

Light It Up! For NDEAM

Thursday, October 21, 2021

Welcome to the national Light It Up! For NDEAM™ campaign.

This document will provide you with all the information you need to understand what **Light It Up! For NDEAM** is about, where it came from and how you can get involved.

The Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN) is excited to collaborate with the Canadian Association of Supported Employment (CASE) and MentorAbility Canada this year to take this collective effort national.

After reviewing the information below, if you have any questions, you can contact one of the team at lightitup@odenetwork.com.

We look forward to your participation, and to taking **Light It Up! For NDEAM** national this year.

What is **Light It Up! For NDEAM**?

Light It Up! For NDEAM is a one-night-only, co-ordinated lighting event in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM).

NDEAM has been observed for decades. It's an annual month-long celebration in October that recognizes the many ways people who have a disability contribute to businesses and their communities.

This campaign helps raise business/industry awareness about the disability talent pool and the business case for inclusive hiring. It also helps you grow your relationships with local businesses and raise your profile as an employment service provider.

In 2020 ODEN started **Light It Up! For NDEAM** as part of our annual NDEAM awareness campaign. The event was a "first" for NDEAM in Canada.

The initiative began with ODEN submitting special lighting requests to four landmarks: Niagara Falls, Welland Bridge 13, the CN Tower and Kingston City Hall. They said yes, and **Light It Up! For NDEAM** grew quickly after that. We knew we had something great – and knew we needed to get everyone involved, because collective effort makes an impact.

In total, 16 cities and 28 structures (bridges, buildings, landmarks, interactive municipal signs) across Ontario lit up purple and blue on the evening of October 22. As well, 11 businesses in St. John's, NL, lit up!

Several businesses such as Bluewater Power, RBC and Canada Life, along with employment service providers (ESPs) also participated by lighting up their offices, and wearing purple and blue that day.

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#LightItUpForNDEAM #LightItUpForDEAM #LightItUp1021 #EngageTalent



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Going national in 2021

The **Light It Up! For NDEAM** event is going national this year in collaboration with CASE, for a national lighting event the **night of October 21**.

We can't do it without you!

The goal is to have as many structures/landmarks as possible **Light It Up! For NDEAM**.

Organizations in all provinces and territories that join in **Light It Up! For NDEAM** will be provided with what you need to request special lighting of your local landmarks and promote the event.

Resources for **Light It Up! For NDEAM** have been developed in French and English for any organizations that sign on to be a part of this national event.

Let us know if there are other supports you need, to help you fully engage with this event.

Organizations that participate in **Light It Up! For NDEAM** have permission to use the trademark name in any promotional materials they create themselves as well.

All that's required is this tag line on materials you create:

Light It Up! For NDEAM™ is a trademark of the Ontario Disability Employment Network. Used with permission.

How we will support you

ODEN and CASE will:

- Suggest landmarks you may not have considered, or assist in your request if needed
- Keep track of all locations where lighting requests have been accepted, a location is participating, or the request was denied — and share that information with you often
- Deliver email communication/updates so everyone knows what's happening with lighting requests and how big the campaign is getting

ODEN and CASE will provide participating organizations with:

- Email and press-release templates
- Media coaching if requested
- Promotional flyer (PDF)
- Online template for confirming your lighting requests
- A question-and-answer sheet (FAQs about how to submit lighting requests, and to whom)
- Customizable social media post templates
- Materials for co-branding

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Timelines for *Light It Up! For NDEAM 2021*

July:

- ***Light It Up! For NDEAM* kick-off event on July 21 at 12 Noon ET**
- Sign on to become part of ***Light It Up! For NDEAM 2021***
 - Provide the ***Light It Up! For NDEAM*** team with the contact information for the person at your location
- Resources will be provided in July for you to start using immediately. For municipal structures (buildings, bridges signs) that accept lighting requests you can start applying right away
 - Many towns/cities have their lighting schedules published already
 - * **The sooner you submit your request, the more likely the October 21 date will be available**
 - Timeframes for submitting lighting requests vary widely — more information about this will come in the resource package noted above

July–September:

- Submit lighting requests; engage with businesses about participating in event
- Share updates about participating towns/cities and locations on an ongoing basis
- Provide event hashtags to participating municipalities/businesses so they can promote their involvement on their social media channels, beginning September 15
- If businesses/municipalities don't have physical lighting capability, promote wearing purple and blue as a way of participating
- **Make sure your local politicians know about the event and the ways your community is participating**

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September 28–30:

- CASE Conference — celebration of ***Light It Up! For NDEAM***

September 15–October 12:

- Submit any outstanding structure/landmark lighting requests requiring submission at least four weeks in advance of a special lighting event
- Start promoting ***Light It Up! For NDEAM*** on your social media channels. You can use templates provided by the team and/or write your own
- **Let local politicians know about the event and that your community is participating**

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October 14:

- National press release goes out; national **Light It Up! For NDEAM** PR campaign starts; goes until October 21
- Send out local press release to media in your local community (customizable template will be provided)
- Provide names and contact information to identify staff who will be regional or local **Light It Up! For NDEAM** spokespeople. Media may want to cover the story of your organization, and the national event.
 - ODEN can help you get prepared for interviews, so don't worry.
- **Remind local politicians about the event and the ways that your community is participating**

October 14–20:

- Participate in local media interviews
- Promote **Light It Up! For NDEAM** in your community
- **Make sure your local politicians know about the event and the ways that your community is participating**

October 21 — *Light it Up! For NDEAM*

- Participate in event on October 21 starting at dusk
 - Take photos of your participating structures, locations, and people and promote on social media using the campaign hashtags
 - * We will be collecting and resharing from across the country all night long!
 - Wear purple and blue while you participate in **Light It Up! For NDEAM**
 - **Have a safe, fun and nationally connected night!**

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