



# NADE ADVOCATE

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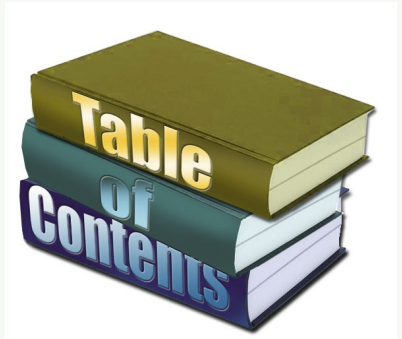


# N.A.D.E

## National Training Conference Denver, CO 2025

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# PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Greetings NADE Family,

Happy Almost Spring! Spring is a time for change and growth. I don't know about you, but I have been spending a lot of time (and money) getting my garden beds ready for some summer vegetables. NADE as an organization is going through some change and growth, but we continue to move in a positive direction.

Many Chapters participated in our annual January Membership Drive. I am happy to report that every Region saw an increase in membership. Welcome to all the new members and those that are returning to NADE! Your membership allows NADE to continue to work hard to support you and all those impacted by the Social Security Disability program.

One of the important ways that NADE advocates for you is with NADE's Top Issues. For 2025, our Top Issues continue to emphasize that DDS recruitment and retention should be a top priority. This is even more critical considering the federal reduction in force currently underway. NADE also continues to support improvements to both policies and procedures that will simplify the way we process disability claims. Let's continue to make our voices heard on these important issues.

The NADE Board held our Mid-Year Board Meeting in February. I was happy to see we had several members attend this year's meeting as guests. One of the items discussed was our 2025 National Training Conference (NTC) which will be held in Denver. The planning committee is working hard to provide an excellent learning opportunity for all of you. Keep your eyes peeled for updates on the NADE website ([www.nade.org](http://www.nade.org)). This year is shaping up to be a challenging budget year, so I encourage all Chapters to make a plan and raise funds to ensure that you are represented at the conference.

The Board also discussed this year's National Disability Professionals Week (June 16-20) theme – **NADE: Together We Can**. I am so excited about this theme, and I cannot wait to see the activities that you plan to celebrate!

Your passion and commitment to NADE is what makes NADE great!

Ayanna Conley,

NADE President





## NADE's Top Issues for 2025

- **Recruitment and Retention:** Continued funding to achieve and maintain adequate staffing levels at the Disability Determination Services (DDS). Provide the DDSs more flexibility in hiring authority.
  - Continued support of telework opportunities for the DDS as an employment tool for recruitment and retention.
  - Continued partnership between the DDS and SSA Field Offices to provide remote work opportunities where telework from home is not possible.
  - Ensure the DDSs have equitable ancillary support, such as access to web-based phone service, mail machine software and state level intranet software.
  - Supporting DDSs to have competitive salaries will help retain experienced personnel.
- **Training:** Resources are needed to train new staff as well as ongoing training for experienced staff. Ensuring adequate funding for quality training and nationally uniform materials is critical for decisional accuracy and reducing processing time. Provide cooperative training between the DDS and SSA Field Offices (FO) to improve understanding of the shared disability processes.
- **Claimant Communication:** Continue to explore ways to permit email and text messaging to claimants to aid in communication while considering privacy and security concerns. Expanding the emailer pilot. Enhancement of technology use to allow for form completion, document uploading, and secure messaging by claimants and appointed representatives.
- **Evaluation of Vocational Regulations and Processes:**

While work has been done to update vocational policy and processes, NADE continues to advocate for additional streamlining, taking into consideration the overall impact on the disability workload and decisional outcomes.

  - Prioritize modernizing the occupational database and software used for vocational analysis
  - Involve DDS directly in the process to update and simplify the vocational regulations.
  - Business processes need to be consistent between the DDS, Office of Quality Review (OQR) and ALJs.
- **CDRs:** Continued program integrity funding as an investment for timely Continuing Disability Reviews (CDRs). Ensure that FOs are properly identifying the Comparison Point Decision (CPD).

- **Timely Revision of the Listings:** NADE supports SSA's ongoing efforts to make timely revisions to the Listings of Impairments to reflect technological advancements and current medical research. Consider the impact of listing changes on Res Judicata.
- **National Case Processing System (NCPS):** To meet the needs of the DDSs, NADE advocates for adequate funding for enhancement requests for NCPS and continuous open communication with the DDSs front line users.
- **Disability Examiner Decision Authority (DEDA):** NADE supports the implementation of DEDA and encourages the continued expansion of this initiative to include additional case types and levels. NADE advocates making.
- **Customer Service Improvements:** NADE encourages efforts to build upon customer service improvements. Maintain hiring authority to keep up with attrition. Providing adequate funding for overtime to help with improving customer service. Fully staff national teleservice center to decrease customer wait times.
- **IT Modernization:** Investment in technology to make reviewing and obtaining evidence more efficient. Continued expansion and development of IMAGEN. Explore programs that can efficiently identify duplicate records. Increase recruitment of Health IT networks. Provide technical support for Electronic Records Express (ERE) systems until it is replaced.
- **CDI:** Continued support for Cooperative Disability Investigation (CDI) units and expansion efforts to decrease fraud and abuse. Develop a training program for new CDI sites and new team members. Revisit CDI model to address challenges in recruiting local law enforcement partners and expand the law enforcement partners possibilities, such as continued use of retired annuitants. Explore ways to exclude time a claim is pending CDI investigation from mean DDS processing time.
- **Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS):** NADE supports a careful re-examination of the Medical Improvement Review Standard (MIRS) and its impact on the disability program. Revise the policy to address Comparison Point Decisions (CPD) that were poorly documented or supported.

