



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **Missouri Contracts with Niagara University's First Responders Disability Awareness Training Program**

**JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI (September 28, 2016)** – Missouri will become the second state to offer comprehensive disability awareness training for first responders, thanks to a new partnership with Niagara University.

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council has entered into a two-year contract with the Niagara University First Responders Disability Awareness Training program. David Whalen, project director for NU FRDAT, will conduct the “train the trainer” instruction for law enforcement, firefighter, emergency medical services and 911 dispatches across the state, with the ultimate goal of embedding the program within the standard curricula.

Whalen will also collaborate with key players in the first responder and disability communities in Missouri to develop a statewide advisory council and customize a curriculum across the four disciplines.

Developed by Niagara University, the program is the only one in the nation that provides fully comprehensive disability awareness training for first responders. New York was the first state to offer the full training program. Arkansas, New Jersey and Montana have contracted with NU FRDAT to present abbreviated versions.

Niagara University's First Responders Disability Awareness Training program is customized for each first responder discipline –firefighters, 911 operators/dispatchers, emergency medical services (EMS), and law enforcement. Created in cooperation with all major first responder associations, councils and state offices, the training is designed to give first responders the knowledge necessary to best serve and respond to individuals with disabilities.

Established in 2010, the program received the New York State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council 2014 Forging Pathways Award. Additional information can be found at <http://frdat.niagara.edu> or by calling 716.286.7355.

The Missouri Developmental Disabilities Council is a federally funded, 23-member, consumer-driven council appointed by the governor. Its mandate is to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports and other forms of assistance that

promote self-determination, independence, productivity and integration in all aspects of community life. For more information, please call 573.751.8611 or visit [www.moddcouncil.org](http://www.moddcouncil.org).

### **Niagara University**

Founded by the Vincentian community in 1856, Niagara University is a comprehensive institution, blending the best of a liberal arts and professional education, grounded in our values-based Catholic tradition. Its colleges of Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education, and Hospitality and Tourism Management offer programs at the baccalaureate, master's and doctoral level.

As the first Vincentian university established in the United States, Niagara prepares students for personal and professional success while emphasizing service to the community in honor of St. Vincent de Paul. Niagara's institutional commitment to service learning has led to its inclusion on the President's Honor Roll for Community Service every year since its inception in 2006, and its recognition with the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement.