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OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Department of Defense 2015 National Disability Employment Awareness Month

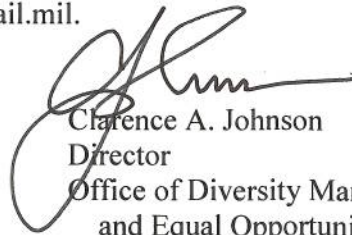
The Department of Defense (DoD) will join the nation in celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), observed during October. During this time, the Department pays tribute to the accomplishments and indispensable contributions of men and women with disabilities, past and present. Their work strengthens our economy, enriches our communities, and reaffirms the nation's commitment to equal opportunity for all.

Congress and the President established NDEAM to advance disability employment and celebrate the diversity of talents, expertise, and passion individuals with disabilities bestow to our nation. Each NDEAM observance carries an important message. This year's theme is "My Disability Is One Part of Who I Am," which reminds us that people with disabilities are just that – people. Like all of us, individuals with disabilities are the sum of many parts. Their disability perspective is only one significant aspect they contribute to the workplace.

The Department continues to be a model employer for recruiting, retaining, and advancing individuals with disabilities. DoD leads all Federal agencies in the hiring of temporary assignments and permanent placements through the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students and Recent Graduates with Disabilities (WRP). WRP is a Federal-wide recruitment and referral program designed to integrate students and recent graduates with disabilities into the Federal workforce. DoD Components continue to increase the utilization of Schedule A non-competitive hiring authority. These hiring actions are recognized as model strategies by the Office of Personnel Management in fulfilling Executive Order 13548, "Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities." DoD remains steadfast in its commitment in reaching and ultimately exceeding the Department's two percent hiring goal of people with targeted disabilities.

The Department will recognize its outstanding civilian employees and service members with disabilities during the 35th Annual DoD Disability Awards Ceremony. The ceremony will be held on Thursday, October 29, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. in the Pentagon Auditorium. Please join in support of our distinguished DoD colleagues with disabilities.

I encourage the DoD Components to renew their commitment to the employment and advancement of Americans with disabilities. Mr. Randy D. Cooper, Director, DoD Disability Programs, is the DoD point of contact for the NDEAM observance. He can be reached at (703) 571-9327 or via email at randy.d.cooper3.civ@mail.mil.



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