



PROTECTION & ADVOCACY PROJECT
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**ND Protection & Advocacy Project Recognizes
National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

(Bismarck, ND) Every October since 1945 America has observed National Disability Employment Awareness Month. As this month comes to an end, the North Dakota Protection and Advocacy Project (P&A) would like to recognize the valuable skills and talents that people with disabilities bring to the workplace. People with disabilities make up the largest minority population in the United States at approximately 25% and remains one of the largest untapped labor pools.

Employment is an integral part of inclusion in our communities. Competitive, integrated employment – working in the community, alongside people with and without disabilities, at competitive wages – offers a direct pathway to greater independence and self-sufficiency for people with disabilities. Employers can also benefit by having a larger and more diverse talent pool when hiring. When people with disabilities are given the opportunity to work everyone benefits.

This year, Protection and Advocacy collaborated with various entities to release an [explainer video on competitive integrated employment](#). The purpose of the video is to help people with disabilities understand their options and rights in the workplace. P&A has additional materials available for people with disabilities and employers on its [website](#). Veronica Zietz, P&A Executive Director shares, “Everyone has value and there are many supports available to people with disabilities to ensure positive employment outcomes.”

The North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project is a federally mandated, independent state agency established in 1977 to advance the human and legal rights of people with disabilities. P&A’s mission is to champion the equality and inclusion of people with disabilities where we live, work and play. P&A fulfills its mission by providing services to individuals with disabilities and their support networks; these services include information and referral, assistance with self-advocacy, education and training, advocacy services, legal representation, protective services, and systems and legislative advocacy.

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