



**National Disability Employment Awareness Month
Resource Base**

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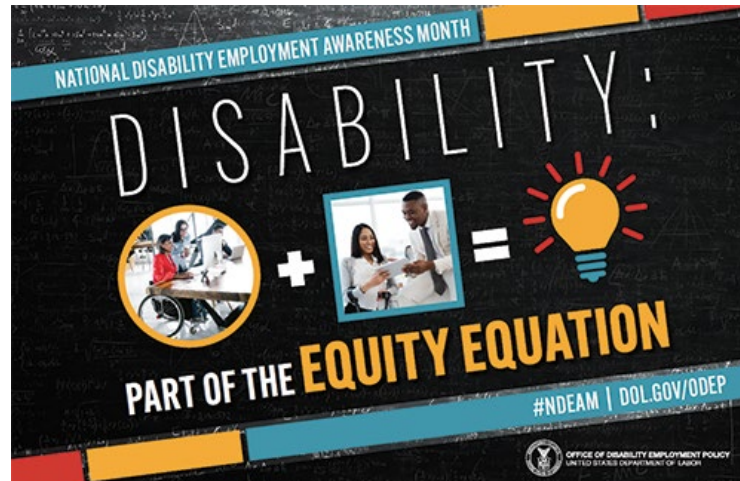
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Instructions

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National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Did you know?



Official poster for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ODEP/pdf/508_NDEAM_Poster_2022_eng.pdf

National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022

For most of the United States’ history, employers could refuse to hire somebody because of a disability. Employing people with disabilities is important so they can participate in society just like anybody else. Individuals with disabilities are an essential part of the nation’s workforce, providing unique perspectives and diverse ideas. National Disability Employment Awareness Month reminds the nation of this, encouraging employers and workers to be aware of cultural and systemic barriers to employment. The theme for National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022 was “Disability: Part of the Equity Equation.”

The observance showcases supportive policies and practices, including President Biden’s Executive Order 13985, “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government,” directing all federal departments to examine their policies on inclusion. In April 2022, the Department of Labor published its Equity Action Plan to empower underserved communities with strategies for better paying jobs, unemployment benefits, and training programs, among other initiatives.

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20220622>

The Office Of Disability Employment Policy Gives Resources To Disabled Individuals

There are many public and private resources available for people with disabilities who are trying to find a job. One example is the Workforce Recruitment Program, which helps federal employers find and hire qualified people with disabilities for full-time positions.

In 2022, the Employee Benefits Security Administration and Office of Disability Employment Policy released a financial toolkit to address the needs of disabled communities. This online information base provides tips for preparing for a job, starting work, maintaining a career, losing or changing jobs, and retiring. Each of these categories includes videos, tools, websites, and publications. Some of the information includes how to negotiate pay and set financial goals, explanations on reasonable accommodations, best budgeting practices, and taxing and investment information. This is just one initiative the government has launched in the 2020s that focuses on equity in the disability community.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ebsa/secure-your-financial-future>



United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Relief and World Health Organization panel in Egypt discussing risk reduction for the disabled community. UNDRR, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/isdr/11168656715/in/photostream/>

The World Health Organization Presents Global Facts About Those With Disabilities

According to the World Health Organization, disability is a global public health issue and a human rights issue. Statistically, most people are likely to experience disability at some point in their life. Disability affects one in seven people worldwide. Those affected by disabilities face barriers, prejudice, discrimination, and violence. Globally, unemployment is higher for those with disabilities than those without. People with disabilities are also more vulnerable to poverty, often because of costs from medical care, assistive devices, or personal support. Anyone with a disability can participate in society, but about 40% of people do not generally have their assistance requirements met.

<https://www.who.int/news-room/facts-in-pictures/detail/disabilities>



National Disability Employment Awareness Month ceremonial program, "Ready for Tomorrow's Jobs," at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2005. National Archives.

