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# Department of Rehabilitation PROMOTES ACCESS TO GOOD JOBS FOR ALL, recognizes National Disability Employment Awareness Month *ANNOUNCES NEW YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE*

SACRAMENTO — The California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), administrator of the largest vocational rehabilitation and independent living programs in the country, recognizes 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. In support of NDEAM, Governor Newsom issued a proclamation declaring October 2024 as [**Disability Employment Awareness Month in California**](https://www.gov.ca.gov/2024/10/03/governor-newsom-proclaims-disability-employment-awareness-month-2024/).   
  
Spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Labor, this year’s NDEAM theme is “Access to Good Jobs for All,” which spotlights the Newsom Administration’s commitment to ensuring that all individuals, regardless of ability, have access to competitive employment opportunities in settings.

“Work opportunities for all are priorities for both the state as an employer and to California as an economic engine for the nation and world. These priorities are woven into initiatives and strategies across our Agency,” said **California Health and Human Services Secretary Kim Johnson**. “An inclusive workforce is a strong workforce, and we are committed to ensuring that equitable employment opportunities are available to all people with disabilities and all Californians.”

“The disability community provides a large and diverse pool of talented individuals ready and able to work,” said **DOR Director Joe Xavier**. “There are qualified candidates in the labor market who have the education, background and training but are being overlooked. A company’s commitment to diversity is reflected in its employees. To truly be an inclusive organization, business leaders must employ inclusive hiring practices to recruit and retain qualified candidates with disabilities and provide them opportunities for career advancement and professional growth.”

**EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES**: As part of DOR’s commitment to increasing career opportunities for youth with disabilities, the Department has partnered with the Office of Youth and Community Restoration (OYCR) to launch the Youth Employment Initiative, a three-year, $30 million partnership to support employment opportunities for justice-involved youth with disabilities. 

 “All young people, regardless of ability or circumstance, deserve to go to work,” said **Xavier**. “Employment is a social determinate of health and essential to prevention, intervention, and recovery. DOR is excited to partner with OYCR on this initiative and provide these youth a road to different life options and the chance to experience the sense of belonging and purpose that comes from having a job.”

To learn more about DOR’s NDEAM events and other initiatives, visit the [**DOR website**](https://dor.ca.gov/Home/ylfvideo). The DOR works in partnership with consumers and other stakeholders to provide services and advocacy resulting in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities. Follow us on [**LinkedIn**](https://www.linkedin.com/company/california-department-of-rehabilitation), [**Twitter**,](https://twitter.com/CaliforniaDOR) [**Instagram**](https://www.instagram.com/dorcalifornia/) and [**Facebook**](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaDOR). #NDEAM #AccesstoGoodJobsforAll

**BIGGER PICTURE:** This year, Governor Gavin Newson deepened the state’s commitment to ensuring equitable employment opportunities for all Californians with his Executive Order calling for a [**Master Plan for Career Education**](https://careereducation.gov.ca.gov/master-plan-engage/), which seeks to improve access to high-paying and fulfilling careers for all students and workers, regardless of income or disability. Last week the Governor signed AB 438, so that students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will start planning for their post-secondary goals no later than age 16, and possibly as early as they begin high school– up to two years earlier than current law. One in 8 California students have an IEP and will have greater access to higher education and to work opportunities with planning that begins as early in the high school career as deemed appropriate by the student’s IEP team. In particular, the Administration is committed to strengthening career pathways for students and workers with intellectual and developmental disabilities: the California Cradle to Career Data System recently added data on developmental disabilities; sub-minimum wage is no longer allowed as of January 1, 2025; and a new Office of Inclusive Higher Education was created in the 2024-2025 budget.

DOR is a leader in this statewide initiative to ensure all Californians, including those with disabilities, have equal access to meaningful and lucrative career pathways.

Departments across the Administration are participating in NDEAM this year, including a public webinar at the California Civil Rights Department on Legal protections for Workers with Disabilities on October 14, state department booths at [**the I AM ABLE Job Fair**](https://www.prideindustries.com/i-am-able-disability-job-fair-employer?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Find%20Reliable%20Employees%20at%20Our%202nd%20Annual%20I%20AM%20ABLE%20Disability%20Job%20Fair&utm_campaign=2024%20Job%20Fair%20-%20Exhibitor%20and%20Sponsor%20Email%20%231b)in Sacramento on October 9 and a [**public NDEAM webinar**](https://dor-ca-gov.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zVLjP0nhQ3mvz1GaZ78YQg#/registration) on Thursday, October 31 from 10 to 11 a.m., hosted by DOR in partnership with the California Natural Resources Agency. DOR has also launched its, [**I Work because DOR Works social media campaign**](https://dor.ca.gov/Home/I_Work_2024), that highlights Californians with disabilities who have found equitable employment opportunities through DOR services. Also, throughout the month, the Department of Developmental Services is sharing stories of workers with intellectual and developmental disabilities at inclusive workplaces.