



GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

GCD Newsletter

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[Governor's Council on Disability](#)

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OCTOBER IS NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH (NDEAM)

by Claudia Browner

Each year in October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is celebrated nationwide to bring awareness to the importance of employment inclusion and recognize the contributions of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

The theme for 2024, 'Access to Good Jobs for All,' speaks to the commitment to expand the number and quality of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Good jobs change lives and all workers including workers with disabilities deserve the opportunity to prepare for success in high-quality, good-paying jobs in workplaces free of discrimination.



What is NDEAM all about? Watch this video to learn more about the history and purpose of NDEAM and how you can participate

[Watch the NDEAM video](#)

This issue of the GCD Newsletter highlights the Governor's Council on Disability's (GCD) initiatives and outreach efforts to raise awareness about the importance of employment inclusion and improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities in Missouri. People with disabilities not only deserve equal opportunities in the application and hiring process, but also equal access to career paths and advancements during employment.

The Governor's Council on Disability supports these efforts through collaboration with state agencies on the [Model Employer initiative](#), raising awareness about the importance of inclusive and accessible workplaces through educational presentations and outreach, providing resources and information on the [NDEAM website](#), hosting an annual [GCD Poster Contest](#) to raise awareness about employment inclusion, and collaborating with the Office of Equal Opportunity to host the State of Missouri's first statewide [NDEAM celebration](#) in Jefferson City.

Please join the GCD in celebrating and recognizing NDEAM by participating in the NDEAM event and posting the 2024 GCD NDEAM poster at your workplace.

GCD ANNOUNCES THE 2024 NDEAM POSTER CONTEST WINNER

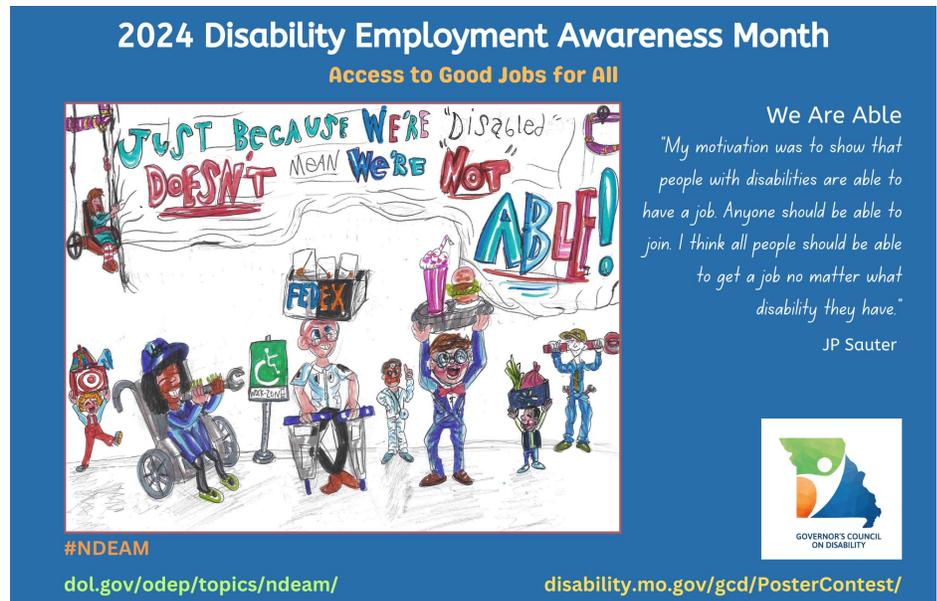
by Reece Ellis

October marks National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), a time to celebrate the contributions of workers with disabilities and promote the value of inclusive employment practices.

In Missouri, the Governor's Council on Disability commemorates this month with a poster contest, inviting artists from across the state to create designs that highlight employment inclusion. This year's winner is JP Sauter, an 11th grader from Benton High School, whose colorful and imaginative artwork will be featured statewide.

JP's inspiration for his design came from a place of pure creativity. "I just wanted to make it really colorful," he shared when describing his poster. "My imagination is what gave me the idea." JP first learned about the contest when his teacher introduced it as a fun class assignment.