U.S. Office Of Disability Employment Policy Sponsors Several Organizations

There are several organizations sponsored by the Office of Disability Employment Policy that help develop disability employment policies. These organizations collaborate with employers and all levels of government to provide tools for success to people with disabilities. Some of these organizations include:

- The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), which seeks to help organizations create more inclusive environments and cultures.
- The Job Accommodation Network (JAN), which provides free consultations to businesses and governments organizations for creating more accommodating work environments and ADA compliance. JAN also offers resources for individuals who have questions about applications, accommodations, the ADA or the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission.
- The National Center on Leadership for the Employment and Economic Advancement of People with Disabilities (LEAD), which develops policy for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act through research, recommendations, technical assistance, and demonstration projects.
- The Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology (PEAT), which uses technology and resources to help create a more accessible workplace.
- The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth (CAPE-Youth), which conducts research, develops strategy for policy and practice for young adults with disabilities in employment and professional development.
- The Partnership on Inclusive Apprenticeship (PIA), which helps design inclusive, mutually beneficial apprenticeship programs for employers and people with disabilities.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/resources>

Increased Remote Work Has Been A Helpful Option For Those With Disabilities

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began to significantly affect Americans in 2020, many people began to work remotely instead of in an traditional office setting. This has been a perk for many disabled people who can and want to work from home. There has been an increase in workplace accommodations because more workers have been experiencing lasting health issues because of COVID-19. A survey from the University of New Hampshire found that nearly 78% of supervisors have changed accommodation practices because of the pandemic. The survey also indicated that two-thirds of supervisors said employing people was very important, an increase from the same survey taken in 2017. While COVID-19 has had some devastating effects on people with pre-existing conditions, the increase in remote work is a silver lining. However, there's more to be done: some supervisors said their superiors were less committed to fulfilling accommodation requests.

<https://www.npr.org/2022/10/21/1130371456/remote-work-opened-some-doors-to-workers-with-disabilities-but-others-remain-shu>



Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken meets workforce organizing the Office of Diversity and Inclusion NDEAM action group. U.S. Department of State, Public Domain.

Statistics Illustrate Employment For Disabled Individuals

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, only 21.3% of Americans 16 and older with disabilities were working or actively looking for work, compared to 67.1% of Americans without disabilities. Additionally, people with disabilities do not occupy as many management or professional positions compared to Americans without disabilities. About 36.5% of employed disabled people work in managerial positions, compared to 42.7% of those without. While many efforts have been made to stop prejudice against disabled people, discrimination still exists through difficulty filling out applications, biases from employers, or systemic barriers like access to education.

<https://www.nod.org/how-americans-with-disabilities-are-underrepresented-as-managers-and-professionals-in-one-glaring-chart>

Percentages Of The Disabled Population Employed From 2016-2020

The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy used microdata from a five-year public survey to calculate the ratio of employees with disabilities currently working to the total percentage of eligible people. Between 2016 and 2020, disability employment rates were at 40% or higher in 18 states. North Dakota has the highest disability employment-population ratio at 51%. The state with the lowest percentage of employed disabled people was Mississippi at 28%.

The same data illustrated the median earnings by adults with disabilities by state from 2016-2020. The states with the highest median wages were Washington, Nevada, North Dakota, Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey, and the District of Columbia, each with over \$27,000 annual wages.

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/EPRmap>

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

People



Judith Heumann in Japan for the nation's Disability Week, 2014. East Asia and Pacific Media Hub, U.S. Department of State.

Judith Heumann Was An Important Leader In The Disability Rights Movement

Judith Heumann, born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1947, is an important disability rights activist. After contracting polio in 1949, she began using a wheelchair. At five, she was denied the right to schooling because her wheelchair was considered a “fire hazard.” After overcoming obstacles, she graduated from Long Island University in Brooklyn, New York, and attended graduate school at the University of California at Berkeley. Throughout the rest of her life, she received several honorary doctorates.

She was a founding member of the Berkeley Center for Independent Living, a grassroots organization to help those with disabilities. In 1970, she co-founded Disabled in Action in New York. From 1993 to 2001, she served as the assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education under the Clinton administration. She was the first advisor on Disability Development from 2002 to 2006 for the World Bank. In 2020, Heumann published a memoir about her life, *Being Heumann: An Unrepentant Memoir of a Disability Rights Activist*, detailing her life fighting for the rights of disabled people.

