support helps us provide scholarships to families in need so they can attend the conference. We deeply appreciate your continued commitment and look forward to your support for the 2026 conference. *Click the links below to learn more about each organization*.

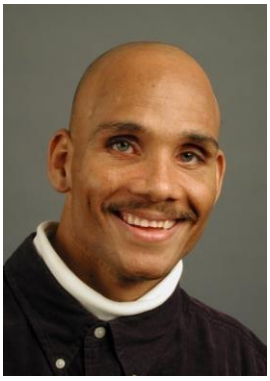
- Ability 360
- Adelante Healthcare
- All Voting is Local
- Arion Care Solutions
- Arizona Bar Foundation
- Arizona Center for African American Resources (AZCAAR)
- Arizona Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Arizona Complete Health
- Arizona Dept. of Economic Security Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council
- Arizona Dept. of Health Services
- Arizona Governor's Office of Youth, Faith, and Family
- Arizona Mentor
- Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind
- Arizona State University College of Health Solutions
- Arizona State University
- Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council
- Banner University Family Care
- Barrow Neurological Institute
- Bluebird Bio
- Brain Injury Alliance of Arizona
- Citizens Clean Elections Commission
- Direct Advocacy & Resource Center
- Disability Rights Arizona
- Diverse Ability Incorporated
- Encircle Families (Raising Special Kids)
- Everlasting Community Services
- Foundation for Senior Living
- Hospice of the Valley
- Humana, Inc.
- Maricopa County Elections
- Mark's the Spot Barbershop
- Mayo Clinic
- Mercy Care
- New Disabled South Black Disability Institute
- Northern Arizona University IHD
- Pfizer
- Phoenix Children's Hospital – Bone Marrow Transplant
- SAAVI Service for the Blind
- Salt River Project (SRP)
- Semper Fi Heating and Cooling
- Sickle Cell Foundation of Arizona
- Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center
- Southwest Human Development Parents Partner Plus
- Superstition Springs Lexus
- TD SYNNEX
- The ARC of Arizona
- The Kwamie Lassiter Foundation
- United Healthcare Community Plan
- University of Arizona Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities
- Wooten & Associates

Special Thank You to the Conference Founders…

Thank you to Renaldo and David for your vision to create a conference that brings together organizations and individuals in the disability community. The AACD has grown to become the premier comprehensive disability conference in the United States that addresses the intersection between race and disability.



Renaldo Fowler, Co-founder, African American Conference on Disabilities (AACD) and Senior Staff Advocate, Disability Rights Arizona



David Carey, Co-founder, African American Conference on Disabilities (AACD) and Disability Justice Educator, Arizona Statewide Independent Living Council

2025 AACD In-Person Conference: June 2025

- Link: 2025 AACD Workshop Presentations

2025 AACD Virtual Conference: February 2025

- Link: 2025 AACD Virtual Conference Workshop Videos

For More Information…

For more information about the African American Conference on Disabilities—or to inquire about becoming a sponsor or vendor for the 2026 virtual and in-person conferences—please contact:

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