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## **Goodwill of Greater Washington Joins Broad Effort to Observe National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Washington, D.C. – Every year, during the month of October, Goodwill of Greater Washington joins hundreds of organizations across the United States in recognizing National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). This campaign is an opportunity to educate our nation’s workforce, facilitate discussion about disability employment issues, and celebrate the countless contributions of America’s workers with disabilities. The theme for 2022 is, **“Disability: Part of the Equity Equation.”**

The history of National Disability Employment Awareness Month traces back to 1945, when Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October each year "National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week." In 1962, the word "physically" was removed to acknowledge the employment needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the week to a month and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that [just over 22.5% of Americans with disabilities participate in the labor force](#). That compares with more than 67% of people in the general population who are working.

A key focus of Goodwill’s mission of transforming lives and communities through the power of education and employment is to provide individuals with disabilities in the Washington, D.C. area the opportunity to obtain sustainable employment. Almost 80 percent of all labor hours at Goodwill’s 9 government contract sites are performed by individuals with disabilities via the AbilityOne Program.

“We are proud to be a part of this year’s National Disability Employment Awareness Month,” said Goodwill of Greater Washington CEO, Catherine Meloy. “As we celebrate National Disability

Employment Awareness Month this October, Goodwill calls on employers to consider hiring people with disabilities and to adopt inclusive policies and practices in the workplace.”

Employers and employees in all industries can learn more about how to participate in National Disability Employment Awareness Month and ways they can promote its message – during October and throughout the year – by visiting [www.dol.gov/ndeam](http://www.dol.gov/ndeam).

To learn more about Goodwill’s contracts division and the AbilityOne Program please visit <https://www.dcgoodwill.org/employment/contract-services/>.

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**About Goodwill of Greater Washington:** Goodwill of Greater Washington has been transforming lives and communities through the power of education and employment since 1935.