## I'm Retired, What Does NADE Do for Me?

By Terri Klubertanz, NADE Retiree Chair

I have been retired for the past twelve years. I've been a member of NADE for 44 years. I'm often asked, "I'm Retired. Why should I still be a NADE member? What does NADE do for me?"

This question reminds me of the famous words from John F. Kennedy's inaugural address of January 20, 1961 – "My fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man."

I believe, it's not what NADE can do for retirees in retirement, but what we can do for NADE. The financial support from our membership dues helps NADE maintain its visibility, credibility and viability. Our support helps the NADE Board do the work of advocating for disability professionals and advancing and improving the disability program. By attending NADE training conferences, we continue to support NADE's mission to enhance the knowledge and continuing professionalism of disability staff. By participating in NADE business meetings, we continue to support NADE's mission to improve the disability program. By offering support and encouragement to existing NADE members and the NADE Board, we support NADE's mission and values and the legacy of NADE to move forward in these challenging times.

Many of the issues and challenges facing existing staff and NADE members are ones we faced during our working careers. Retirees can offer NADE the benefit of our knowledge gained from years of experience working in the disability field. By offering a historical perspective on how issues and challenges were addressed in the past, we are helping the NADE Board as they work to advocate for and improve the current disability process for staff and the American public. So though "the torch has been passed to a new generation" of disability professionals, we can help them by projecting optimism and professionalism in facing current and future challenges. After all, as a retiree, we've been there and survived!

Therefore, my fellow retirees: I challenge you to ask yourselves not what NADE can do for you – ask what you can do for NADE. What can we do together for the benefit of the disability program?

If you would like to join the NADE retirees group, please send me an email at [NADEretirees@gmail.com](mailto:NADEretirees@gmail.com). Membership is a bargain, at \$25 per year, less than \$2.10 per month. I look forward to hearing from all you retirees.



# National Disability Professionals Week 2025

Marcia Golden

The NDPW committee is excited to announce this year's theme for National Disability Professionals Week. The 2025 theme is: **NADE: Together We Can.** NDPW will be celebrated June 16 to June 20, 2025. Due to office needs, some Chapters may need to celebrate NDPW on a different week during June.

The committee would like to thank all the Chapters who submitted themes for our contest. We received many great suggestions, and after a close vote, we would like to congratulate the NADE Chapter from Cape Girardeau, MO who submitted this year's winning theme. They will receive their \$10 prize at NADE Training Conference

NDPW is a time for NADE Chapters to celebrate their members with games and activities based on the theme. Some chapters plan after hours activities, other will host virtual events and games, as well as activities that take place at their offices. The NDPW committee looks forward to what each Chapter decides to do to honor their membership. Remember, each chapter can submit a summary of the week's events to compete for the NDPW Award that is announced at the Annual Training Conference this summer. Award submission should be emailed to Marcia Golden, [marcia.golden@ssa.gov](mailto:marcia.golden@ssa.gov) by the close of business Friday, July 18, 2025. There will be a \$25 prize for the first-place chapter, and a \$15 prize for the second-place chapter.



## ARKADE Fall/Winter Activities!

Our fall and winter ArkADE activities have been many and we are now a chapter of 20! Let's welcome our new members to ArkADE: Bonnie Sterling, Jacob Boyce, Jason Myers, LaSonya Parrish, Jogie Detchemendy, and welcome back Nikki Cruise. Our president Keith Hearnberger announced that AR was approached about possibly hosting the 2026 National NADE Convention in Summer 2026. ArkADE will be meeting with the board to discuss options, as AR Agency Director has given consent. Quarterly, we sponsor the AR Blood Bank blood drives. So far this year we held one on 8/28, 10/29, and on 1/29. Part of our fundraising efforts include: Biannual Books & More Sale (donated from the employees of DDS), various baskets/goodies for various holidays (i.e. Halloween, Valentines Day, St. Patricks, Day, Christmas). We had two retirement get togethers for Jeanette Hawkins and Susan Jacuzzi and our next meeting was on October 4<sup>th</sup> after the party. Also, on October 4<sup>th</sup> we went to talk to the new adjudicator class about joining ArkADE which gained 5 new members.

The Fall Craft Fair was held on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Booths were available for those wanting to sell craft items or food. Booths were on sale for \$25 if we set up for them and use our tables and \$20 if they bring their own. This is another fund raiser for our agency and we have it each October.

