SOUTH CAROLINA

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

October 2026

Beginning in 2018, Governor Henry McMaster declared October as Disability Employment Awareness Month in South Carolina. A month to celebrate the impact of individuals with disabilities in the workforce and to promote equal employment opportunities.

The Governor's proclamation emphasizes:

*Equal opportunity for people with disabilities to work competitively.
*Removing attitudinal and physical barriers to full workforce participation.
*Implementing Employment First principles in all publicly funded services for working-age citizens with disabilities.
*Recognizing that individuals with disabilities are capable contributing members of society.

Developmental Disabilities Council

Project Search



Work, at its very essence, comes down to a choice. It's knowing the easy thing to do but deciding against it. It's parents putting in the time when there isn't enough. It's teachers nurturing potential. It's lawmakers funding programs for another year and those programs standing in the gap for the vulnerable. It's a state that does the same even in difficult times and a country that was born from adversity. It's a young man named Sanyika whose life has been shaped by all the above. Sanyika was an intern with the Project Search program at Prisma Health Baptist Parkridge. Through 3 internships over the course of the program, Sanyika brought enthusiasm, kindness, and a work ethic that benefited everyone lucky enough to work with him. He made such an impact that he was offered a full-time position with Environmental Services. The right intern for the right program at the right place. The perfect example of tax dollars put to work for an individual who now has the opportunity to return the favor.

LANTERN
COLUMBIA



While still very new to the Vista neighborhood, The Lantern hotel has quickly become a popular addition to the Columbia hospitality scene. What makes The Lantern so special? The word hospitality extends not only to their guests but also to their employees. You see, 40% of their current staff are individuals with disabilities. In their own words, “Purpose is part of the experience.” Guests see firsthand how being included can elevate service and how a stay can light the way forward. This first-of-its-kind collaboration with the CarolinaLIFE program at the University of South Carolina, is proof that a workplace that includes people with disabilities benefits businesses, employees and the community alike.

My Journey



Justin Borrero

Before my first paying job, I was 27 years old on the autism spectrum and rarely left the house due to anxiety. I had been interested in learning about technology that was popping up around us in modern life but had been in and out of college semesters over the past few years. I had joined SOS Care as a participant in their adult social and life skills programming, which led to an opportunity to volunteer at their nearby offices. One day, a computer failed to start, and I was able to diagnose and resolve the problem. I would continue to help out at the offices as I finished my degree program in computer technology and networking. This then led to my official hiring with SOS Care and my career in IT that continues through to today! Thanks to the introduction of working in that office environment, including the soft skills and socializing that is a part of the typical job, I have been able to develop and grow beyond just a simple job. I have since moved to live on my own in SOS Care's Oak Tree Farm community and have now married and moved into a townhome of our own. I have been able to speak to South Carolina representatives in pursuit of ending subminimum wages across the state as well as serve as a member of the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council. I am much more outgoing and less anxious than I've ever been, and I appreciate that the initial steps in volunteering and working were such major drivers in that progress.

Celebrating Danny's 1-Year Anniversary at Five Guys!



Shout out to Danny for celebrating one year at Five Guys Burgers & Fries! Danny loves his job and especially enjoys working in a positive environment with coworkers he has built great relationships with. Danny works the register, making him one of the first people customers meet when they visit. His upbeat and positive personality helps create a welcoming experience for customers. His managers praise him for being a fast learner, dependable, and always on top of his daily responsibilities. When things slow down between customers, Danny takes initiative by making milkshakes, keeping the dining room clean, and making sure supplies are stocked. Danny's hard work, positive attitude, and dedication have made him a valued member of the Five Guys team.

"Congratulations on one year, Danny! We are so proud of your success!" **SOS Care**

Where There's a Will There's a Way

My name is Will Farrior, and I'm a self-advocate with autism. I've served the great state of South Carolina for 11 years as a state employee. As a state employee with the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council, I've used my platform through articles, interviews, panels, and committees to highlight my community and state, and how people with disabilities can contribute to society in many ways. I have also advocated for accommodations that have helped me succeed, including Grammarly and an Echo Pen. The Echo Pen helps me keep up in staff meetings because I am not a fast note-taker. Grammarly helps me draft emails, federal reports, and articles. For example, I serve as the Partners in Policymaking® coordinator, where I have the privilege of bringing in numerous speakers to teach parents and self-advocates how to advocate and break down the barriers they face in everyday life. Overall, I am proud to share my story for Employment Disability Month in October.