What started as an in-class project quickly turned into a proud moment when JP was announced as the winner. "I felt super glad! I absolutely love doing art," he said. His enthusiasm for art is something that has been with him from a young age, starting with simple drawings on a doodle pad. Over the years, his doodles evolved into more detailed sketches, and today, art is something he enjoys doing "pretty much anywhere and everywhere." "I just ask for a pen," he said, emphasizing how often he finds himself drawing. His love for creating isn't limited to one style. "Sometimes I like to draw anime characters, but don't mistake me for some kind of weeb!" he joked.



We Are Able
"My motivation was to show that people with disabilities are able to have a job. Anyone should be able to join. I think all people should be able to get a job no matter what disability they have."

JP Sauter



JP's artistic interests are diverse—he enjoys drawing everything from video game characters like Super Mario to garden gnomes and random creatures. He also offered advice to other students who might want to try their hand at the contest or just explore their creative side: "Practice. Practice every day."

Outside of drawing, JP enjoys making memes and other funny creations online, but it's clear that art remains his primary passion. His teacher's encouragement to submit a poster has given him a platform to share his talent with the entire state. This October, JP's artwork will be displayed as part of NDEAM, spreading awareness about the significance of employment inclusion for people with disabilities. The Governor's Council on Disability is proud to showcase his talent, creativity, and message of inclusion. Congratulations to JP on this well-deserved achievement!

To learn more about the GCD NDEAM Poster contest, visit <https://disability.mo.gov/gcd/PosterContest>

STATE OF MISSOURI HOSTS NDEAM CELEBRATION

by Kim Hicks, Office of Equal Opportunity



You are invited to join the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) and Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) at the National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) celebration on Monday, October 21, in the Harry S Truman Building, in Rooms 490 and 492 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM. We are excited to showcase exhibits from esteemed organizations such as the Special Olympics, Missouri Assistive Technology, Rehabilitation Services for The Blind, and the Missouri Department of Mental Health, to name a few. Our event will feature speakers and exhibitors from the Governor's Council on Disability, Missouri Department of Mental Health-Model Employer Workgroup, Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Missouri Mental Health Foundation, Developmental Disabilities Council, MoABLE, and the Office of Equal Opportunity. Rehabilitation Services for The Blind will offer free vision screenings, and sign language interpretation will be available during the event to ensure everyone in attendance can fully participate in the celebration.

Stay for an insightful keynote message from Lydia Olmstead. Lydia is the 2023 Youth Leadership Award winner and a past recipient of the Senator Chuck Graham Memorial Disability and Advocacy Ambassador Award.

Learn more at <https://oio.mo.gov/2024-national-disability-employment-awareness-month-ndeam-celebration/>

STARKLOFF HOSTS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT SUMMIT

by Claudia Browner

Thought leaders, industry experts, and change-makers gathered at Starkloff Disability Institute's 10th annual Disability Employment Summit on September 26 in St. Louis to share actionable strategies for promoting disability inclusion in the workplace and empower employers with the knowledge and tools to remove barriers and create inclusive environments where employees with disabilities are valued and have the opportunity to thrive.



Rebecca Cokley, US Disability Rights Program Office, FORD Foundation

Nationally renowned keynote speakers Rebecca Cokley and Vincenzo Piscopo delivered powerful and insightful messages about building workplace cultures that are ready to welcome the disability community. Breakout sessions facilitated discussions on best practices in Universal Design, Accommodations, and Self-ID Campaigns.

Networking opportunities for conference attendees lead to discussions on employment inclusion encompassing more than getting people with disabilities jobs, but also creating inclusive, accessible workplaces where the individuals have equal access and opportunities for advancement and retention.

The goal is to build work environments where team members feel valued and have a sense of belonging. This most often happens in organizations that clearly communicate their values surrounding workforce diversity and have leaders who openly support disability inclusion efforts.

More information about the Disability Employment Summit is available at <https://starkloff.org/disability-employment-summit/>



Emily Hartley, MO DD Council and Claudia Browner, GCD/OEO

STATE OF MISSOURI HOSTS REVERSE HIRING EVENT

by Claudia Browner

The State of Missouri is hosting a Reverse Hiring Event on October 29, 2024 from 9 a.m. to noon at the Special Olympics Missouri facility in Jefferson City. Job seekers with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in this event by contacting HiringEvents@oa.mo.gov to register.

