



NEWS RELEASE

For additional information, please contact David Jespersen by phone (402-471-4537) or email (david.jespersen@nebraska.gov)

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NEBRASKA OBSERVES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Nebraska VR today announced its participation in National Disability Employment Awareness Month, an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate the public about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. This year's theme is "Increasing Access and Opportunity."

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back 75 years, to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962 the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988 Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month, or NDEAM.

"Ensuring that America's workplaces continue to include and accommodate people with disabilities will be an important part of our economic rebound," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Eugene Scalia. "Looking ahead, the Department will remain focused on the policies that led to a strong economy and record-low unemployment rates for persons with disabilities prior to the pandemic. A vigorous economic rebound and job growth will, alongside the Americans with Disabilities Act, increase access and opportunity for Americans with disabilities."

Reflecting this year's theme, Nebraska VR will be engaging in activities throughout the month to highlight access and opportunity, educate partners about disability employment issues, and its commitment to an inclusive work culture. These efforts include social media campaigns designed to recognize business partners who have either hosted work-based learning opportunities for students in a real-life work setting or provided adult job seekers with on-the-job experiences. The Lincoln Service Office will also host an event to educate area businesses about building an inclusive workforce, disability etiquette, customized employment, and tax credits. Staff members will serve as guest speakers during, "Increasing Access and Opportunity Week" in late October.

"Nebraska VR is proud to celebrate the 75 years of NDEAM, 30 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the 100-year anniversary of the vocational rehabilitation program in 2020," said Nebraska VR Director Lindy Foley. "Through increased access and opportunity for our clients and partnering with businesses in Nebraska communities to adopt inclusive hiring practices, Nebraskans with disabilities will continue to play a significant role in the future and success of our state for years to come."

To learn more, visit Nebraska VR's website: <http://www.vr.nebraska.gov/>.

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its messages during October and throughout the year, by visiting: <http://www.dol.gov/ndeam>.

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David Jespersen
Public Information Officer, Nebraska Department of Education
402-471-4537
david.jespersen@nebraska.gov
@NDE_News