



U.S. Council for the International Year of Disabled Persons

1575 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 430, Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 638-6011

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE 1982 NATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS

In the towns and cities of America, people from all walks of life have responded to the United Nations' challenge of the International Year of Disabled Persons—"full participation of disabled persons." They made public buildings and facilities more accessible; developed special transportation systems; modified churches and parks to accommodate disabled persons; started new educational programs for disabled youth; facilitated voting by disabled individuals; passed new ordinances on housing; held job fairs bringing together employers and disabled job seekers; and they carried out local awareness programs.

Self-reliance and self-help initiatives emerged as a common theme throughout the IYDP. More than 1,850 communities joined with the U. S. Council as IYDP community partners. All governors, 330 national organizations, agencies of the federal government, and 270 corporations cooperated. Attitudes were changed. Commitments were made for the future. The success of the Year is not only in what was done, but in what was started. The National Year of Disabled Persons will build on this momentum and national structure by promoting the long-term goals of and for disabled persons promoted in the IYDP.

1. Q: WHAT IS THE NATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS?

A: The "National Year of Disabled Persons" is the designation adopted for 1982 in several countries to continue the momentum of the UN proclaimed International Year of Disabled Persons which ends on December 31, 1981. Zambia and Peru were the first countries to designate 1982 their National Years.

2. Q: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE NYDP?

A: Focusing attention, increasing awareness, and enhancing opportunity for organizations and individuals to further their objectives aimed at improving the lives of disabled persons comprise the purpose of the National Year of Disabled Persons.

3. Q: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AN INTERNATIONAL YEAR AND A NATIONAL YEAR?

A: An international year is proclaimed by the United Nations. In the case of the IYDP, the UN urged each nation to carry out its own program depending on its level of development

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and the nature of its society. In 1981 each country, in effect, carried out a national year. The national years are being adopted by national proclamations in a number of countries which recognize the importance of continuing to further the UN's IYDP theme of "full participation of disabled persons in the life of their society."

4. Q: WHY IS ANOTHER "YEAR" NEEDED, WHEN THERE ALREADY HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE PROBLEMS OF DISABILITY DURING THE IYDP?
- A: The problems of disability affect 35 million Americans, and one-half billion persons worldwide, to say nothing of at least equal numbers of their family members. Clearly, these problems will not end with the IYDP. The IYDP has increased recognition of their extent and seriousness. It has increased understanding of the needs and potential contribution of disabled Americans. It has furthered attitudinal change and accelerated progress toward long-term goals. The designation of the National Year will provide encouragement for continuing this momentum.
5. Q: WHO IS PROVIDING THE LEADERSHIP TO DESIGNATE 1982 AS THE NATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS?
- A: Congressman Larry Winn, Jr. of Kansas introduced HJR 354 in the House of Representatives on November 4, 1981. Senators William Armstrong of Colorado and Donald Riegle, Jr. of Michigan introduced the companion bill in the U. S. Senate, where it passed unanimously on December 16, 1981. This joint resolution calls upon all Americans to continue working toward the long-term goals of and for disabled Americans promoted during the IYDP. It also authorizes and requests the President to issue a proclamation, as he did for the IYDP.
6. Q: IS THERE A NATIONAL FOCUS FOR THE NYDP?
- A: Yes. In response to the urging of many individuals throughout the country, the National Office on Disability is being established as a privately funded organization in Washington, D. C. to continue the IYDP momentum. Initially it will have the same address as the U. S. Council for IYDP. It will encourage national, state, and local organizations, government agencies, corporations, and individuals nationwide to support activities started or strengthened during the IYDP. It will promote awareness and disseminate information on disability programs and issues. At its final meeting, the board of directors of the U. S. Council for IYDP voted its support of continuing the momentum and of designating 1982 as the National Year of Disabled Persons.
7. Q: IS IT APPROPRIATE FOR GOVERNORS AND MAYORS TO ISSUE NEW PROCLAMATIONS?
- A: Yes. In fact, in November and December 1981 several governors and mayors issued proclamations designating the "National Year of Disabled Persons" for observance in their respective states and communities. The National Office on Disability is encouraging issuance of such proclamations, as well as action and support by these elected officials.

8. Q: WILL THERE BE A NATIONAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN IN SUPPORT OF THE NYDP?

A: Yes. The national advertising campaign sponsored by the U. S. Council for IYDP together with the Advertising Council, is being adapted for use after 1981. This advertising campaign will mention the National Year of Disabled Persons and the National Office on Disability. It will again urge viewers, listeners and readers to become involved and contact their mayors or local officials.

9. Q: HOW DOES THE DESIGNATION OF THE NATIONAL YEAR OF DISABLED PERSONS RELATE TO GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE SECTOR PROGRAMS IN THE AREA OF DISABILITY?

A: They should be mutually reinforcing. Serious problems facing disabled persons go on. In these days of government cutbacks and economic uncertainty, continuing efforts to protect vulnerable individuals and to expand opportunity for them must also go on. At the same time, private sector initiative and identifying alternatives must be encouraged. Efforts to bring disabled persons into the mainstream must be pursued in many different ways. The National Year and these substantive programs further the same goals.

10. Q: WHAT ARE THESE GOALS?

A: These are the long-term goals of and for disabled persons promoted during the IYDP as contained in the IYDP mission statement adopted by the U. S. Council and the U. S. Government's Federal Interagency Committee for IYDP:

The mission is to promote the full participation in the life of our society of America's citizens with physical or mental disabilities. Building on the progress of the past decade, we work together with private and governmental organizations to strengthen public understanding of the still unmet needs and potential contribution of these 35 million people. We foster the partnership of Americans from all walks of life in furthering the following long-term national goals of and for citizens with disabilities:

- o Expanded educational opportunity
- o Improved access to housing, buildings and transportation
- o Greater opportunity for employment
- o Greater participation in recreational, social and cultural activities
- o Expanded and strengthened rehabilitation programs and facilities
- o Purposeful application of biomedical research aimed at conquering major disabling conditions

- o Reduction in the incidence of disability through accident and disease prevention
- o Increased application of technology to ameliorate the effects of disability
- o Expanded international exchange of information and experience to benefit all disabled persons

11. Q: DOES THE DESIGNATION OF THE NATIONAL YEAR CALL FOR A SPECIAL APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS BY THE CONGRESS?

A: No. As was the case with the International Year of Disabled Persons, the Congress will appropriate no special funding. Government agencies may sponsor special programs as they did in the IYDP.

12. Q: HOW DOES AN ORGANIZATION OR COMMUNITY GROUP MAKE THE MOST OF AN INTERNATIONAL OR NATIONAL YEAR?

A: The best successes of the IYDP were realized by those organizations, communities and groups who saw the observance as an opportunity to further their own objectives relating to disabled persons -- and seized it.