

# Workforce Diversity Matters

## NEWSLETTER

We believe diversity drives innovation and the more inclusive we are, the better our work will be.



OFFICE of EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

### What's Inside ?

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Juneteenth is a time to celebrate the achievements of all African and Black Americans.

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The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) participated in the 24th Annual Juneteenth-Heritage Festival.

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A diverse and inclusive workplace promotes employee wellbeing, and in turn, employee wellbeing supports a more inclusive culture. July is Disability Pride Month.

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- Missouri Youth Leadership Forum
- Fall Conferences
- NDEAM (National Disability Employment Awareness Month)
- Veterans Day

### Diversity Spotlight



The Governor's Council on Disability (GCD) was grateful for the opportunity to present on June 5th at the Missouri Office of Administration Recruiter Summit and join team members of the Missouri Office of Equal Opportunity to learn best practices in the recruiting efforts for the State of Missouri's workforce. Pictured, from left, is GCD Director/OEO Acting Director Claudia Browner, OEO Team Member Kimberly Hicks, and OEO Deputy Director Kristal White.



# Juneteenth freedom day

## HISTORY OF JUNETEENTH

June 19, or Juneteenth, is a holiday that commemorates the day the enslaved in Texas, the last Confederate state, learned of their freedom. It was 2½ years after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, marking the end of slavery in the United States in 1865. As soon as the following year, festivals were organized in African American communities to honor the significance of that day. Juneteenth festivals have continued across the United States into the 21st century. Prayer, speeches, picnics, and dancing are just some of the activities happening in modern day Juneteenth events. Juneteenth is a celebration, but it is also a reminder of the importance of challenging the narrative that so frequently overlooks and even suppresses the rich history and incredible strength of the Black community. Let's make Juneteenth a time to honor those pioneers, activists, and emerging leaders; recognize their contributions, commemorate their sacrifices, and celebrate the achievements of all Black Americans.

OEO Inside

## OEO CELEBRATES JUNETEENTH



The Office of Equal Opportunity participated in the 24th Annual Juneteenth Heritage Festival on Saturday, June 15, at Community Park in Jefferson City. Team OEO helped festival goers beat the heat by distributing ice packs, hand fans, popsicles, and juice pouches. Information for the Minority and Woman Owned Business Enterprise Certification Program was also available for interested small business owners.



2 Where We've Been



## JULY IS DISABILITY PRIDE MONTH

Disability Pride Month happens every July and coincides with the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. On March 12, 1990, over 1,000 people marched from the White House to the U.S. Capitol to raise awareness and demand for significant changes for individuals with disabilities. When the group arrived at the Capitol many cast aside their wheelchairs and crawled up the Capitol steps to demonstrate how inaccessible architecture impacts people with disabilities. This event became known as the “Capitol Crawl.” That same year the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law on July 26, 1990. Encompassing all abilities, ages, colors, nationalities, faiths, and socioeconomic backgrounds, people with disabilities constitute the largest and most diversified minority group in the population. Through sharing stories and personal experiences of the disabled population, Disability Pride Month aims to celebrate disability as an identity. Disability pride is an essential component of an inclusive and diverse community, as well as a direct response to systematic ableism and stigmatizing notions of disability. It is about taking pride in our identities not pleading for acceptance. Disability Pride Month is an opportunity to raise awareness within all organizations, businesses, and charities and advocate for a more accessible and inclusive world for people living with long-lasting health conditions, disabilities, or mental health conditions.



Progress has been made but there is so much more to be done. Disability should have a month of being in the spotlight to educate or at least make people think.

What can you do to celebrate Disability Pride?

- Educate yourself about policies that harm and help people with disabilities.
- Teach your kids to acknowledge and include people with disabilities.
- Shop disability-owned small businesses in your community.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

## Youth Leadership Forum

Team members from OEO will join GCD to experience the 2024 Missouri Youth Leadership Forum July 16-20, 2024.



## Conferences

Team members from OEO have plans to exhibit at the 66th Annual Governor's Conference on Economic Development held September 4-6, 2024, in St. Louis and the 2024 Inclusion Summit September 26-27, 2024, in Kansas City.



## Celebrations

Plans are underway to host the state's first National Disability Employment Awareness Month Celebration. Additionally, OEO is gearing up for the 2024 Veterans Day Celebration at the Capitol.



## Committee Volunteers

We are seeking creative new volunteers for upcoming events organized by the Office of Equal Opportunity. If you are interested in volunteering to serve on a committee, please reach out to Kim Hicks in OEO at: [kim.hicks@oa.mo.gov](mailto:kim.hicks@oa.mo.gov).