Different from typical job fairs where job seekers visit with various employers, the reverse hiring event allows job seekers to provide displays, presentations, and resumes to showcase their skills, talents and career interests. The individuals have the opportunity to connect with State of Missouri recruiters looking to hire team members for a variety of state jobs in the different state departments.

If you are interested in participating or have questions about the event, please contact the Office of Administration's Recruitment Specialist Suzanne "Suzi" Stefaniak by email at Suzanne.stefaniak@oa.mo.gov or phone (573) 522-3688.

#hireMOTALent

Join the State of Missouri for a

REVERSE HIRING EVENT

This type of event provides a relaxed opportunity for employers to meet people with various educational needs and/or disabilities who are looking for employment.

Job seekers will create displays and presentations that showcase their talents in addition to providing resumes. State of Missouri recruiters can then circulate among the job seeker booths and connect with those whose skills and abilities meet their needs.

To register for your booth or if you have any questions, contact HiringEvents@oa.mo.gov

Please note that space is limited to 60 spots.

October 29, 2024
9 a.m. to Noon

Special Olympics Missouri
305 Special Olympics Drive
Jefferson City, MO 65101

MOCareers
We Serve Missouri
#hireMOTALent

2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES POLL NOW OPEN

by Laura Mueth

The legislative poll addresses various topics including housing, transportation, education, healthcare and employment. In keeping with our newsletter theme of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), we want to highlight that you can provide feedback on the topic of employment by completing the poll!

NOW OPEN

We look forward to receiving your feedback!

You are invited to participate in the Governor's Council on Disability's **Legislative Priorities Poll**

disability.mo.gov/gcd/legislative_priorities_poll.htm

GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITY

Do you have thoughts on employment of people with disabilities that you would like to share with state legislators, state elected officials, and our agency? One way to do that is through the 2024 Legislative Priorities Poll.

All available formats can be found on the [Annual Legislative Priorities Poll](#) web page. Our staff is available to assist anyone who has difficulty understanding the questions or completing the poll independently. To receive assistance, call 800-877-8249.

Please return all polls by **Friday, November 1, 2024 at 5:00 PM.**

Alternate format versions can be returned to our office via fax to 573-526-4109, email to gcd@oa.mo.gov, or mail: Governor's Council on Disability, 301 West High Street, Room 620, PO Box 1668, Jefferson City, MO 65102-1668.

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Council Members

- Ronald Hack, Council Chair, St. Louis
- Steve Ahrens, Jefferson City
- Charles Comstock, Kirksville
- Stacey Elster, Wildwood
- Wayne Crawford, Marshall
- Betty Davidson, Ph.D., St. Louis
- Chip Hailey, Joplin
- Rosemary Hendon, West Plains
- Katie Jones, St. Charles
- Kim Lackey, St. Louis
- Elijah Mayfield, Jefferson City
- Susan Orton, Creve Coeur
- Andrew Sartorius, Jefferson City
- Jason Schott, Ste. Genevieve
- Lesia Shelton, Buffalo
- Robert Wallace, St. Louis

Missouri Governor's Council on Disability— Staff Members

- Claudia Browner, Executive Director
- Reece Ellis, Senior Program Specialist
- Laura Mueth, Senior Program Specialist
- Jennifer Pettit, Administrative Support Professional

MISSOURI RANKS #1 IN APPRENTICESHIPS

by Claudia Browner



The State of Missouri is currently ranked first in the nation for providing registered apprenticeships for individuals with disabilities!

Registered apprenticeships provide a proved workforce solution that promotes diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Apprenticeships combine on the job learning and instruction with related educational instruction.

To learn more about Missouri's apprenticeship programs, please visit the Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development's [Apprenticeship Missouri](https://www.dhewd.mo.gov/apprenticeship) web page or send an email to apprenticeship@dhewd.mo.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

Check out these upcoming disability-related conferences and events! Click on the links to learn more or register.

- **October 9—11, 2024**
[MACDDS Annual Conference, Columbia](#)
- **October 21, 2024**
[National Disability Employment Awareness Month \(NDEAM\) Celebration](#)

If you know of other events you would like us to share with the disability community, please contact our office.