<https://judithheumann.com/project/about/>

<https://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/drilm/collection/items/heumann.html>



The inside of the San Francisco Federal Building, where disabilities activists like Kitty Cone staged sit-ins. Library of Congress, 2007. <https://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2010718898/>

Kitty Cone Helped Kickstart Disability Rights Movements

Kitty Cone, born in 1944, became an important disability rights activist throughout the 1970s. As a student activist at the University of Illinois who was confined to a wheelchair, Kitty worked against racial segregation around the globe and for women's rights. She grew to be a successful community organizer. She moved to San Francisco and began advocating with the Berkeley Center for Independent Living for access to personal assistance services, curb ramps, and accessible public transportation. She and other activists staged sit-ins at the San Francisco Federal Building for more than 25 days to receive proper government enforcement from Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which stated no federally funded program could discriminate against people with disabilities. These protests formed the basis of the disability rights movement that helped bring the Americans with Disabilities Act to fruition in 1990.

Throughout the rest of her life, Kitty Cone fought for disability rights. In the 1980s, she overcame barriers and discrimination so that she could adopt her son, Jorge. Throughout the 1990s, she began working for the Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF). At first, she referred certified lawyers to people who needed to stand up for their rights, but she eventually became the organization's Development Director and a member of the board. After several decades of working to elevate the cause of disability rights, and fostering a diverse community in San Francisco, she passed away in 2015.

<https://womenshistory.si.edu/stories/kitty-cone-advocate-disability-rights>

<https://oac.cdlib.org/view?docId=kt1w1001mt;NAAN=13030&doc.view=frames&chunk.id=div00138&toc.depth=1&toc.id=div00138&brand=oac4>



Justin Dart, Jr., in Washington, D.C., 1998. John Matthew Smith, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kingkongphoto/31673271787/>

Justin Dart Was The “Father Of The Americans With Disabilities Act”

Justin Dart, Jr., was an important leader of the international disability rights movement and considered the “father of the Americans with Disabilities Act.” Born in 1930 to a wealthy family, Justin Dart often felt like an outcast amongst his successful family. He attended seven high schools and didn’t graduate from any of them, receiving many demerits. In 1948, Dart contracted polio, and doctors said he had less than three days to live. The near-death experience led to him using a wheelchair and gave him a newfound compassion for others. He soon enrolled in and graduated from the University of Houston, earning degrees in political science and history. Dart formed his first human rights group while in school, a pro-integration organization at the white-only institution. As he completed his studies, he wanted to be a teacher, but the school denied his teaching certificate because he used a wheelchair.

He founded two successful businesses in lieu of an education career. Giving equal opportunity to women and people with disabilities was a priority for Dart. He even organized Japan’s first wheelchair basketball team with his employees. In 1966, he dedicated himself to advancing disability rights upon seeing the terrible conditions of a rehabilitation center for children with polio in Vietnam. He eventually became the chair of the Texas Governor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities. In 1981, Dart was appointed to the vice-chair of the National Council on Disability by President Reagan. While in this position, he drafted a national policy against disability discrimination that would eventually become the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Dart headed the Rehabilitation Services Administration, calling for radical changes to public and private infrastructure to accommodate disabled people. He worked with other federal agencies and elected officials to implement changes and lead campaigns for his cause, eventually leading to the passage of the ADA. In the years that followed, he was a fierce defender of the law and pushed for further disability rights and protections. In 1998, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Clinton.

https://abilitymagazine.com/JustinDart_remembered.html

Corbett O’Toole Wrote About The Struggle For Equal Protections

Corbett O’Toole is a disability activist, writer, and artist born in 1951. After getting polio as a child, she began to help disabled individuals in public life. As part of the Berkeley, California disabled community, she was part of the 1977 504 sit-in at the San Francisco Federal Building, which stated, but didn’t enforce, equal rights for disabled people. She was also a part of the Berkeley Center for Independent Living and the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Inc.

As a queer person and a mother with a disability, she organized gatherings to bring light to the issues facing the marginalized communities she was a member of. Some of these included the International Leadership Forum for Women with Disabilities, Through the Looking Glass, and the *Disability Studies Quarterly*. She organized the first international Queer Disability Conference. O’Toole spoke at a United Nations conference on women in 1992. She co-founded the *Reclamation Press*, which publishes books by disabled people, wrote *Fading Scars: My Queer Disability History*, and was a finalist for the Lambda Literary Award.

