



Delaware
**DEPARTMENT
OF STATE**

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State Council for Persons with Disabilities Annual Partnership

Delaware Office of Veterans Services



SERVICE OFFICERS IN EACH OF DELAWARE'S COUNTIES

- Services are provided at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bear (New Castle County) and Millsboro (Sussex County), and Dover (Kent County). These locations allow veterans with disabilities and their family members easy access to DDVA Service Officers to address their healthcare and wellness needs.
- Supporting events providing disabled veterans access to resources to improve their quality of life.
- In FY25, our staff processed 46,000 VA disability claims, resulting in \$98m in benefits to Delaware veterans (disability and compensation).
- In July and August 2025 (FY26), we processed 10,432 disability claims, resulting in \$22.3m in benefits to DE veterans. Recently, we've seen a rise in applications from veterans for VA disability claims and Trust Fund support.

Delaware Division of the Arts



DELAWARE CREATIVE AGING

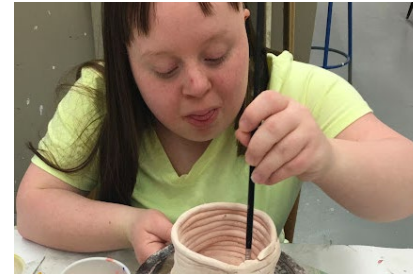
- The Delaware Creative Aging initiative is designed to provide Delaware's older population with opportunities for artistic expression, social interaction, and enhanced mental and physical health through meaningful engagement in the arts. Through free 8-week classes at local libraries and senior centers, Delaware Creative Aging aims to provide our older population with new learning opportunities and experiences for personal growth.
- Since its inception, the Division has invested over \$300,000 into this program.

DELAWARE CREATIVETERANS

- The Delaware CreatiVeterans Program, in partnership with the Office of Veterans Services, is designed to provide Delaware's veteran population with opportunities for artistic expression, social interaction, and enhanced well-being through meaningful engagement in the arts. Through free 8-week classes at local arts organizations and VFWs, Delaware CreatiVeterans seeks to provide our veteran population with opportunities for personal growth.
- In its first year, we invested \$100k in the first six programs and related training/marketing.

GRANTS BY THE DIVISION

- The Division, through its portfolio of grant programs, provides support for arts programming and presentation. Organizations such as Art Therapy Express, Art Works for All, the Delaware Theatre Company (Totally Awesome Players), The Grand Opera House (offering sensory-friendly performances), and the Delaware Art Museum all provide programming for individuals with disabilities. Over the last five years, the Division has granted more than \$22M for arts programs statewide.



Division of Historical & Cultural Affairs



TRAININGS COMPLETED BY STAFF MEMBERS

- On February 11, the Delaware Network for Excellence in Autism led a division-wide webinar training, Introduction to Autism. The second part of the training was in-person and held during the All-Staff meeting on February 28. This training, Supporting Autistic Visitors in the Museum, developed strategies to welcome autistic students, families, and individuals to the museums. In August and September, the Race and Equity committee viewed the documentary, Crip Camp, which focused on the individuals and origins of the disability rights movement that led to the passing of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

IN DEVELOPMENT: A TOUR ON DISABILITIES AT THE NEW CASTLE COURTHOUSE MUSEUM.

ACTIONS HCA HAS TAKEN TO PROVIDE PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

