



Down Syndrome Advocacy Conference (DSAC): Frequently Asked Questions

1. *How is this different from past Buddy Walk® on Washington events?*

- a. The Buddy Walk on Washington has grown and evolved into the Down Syndrome Advocacy Conference (DSAC). After two years of virtual programming, NDSS is thrilled to be returning to the Hill in person alongside partner organizations in the community. The Down Syndrome Advocacy Conference will have many of the same features as past Buddy Walk on Washington events with the addition of many new and exciting updates!

2. *When is the conference?*

- a. April 17 – 19, 2023. Optional pre-conference learning sessions will begin at noon on April 17. These sessions will allow participants to take a deep dive with the NDSS team, and other national groups, on legislative priorities that we will not be advocating for on our Hill Day. On the first full day of the conference (April 18), attendees will have the opportunity to take part in advocacy training, learn more about our legislative priorities for the Hill day, and hear from guest speakers such as Heather Avis of The Lucky Few and Matthew Schwab of Matthew Schwab Speaks. Finally, the conference culminates on April 19 with the opportunity to advocate to Members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

3. *Where is the conference?*

- a. The training portion of the conference will take place at the [Hilton Arlington National Landing](#) (formerly the Hilton Crystal City at Washington Reagan National Airport) right outside of Washington, D.C. There is a room block available at the hotel and all participants are strongly encouraged to book their hotel room at the Hilton Arlington National Landing. The last day of the conference will take place in the House and Senate office buildings on Capitol Hill in downtown Washington, D.C.

4. *Who will be attending the conference?*

- a. Individuals with Down syndrome and their families, caregivers, loved ones, related professionals, and anyone with a passion for advocating for the rights of the Down syndrome community are invited to attend!

5. *Is there a group discount?*

- a. Yes! Many local affiliate groups, parent groups, etc. are encouraged to attend the conference together. We offer discounted tickets for groups of 10 or more and strongly encourage participants to reach out to local groups about attending. Many groups choose to

book travel together to save on travel costs, and our hotel block has plenty of room to accommodate groups.

6. Who is eligible to receive the group rate discount?

- a. Groups with 10 or more participants are eligible for our special group pricing of \$100 a person.
- b. To purchase, please select the group price option when registering. You do not need to know the names of all 10 people before purchasing.
- c. For groups larger than 10, please reach out to conference@ndss.org and we can assist with registration.

7. How much does it cost?

- a. Consistent with our belief that our most powerful voices are from individuals with Down syndrome, conference attendance for self-advocates is free. All other participants can attend for \$150 each. Groups of 10 or more are eligible for group pricing at \$100 per person, and this rate does not expire.
- b. NDSS has a limited number of scholarships to award participants who require financial support in order to attend the conference. These limited scholarships are intended for participants who face significant financial barriers to attending the conference and are unable to secure support or group discounts from their local Down syndrome group. Learn more and apply [here](#) by January 27th, 2023.

8. How do participants register?

- a. Participants can register on our website at give.ndss.org/DSAC. All participants who plan to attend any part of the conference are required to register.

9. How do interested participants get more information?

- a. Interested participants can learn more at www.ndss.org/DSAC or by emailing conference@ndss.org

10. Is NDSS advocating on partisan issues?

- a. No. The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) is a nonpartisan organization that works across political parties and at all levels of government to advocate for and support individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and their caregivers. As the leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome, we pursue our advocacy and policy priorities by working with legislators and other decision-makers regardless of political affiliation.

11. Do you need to have any prior advocacy or policy experience to attend?

- a. No! We offer a full day of policy and advocacy trainings as well as optional pre-conference learning sessions to educate advocates on our policy priorities and how to effectively advocate.

12. What will be available for younger children at the event?

- a. We are thrilled to offer a Youth Advocacy Training Session during the conference. This training is geared toward participants 6-15 years old. This exciting training will get our young advocates ready for their meetings on Capitol Hill including an age-appropriate understanding of the topics we'll be discussing with members of Congress on Wednesday.
- b. When registering, please be sure to purchase a ticket for this session.

13. What is the dress code for this event?

- a. Casual to business casual attire is appropriate for the preconference training day and the first day of the conference (April 17 and 18). The Hill Day (April 19) is a professional event and business professional attire is required. We recommend wearing comfortable walking shoes as participants will be walking between office buildings. On the evening of April 18, NDSS will be hosting a dessert reception to celebrate and honor members of the Down syndrome community who exemplify outstanding advocacy. Many participants choose to dress up for this reception.

14. How does the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affect DSAC?

- a. NDSS closely monitors and will comply with state and local requirements related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and we encourage all attendees to make the decisions that they feel are best to ensure their health, safety, and comfort. Additionally, we are in touch with our contacts on Capitol Hill to ensure meetings are aligned with the policies put in place by Congressional leadership and individual members. In the event that virtual meetings are required, we will inform conference attendees as early as possible and provide supports to ensure the best possible experience.

15. What happens if I register and then can't attend?

- a. Please note that tickets to the Down Syndrome Advocacy Conference are nonrefundable. If you are unable to attend, your registration will become a fully tax-deductible donation. You may also transfer it to another attendee. Transfer of hotel rooms will be made at the decision of the hotel.

If you have any further questions, please contact us at conference@ndss.org.