<https://corbettotoole.com/about/>



Jim Langevin’s official portrait for the House of Representatives, 2013. U.S. House Office of Photography, Public Domain.

Jim Langevin Is The First Quadriplegic To Serve In Congress

Jim Langevin was born April 1964, in Providence, Rhode Island. At the age of 16, he was injured while working with police during a Boy Scout program. He was accidentally shot in the back, leaving him paralyzed. After support from the community for his recovery, he entered public service and was elected as a delegate to Rhode Island’s Constitutional Convention in 1986. In 1994, he became the nation’s youngest Secretary of State and reformed Rhode Island’s election system. He served in this position until 2000, when he successfully ran for the U.S. House of Representatives. As the first quadriplegic person to serve in Congress, Langevin advanced stem cell research, universal health care, and family care. He served until January 3, 2023.

<https://www.loc.gov/disability-employment-awareness-month/people/jim-langevin/>



Gini Laurie, 1985, Post-Polio Health International. Joan L. Headley, PHI archives.

Gini Laurie Created A Network Of Disability Activism

Virginia Grace Wilson Laurie, “Gini,” was born on June 10, 1913, in St. Louis, Missouri. The year before she was born, polio caused the death of her two sisters and left her brother disabled. This tragedy gave Laurie a strong determination to support the disabled community. She studied biology and Latin at Randolph Macon Women’s College in Lynchburg, Virginia.

She became a Red Cross volunteer at the Toomey Pavilion rehabilitation center during the 1949 polio epidemic, where she visited patients, provided assistance, and read to them. In an effort to keep in touch with her patients when they left the hospital, the staff formed a newsletter, the *Toomeyville Gazette*. As an unpaid editor, Laurie gathered news from patients and staff, tips on accomplishing tasks, and experiences from those with polio. In 1970, the publication was renamed the *Rehabilitation Gazette*, and focused more on legislation, activism, and the independent living philosophy. Laurie became the only nondisabled person on the board of directors of the American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. In 1981, she organized the first international conference on post-polio problems that people with polio experience as they age, and she founded the International Polio Network in 1985, which published information about the condition, political news, and advice on medical practices and rehabilitation.

Throughout the rest of her life, she published several books and publications emphasizing the independent living philosophy for people with disabilities, leading the disability rights movement with her collections of literature. In 1979, Gini Laurie and her husband were awarded the President’s Distinguished Service Award.

<https://post-polio.org/about/virginia-grace-wilson-gini-laurie-1913-1989/>



Ed Robert's wheelchair in the Smithsonian in the National Museum of American History. Smithsonian Museum of American History, Zona L. Roberts. https://www.si.edu/object/ed-robertss-wheelchair%3Anmah_1181889

Edward Roberts Shaped The Independent Living Movement

Edward Roberts was born in San Mateo, California, in 1939. When he was 14 years old, he contracted polio and became paralyzed in most of his lower body except for a few fingers. He needed to use an iron lung and had to attend his classes by listening on the telephone. After 18 months of treatment, he could return home and school in person. However, he began experiencing discrimination. His school didn't allow him to graduate because he couldn't complete his driver's education and physical education. After petitioning, he was granted a diploma. Soon, he was accepted to the University of California, Berkeley, but administrators tried to rescind his attendance when they discovered he was quadriplegic, claiming they couldn't accommodate his wheelchair or iron lung. Still, he persisted and enrolled in classes, becoming the first student at the university to use a wheelchair.

While in school, Ed Roberts formed a group of students with disabilities to pressure UC Berkeley to create more accessible facilities. This group, which eventually became the Physically Disabled Students Program, was the first college organization for disabled students in the United States. Roberts created the first Center for Independent Living in 1972, which encouraged accessibility and independence in the disabled community. Eventually, he began working as a professor of political science at UC Berkeley, where he was once discriminated against. Later, he directed California's Department of Rehabilitation and co-founded the World Institute on Disability. After his death, California named January 23 "Ed Roberts Day."

