

October Reminds Manitoba Employers to be Disability-Friendly



In Manitoba, October is now officially Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM). It is an annual opportunity for employers to review their policies and practices and take steps to ensure that they are doing what they can to ensure that Manitobans with disabilities can be successfully employed in their workplaces.

For Manitobans with disabilities, "Inclusion" is the operant word. They want to be fully included, active, and engaged within their communities. Particularly, like all of us, they want to find jobs that will let them apply their talents and reach for their dreams. Sadly, some companies are still ill-informed and hesitant to consider applicants with disabilities. Others, without even knowing, have ways of doing things which needlessly hinder people with disabilities from being recruited - or from being fully productive on the job.

DEAM is all about changing that. DEAM gives Manitoba employers a once-a-year reminder to make some changes, forge some alliances, or start new initiatives to improve the likelihood that people with disabilities will be a successfully included in their workforces. As part of DEAM, a Career Exploration Week is being planned that will give employers and career-minded folks with disabilities an opportunity to meet face-to-face.

It's not all about employers either! Community agencies, educators, industry associations, organized labour, professional associations, and service organizations all have important roles to play. With 15% of our citizens having a disability of one kind or another, this is everyone's business.

Manitoba's DEAM is being promoted and coordinated by an active group of volunteers that represents employers, community agencies, government programs, and people with disabilities. The DEAM website has a calendar of events being held throughout October, suggestions for how companies and other organizations can get involved, ordering information for free posters, recommended videos, and much more.

Visit the DEAM website to learn more about DEAM and how you can get involved: www.deam-mb.ca.