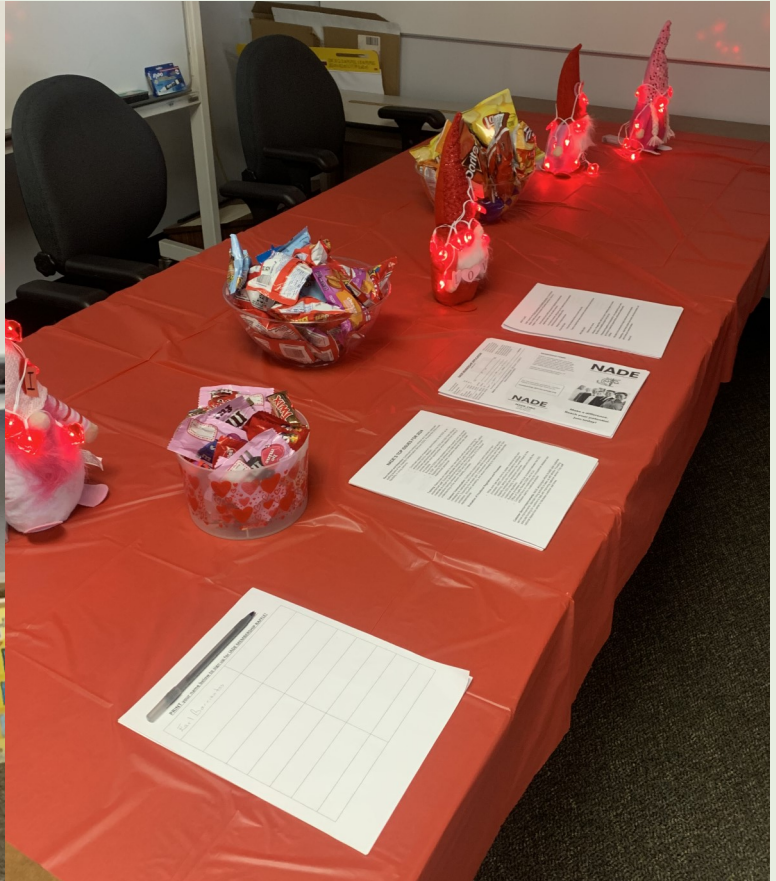
Our annual Food Drive was held on Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>. We delivered all collected food items that day to the Compassion Center, a homeless shelter in downtown Little Rock.

The annual Winter business meeting was 12/12. We sponsored the Annual Ugly Holiday Sweater contest! Cash prizes were given to the winners.

We had our annual holiday luncheon on 12/20/24 and we had given over \$2,500 to various charities and colleagues at AR DDS when there was a need in their lives.



IADE (Illinois) hosted a Membership drive on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2025! We had 30 attendees both in-person and remotely. We had tasty snacks, and heard some details about what NADE does from guest speaker Trish Boesing (St Louis DDS), the Midwest Regional Director of NADE. I enjoyed sharing some details about what we have done here at the Illinois chapter as well.





## The Oregon Chapter (OrADE) Raises Funds and Spirits!

Since the NTC wrapped up, OrADE has led chapter meetings and inspired activities. Aside from the regular Medical Moments presentations to all staff by NADE members (MC/PC and others), the chapter sponsored in-person and virtual events. A fall celebration included a pumpkin decorating contest and treats for all! The chapter also partnered again with Shangri-la, a non-profit agency assisting at risk and ID individuals/families live independently. This year's Holiday Wishes program collected funds and over 200 gifts of essential items.



# New Product



**NADE TUMBLERS  
\$20/EACH, INCLUDES  
SHIPPING!!!**

email [julie.kujath@ssa.gov](mailto:julie.kujath@ssa.gov)  
for details

**GET your NADE  
MERCH!!!!**

**Contact Julie if interested  
in ordering products.**



## Camera Pro?



The NADE Communications director will be giving out prizes for your photos and Newsletter.



Submit any photos and your newsletter to [sara.b.winn@ssa.gov](mailto:sara.b.winn@ssa.gov)

# HELP!

**NADE needs members to volunteer for committees to help plan and organize events.**

VISIT NADE WEBSITE FOR COMMITTEE CHARGES:

[WWW.NADE.ORG/ABOUT-NADE/BOARD-OF-DIRECTORS/NADE-CHARGES/](http://WWW.NADE.ORG/ABOUT-NADE/BOARD-OF-DIRECTORS/NADE-CHARGES/)



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Professional Relations Officer - contact [keith.hearnsberger@ssa.gov](mailto:keith.hearnsberger@ssa.gov)  
Retirees Committee - contact [NADERetirees@gmail.com](mailto:NADERetirees@gmail.com)  
Support Staff Committee - contact [ayanna.conley@ssa.gov](mailto:ayanna.conley@ssa.gov)  
National Training Conf Committee - [jennifer.nottingham@ssa.gov](mailto:jennifer.nottingham@ssa.gov)

## NADE



National Association of Disability Examiners