- All currently open sites have accessibility on the first floor.
- The John Dickinson Plantation's current visitor center is accessible. The first floor of the mansion is accessible via a lift from the ground to the first floor. The new visitor center is being designed to be fully accessible, including accessible stalls in each full-size restroom, two separate family-type restrooms, and an accessible lactation room.
- Old State House has an elevator, so all public floors are accessible (except the balconies in the House and Senate rooms).
- Cooch's Bridge Historic Site is undergoing rehabilitation and improvements to make the entirety of the first floor of the Cooch Homestead accessible, including the addition of an accessible restroom. Only the first floor will be open to the public.
- All currently open sites have a binder with photos and descriptions of floors that are not accessible. All sites have a tablet for use in programming and providing access to digital interpretation.
- New Castle Court House Museum has a virtual video tour of the second floor that is available on their tablet.
- The Johnson Victrola Museum has a virtual tour available of the 2nd floor.
- Zwaanendael Museum has a virtual tour of both floors available.
- A virtual tour of the pre-rehabilitation state of all floors of the Cooch Homestead is being created now. The plan is to create another one after the work is done, so people can see the other levels of the building that are not open to the public, both before and after the rehabilitation.
- Lecterns with built-in sound equipment at all sites that are currently open to have available for programs to assist with sound issues.

Delaware Division of Human & Civil Rights

FAIR HOUSING LAWS & PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- People with disabilities have the right to fair and equal housing in Delaware. The Delaware Fair Housing Act makes it illegal for landlords, property managers, real estate agents, lenders, or homeowners' associations to discriminate because of a disability.

DELAWARE EQUAL ACCOMMODATIONS LAW

- Prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodation (like restaurants, hotels, and stores) based on disability and other categories.
- Reasonable Modifications: Places of public accommodation must make reasonable modifications to their policies, practices, and procedures to ensure access for people with disabilities.
- Auxiliary Aids: Public accommodations must provide auxiliary aids and services (like interpreters) unless it would cause an undue burden or fundamentally alter the nature of the business.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO RENT OR BUY

- Housing providers cannot refuse to rent, sell, or negotiate housing because of a disability. They cannot ask unnecessary medical questions or force higher deposits because of disability.
- Reasonable Accommodations: Housing providers must adjust rules, policies, or services when needed for a person with a disability to use their home.
- Reasonable Modifications: Tenants must be allowed to make physical changes to their home if needed for accessibility.
- Accessible Housing in New Construction: Apartment buildings with 4 or more units built after March 13, 1991, must include basic accessibility features like wider doors, accessible light switches, and step-free entrances.
- Protection from Harassment and Retaliation: It is illegal for a landlord to harass or punish someone for requesting accommodation, filing a complaint, or standing up for their rights.

Persons with disabilities may file a complaint with the Division of Human and Civil Rights. Complaints of housing discrimination must be filed within 1 year of the last act of alleged discrimination.

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

- GIC defines digital accessibility as the practice of removing barriers so that people with disabilities (e.g., vision, hearing, motor, cognitive) can interact with websites equally. Public entities must bring digital assets into compliance with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines by April 24, 2026 (for state and local governments in jurisdictions over 50,000 population) or April 26, 2027 (for entities under 50,000). The U.S. Department of Justice has set this rule.
- In addition, GIC has released a new design system called Lighthouse, for all agencies to use, which has been designed from the start with accessibility in mind. GIC's strategy for our platform websites (about 140 of them*) is to move as many websites into Lighthouse as quickly as possible by January 2026, and then GIC's focus will switch to remediation of platform websites that didn't make it into Lighthouse.

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- Participates in the Electronic Accessibility Committee (as part of the State Council for Persons with Disabilities) to coordinate across government and stakeholder input
- Conducted usability testing with disabled users that helped us uncover issues to fix that were not being flagged by automated software
- Video team ensures that all videos we produce internally have captioning, and that live videos we broadcast at minimum live captioning and often American Sign Language interpreting (ASL).

HOW GIC HELPS/ROLE & SERVICES

- Acting as a liaison or resource to help agencies improve accessibility of websites.
- Implementing universal improvements to shared infrastructure: for example, external link indicators, accessible color schemes, screen reader compatibility, design templates.
- Facilitating scanning and evaluation tools accessible to state agencies
- Offering training and continuing education: state employees can access digital accessibility training via Delaware's Department of Technology & Information, tailored to developers, designers, and content editors.

GIC is helping set standards, maintain shared infrastructure, provide training, and support agency-level remediation.

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Delaware Department of State



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