National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is commemorated for the contributions individuals with disabilities make to the American economy and workplace.

This year’s theme is: "Disability: Part of the Equity Equation."

DoDEA celebrates NDEAM, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of NDEAM is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In
1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

NDEAM Facts

- In 1945, Congress declared the first week in October each year National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. In 1962, the word "physically" was deleted to acknowledge the needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.
- In 1954, Congress passed the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Amendments, increasing the scope of the VR system. VR helps thousands of people obtain employment. As the Director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Mary Switzer funded more than 100 university-based rehabilitation programs. The Act also initiates funding for research, eventually leading to the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.
- The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was the first major legislative effort to secure an equal playing field for individuals with disabilities. This legislation provided a wide range of services for persons with physical and cognitive disabilities. These disabilities can create significant barriers to full and continued employment, the pursuit of independent living, self-determination, and inclusion in American society.
- Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in Federal employment and requires Federal agencies to establish affirmative action plans for the hiring, placement, and advancement of people with disabilities in Federal employment.
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that when Federal agencies develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology, Federal employees and the general public with disabilities have access to and use of information that is comparable to access to and use of information by people without disabilities.
- In 1975, President Gerald Ford signs the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA), which requires public schools to provide a “free appropriate public education” to all students, including those with disabilities. The Act is renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, and amendments in 1997 add a focus on transition outcomes for students with disabilities exiting high school and pursuing post-secondary options, including employment.
- In 2001, Congress established the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) to develop and influence policies and practices that increase the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities to ensure that they are fully integrated into the workforce.
- In 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13163, which requires Federal agencies to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities employed at all levels and occupations in the Federal Government.
- In 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order 13548, an order which recommitted the Federal Government’s commitment and emphasized greater compliance and accountability, including performance targets, numerical goals and sub-goals for individuals that have targeted disabilities (including deafness, blindness, missing extremities, partial or complete paralysis, epilepsy, severe intellectual disability, psychiatric disability, and dwarfism).
National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Disability: Part of the Equity Equation

INCLUSION IS WITHIN EVERYONE'S ABILITY.

Be part of Disability Awareness Month

Alaska Cox, was born deaf and has a prosthetic lower right leg. She is bringing to life a one-of-a-kind hero with a unique backstory in the Marvel® series, Hawkeye.

Cox said, "I don't know why they're giving me this opportunity, but I'm just grateful. I'm excited for the support and being able to advocate for the deaf community. We want to hear that equality and get more people involved.

Her co-stars, Jeremy Renner and Hailee Steinfeld both worked to learn American Sign Language (ASL) so that they could communicate more easily with her.

"I thought it was neat if there were people in my deaf community. It means a lot to me as a deaf person."
National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2022

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we celebrate the essential contributions to our workplaces, economy, and Nation made by disabled Americans and recommit to promoting equal opportunity for all people.

Downloadable Poster

Resources
Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

DoDEA’s Disability Emphasis Program

Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion

Ideas to Celebrate! 31 Days of NDEAM

OPM - Federal Employment of People with Disabilities

Ted Talk: Our fight for disability rights and why we’re not done yet

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