



State of Illinois
Interagency Committee on Employees with Disabilities

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**State of Illinois Celebrates National Disability
Employment Awareness Month**

*Ceremony highlights efforts to increase opportunity for
employees with disabilities in state government*

CHICAGO – In celebration of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), the State of Illinois today honored the achievements of State employees who have made extraordinary efforts to promote equal opportunity and access to State resources in employment for people with disabilities.

The program, hosted by the Illinois Interagency Committee for Employees with Disabilities (ICED), included a proclamation from Governor Bruce Rauner declaring October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in Illinois. Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti highlighted this year's NDEAM theme of "Inclusion Drives Innovation".

"Illinois is a state of inclusion and diversity, where we believe in rights for all and promoting discrimination-free environments," said Lt. Governor Sanguinetti. "As part of this celebration, companies, industries, and employers of all sizes are encouraged to learn more about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities."

ICED, co-chaired by Illinois Department of Human Rights Acting Director Janice Glenn and IDHS Secretary James Dimas, represents the interests of more than 3,000 employees with disabilities in state government and monitors the work of state agencies to hire, retain, and advance employees with disabilities.

"We know that individuals with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, and adults with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty than those without disabilities," said IDHS Secretary James Dimas. "That is why IDHS and our fellow agencies are working hard to increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities so they can enter into the workforce or advance their careers."

The ceremony honored awardees who have demonstrated leadership in increasing opportunities for employees with disabilities across Illinois. The **ICED Outstanding Employee of the Year Award** recognized John Eckert, Senior Policy Advisor at the Illinois Department on Aging, for his extensive ensuring that individuals with disabilities and the elderly have every opportunity to live independently in their community. The Legal Advocacy Team of the Illinois Guardianship and Advocacy Commission received the **ICED Advocate of the Year Award** for their efforts to litigate and advocate on behalf of those with physical and mental disabilities, leading to numerous of cases settled with the courts.

"Today's awardees have gone above and beyond in creating inclusive communities that recognize the contributions of people with disabilities," said IDHR Acting Director Janice Glenn. "Employers throughout

Illinois should be able to look to State government to set the example for ensuring access, opportunity, and independence throughout the workforce, and we are grateful for the efforts of the leaders being recognized by ICED.”

For additional information on ICED, please visit www.state.il.us/iced.

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