



PERSONNEL AND  
READINESS

**UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**  
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

SEP 27 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2023 Department of Defense National Disability Employment Awareness Month  
Observance

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is observed annually across the United States each October. The theme for NDEAM 2023 is “Advancing Access and Equity.” This theme highlights the importance of removing barriers to employment for people with disabilities and providing equal opportunities to succeed in the workforce.

The Department observes NDEAM to educate DoD personnel concerning disability employment and to recognize the valuable contributions of workers with disabilities. Enacted 50 years ago, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs conducted by Federal agencies, in programs receiving Federal financial assistance, in Federal employment, and in the employment practices of Federal contractors. While great progress has been made in establishing DoD as a model employer for individuals with disabilities, more work must be done to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities.

At least 12 percent of DoD civilian employees are individuals with disabilities and 2 percent are individuals with manifest disabilities who often face significant barriers to employment. I encourage each of you to renew your efforts to provide a workplace that is both accessible and inclusive for such workers. To assess and advance current accessibility measures, take advantage of DoD’s many accessibility programs, including those in your Component and the Department’s Computer/Electronics Accommodation Program (<https://www.cap.mil>). Finally, I challenge leaders to actively promote opportunities to employ qualified individuals with disabilities.

The Department remains committed to increasing employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities by removing barriers of inaccessibility. Join us in providing a more inclusive workforce that fosters an environment where all people are recognized for their abilities and valued for their contributions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ashish S. Vazirani".

Ashish S. Vazirani  
Acting