



# State of New York

## Executive Chamber

### Proclamation

**Whereas**, New York State recognizes that people with developmental disabilities have the right to live and work in communities of their choice, within the most integrated settings possible, and we support the accessibility of person-centered services, gainful employment, good health, personal growth, and meaningful relationships that enhance and enrich their overall quality of life; and

**Whereas**, the diverse community of people living with developmental disabilities continue to bring valuable knowledge and skills to our workforce, our communities, and our entire state and nation; and

**Whereas**, developmental disabilities include neurological, sensory, metabolic, intellectual, and degenerative disorders and conditions—those perceptible and imperceptible—and New York State does not tolerate the discriminatory treatment of people with developmental disabilities which results in harmful social attitudes and stereotypes that are erosive to the very foundation of our society; and

**Whereas**, people with disabilities have a strong advocate in the New York State Office of the Chief Disability Officer, created in February 2022 to directly interact as the state liaison with disability organizations and individuals with disabilities so as to ensure that all people with disabilities, regardless of their type or degree of disability, are well-represented with a determined and effective voice in making policy recommendations; and

**Whereas**, the New York State Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) administers and oversees essential services for New Yorkers with developmental disabilities; in partnership with self-advocates, parents, family members, volunteers, staff, government officials, community members, service providers, and others who have worked tirelessly over the years, OPWDD continues to transform New York State's service delivery system into a community-based system that ensures people with developmental disabilities have greater independence, full participation in their communities, opportunities for leadership, and a strong voice in determining their own path in life; and

**Whereas**, the enactment of the Federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 led to the creation of the New York State Council on Developmental Disabilities, which helps enhance the lives of New Yorkers with developmental disabilities and their families by conducting and supporting advocacy, systems change, and capacity-building efforts through programs that promote self-advocacy, participation, and inclusion in all facets of community life, with its work guided by core values and a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and

**Whereas**, with the adoption and implementation of Executive Order No. 40 on September 30, 2024, New York State has committed to being an "Employment First" state as part of the national movement to prioritize Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) as the preferred outcome when planning or providing services and supports to New Yorkers with disabilities who are of working age; through this action, our state recognizes the importance of informed choice and person-centered planning where the person fully participates in planning, preparing, and seeking employment opportunities; and

**Whereas**, Competitive Integrated Employment refers to work in which the employee's experience is the same as a colleague without a disability, including rates of pay never less than minimum wage, integration within the workforce, availability of benefits, and opportunities for advancement; and

**Whereas**, New Yorkers proudly join in the national observance of March as *Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month*, recognizing the unique contributions people with developmental disabilities make to our society, applauding their achievements, and encouraging their integration at all levels of society, so they can continue to thrive and achieve their fullest potential; and

**Whereas**, in honor of *Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month*, New York State will light its landmark buildings orange in early March to commemorate the important contributions and talent that the developmental disabilities community adds to the overall diversity of our great state;

**Now, Therefore**, I, Kathy Hochul, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim March 2025 as

## DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

in the Empire State.



**G i v e n** under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State  
at the Capitol in the City of Albany this third day  
of March in the year two thousand twenty-five.

*Kathy Hochul*  
Governor

*Karen Persichilli Keogh*

Secretary to the Governor  
Karen Persichilli Keogh