

National Disability Employment Awareness Month: Fact Sheet

Updated October 25, 2024

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

R47272

Introduction

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is observed annually in October. It celebrates the contributions of people with disabilities to America's workplaces and the economy, and "reaffirms the commitment to ensure equal opportunity for all citizens." Each year, the month is celebrated with a theme chosen by the U.S. Department of Labor. For 2024, the theme was "Access to Good Jobs for All," which was designed to reinforce the commitment to expand the number of employment opportunities for people with disabilities and the quality of those opportunities.

History and Legislation

As a precursor to National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), in 1945, Congress established "the first week in October of each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week" (Public Law 176, 79th Congress). In 1962, to bring more attention to those with all types of disabilities, Congress dropped the word "Physically" through the adoption of P.L. 91-442, resulting in the condensed National Employ the Handicapped Week. In 1988, P.L. 100-630 expanded the commemoration to a month and altered its name to the current National Disability Employment Awareness Month. National Disability Employment Awareness Month is codified at 36 U.S.C. §121.

Related CRS Products

CRS has prepared reports that explain or address working with a disability. Some of these include the following:

- CRS In Focus IF10506, *Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)*, by William R. Morton and Emma K. Tatem
- CRS Report R43255, *The Mental Health Workforce: A Primer*, by Elayne J. Heisler
- CRS Report R43468, *Special Minimum Wages for Workers with Disabilities: Frequently Asked Questions*, by Benjamin Collins
- CRS In Focus IF12366, *Reasonable Accommodations for Employees with Disabilities*, by Abigail A. Graber

CRS also has a report on the process of observing commemorative days, weeks, and months:

- CRS Report R44431, *Commemorative Days, Weeks, and Months: Background and Current Practice, 113th to 115th Congress*, by Jacob R. Straus

Selected Congressional Statements and Remarks

Members of Congress may issue press releases, enter Extensions of Remarks into the *Congressional Record*, deliver speeches, or make floor statements to recognize federal holidays and observances.

Senator Richard Burr, "National Disability Employment Awareness Month," Senate, *Congressional Record*, vol. 167 (October 26, 2021), pp. S7365-S7366.

Representative Joyce Beatty, “Congresswoman Beatty Marks National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” U.S. House of Representatives, official website of Representative Joyce Beatty, press statement released on October 12, 2020.

Representative Earl L. “Buddy” Carter, “National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, vol. 165 (October 22, 2019), p. H8304.

Representative Andy Levin, “Recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, vol. 165 (October 21, 2019), p. H8283.

Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, “Raising Awareness of National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” House of Representatives, *Congressional Record*, vol. 164 (October 23, 2018), p. E1443.

Selected Presidential Proclamations and Remarks

One of the many uses of a presidential proclamation is to call attention to certain issues or events. Some recent NDEAM proclamations, from the White House and the *Compilation of Presidential Documents*, include the following:

- Presidential Proclamations—Joe Biden Jr. (2021-)
- Presidential Proclamations—Donald J. Trump (2017-2021)
- Presidential Proclamations—Barack H. Obama (2009-2017)
- Presidential Proclamations—George W. Bush (2001-2009)

Older presidential proclamations are available through the GovInfo service on the Government Publishing Office website. Remarks such as audio and video clips may be available through The American Presidency Project, established by the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Government Resources

Government Outreach Information

U.S. Department of Labor, “National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2024.” Official web page for NDEAM. Provides general information on the annual commemorative month, highlighting promotional materials.

Library of Congress, “National Disability Employment Month, About.” Provides general information on the annual commemorative month, highlighting access to Library of Congress resources.

Library of Congress, “National Disability Employment Month: A Commemorative Observances Legal Research Guide.” Provides links to legislative branch and executive branch primary resource historical documents. These documents formulated and impacted the current commemorative month, as well as preceding observances for the working disabled.

U.S. Department of Labor, “Office of Disability Employment Policy.” Agency within the U.S. Department of Labor presiding over NDEAM.

Social Security Administration, “Working While Disabled—Social Security Can Help.” Information on the exploration of working while receiving disability benefits.

U.S. Census Bureau Data

This information was provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. Information and accuracy of Census data in the area of demographics is available at the Pew Research Center's Key Facts about the Quality of the 2020 Census website.

U.S. Census Bureau, “National Disability Employment Awareness Month: October 2023.”

U.S. Census Bureau, “Disability Data.”

Other Government Data

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics—2023.”

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Persons with a Disability: Barriers to Employment, Types of Assistance, and Other Labor-Related Issues—July 2021.”

U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, “Disability Employment Statistics.”

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Spotlight on Statistics: Labor Market Characteristics of People with a Disability.” Visual display of data promoting the importance of NDEAM.

Nongovernment Resources

American Bar Association, “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.” Workplace rights and examples of resources for disabled worker opportunities.

National Disability Institute, “Celebrate National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Access to Good Jobs for All.” Advocacy for employment success stories for disabled workers.

Author Information

Gary Sidor
Senior Technical Information Specialist

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.