

**CULTURAL  
AWARENESS**

**OBSERVANCE**



**National Disability  
Employment Awareness Month**

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OCTOBER

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*National Disability Employment Awareness Month*

People

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Daniel Inouye, U.S. Senate. Photo from senate.gov

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Daniel Inouye was born and raised in Hawaii. In 1942, he enlisted in the U.S. Army's 442nd Regimental Combat team, made up of soldiers of Japanese ancestry. After losing his right arm in battle in 1945, he was honorably discharged in 1947, earning a Medal of Honor and a Purple Heart, among other awards. He became Hawaii's first congressman when it became a state in 1959. In 1962, he was first elected to the U.S. Senate, where he served for almost 50 years.

*<http://www.loc.gov/disabilityawareness/profiles/inouye.html>*

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Jim Langevin was the first quadriplegic to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. At 16, he was injured while in the Boy Scout Explorer program working with a local police department. He was hit by a bullet and paralyzed when a gun accidentally discharged. Inspired by the community support he received, he decided to enter public service. In 2000, he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

*<http://www.loc.gov/disabilityawareness/profiles/langevin.html>*

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*National Disability Employment Awareness Month*

Events

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*Photo from dol.gov*

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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.

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20140713>

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For the purpose of federal nondiscrimination laws, the federal government defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

<http://www.dol.gov/odep/faqs/general.htm#2>

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What is Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act? Section 501 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.

<http://www.cap.mil/AboutCAP/FAQs/disabilityLaws.aspx>

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate during June 2014 dropped from 6.3 to 6.1 percent. The unemployment rate among people with disabilities was 12.9 percent. Among people with disabilities, 19.3 percent were in the labor force, compared to 69.2 percent of people without disabilities.

*<https://www.disability.gov/bureau-labor-statistics-releases-june-employment-numbers/>*

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56 million Americans, or 1-in-5, live with disabilities. Thirty-eight million disabled Americans, or 1-in-10, live with severe disabilities. Disability is something many Americans, especially younger people, think can only affect the lives of other people. Tragically, thousands of young people are seriously injured or killed, often as the result of traumatic events. Many serious medical conditions, such as cancer or mental illness, can affect the young as well as the elderly. The sobering fact for 20-year-olds, insured for disability benefits, is that more than 1-in-4 of them becomes disabled before reaching retirement age.

*<https://www.ssa.gov/disabilityfacts/facts.html>*

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What is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act? Section 504 prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in any federally funded programs or activities. Section 504 requires that programs receive Federal funds to be accessible to people with disabilities. Section 504 also prohibits disability-based job discrimination of any kind and requires that employers make reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities.

*<http://www.cap.mil/AboutCAP/FAQs/disabilityLaws.aspx>*

In 1995, the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for College Students with Disabilities was established as a partnership between the U.S. Departments of Labor and Defense. This referral program connects public- and private-sector employers nationwide with highly motivated postsecondary students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their talents and skills in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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On June 22, 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Olmstead v. L.C.* that unjustified segregation of persons with disabilities constitutes discrimination in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The plaintiffs were two women who had mental illness and developmental disabilities. They had been voluntarily admitted to the psychiatric unit of a state-run hospital but were held for several years after their initial treatment.

*[http://www.ada.gov/olmstead/olmstead\\_about.htm](http://www.ada.gov/olmstead/olmstead_about.htm)*

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The Assistive Technology Act of 2004 amends previous iterations to reflect developments in technology in all aspects of community life, including employment. Among other things, it requires states to provide direct aid to people with disabilities to ensure they have access to the technology they need, at both home and work, and authorizes the development of alternative financing mechanisms to help in doing so.

*<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/resources.htm#PressRelease>*

Reasonable accommodation is any modification or adjustment to a job or the work environment that will enable a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job functions. Reasonable accommodation also includes adjustments to assure that a qualified individual with a disability has rights and privileges in employment equal to those of employees without disabilities.

*<http://www.cap.mil/AboutCAP/FAQs/general.aspx#2>*

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What is Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act? Section 508 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.