<https://www.nps.gov/people/ed-roberts.htm>

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Events



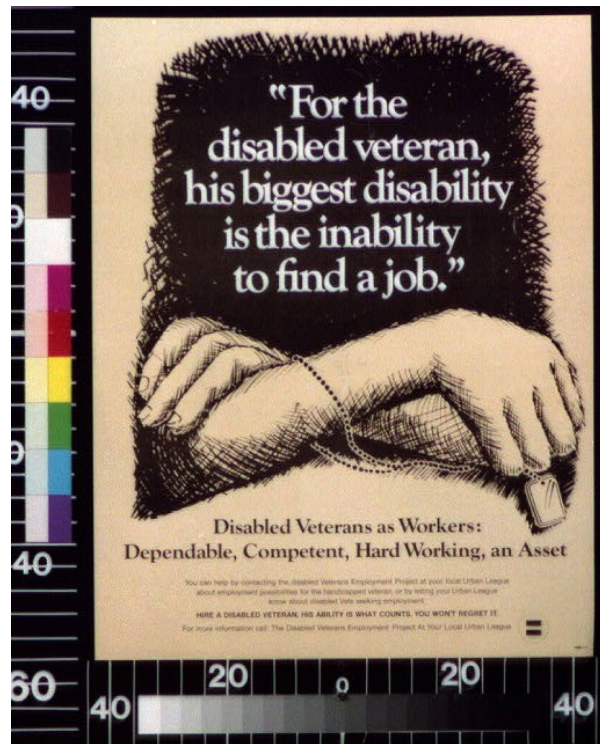
Young people illustrating reading and writing before a Senate committee in support of a bill to fund education for disabled children, 1937. Library of Congress, Public Domain.

“National Employ The Physically Handicapped Week” Became NDEAM

Prior to the establishment of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, President Truman designated the week of October 3 as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week in 1945. The designation encouraged employers and government agencies to hire people with physical impairments including civilians and veterans who had just fought in World War II. In 1962, “physically” was removed from the title to recognize people who had disabilities that weren’t just physical. In 1990, after years of public policy and activism, the week became a whole month of awareness. The National Disability Employment Awareness Month was brought about through presidential proclamation by George H.W. Bush and the passage of Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990.

<https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/proclamations/2812/national-employ-physically-handicapped-week-1948>

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/proclamation-6203-national-disability-employment-awareness-month-1990>



Poster encouraging the employment of disabled veterans. National Urban League, 1965-1980. Library of Congress.

The Rehabilitation Act Of 1973 Put Equal Rights On The Table

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals with physical and mental impairments. The law forbids exclusion or discrimination based on disabilities by employers. Continually, those with disabilities must receive equal opportunity in services, benefits, and access. This law applies to all organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal agency. Organizations must also provide reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities under this law.

The law was first conceived shortly before the outbreak of World War I, but didn't make much of an impact. It wasn't until 1973 that the law was redefined, greatly impacting the lives of countless Americans. The law was intensively debated, and original versions of the law were vetoed by President Nixon in 1972 and 1973. However, after compromises and protests pushing for the bill were made, it became law.

<https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/rehabilitation-act-1973>

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/rehabilitation-act-1973-independence-bound>

Individuals with Disability Education Act Provided Necessary Resources

In 1975, Congress created the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which was changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990. Prior to the passage of the law, only one in five children with disabilities were educated in the United States. In fact, many states had laws excluding children who were deaf, blind, emotionally disturbed, or had an intellectual disability. Many individuals were sent to live in state institutions, where conditions were often poor and restrictive. Several initiatives were implemented throughout the mid-20th century to assist people with disabilities, like the Captioned Films Act of 1958, the Training of Professional Personnel Act of 1959, which trained people to educate those with intellectual disabilities, and the Teachers of the Deaf Act of 1961, amongst several others.

Since the passage of IDEA, millions of children have gotten the education they need; today, more than 7.5 million children with disabilities are given special education and designated services to meet their needs. This aid has also been expanded to include thousands of infants with disabilities through early intervention services. Because of this, more children with disabilities have been able to go to secondary and post-secondary schools and find good jobs.

