

Program Summary

The National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS) Employment Program seeks to increase access to the workforce for all people with Down syndrome. Through collaboration with NDSS affiliate organizations, employers, government agencies and other key stakeholders, NDSS creates meaningful change in the professional lives of people with Down syndrome across the country. Specifically, NDSS advocates for policies that increase access to competitive integrated employment for individuals, provides valuable resources, support, and training to the community, offers technical assistance to corporations, and highlights the success of employees and business owners with Down syndrome.

Employment Policy and Advocacy:

NDSS advocates for policies that promote access to competitive integrated employment at the federal, state, and local levels. These include policies that both protect the civil rights of workers with Down syndrome as well as support employers in their efforts to employ people with Down syndrome. For example, NDSS continues to work with policymakers and stakeholders to phase out subminimum wage practices permitted through Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act.



Resource Development:

The NDSS Employment Program publishes resources that are publicly available on the NDSS website. These resources are developed in partnership with technical experts to support people with Down syndrome, their families, and other members of the community, as well as employers. These resources include printed guides and webinar recordings.

Private Sector Engagement:

Partnerships with the business community are critical to the success of the NDSS Employment Program. The NDSS Employment Program develops and maintains close relationships with companies across the country to create pathways to employment for people with Down syndrome and provide technical assistance to companies working to build a more inclusive workplace. Additionally, NDSS is a founding member of the CEO Commission for Disability Employment which is a source of research and information, actionable steps and advocacy opportunities for member companies to recruit and onboard individuals with disabilities into their organizations.



Local Affiliate Support:

NDSS has a network of over 300 local affiliate organizations across the country. These local organizations directly engage with people with Down syndrome looking to enter the workforce. NDSS' Employment Program offers these organizations, and the people they serve, support and training at the local level to increase employment outcomes for people with Down syndrome within their communities.



Raising Awareness:

The NDSS Employment Program promotes the professional successes of people with Down syndrome in order to encourage employment within the community and to demonstrate the value of individuals with Down syndrome to our society and our economy. Through the #DSWORKS® campaign, NDSS has created a webpage with over 70 success stories of people with Down syndrome. NDSS also engages in social media outreach to highlight the professional accomplishments of members of the Down syndrome community.

Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment:

Increasingly, people with Down syndrome are seeking entrepreneurship and self-employment as a long-term career option. NDSS has created a network of nearly 100 businesses led by people with Down syndrome. These businesses are listed on a dedicated page on the NDSS website. The NDSS Employment Program offers opportunities for collaboration, brand awareness, and technical assistance through social media and other platforms such as our interview series: *Business Spotlights by Charlotte*.



For more information visit ndss.org/employment
or email the team at employment@ndss.org