The Disability Law Center Joins Broad Effort to Observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month

The Disability Law Center (DLC) announced today its participation in National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), an annual awareness campaign that takes place each October. The purpose of National Disability Employment Awareness Month is to educate about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America’s workers with disabilities.

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "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.

"We all have a role to play in — and benefit to gain from — increasing opportunities for meaningful employment for people with disabilities. This year's theme encapsulates this in three powerful words. It conveys that advancing disability employment is about much more than just hiring. It's about creating a continuum of inclusion. And the first step on this continuum is expectation," said Kathy Martinez, assistant secretary of labor for disability employment policy when announcing this year’s NDEAM theme, which is "Expect. Employ. Empower."

Reflecting this year's theme, throughout the month, the DLC will share information with the community on disability employment issues and the role they play in fostering a disability-friendly work culture. This information will be shared through the DLC’s website and social media pages.

“As Utah’s Protection and Advocacy Agency, the DLC is excited to participate in this year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” said Lindsay Boerens, a DLC advocate. “We know that the strongest of workforces includes the skills and talents of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities. We encourage the community to work together to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities to work in real jobs and earn real wages. It is time to level the playing field and allow all individuals – regardless of disability – the chance to succeed in the workplace.”

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 the ODEP website at www.dol.gov/odep/.

The Disability Law Center is a private non-profit organization. The DLC’s mission is to enforce and strengthen laws that protect the opportunities, choices and legal rights of Utahns with disabilities. Our services are available statewide and free of charge, regardless of income, legal status, language, or place of residence.

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For more information, interviews, or media inquiries about this topic, contact Laura Boswell at 801-363-1347, or email at, lboswell@disabilitylawcenter.org.