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/IDEA-History#:~:text=On%20November%2029%2C%201975%2C%20President,and%20locality%20across%20the%20country.>

The American Coalition Of Citizens With Disabilities Fought For Equal Protections

The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD), formed on April 30, 1975, was an organization of local, state, and national disability groups. The group staged demonstrations after the Carter administration stalled to enforce Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which would protect disabled people against discrimination. The bill had originally been vetoed by President Nixon, claiming it would cost too much. Nixon eventually signed the bill after initial protests but didn't enforce it. Years later, the protest to enforce it was staged in several cities around the country, lasting a day or two, except in San Francisco, where the sit-in lasted for a month. Many members of the coalition risked their lives to have their demands met. The group was active until 1983 and was the first group organized by people with a variety of disabilities.

https://americanhistory.si.edu/blog/sitting-disability-rights-section-504-protests-1970s?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+OSayCanYouSee+%28O+Say+Can+You+See%3F+National+Museum+of+American+History+Blog%29



President George H. W. Bush signing the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 with Evan Kemp, Rev. Harold Wilke, Sandra Parrino, and Justin Dart. The White House, Public Domain.

Americans With Disabilities Act Changed Disability Inclusion For The Nation

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a landmark civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in every area of public life. Taking effect in 1990, the law opened jobs, schools, transportation, and public and private spaces to people with disabilities that anybody else could access. Through the ADA, the United States became the first country to pass a comprehensive civil rights law for people with disabilities. The ADA guarantees equal opportunity to individuals with disabilities that are afforded to anybody else, like laws that provide equal rights based on race, sex, religion, or age. The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act became law in 2009, changing the definition of “disability” to be more inclusive.

There are five titles in the ADA that cover different aspects of public life. Title I establishes equal employment opportunity, requiring employers to provide reasonable accommodation. Title II bans discrimination by state and local governments, and requires public transit accommodate disabled people. Title III sets the minimum standard that public and private places should accommodate disabled people, requiring businesses and facilities to remove barriers. Title IV requires telephone and internet companies to relay services to those who might have hearing or speaking disabilities. Title V, the final portion of ADA, covers miscellaneous provisions, like prohibiting retaliation and coercion, the ADA’s relationship to other laws, and outlines certain conditions that are not covered under ADA.

<https://adata.org/learn-about-ada>

The UN Established The Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted on December 13, 2006, in New York City at the United Nations Headquarters. The next year, it was opened for signature and signed by 82 nations, the highest number of signatories in the history of the United Nations on its opening day. It was the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century. The Convention continues to improve attitudes toward people with disabilities, trying to disprove the misconception that they are objects of charity instead of active participants in their respective nations with rights and freedoms like any other person.

The Convention was negotiated in just eight sessions of an Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly, making it the fastest negotiated human rights treaty ever.

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>



U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment photography, Competitive Integrated Employment.
<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/integrated-employment>

U.S. Department Of Labor Selects Seven States For Mental Health Job Initiative

The U.S. Department of Labor revealed seven states that will participate in the second round of a program to align state policy and funding for competitive integrated employment for people with mental health disabilities. Competitive integrated employment is defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as full-time or part-time work performed by a person at comparable wages, receiving the same benefits, working at the same location, just like a person without disabilities. Led by the Office of Disability Employment Policy, the program administers technical assistance to expand individual placement and support practices. The selected states include Florida, Indianan, Iowa, Virginia, Louisiana, Montana, and New York. The program, Advancing State Policy Integration for Recovery and Employment (ASPIRE), seeks to give access to people with mental health conditions who want to work but lack the resources or supports. These resources include mental/behavioral health support, Medicaid, vocational rehabilitation, and educational services.

<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/odep/odep20221215>



Steven Chu (center), a Defense Logistics Agency civilian, was recognized at the DoD Disability Awards. Department of Defense.

DoD Recognized Personnel And Organizations For Enabling Disability Inclusion

In October 2022, the Department of Defense recognized 28 civilian and military personnel for their efforts in disability inclusion. The celebration is part of the 42nd Annual DoD Disability Awards. The people who received the honor were described as problem-solvers who “tapped into the reservoir of talents and skills that America has to offer.” Comments were offered by Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen H. Hicks, who emphasized the importance of the Wounded Warrior program, Operation Warfighter, and the Workforce Recruitment Program, which spotlight the skills and patriotism of those with disabilities. The many award recipients come from all over the United States, fulfilling organizational, managerial, and combat roles while fulfilling a commitment to disability inclusion.

Several organizations received recognition as component awardees.

