



## Disability Employment Awareness Month 2024

October 1, 2024 to October 31, 2024

Taking place each October, Disability Employment Awareness Month, or DEAM, is a campaign that promotes inclusion within the job market for people with disabilities. The idea is to raise awareness of the challenges they face in gaining employment, and celebrating the impact and contribution made by workers with disabilities who have been given a chance.

From engaging online events to insightful webinars, we ask the community to raise awareness about the importance of creating an inclusive and accessible work environment for everyone.



The ripple effect of DEAM resonates throughout the country, inspiring employers and communities to join in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Through ongoing advocacy, collaboration with stakeholders, and innovative programs, DEAM strives to create a workforce that embraces the unique talents and capabilities of every individual, ensuring a more equitable and prosperous future for all.

The Objectives of DEAM are to:

- Increase understanding of disability as a type of diversity that builds workplace inclusion competencies
- Increase awareness of this unique talent pool
- Increase awareness of Alberta's employment Service Providers and their role in talent sourcing
- Connect Employers, Service Providers and Community
- Create new 'Workplace Inclusion Partnerships' between Employers and Service Providers
- Increase awareness of Alberta Government initiatives supporting inclusive employment

## 10 Ways to Celebrate Disability

**Adapted from the article by Heather Karellas**

Celebrating Disability Awareness Month in March, Disability Pride Month in July, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month in October is a powerful way to foster a more inclusive workplace. By embracing and planning ahead for celebrations, your company can create a supportive environment that values diversity, encourages equal opportunities, and enhances overall morale and productivity.

Emphasizing the importance of inclusivity and support for individuals with disabilities not only enriches the company culture but can also drive innovation and success. A few of our favorite ideas:

- Learn about the history of activism for accessibility and equity
- Invite guest speakers or organize a panel session
- Partner with organization or nonprofits that serve people with disabilities
- Start an employee resource group (ERG) for employees with disabilities
- Explore podcasts, books, and movies highlighting different disabilities and related topics

### 1. Organizing Disability Awareness Events

- Hosting a guest speaker
- Organizing a panel discussion with a Q&A session
- Planning an educational film screening
- Integrating a disability simulation for better understanding
- Remember to pay your guest speakers and provide honorariums for panel participation, etc. In honoring and celebrating people with disabilities, it is important to not use these activities as a means by which to extract free labor and knowledge.

### 2. Implementing Accessibility Initiatives

- Installing ramps
- Constructing accessible restrooms
- Utilizing assistive technologies
- Accessible website design (pro tip: widgets like UserWay can help automate this!)
- Offering adjustable workstations that can be customized for differing physical needs
- Ensuring all company videos include captions
- Hiring ASL (American Sign Language) interpreters for keynote speeches, events, etc.
- Installing Braille signage
- Visit [ada.gov](http://ada.gov) to learn more about workplace accessibility laws, regulations, and standards as well as



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explore a variety of resource materials.

### 3. Planning Inclusive Activities

Social events, team-building activities, and workshops that promote inclusivity and celebrate the diverse talents and contributions of individuals with disabilities. For instance, the Disability Pride event from Unexpected Virtual Tours & Training blends learning and fun for an hour-long interactive, virtual team experience.

### 4. Highlighting Success Stories and Role Models

Celebrate the resilience, strength, and tenacity of the disability community by sharing inspiring stories of individuals who have overcome challenges and made significant contributions in their fields. You can host film screenings, organize a book club, share a Ted Talk, or invite a guest speaker. Remember that when celebrating success stories, it's important not to minimize real challenges and barriers that people with disabilities often face. No amount of "positive attitude" will turn stairs into a ramp; structural change is needed alongside inspirational stories and successes.

### 5. Providing Educational Resources

Offer educational resources such as books, articles, podcasts, and movies that promote greater awareness and understanding of people with disabilities. Encourage employees to engage with these resources and share their insights with their colleagues. Start an impromptu book club at work and read books like *Demystifying Disability* by Emily Ladau, *Disability Visibility* by Alice Wong, or another book by a disabled author. Additionally, explore this list of 8 Disability Podcasts That Are Well Worth a Listen from Forbes.

### 6. Partnering with Disability Organizations

Collaborate with local or national organizations that serve disabled people to provide support, resources, and guidance for employees with disabilities. These activities can also benefit the organization that you work with, creating a win-win for everyone. Activities can include inviting representatives from these organizations to speak at events or provide training sessions and workshops. You can also partner with nonprofits that provide resources for – and/or advocate for – the disabled community. Consider sponsoring an event, organizing a volunteer project, or amplifying the nonprofit's message and mission. Moreover, keep the partnerships going year-round! If your team enjoys the project, consider planning a quarterly volunteer day, or make a monthly contribution.

### 7. Celebrating Different Types of Disabilities

There are many types of disabilities – from physical disabilities to sensory disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and mental health conditions. Remember, many disabilities are "invisible." In other words, you may not be able to tell that someone is disabled simply by looking at them, or even interacting with them. Honor and celebrate each team member's differences by offering flexible work arrangements, accessible facilities, inclusive communication (including text, audio, and visual aids), training programs, "quiet zones" in the office, and open dialogue.

