



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

October 4, 2021

Memorandum

To: All DOI Employees

From: Jennifer Ackerman
Director, Office of Human Capital

Alesia Pierre-Louis
Acting Director, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights

Subject: Invitation to the Voluntary Self Identification of Disability

This October, we celebrate the 76th observance of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) and the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Both milestones are being commemorated and centered on the theme “America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion.”

NDEAM celebrates America’s workers with disabilities and reminds employers of the importance of inclusive hiring practices in the workplace. This recognition started in 1945 when Congress declared the first week of October “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” In 1962, the title changed by dropping the word “physically” to include individuals with all types of disabilities. The week was expanded to a month in 1988, and Congress changed the commemoration to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

DOI encourages all Bureaus and Offices to work towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce through the employment, development, and advancement of people with disabilities.

Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 indicates Federal employees may voluntarily self-identify their disability every five years. DOI is required to collect and maintain accurate data for all employees on their respective disability status in order to provide better services and fulfill the Rehabilitation Act requirements. The disability data collected is used only in the production of regulatory and compliance reports that track the hiring, retention, and advancement of persons with disabilities. Every precaution is taken to ensure that the information provided by each employee is safeguarded and kept confidential.

Participation in the disability reporting system is entirely voluntary. Employees may update their disability information using the Federal government’s [Employee Express](#) website. In the Employee Express website, select “Disability Update” to change/correct your disability status using [U.S. Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) Standard Form-256](#).

Thank you in advance for your participation and support to make DOI a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplace for all employees.