- The Air Force was recognized with the Secretary of Defense Award for the best military department for achievement in advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- The Defense Logistics Agency was given the Secretary of Defense Award for best mid-sized component for achievements in advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- The National Security Agency was recognized with the Secretary of Defense Award for best intelligence component award.
- The DoD Office of Inspector General earned the Secretary of Defense Award for best small-sized component for achievements in advancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3194627/department-recognizes-28-civilian-military-personnel-for-enabling-disability-in/>

The Americans With Disabilities Act Protects Transgender People

In August 2022, a federal court ruled that transgender people are protected from discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The case that determined the ruling came from a 2020 lawsuit by Kesha Williams, a transgender woman who was incarcerated in a men’s prison despite 20 years of hormone replacement therapy. Prison officials withdrew her hormone therapy for long intervals, and she faced harassment by deputies and inmates. After the lawsuit went to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, the court ruled that the gender dysphoria Williams experienced was discriminatory under the ADA. The decision was made in part by new research from the American Psychiatric Association, which updated the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders to include gender dysphoria in 2013. The case was won by Williams when it was determined she was discriminated against when she was denied her hormone medicine.

<https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/equality/3604307-americans-with-disabilities-act-protects-transgender-people-judge-rules/>

Disabled Workers Fight Back Against Union Pacific Railroad Policies

After the Union Pacific Railroad Company, one of the largest railroad organizations in the United States, fired several employees over their disabilities, they fought back with a federal lawsuit. Though the number of employees filing cases is small compared to the 30,000 people working for the Union Pacific, the lawsuits could be costly for the railroad company as they deal with work shortages. There are 15 federal lawsuits against the railroad and over 200 complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. As of August 2022, most of the lawsuits are still to be determined.

One of the people filing a lawsuit is Terrence Hersey, a former railroad supervisor, who suffered a stroke in 2015. Despite having to relearn how to get out of a car and dress himself, doctors cleared him to return to work. However, the Union Pacific let him go after deciding, without a medical examination, he was unfit. Union Pacific sees any risk of somebody being incapacitated at work as a risk. However, one of the medical doctors working with the plaintiffs believes the policies by Union Pacific are more restrictive than necessary, forcing employees out of work unnecessarily. Filing lawsuits and fighting legally is an important way to protect rights established in the Americans with Disabilities Act and other equal protection laws.

<https://apnews.com/article/health-omaha-410c8e04b049af6b1f8afe11084a43d9>



Poster from the “What Can I Do?” PSA. The Campaign For Disability Employment.

The Campaign For Disability Employment Launches PSA

In March 2022, the U.S. Office of Disability Employment Policy launched the “Mental Health at Work: What Can I Do?” PSA campaign. The campaign, as part of a collaboration with the Campaign for Disability Employment (CDE), seeks to promote flexible, supportive workplaces. The organization provided outreach tools, posters, and resources to help guide employers with employees who may have mental health issues. The CDE encourages awareness about mental health issues, accommodation and assistance, and access to healthcare for mental health services. They provide a list of resources like the Center for Workplace Mental Health, Mental Health America, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness, among others.

The Campaign for Disability Employment offers various PSAs that encourage disability employment. Their campaigns have aired more than 450,000 times on radio and televisions, earning more than \$82 million in donated airtime. Their goal is to encourage people and organizations to recognize the value of those with disabilities as people and as workers.

<https://www.whatcanyoudocampaign.org/psa-campaigns/mental-health-psa/>

Covvi Released A New Bionic Hand

In 2022, Covvi, a leading manufacturer of limb prosthetics, developed a new bionic hand that can be updated with new gestures and movements anywhere at any time. Bionic hands are prosthetic limb replacements that convert electrical impulses from muscles in the upper arm into movements, which are powered by motors. Because of this new advancement, bionic hands can now come with Bluetooth technology, allowing specialists to update it through an app. Jessica Smith, an Australian Paralympian swimmer, is a recipient of the bionic hand. Recipients of the bionic hands have said that it can provide newfound assistance and a sense of pride.

