

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**WASHINGTON** – The U.S. Department of Labor today announced “Expectation + Opportunity = Full Participation” as the official theme for October’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month. It is intended to urge employers, as they seek to fill positions, to embrace the richness of America’s diversity by considering the talents of all workers, including workers with disabilities.

This year’s theme emphasizes the vision of the Labor Department’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP): a world in which people with disabilities have unlimited employment opportunities. Early selection of an annual theme for upcoming National Disability Employment Awareness Month helps the private sector; federal, state and local governments; and advocacy organizations plan events and programs that showcase the abilities and skills of job seekers and working Americans who have disabilities.

ODEP is the nation’s first assistant secretary-led office that addresses policies that impact upon the employment of people with disabilities. The office provides national leadership on disability employment policy by developing and influencing the use of evidence-based disability employment policies and practices, building collaborative partnerships, and delivering authoritative and credible data on the employment of people with disabilities.

As background for National Disability Employment Awareness Month, Public Law 176, enacted by Congress in 1945, designated the first week in October as “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” President Harry S. Truman designated the (now former) President’s Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities to carry out the law. Congress changed the name to “National Disability Employment Awareness Month” in 1988. The responsibility for leading the nationwide recognition was transferred to the newly created ODEP in 2001.