

Memo

To: All County Employees and Residents

From: Alameda County Behavioral Health Department

Date: October 2024

Subject: National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) (October 2024)

Dear Colleagues and Community Members,

As October begins, the Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD) recognizes **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**. This observance highlights the essential role that people with disabilities play in America's workforce and the value of inclusive employment practices.



The Imperative of National Disability Employment Awareness Month

NDEAM stands as a beacon for workplace inclusivity and equality:

1. **Talent Unleashing:** It spotlights the often-untapped potential of workers with disabilities, encouraging employers to broaden their talent pools.
2. **Barrier Breaking:** This month challenges physical and attitudinal barriers that hinder the full participation of people with disabilities in the workforce.
3. **Economic Empowerment:** By promoting employment opportunities, NDEAM contributes to the self-sufficiency and empowerment of individuals with disabilities.
4. **Innovation Catalyst:** It encourages the development of adaptive technologies and inclusive workplace practices that benefit all employees.

History of National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The history of NDEAM traces back to 1945 when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year as "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." This was a result of society's growing awareness of the employment needs of veterans with disabilities returning from World War II.

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."

The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) has been responsible for NDEAM since 2001, working each year to develop a fitting theme for the observance.

ACBHD's Commitment

Alameda County Behavioral Health Department is dedicated to promoting inclusive employment practices and supporting the mental health of community members, including those with disabilities.

During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, ACBHD will:

1. Hosting virtual and in-person workshops on inclusive hiring practices and workplace accommodations
2. Providing resources for employers to create supportive work environments for employees with disabilities
3. Partnering with local organizations to expand job opportunities for individuals with disabilities
4. Launching a social media campaign to highlight success stories of employees with disabilities in various fields

We encourage all members of our community, especially employers, to participate in these initiatives and to take this opportunity to learn more about disability employment issues and the benefits of fostering a disability-inclusive workplace culture.

ACBHD is committed to supporting both employers and employees in creating inclusive work environments. If you or your organization needs guidance on mental health support or accommodations for employees with disabilities, please reach out to our department. For more information about our National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities or to access related resources, please visit our website <https://www.acbhcs.org/> or contact our office at [1-800-491-9099](tel:1-800-491-9099).