<https://www.reuters.com/technology/bionic-hand-can-be-updated-with-new-gestures-anytime-anywhere-2022-08-16/>

Netflix Documentary Depicts Beginnings Of Disability Rights Movement

Crip Camp: A Disability Revolution is a documentary depicting the disability rights movement of the 1970s released in 2020. The movement, according to the film, sprung from a New York summer camp for disabled teenagers, Camp Jened, which ran from the 1950s to 1977. The film was directed by Jim LeBrecht, who attended the camp, and Nicole Newnham. The documentary was executive produced by Michelle and Barack Obama as part of a deal with Netflix to produce films depicting American stories. Much of the film depicts Judy Heumann, who was a counselor at the camp, as she ascended to lead the disability rights movement.

<https://time.com/5809758/crip-camp-review/>

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Quotes

“Although I was by no means confident that a law like the ADA could be passed in this century, I felt strongly that the project must become the central focus and passion of our movement. To Americans, total equality is a sacred concept of transcending power and majesty.”

“The ADA is an absolutely essential legal and educational tool to achieve equality and to achieve employment. But the ADA is not equality and it is not employment. ADA is a promise to be kept. And what is that promise? For whatever the law says legally, the clear promise of the ADA is that all people with disabilities will be fully equal, fully productive, fully prosperous, and fully welcome participants in the mainstream. Keeping the promise of the ADA is not going to be easy.”

“We must invest in a continuum of new and strengthened programs to liberate people with disabilities from dependency, and empower them to be equal and productive participants in the mainstream: Productivity-oriented education for all citizens. Economic, technological, independent living, vocational rehabilitation, transitional, personal assistance and community based supports for productivity and quality of life. Prevention. Affordable insurance and health care for all. Incentives for productivity to replace disincentives. Accessible communications, transportation, housing, and completely new communities that are accessible as a whole.”

Justin Dart, Jr.

<https://mn.gov/mnddc/ada-legacy/pdf/related-quotes-by-justin-dart.pdf>

“Our aim is to reach and advance respiratory polios all over the world and to share the problems, experiences, thoughts and adventures that would be of value.”

“Networking links people who share common needs or common goals. Networking is a support system. It is a method of self-organizing. It is the structure of a social movement. Most of all, it is a method by which people get things done.”

Virginia “Gini” Laurie

<https://web.archive.org/web/20190316085249/http://www.post-polio.org/about/ginilauriel.html>

“The most important part of that is working with other people, you move away from your own problems to help somebody else. And that liberated me. When I realized I could help others, it made me a lot freer to help myself.”

“You have to recognize that we didn't want to live in an institution. I remember one dean at the university said, ‘Oh, you'll finish your PhD. and then you'll live in a nursing home.’ And I said, ‘No, that's not the plan.’ We're here to change that whole idea.”

“Independent living is a psychological idea much more than a physical concept. I'm paralyzed from the neck down, but I am completely in control of my own life. I make decisions about what I want. And when you begin to believe that, it's very empowering and powerful.”

“Our whole philosophy was: Do not make other people with disabilities dependent on you. Our whole professional system is set up that way. Always ask what do you want to do and help people learn how to make their own decisions. And you know what? It's that simple.”

Ed Roberts

<https://mn.gov/mnddc/ed-roberts/freeWheeling.html>

“Change never happens at the pace we think it should. It happens over years of people joining together, strategizing, sharing, and pulling all the levers they possibly can. Gradually, excruciatingly slowly, things start to happen, and then suddenly, seemingly out of the blue, something will tip.”

“Our anger was a fury sparked by profound injustices. Wrongs that deserved ire. And with that rage we ripped a hole in the status quo.”

“The truth is, the status quo loves to say no. It is the easiest thing in the world to say no, especially in the world of business and finance. But for the first time we were discussing civil rights, and no other civil rights issue has ever been questioned because of the cost.”

Judith Heumann

https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/19238511.Judith_Heumann

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.

For far too long in this country, employers could refuse to hire you if you were disabled. Stores could turn you away. If you used a wheelchair, there was no real way to take a bus or train to work or school. America simply was not built for all Americans.

Studies have found that Americans with disabilities are especially productive and motivated workers — but they still have a harder time getting jobs, promotions, and fair pay. They are three times less likely than others to be employed and often earn sub-minimum wages for their work.

President Joe Biden

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2022/09/30/a-proclamation-on-national-clean-energy-action-month-2022/>

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