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To: [Clerks](#)
Subject: New Response Completed for Proclamation Request Form
Date: Tuesday, September 16, 2025 4:23:55 PM

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Hello,

Please note the following response to Proclamation Request Form has been submitted at Tuesday September 16th 2025 4:21 PM with reference number 2025-09-16-023.

- **Name of Organization**
Ontario Disability Employment Network
- **Contact Name**
Ofelia Dugal
- **Street Address**
[REDACTED]
- **City / Town**
LaSalle
- **Province**
On
- **Postal Code**
[REDACTED]
- **Cell**
[REDACTED]

- **Email Address**

[REDACTED]

- **Name or Title of Proclamation**

Proclaim October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in the Town of Essex

- **Dates / Time Period Covered by Proclamation**

Month of October

- **Purpose of Proclamation (select all that apply)**

Public Awareness Campaign

- **Description of Organization / Proclamation**

September 16, 2025

Mayor Sherry Bondy
Town of Essex
33 Talbot Street South
Essex, ON N8M 1A8

Subject: Request for Mayoral Proclamation – National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Dear Mayor Bondy:

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM), recognized each October, is fast approaching. It's a time to celebrate the contributions of people in the Town of Essex who have a disability, and the success of businesses that embrace inclusive hiring practices.

Too often, disability is left out of diversity, equity and inclusion conversations – yet disability is diversity.

NDEAM raises awareness across business, community, and society that disability inclusion in employment is not optional – it's essential. Employment and full participation in the economy, business, and community life are basic human rights for people who have a disability, as affirmed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which ratified in Canada in 2007.

For residents of Essex who have a disability and are eager, willing, and able to work, the path to equitable employment remains challenging. Attitudinal barriers are still among the most persistent obstacles to inclusion – right here in our community.

Local businesses must understand that disability inclusion is not just about AODA compliance or corporate social responsibility. It's a smart business strategy. Inclusive hiring drives innovation, growth, and profitability.

That's why I believe it's important to publicly recognize the value people who have a disability bring to our workplaces, our communities, and our society – and to acknowledge how much more opportunity still exists. A municipal proclamation of NDEAM in the Town of Essex would help shine a light on both.

As a Workforce Engagement Strategist with Project SEARCH Ontario, I see first-hand the impact of collaboration between government, business, and service organizations in advancing employment inclusion.

While many businesses today are focused on short-term challenges, the long-term benefits of inclusive hiring are clear. A 2018 Accenture study found that companies with inclusive hiring practices experience:

- 72% higher productivity
- 45% better workplace safety
- 30% higher profit margins
- 28% higher revenue
- And twice the net income of businesses that are not disability inclusive

This kind of hiring benefits not only Essex's major employers but also its Main Street businesses – helping them not just survive, but thrive.

That's why I'm writing to respectfully request that you proclaim October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in the Town of Essex. Your support would help recognize the achievements of workers who have a disability and strengthen the call for greater employment opportunities across all sectors.

As a proud member of the Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN), I can assure you that such a proclamation would be deeply appreciated by the many organizations and individuals working to create a more inclusive labour force.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this important initiative.

With respect and much appreciation,

Ofelia Dugal
Ofelia Dugal (she/her)
Project SEARCH ON Workforce Engagement Strategist
odugal@odenetwork.com
1 866-280-6336 ext 111 | 519-988-9512

- **Has the same/similar proclamation been requested of the Town of Essex in past years?**


No

- **As part of this proclamation, will any special initiatives or events be planned in the Town of Essex?**

Yes

- **Please describe the special initiative or event**

Although there is no initiative specifically for the Town of Essex, we are encouraging communities to participate in the Light It Up! For NDEAM – October 16, 2025

Join the province-wide movement by lighting up municipal buildings or landmarks in purple and blue – the official NDEAM colours. 
Register your location here: Light It Up! for NDEAM

Location Submission Form 2025:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NDEAM2025>

- **Does your Proclamation Request include a request for a flag raising?**

No

- **Please upload draft wording and/or other documents related to your request**

1. [Town of Essex NDEAM Proclamation.pdf \[198.0 KB\]](#)

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