Equal Employment Opportunity

FY27—Q1-2 OCTOBER 2026

THE POWER OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
"It's about connecting with people"

Why it's important:

Communication in the workplace is important because it boosts employee morale, engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. Communication is also key for better team collaboration and cooperation. Ultimately, effective workplace communication helps drive better results for individuals, teams, and organizations.

To take it a step further, specifically as a manager, building good communication skills has profound short- and long-term benefits for your organization. An effective communicator is able to motivate their team to get more done with better results and fewer misunderstandings. And who doesn't want fewer misunderstandings?

All of these things can contribute to the organizations success — and to your own personal success as a leader.

In order to work effectively together, team members must know they can trust the other members of their team. Communication is a major component of trust and ensures everyone is of the same understanding in terms of the expectations and duties of the team. Clear guidelines that are communicated effectively help team members know how to behave as part of the team and ultimately bring team members closer to each other for a more synchronized work effort.

Effective communication plays an important part in maintaining a healthy workplace culture. Many workplaces employ people of all different cultures, races and beliefs, and conflict will naturally arise when so many differences are present. A culture of open communication fosters a healthy and accepting environment where all employees feel equal and understood.



THE POWER OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
"It's about connecting with people" (cont. from page 1)

To improve communication in the workplace you can:

- ⇒ Set clear goals and expectations
- ⇒ Ask clarifying questions
- ⇒ Praise in public, criticize in private
- ⇒ Assume positive intent
- ⇒ Repeat important messages
- ⇒ Raise your words, not your voice
- ⇒ Hold team meetings

Communication is hard, and



there's always more to learn. And while communication is only one of the keys to success at work, it's a crucial one.



National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM): October 2026
"Celebrating Value and Talent"

NDEAM's history traces back to 1945, when Congress designated a national week to recognize the contributions of Americans with physical disabilities. In 1988, Congress expanded the commemoration to a month and designated it NDEAM to acknowledge the importance of advancing opportunities for Americans with disabilities both apparent and nonapparent. Upon its establishment by Congress in 2001, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) was charged with leading NDEAM, including selection of an annual theme that reflects this spirit and unites observances nationwide.

This year's NDEAM theme will be "Celebrating Value and Talent," carrying the spirit of last year's celebration forward through 2026 in honor of America's 250th birthday. We will recognize the skills and contributions Americans with disabilities add to the nation's workplaces, communities, and economy. This year's observance will play an important role in the department's year-long celebration of the American worker in support of the nationwide and more.

Led by ODEP, NDEAM reaffirms the Department of the Army's commitment to recruit and advance disabled individuals throughout its workforce.

The cornerstone legal precedent governing disability accommodations in the federal workforce was set by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in the landmark case Prewitt v. United States Postal Service, 662 F.2d 292 (5th Cir. 1981). This ruling permanently redefined the obligations of federal agencies under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

George L. Prewitt, Jr., was a disabled veteran of the Vietnam War who sustained severe shrapnel wounds, resulting in partial paralysis and limited mobility in his left shoulder and arm. Despite these physical limitations, Prewitt had successfully worked as a postal clerk and carrier in earlier temporary appointments.

In 1979, Prewitt applied for a career appointment as a clerk-carrier at the Greenville, Mississippi Post Office. During his pre-

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (cont.)

employment medical examination, a regional medical officer disqualified him as medically unsuitable, concluding that his limited shoulder movement prevented him from sorting and handling mail under standard operating procedures. The agency rejected Prewitt without assessing his past successful track record or determining whether adjusting the sorting station would enable him to perform the role.

Prewitt challenged the agency's disqualification, arguing that the Postal Service had violated Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act by failing to consider reasonable accommodation.

Prewitt v. USPS laid the foundation for American's with Disabilities Act (ADA) and showed agencies must conduct individualized assessment and engage in the interactive process, differentiate between the essential functions and incidental operational traditions.

Common Myth	Reality
"Accommodations impose an unsustainable financial cost on agency budgets."	According to data from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), over 56% of workplace accommodations cost $0, and the rest have a typical one-time cost of under $500. Centralized agency accommodation funds ensure branch budgets are never penalized.
"Hiring under Schedule A or accommodating workers lowers performance standards."	Section 501 does not lower performance expectations. Federal employees with disabilities are evaluated on the exact same quality and quantitative metrics as all colleagues; accommodations merely adapt how the essential functions are performed.
"Accommodations violate merit principles and grant an unfair advantage."	As Prewitt proved, an accommodation simply eliminates irrelevant logistical hurdles so that an employee's genuine talent, intellect, and merit can compete and perform on an even plane.



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The primary goal of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program is to manage workforce diversity and to maintain a discrimination-free workplace. This is high on the list of critical functions performed by federal managers and supervisors. Equal Employment is the law of the land. It is the right of all people to be protected from discrimination in employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin and age, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation.

The EEO Office ensures equal employment opportunity for civilians under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.