

## **October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

*Talent Is Here. Opportunity Must Catch Up.*

**By Kristin Schaub, CEO, Greenleaf Job Training Services**

Every October, we recognize National Disability Employment Awareness Month. The tradition began in 1945 as a weeklong recognition of workers with physical disabilities, and Congress expanded it to a full month in 1988. Today, it honors workers with all types of disabilities, including mental health conditions and disabilities you can't see. This year's theme, "Celebrating Value and Talent," gets right to the heart of it.

At Greenleaf Job Training Services, we see that value and talent every day. For more than 30 years, we have helped people with disabilities and others facing barriers to work find jobs, keep them, and build fulfilling careers. In 2025 alone, we served 744 people, celebrated 93 job placements, and partnered with 119 local businesses.

Still, the national picture shows how much work remains. In 2024, only 22.7% of Americans with a disability were employed. Many who do work are underemployed, stuck in part-time or entry-level roles that don't match their skills, education, or availability. As a result, people with disabilities are twice as likely to live in poverty.

These gaps are not about ability. Rather, they are often about access. A talented candidate can be held back by unreliable transportation, a missing ID, childcare challenges, or an employer who isn't sure how to build an inclusive workplace. Every one of those barriers can be overcome, and Greenleaf is here to help.

One size simply does not fit all, so our staff works one-on-one with participants on career planning, interview preparation, on-the-job training, and long-term coaching. We also help with practical needs, from interview clothing to transportation, that can make the difference between a job offer and a missed opportunity. More than one-third of our own team members identify as having a disability, and their lived experience makes our work stronger.

Employers are essential partners. Hiring people with disabilities isn't charity; it's smart business that widens the talent pool and brings fresh perspectives to the workplace. Greenleaf helps companies recruit and retain great employees and build cultures where everyone can succeed.

This month, I invite you to take one step. If you're an employer, ask whether your organization embraces and supports disabled employees. If you find that it doesn't, reach

out to us at Greenleaf to learn how you can create a more open and inclusive environment. If you're a job seeker facing barriers, know that help is available. Reach out to us for support in landing a fulfilling role. And if you are just someone who believes everyone deserves the chance to contribute, I ask that you share the message far and wide.

Disability Employment Awareness Month lasts 31 days, but the value and talent of workers with disabilities are with us all year. Together, we can build a Central Ohio where every person who wants to work has a real path to a meaningful career.

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*Kristin Schaub is CEO of [Greenleaf Job Training Services](#). Through employment services and ongoing support, Greenleaf Job Training Services helps individuals with disabilities build meaningful careers, achieve greater independence, and contribute their talents to the workforce. The Disability Pride Party celebrates those achievements while raising awareness of the continuing importance of disability inclusion and equal opportunity.*