### 8. Promoting Disability Etiquette and Language

Often, people have good intentions – but they may not be aware that something they are saying or doing is offensive or outdated. To facilitate ongoing learning, offer your team guidance on etiquette and inclusive language. You can also book a fun and educational program that blends learning with team camaraderie.



### 9. Encouraging Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Forming Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) focused on awareness and support for employees with disabilities is another one of our favorite disability ideas. It's also

a great year-round idea! These groups can provide a safe, interactive, welcoming platform for employees with disabilities and allies to connect, share experiences, and advocate for inclusive practices within the organization. Furthermore, an ERG can help employees unwind with social activities after the workday and build strong interpersonal relationships at work. In turn, this can help improve cross-departmental collaboration, problem-solving, communication, and trust in the office.

### 10. Celebrate Diversity Months All Year Long!

Go beyond monthly celebrations to embrace advocacy and equity all year long! Additional ideas to explore throughout the year include:

- Examining hiring practices to ensure an inclusive process for disabled applicants
- Host ongoing volunteer opportunities and/or philanthropic initiatives to support the disabled community
- Plan monthly or quarterly awareness events or training sessions
- Create a mentorship program for employees with disabilities



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**Full Participation - Accessibility - Equity**



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- Regularly update digital materials and physical spaces with accessibility in mind

<https://unexpectedvirtualtours.com/resources/disability-month-ideas/>

## Alberta Helping Animals Society

Phone: 587-338-8668

Email: [AlbertaHelpingAnimalsSociety@gmail.com](mailto:AlbertaHelpingAnimalsSociety@gmail.com)

AHAS Home Veterinary Services provides basic veterinary care to people living with a very low income in Edmonton.

Low Income Cut-Off for 2024 is:



ALBERTA HELPING ANIMALS SOCIETY

- One person in household \$28,339
- Two family members in household \$35,252
- Three family members in household \$43,373
- Four family members in household \$52,662

To qualify, you will need to submit a 2023 Notice of Assessment for every adult family member living in your household.

If you are on a government assistance program such as AISH, Social Assistance, Income Support, Alberta Works, etc., we will also require a photo of your most recent deposit notice.

Please complete the form Request Our Services Form available on the website. Please note that we are quite busy right now and it may take several weeks to get back to you. Please do NOT email, call, message us to see if we have received your form because it slows our volunteers down. We also cannot handle emergencies except under very limited circumstances.

## How to get an accessibility discount on your mobile phone plan - Rogers

If you have an accessibility need or a disability, you may be eligible for a discount on your mobile plan.

This discount is available for most mobile plans,

including 5G mobile and 5G Infinite™ plans, and applies to the qualifying person's mobile line.

Eligible customers get:

- A \$20 monthly discount on their mobile line,
- An extra 20 GB of data per month (voice and data plans only), and
- Voicemail-to-text feature.

Need to set up a plan? Contact Roger's Accessibility Services team to choose one that's right for you.

What you need to apply for the accessibility discount?

To apply for the accessibility discount on your mobile plan, please make sure the account holder or authorized level 1 user has the following information ready:

- Your Rogers account number,
- The eligible person's name,
- The eligible mobile phone number, and
- A copy of their disability-association membership.

The name on the disability-association membership must match the name on the mobile line.

Where to apply

The account holder, or an authorized level 1 user on the account, can use the following methods to apply.

Online form (must be filled out by the primary account holder): *Mobile plan accessibility discount form* - available on the website.

Web: <https://www.rogers.com/accessibility/offers>

Email: [AccessibilityDiscount@cx.rogers.com](mailto:AccessibilityDiscount@cx.rogers.com)

Subject line: Escalations for Accessibility Discount: BT:2313

Mail: Customer Support Investigations Team

70 Assumption Blvd.

Moncton, NB

E1C 1A1

Fax: 1-800-219-6473

## VAD Open House

Thank you to everyone that joined Voice of Albertans with Disabilities for our September 13th Open House. We were very excited to show off our new location and network with our stakeholders, members, volunteers, and general public. VAD appreciates your support of our services and appreciates the referrals you provide to us.



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Here are some photos from the event!



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# MASCOT CONTEST

The EEA needs a new mascot and we want kids,  
under the age of 18 to give us ideas on what it  
will look like!



SUBMIT YOUR IDEAS BY  
OCTOBER 31, 2024!

ALL YOUTH UNDER AGE  
OF 18 WELCOME TO  
PARTICIPATE!

Enter to create our next  
Edmonton Epilepsy Association  
mascot!

More information visit our website

[www.edmontonepilepsy.org](http://www.edmontonepilepsy.org)



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**VOICE OF ALBERTANS WITH  
DISABILITIES PRESENTS**

# IDPD COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR



VAD Membership

Supporting  
the disability  
community

SATURDAY  
**NOVEMBER 30**

Stanley Milner Library  
Downstairs Community Rooms 1 & 2  
7 Sir Winston Churchill Square NW  
9 am Set up - 3 pm Teardown

**\$50  
TABLE**  
Networking  
between 10 am  
and 11 am

Join community service providers to educate the disability community in Edmonton about the resources available to them.



Contact Teresa at 780-488-9088 or [teresa@vadsociety.ca](mailto:teresa@vadsociety.ca) for information about exhibiting at the event.

[www.vadsociety.ca](http://www.vadsociety.ca)

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/international-day-of-persons-with-disabilities-community-resource-fair-tickets-1018864339667>

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