



**Disability Employment
Awareness Month**

2018-2019

Florida

Disability Employment

Awareness Month

Summary of Events



This is the 18th year of Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM) being celebrated in Florida. The goal of DEAM is to recognize the contributions and capabilities of workers with disabilities and to highlight the continued need for a diverse and inclusive workforce. DEAM enables businesses to engage individuals with disabilities and begin a dialogue with this talented and motivated pool of potential employees. Allowing businesses and organizations to interact with students and job seekers with disabilities in a less formal workplace environment, simultaneously changes misperceptions and increases their knowledge and comfort level of working alongside people with disabilities. In Florida, DEAM encompasses an entire “season” beginning in September and lasting into the first quarter of the following year. The eventual goal is to have career exploration activities take place year-round, increasing the opportunity for employment of individuals with disabilities.

Participants of DEAM are provided a number of different career exploration activities including, one-on-one job shadowing, group site visits, career preparation workshops and career fairs. The type of activities available to participants is determined by participating businesses and community liaisons working to arrange events throughout the state. DEAM activities provide participants the opportunity to gain insight into a particular career field or job. These interactions enable students and young job seekers to network and better prepare themselves as applicants in the workforce.

The programs of The Able Trust aim to empower and educate people with disabilities so they become employed and that is the reason The Able Trust has proudly coordinated Florida DEAM for the past 18 years. Integral to the success of Florida DEAM are the many dedicated community liaisons throughout the state, and importantly, the businesses and organizations that open their doors to participants. Promotion of the activities, financial support, and active participation in DEAM activities was also provided by 13 committed organizations and individuals, who all elected to fund the 2018 campaign highlighting DEAM in Florida.

Created by the Florida Legislature in 1990 the Florida Endowment Foundation for Vocational Rehabilitation, parent organization of The Able Trust, is a 501(c)(3) non-profit public/private partnership. Its mission is to be a key leader in providing Floridians with disabilities opportunities for successful employment.

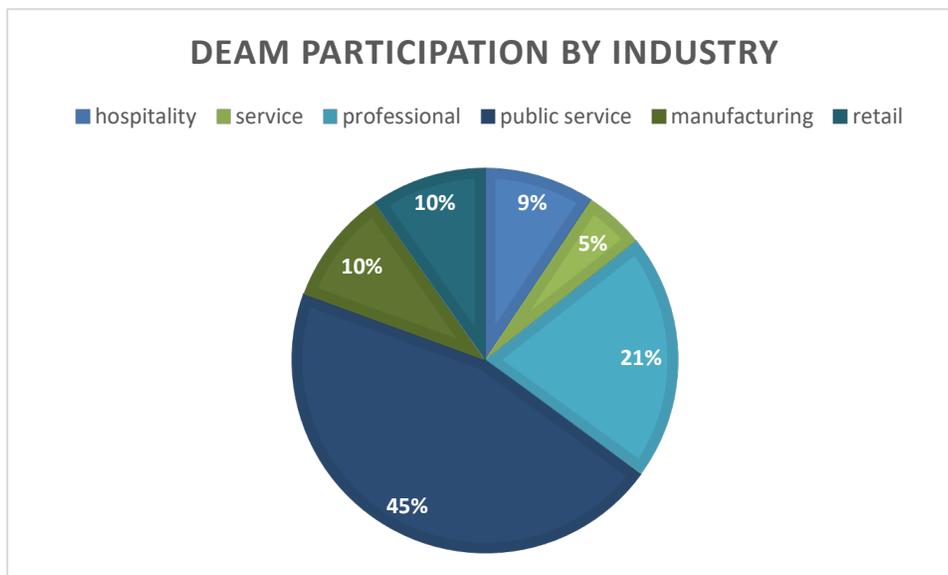


A Synopsis of Florida DEAM Activities

2018 DEAM was made possible due to the hard work of 80 community liaisons working in 62 counties throughout Florida. **Together with over 240 businesses and organization partners, they were able to provide career exploration opportunities to over 1600 participants at time of reporting.** The 2018 DEAM season was launched with a breakfast kickoff in Orlando. Over 100 representatives of the business community, government and the public sector came together to show their support of employing individuals with disabilities and the importance of DEAM. The DEAM launch was highlighted by speakers: Melisa Lewis a nurse from Volusia County, Arlene Shackelford of FPL/NextEra Energy and Senator Bill Galvano, Florida Senate President.

Breakdown of Industry Participation

Public Sector (local, state government, nonprofit)	45%
Service (includes utilities)	5%
Professional (includes medical professions)	21%
Hospitality (includes restaurants, hotels, attractions)	9%
Retail (includes grocery stores)	10%
Manufacturing	10%



Other Item of Note

- The data is accurate as of publishing of the report. Additional activities may have occurred post publishing and are not reflected above.

Florida was unfortunately hit by Hurricane Michael during the 2018 Hurricane season which directly impacted scheduled DEAM events. The storms pushed DEAM events into 2019, yet unfortunately some events were canceled due to damage of participating businesses.

Participants of DEAM are provided a number of different career exploration activities including one-on-one job shadowing, group site visits, career preparation workshops and career fairs. The following highlights are just a few examples of the DEAM experiences that occurred throughout the state



Broward County

Located in Davie, Red Smith Foods is family owned and operated for 45 years. They are a leading manufacturers of pickled sausage, eggs and pig's feet. Students with disabilities from Atlantic Technical College were fortunate enough to tour their state-of-the-art manufacturing facility to learn about the business and careers in manufacturing and distributing.

Polk County

Lakeland Regional Medical Center once again welcomed participants of DEAM from Polk County. Students started their visit with a greeting from Ms. Darcy King, Manager of Volunteer Services. Participants were then given the opportunity to meet with various department managers who explained in detail their departments and the different job positions in each one. Participants toured through Inpatient Rehabilitation, Radiology, Plant Operations, Acute Care-Surgical, Food Services and ED Trauma. Participants and hospital staff enjoyed the morning's interaction. The day wrapped up with lunch and sharing about their experience.



Escambia County

The Northwest Region Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) partnered with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Escambia County School District to facilitate DEAM events. Students with disabilities were transported to the event as a field trip. The different agencies put on a variety of workshops that would assist participants in their job search. Representatives from Landrum, Walmart, Lowe's, Goodwill Easter Seals of the Gulf Coast, Publix, Escambia County School District, and Emerald Coast Utility Authority were on site providing mock interviews for the students.

The Able Trust • www.abletrust.org • 850.224.4493



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