

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is NDEAM?

Answer: Held each October, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is a national campaign spearheaded by US Department of Labor's (DOL's) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). NDEAM raises awareness about disability employment issues, and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities and the businesses who hire and value a diverse workforce.

2. What is the history of NDEAM?

Answer: NDEAM's roots go 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." Upon the agency's establishment in 2001, ODEP assumed responsibility for NDEAM and has worked to expand its reach and scope ever since.

Although led by ODEP, NDEAM's true spirit lies in the many creative observances held at the *grassroots* level across the nation every year. Employers, schools and organizations of all sizes and in all communities are encouraged to participate in NDEAM, and ODEP offers a variety of resources to help them do so. Activities range from simple, such as putting up a NDEAM poster, to comprehensive, such as implementing a disability education program. Regardless, all play an important part in fostering a more inclusive America, one where every person is rightly recognized for his or her abilities — every day of every month.

3. Where are NDEAM events held?

Answer: NDEAM events are held every October throughout New York State. Please check our NDEAM event links for an event near you.

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/ndeam>

4. Who is recognized at NDEAM events?

Answer: Each year New York State recognizes Businesses which demonstrate their commitment and understanding that all individuals deserve an opportunity to participate and be included in their communities, starting with the opportunity to earn a living wage and be employed.

5. Are there different levels of NDEAM recognition?

Answer: Yes. New York State has several levels of recognition. Your first consideration when thinking about potential nominees should be based on business size, from large not for profit/profit organizations and government entities to micro-businesses (profit and not for profit).

Categories:

Businesses of 500 or more employees
Businesses of 499 to 100 employees
Businesses of 99 to 25 employees
Businesses of 24 or fewer employees and;
Entrepreneur Business Owners with Disabilities.

There are also:

Local Recognition Awards at the District Office level.
Regional Awards (representing all five regions in NYS) and
Statewide Awards in each of the above categories

6. How do I nominate a Business for a NDEAM award?

Answer: Each nominating entity needs to fill out a NDEAM nomination application in a timely fashion. You should fill out the required information on the business/government entity, and provide a narrative as to WHY they should be recognized. This narrative should be clear and concise. There is a rubric that provides an example of how a WINNING narrative should read and what information should be covered. This allows local, regional and statewide review committees to evaluate and select the BEST nominees.

7. Where do I find the NDEAM nomination form?

Answer: The NDEAM nomination form can be found on our website at:

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/ndeam>

or you can contact your local ACCES-VR office:

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/business-relations-team>

8. Is there a difference between the Local, Regional and Statewide Awards?

Answer: Yes

The LOCAL AWARD...requires a completed NDEAM application, including the Business's *Federal Employer Identification Number*** (FEIN), questionnaire and the narrative. Local Awards are not signed by any government official.

The REGIONAL AWARD...requires a completed NDEAM application, including the **FEIN #, questionnaire and the narrative. The Business's **FEIN # will be provided to New York State

Department of Labor for *vetting of the business*** (see FAQ 10) before winners can be identified. This Regional award is usually signed by a County Executive, the ACCES-VR District Office Manager and/or other governmental officials.

The STATEWIDE AWARD... requires a completed NDEAM application, including the **FEIN #, questionnaire and the narrative. The Business's** FEIN # will be provided to New York State Department of Labor for *vetting of the business*** (see FAQ 10) before winners can be identified. The nomination is moved to New York State Department of Labor for *vetting*** (see FAQ 10) before Statewide winners can be identified. Statewide awards are signed by the Governor and Chancellor of the Board of Regents

9. What is a *Federal Employer Identification*** (FEIN) number and why is it required?

Answer: The FEIN is also known as a Federal Tax Number. This **9 digit code** is used by Businesses in order to classify and identify business as a tax payer, for banking services and other official and legal purposes. Businesses with no employees and sole proprietorship may use their Social Security Number for tax reporting. However, Businesses with employees MUST have a FEIN. The FEIN is unique to a business, just like a Social Security number is unique to an individual. *It is critical to have the correct number FEIN number.*

10. Why is the FEIN required for NDEAM?

Answer: Each FEIN number is unique identifier and NYSDOL uses it to track Due Diligence requirements of NYS Business for such things as payment and required employment standards such as:

- Unemployment Insurance
- Workers Compensation Insurance
- Disability Insurance
- Labor Standards
- Department of Safety & Health
- Department of State
- Public Works
- Federal OSHA
- Worker Adjustment & Retraining Notification Act (WARN)

11. What does VETTING mean and who does it?

Answer: The NYS Department of Labor's (NYSDOL) Due Diligence Unit is responsible for *vetting* any business under consideration for a statewide or regional NDEAM recognition award. As it relates to NDEAM, *vetting* is the process of examination and evaluation (generally referring to performing a background check) in order to ascertain if a business has a clear record and the integrity to justify NDEAM recognition.

The list above (see FAQ 10) is based on official NYSDOL regulatory requirements for all entities doing business in New York State. Businesses found during the vetting process to have outstanding issues relating to any of the above categories will be flagged for further review by NYSDOL. If the review “flags” an issue or concern, the Business will be requested to call NYSDOL to work with them to clear up the issue. All issues must be cleared before a Regional or Statewide Award can be issued.

It should be noted this process is started in July of each year ...allowing time for any resolution with NYSDOL for the October awards.

12. When should I inform the Business that their nomination will trigger vetting by NYSDOL?

Answer: When you collect the information for the NDEAM nomination, inform the business that if they are considered for REGIONAL or the STATEWIDE recognition, their FEIN will be provided to NYSDOL as explained in FAQ 10 & 11.

13. What should the Business expect to happen during the vetting process for the Regional or Statewide awards?

Answer: Usually nothing. However, if NYSDOL finds an issue in any of the vetting categories mentioned above (in FAQ 10) they will receive a phone call requesting them to call NYSDOL directly and work NYSDOL Due Diligence staff to clear up any issues. Usually, these issues can be straightened out quickly. In most cases we have found (historically) the issue comes up due to an incorrect 9 digit FEIN number being submitted.

14. If I am nominating an Entrepreneur Business owner with a disability and they have NO employees, and they indicate they do not have an FEIN number...what needs to be submitted?

Answer: Please submit the NDEAM application and where the application requests the FEIN number; please provide the Entrepreneur’s **Social Security** number instead. NYSDOL will use the Social Security number to perform the Due Diligence review.

15. If I have other questions and need to talk to someone. Who should I contact about my potential nomination(s) and my local NDEAM event?

Answer: Please click on the link below for WHO TO CONTACT:

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/business-relations-team>