*<http://www.cap.mil/AboutCAP/FAQs/general.aspx#2>*

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In 1988, the “President’s Committee on the Employment of the Handicapped” became the “President’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities.” A year later, Justin W. Dart Jr. was appointed as its chairman. Congress also expanded “National Employ the Handicapped Week” to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” which is recognized now each October.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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The final regulations associated with the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 are approved by a bipartisan vote and published in the Federal Register. The amendment makes important changes to the definition of the term “disability” under the ADA, and make it easier for a person seeking protection under the law to establish eligibility.

*[http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa\\_info.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa_info.cfm)*



In 2010, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the U.S. Department of Labor inducted disability activists Justin W. Dart Jr. and Helen Keller into the Labor Hall of Honor.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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In the 1950s, veterans with disabilities and other people with disabilities began the barrier-free movement. The combined efforts of the U.S. Veterans Administration, the President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped and the National Easter Seals Society, among others, resulted in the development of national standards for "barrier-free" buildings.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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According to the Americans with Disabilities Act, service animals are dogs trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities. This includes guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling a wheelchair, alerting and protecting a person who is having a seizure, and calming a person with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder during an anxiety attack. The tasks a dog has been trained to perform must be directly related to the person's disability.

*[http://www.ada.gov/service\\_animals\\_2010.htm](http://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm)*

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In 1992, a growing number of leading businesses recognized disability as a key part of diversity and incorporated it into their workplace inclusion initiatives. Reflecting this, many joined forces to establish state and local business leadership networks—groups of business leaders and human resource executives focused on increasing disability inclusion, from both an employment and consumer perspective.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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*National Disability Employment Awareness Month*

Milestones

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*Photo from usuhs.mil*

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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.

*[http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa\\_info.cfm](http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/statutes/adaaa_info.cfm)*

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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.

*<http://www.dol.gov/odep/about/>*

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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.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed 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 was 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.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 mandates the removal of what is perceived to be the most significant obstacle to employment for people with disabilities—the physical design of the buildings and facilities—by requiring that all buildings designed, constructed, altered or leased with federal funds be made accessible.

*<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/resources.htm#PressRelease>*

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In 1935, Congress passed and President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act, establishing federal old-age benefits and grants to the states for assistance to blind individuals and children with disabilities. The act also extends the already existing vocational rehabilitation programs established by earlier legislation.

*[http://www.fta.dot.gov/12325\\_4064.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/12325_4064.html)*

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The Telecommunications Act of 1996—the first revision of telecommunications law since the 1930s—requires telecommunications manufacturers and service providers to ensure that equipment is designed, developed and fabricated to be accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. At its signing, President Bill Clinton addresses technology’s growing role in all aspects of life, including employment.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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Established in 1989, the Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP) has been providing federal employees with disabilities and service members with functional limitations free assistive technology and support services. On May 20, 2015, CAP made its 150,000th accommodation.

*<http://www.cap.mil/AboutCAP/AboutCAP.aspx>*

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In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into law. Modeled on the Civil Rights Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the ADA stems from collective efforts by advocates in the preceding decades and is the most comprehensive disability rights legislation in history.

*<http://www.dol.gov/featured/ada/alternate.version.timeline.htm>*

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In 2010, on the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, President Barack Obama signed Executive Order 13548 – Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities. This directive calls on federal departments and agencies to increase the recruitment, hiring and retention of people with disabilities.

*<http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam/resources.htm#PressRelease>*

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*National Disability Employment Awareness Month*

Quotes

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*Photo from ada.gov*

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“As a nation, we must continue to promote inclusion in the workplace and tear down the barriers that remain—in hearts, in minds, and in policies—to the security and prosperity that stable jobs provide and that all our people deserve. And we must actively foster a culture in which individuals are supported and accepted for who they are and in which it is okay to disclose one’s disability without fear of discrimination.” – Barack Obama  
*barackobamawhitehouse.archives.gov*

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