

NDEAM 2026: Celebrating Value and Talent

A practical awareness-to-action guide for workplaces, schools, families and communities. (Screen-reader accessible version — single column, no decorative layout.)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), observed each October, recognizes the skills and contributions of people with disabilities in America's workplaces, communities and economy. The 2026 theme — "Celebrating Value and Talent" — is an invitation to do more than recognize inclusion: use October to start conversations, share practical ideas, invite participation and build habits that continue all year.

[Explore the U.S. Department of Labor NDEAM resources](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam/)

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Who is this for?

Everyone has a role. Employers and employees can shape workplace culture; people with disabilities can share experience and leadership; families and caregivers can encourage opportunity; schools and youth programs can connect awareness to career exploration; community and disability organizations can convene people and resources; associations, unions and public leaders can amplify participation and create broader opportunities.

From awareness to action

- **Get People Thinking** — Start with perspective.
- **Share Ideas** — Make participation practical.
- **Invite Action** — Turn ideas into opportunity.
- **Showcase What's Happening** — Make progress visible.
- **Keep the Conversation Going** — Carry it beyond October.

Ideas you can use this October

Workplaces & Employers

- **Review the basics.** Use NDEAM to revisit accessibility, accommodation processes and supervisor responsibilities.
- **Make it visible.** Display the NDEAM poster; feature employee contributions, stories or resources in newsletters, intranets and social media.
- **Create conversation.** Host a brown-bag lunch, panel or presentation led by people with disabilities and local community partners.

Schools, Families & Youth

- **Start career conversations.** Discuss disability employment, workplace access and the range of careers available to young people with disabilities.
- **Invite lived experience.** Bring in workers, entrepreneurs or community leaders with disabilities to talk about their work and experiences.
- **Create student-led activities.** Try a poster contest, student article, interview, assembly or disability-awareness project tied to careers and community participation.

Turn October into something people can do

Choose one idea. Invite others in. Share what happens. Then keep going.

Community organizations, associations, unions & public leaders

Use your reach to make disability employment visible. Share NDEAM resources with members and local employers; host a breakfast, panel, webcast or community discussion; recognize employers and workers who are taking action; invite local media to cover disability employment stories; or create a proclamation, poster contest, mentoring activity, internship or fellowship opportunity. Disability organizations can also serve as connectors — bringing employers, schools, families and people with disabilities into the same conversation.

Try an experiential learning activity: One Day in the Chair

Awareness can become more meaningful when people have a structured way to notice access, assumptions and everyday barriers. One Day in the Chair is a Life in Full program designed to help organizations create that kind of learning experience. Explore the program, learn how it can be used, and download available materials for a workplace, school or community activity.

[Learn about One Day in the Chair and download the Host Your Own Event Guide](https://mylifeinfull.com/one-day-in-the-chair/)

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Hosting a public NDEAM event?

Help others find it. List public events and opportunities on AdaptLinks and expand the connection beyond your own audience.

[List a public event on AdaptLinks](https://mylifeinfull.com/adaptlinks/) (<https://mylifeinfull.com/adaptlinks/>)

Keep the conversation going after October

The strongest NDEAM observances lead to year-round practice. Ask what worked, what people learned and what should happen next. Keep disability represented in recruiting, career exploration, leadership development, training, communications and community partnerships. Continue inviting people with disabilities into the planning — not only as participants, but as employees, students, leaders, experts, mentors and decision-makers.

Resources to explore & link

- **U.S. Department of Labor / ODEP — NDEAM.** Official 2026 theme, posters, key messages, videos and participation ideas. **[Visit site](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam/)**
(<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam/>)
- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN).** Free, expert guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. **[Visit site](https://askjan.org/)** (<https://askjan.org/>)
- **Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability (EARN).** Employer tools for recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing people with disabilities. **[Visit site](https://askearn.org/)**
(<https://askearn.org/>)

- **Life in Full — One Day in the Chair & AdaptLinks.** Experiential awareness resources plus a place to connect people with public disability-related events and opportunities. [Visit One Day in the Chair](https://mylifeinfull.com/one-day-in-the-chair/) (https://mylifeinfull.com/one-day-in-the-chair/) / [Visit AdaptLinks](https://mylifeinfull.com/adaptlinks/) (https://mylifeinfull.com/adaptlinks/)

Stronger Workplaces. Brighter Futures.

This guide summarizes ideas from the U.S. Department of Labor's NDEAM resources and Life in Full planning notes.