



NASUAD CELEBRATES NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

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Washington, DC - On October 3, President Obama issued a proclamation declaring October 2011 **National Disability Employment Awareness Month**. Observed each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many skills that people with disabilities bring to the nation's workforce.

The theme for NDEAM 2011, *Profit by Investing in Workers with Disabilities*, promotes the valuable contributions that people with disabilities make to America's workplaces and economy. In supporting the 2011 campaign, Martha Roherty, NASUAD's Executive Director, said "The focus of this year's campaign perfectly highlights how improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities can benefit individual workers, employers, and society as a whole, as investing in workers with disabilities fosters individual economic security, national economic stability, and a more inclusive America."

This annual effort to educate the public about issues related to disability and employment began in 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October "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-long observance to one month, and changed the name to "National Disability Employment Awareness Month." In 2001, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) within the U.S. Department of Labor assumed responsibility for NDEAM, and has worked to expand the reach and scope of the campaign ever since.

Although led by ODEP, NDEAM's true spirit lies in the many locally organized programs and events that will take place during the month of October to celebrate American workers with disabilities. To help employers, schools, and other organizations participate in NDEAM, ODEP created a variety of resources and outreach materials, which are available [here](#). NASUAD encourages you to utilize these resources and learn how you can play a role in affirming the intrinsic value of workers with disabilities within your community, throughout NDEAM and beyond.

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National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, founded in 1964, represents the nation's 56 officially designated state and territorial agencies on aging. The Association's principal mission is to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering home and community based services and supports for people who are older or have a disability, and their caregivers. <http://www.nasuad.org>