



# It's National Disability Employment Awareness Month!

By Steven Nguyen

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month! Declared in 1988 by the United States Congress, this month hopes to raise awareness of the employment needs and contributions by individuals with disabilities in the workforce. According to the United States Department of Labor's most recent statistics, only 1/3 (32%) of people with disabilities, who are of working age, are competitively employed. This compared to over 72% of their non-disabled peers. Why such the huge discrepancy? One may never truly know and understand, but we all should agree that this is unacceptable and we need to work collectively to come up with a solution!

Individuals with disabilities are employable and eager to find work. Employment has many benefits, outside of earning a paycheck, for someone with a disability. Among other things employment boosts one's self-confidence, builds community relationships, and promotes diversity and awareness for everyone.

Understanding the unique needs of the individual and tailoring to the person's strengths can go a long way.

After all, we, as individuals with disabilities, have something unique to bring to the table. There are many organizations and agencies out there working hard to improve the outcome and likely-hood that individuals are gainfully employed! If you're reading this, I hope you take initiative and do your part in improving the lives of individuals with

disabilities, through nurturing and opportunity, so that they can be the best that they can be!

**Below you will find some helpful links:**

[National Disability Employment Awareness Month Website \(Department of Labor\)](#)

[U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy](#)

[Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#)

[Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)

[Louisiana Rehabilitation Services](#)  
(A Program under the Louisiana Workforce Commission)



**Changing Lives. Every Day.**