

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, October 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the annual National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), which focuses on education around disability employment issues, the importance of inclusive policies and practices, and celebrates the many and varied ways America's workers with disabilities participate in the workforce; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, NDEAM began as a week, recognizing solely people with physical disabilities, however, in 1988, Congress designated a full month for disability employment awareness each year and expanded its scope to include people with all kinds of disabilities; and

WHEREAS, as an Employment First state, Pennsylvania considers Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE) to be the first consideration and preferred outcome of publicly funded education, training, and employment related services, and Act 36 of 2018 created the Governor's Cabinet for People with Disabilities and the Employment First Oversight Commission to ensure implementation of this policy; and

WHEREAS, nearly 76,500 Pennsylvanians with a disability currently receive services through the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and earn about \$19 per hour, and with First Lady Lori Shapiro's leadership guidance and support, employers like Sheetz and Wawa are partnering with OVR to expand access to good-paying jobs for people with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, in 2024, the Commonwealth secured \$354.8 million in federal and state funding to provide more resources for home and community-based service providers, including \$280 million to help raise wages for direct support professionals (DSP) who care for Pennsylvanians and \$74.8 million to begin the process of clearing the emergency waiting list for these vital services; and

WHEREAS, for the first time ever, after this historic commitment, more than 40,000 Pennsylvanians with ID/A are getting the services they need and the adult emergency wait list for services is down 28 percent over the last year; DSP wages are up six percent at \$17.85 per hour; and DSP vacancies are down 14 percent—the lowest since 2015; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme of "Celebrating Value and Talent" underpins the skills and contributions that people with disabilities bring to the workplace and upholds the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's steadfast commitment to working alongside advocates, providers, and community partners to strengthen the care workforce, make sure every Pennsylvanian can live with dignity, independence, and respect, and increase access to high-quality, good-paying jobs for all Pennsylvanians, including Pennsylvanians with disabilities, every month of the year.

THEREFORE, I, Josh Shapiro, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim October 2025 to be

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

I encourage all Pennsylvanians to recognize that workplaces that include and embrace all people, including people with disabilities, are key to creating an equitable community and society as well as a robust and vibrant economy.



GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, on this third day of September two thousand twenty-five, the year of the Commonwealth the two hundred fiftieth.

Governor Josh Shapiro

First Lady Lori Shapiro