

CULTURAL
AWARENESS



OBSERVANCE

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH



FACTS

Reflecting a commitment to a robust and competitive American labor force, the 2018 National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) theme is “America’s Workforce: Empowering All.”

Observed each October, NDEAM celebrates the contributions of workers with disabilities and educates about the value of a workforce inclusive of their skills and talents.

The observance also emphasizes the importance of guaranteeing that all Americans have access to the services and supports to enable them to work.

NDEAM dates back to 1945, when Congress declared the first week in October “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.”

In the 1950s, disabled veterans and other people with disabilities begin 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, result in the development of national standards for “barrier-free” buildings.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 marks a major step forward in legislation impacting the employment of people with disabilities, extending and revising state Vocational Rehabilitation services and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability by federally funded and assisted programs, federal employers and federal contractors.

In 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is signed 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.

NDEAM is an opportunity to reaffirm the DoD’s commitment to recruit, retain, and advance individuals with disabilities. By EMPOWERING ALL, the Defense Department continues to build an inclusive workforce resulting in total force readiness.

