### For Immediate Release

 **DATE**: October 4, 2023

 **CONTACT**: Cynthia Butler

 **PHONE:** 916-764-0150

cynthia.butler@dor.ca.gov

# Department of Rehabilitation Celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month

SACRAMENTO— The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), administrator of the nation’s largest vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs, is celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), an annual event in October that highlights the skills, talents, and diversity that people with disabilities bring to the workforce. This year’s theme is Advancing Access and Equity.

“Access to equitable employment opportunities should be available to any skilled and qualified candidate, including a person with a disability. However, that is not always the case,” said **DOR Director Joe Xavier**. “By overlooking people with disabilities, employers are missing out on an untapped pool of talented and highly motivated individuals who are ready, willing, and able to go to work.”

This year, DOR launched the [California Subminimum Wage to Competitive Integrated Employment Project](https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/csp) (CSP) through a grant received from the U.S. Department of Education Disability Innovation Fund. This project will create a comprehensive set of interventions and support to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes, economic self-sufficiency, independence, and full inclusion for Californians with the most intellectual and developmental disabilities.

“California is moving toward ending subminimum wage for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities by phasing out programs that were not providing a living wage or opportunities for growth,” Xavier said. “Through the CSP project, people with significant disabilities can find a fulfilling career and have the ability to live independently in their community of choice.”

The CSP project is also aligned with California Governor Gavin Newsom’s recent executive order that outlines the development of a [Master Plan on Career Education](https://www.gov.ca.gov/2023/08/31/freedom-to-succeed/#:~:text=The%20Master%20Plan%20on%20Career,government%20and%20the%20private%20sector.), which will guide the state in its efforts to strengthen career pathways, prioritize hands-on learning and real-life skills, and advance universal access and affordability for all Californians through streamlined collaboration and partnership across government and the private sector.

“Through collaborations with our grant program partners, we are evaluating innovative vocational service delivery models that include employment preparation, work-based learning experiences, and other options, including education in integrated settings, matriculation into college or enrollment in career technical education,” Xavier said. “The Governor’s new Master Plan on Career Education will allow us to expand this work to ensure all young people – regardless of disability – will have the skills to go to work and succeed in their chosen career.”

As a nationwide leader in the vocational services space, DOR works continuously to find ways to break down barriers and increase the hiring of people with disabilities. DOR’s [Demand Side Employment Initiative](https://dor.ca.gov/Home/DemandSideEmployment) provides employers with business grants, human resources trainings, and other resources to support California’s business community in the hiring of individuals with disabilities.

“Recruiting and hiring individuals with disabilities is a smart move for businesses and for the continued economic growth of local communities,” Xavier said. It represents an organization’s commitment to having a diverse and inclusive workforce and truly reflects a California for All.”

Visit the DOR website to learn more about [NDEAM 2023](https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/ndeam2023), the [CSP project](https://www.dor.ca.gov/Home/csp) and the [Demand Side Employment I](https://dor.ca.gov/Home/DemandSideEmployment)nitiative.

####

The California Department of Rehabilitation works in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities. Visit the [California Department of Rehabilitation Website](https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dor.ca.gov%2FHome&data=04%7C01%7CCynthia.Butler%40dor.ca.gov%7Ca89a20d746ed49e8786c08d905bc6158%7C19ed70549d9743c792b16781b6b95b68%7C0%7C0%7C637547128996375515%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=tjtlXxpq0QVkzzU%2BogFjsMeHaNkU%2FEQXP8vMae9y4wM%3D&reserved=0). Follow us on [X(Twitter),](https://twitter.com/CaliforniaDOR) [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaDOR). [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/4840749/admin/feed/posts/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/dorcalifornia/)