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His/Her Honour John Tory

Office of the Mayor

City Hall — 2nd Floor

100 Queen St. West

Toronto ON M5H 2N2

August 5, 2025

Dear Mr./Madam Mayor Chow,

Last year/in 202x, you proclaimed October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) in the City of Toronto. On behalf of the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN), I, as the CEO, would like to thank you for supporting our awareness campaign in 2023 with a mayoral proclamation.

I’m writing to ask that, you once again proclaim October 2025 as Disability Employment Awareness Month in the City of Toronto.

NDEAM acknowledges and celebrates the workplace contributions of people who have a disability, and business successes and benefits stemming from hiring with a focus on inclusion.

October is also a perfect time to acknowledge there is more to be done, and to keep raising awareness that it’s critical for all businesses review their recruitment processes. There is a vast talent pool of motivated, educated and skilled people — including people in our community here in City/Town — who are still overlooked. Disability inclusion, too often, gets left out of the business conversation.

There are almost 645,000 Canadians who have a disability who can and want to work — but they’re under-employed. The employment rate of Canadians who have a disability is up. The 2022 Statistics Canadian Survey on Disability showed the employment rate of Canadians (25–64) who have a disability is 62%, compared to 78% for those without a disability. Other recent research has shown 71% of small businesses haven’t hired staff who have a disability because they’re unaware of the job skills of people in this hidden talent pool. While the employment rate is up, the equitable employment journey for people who have a disability is still fraught with challenges. Attitudes about disability is still a major employment barrier.

With many businesses in Toronto short of staff (especially restaurant and hospitality establishments) because there’s a labour shortage across many sectors, it’s important to make businesses more aware of this talent pool.

And it’s important to make businesses aware that disability inclusion isn’t just a matter of compliance with AODA standards and human rights legislation, or of corporate social responsibility; it’s something that’s strategically important. There’s ample research showing that disability-inclusive hiring can help drive growth, innovation and profitability for our local businesses.

As a professional in the disability sector, I know how vital the collaborative efforts and voices of government, business and service organizations are in raising awareness about disability and employment. A mayoral proclamation would send a powerful message to shine a spotlight on disability-inclusive hiring.

[Optional paragraphs — use if applicable/]

A mayoral proclamation will also complement the support that the City/Town is showing by participating in Light It Up! For NDEAMTM again in 2025/in 2025.

The City of Toronto participated in *Light It Up! For NDEAM* last October by specially lighting the 3D “Toronto” sign at Nathan Phillips Square purple and blue.

The combination of the City’s/Town’s participation in *Light It Up! For NDEAM*, and a mayoral proclamation of National Disability Employment Awareness Month in the City of Toronto, would send a powerful message to shine a spotlight on disability-inclusive hiring.

[/Optional paragraphs — use if applicable/]

I thank you for considering this request.

Best regards,

[signature or electronic signature]

Your Name

Your Title, Organization

Email: [email address]

Phone: [cell or office number]

Web: [website URL]