



**DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH,
EQUITY OUR VIRTUE,
INCLUSION IS OUR PASSION**

The People Inc. DEI Committee produces this monthly calendar to share seasonal observances and events with the people the agency supports, including families, employees, and the community.

May

Month-long Observances

Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month

Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month originated in 1977. It recognizes the contributions and influence of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islander Americans to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States. It honors the achievements of those who have paved the way while igniting the passions of those who will follow. The 2026 theme for this month is “Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together,” which highlights the importance of leveraging collective power, telling stories, and being bridge builders in communities.

Resources:

- <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/>
- <https://fapac.org/AAPI-Resources>

Haitian Heritage Month

First observed in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1988, Haitian Heritage Month is a national observance dedicated to Haitian communities and their culture in the United States. The month of May coincides with Haitian Flag Day on May 18, a major patriotic holiday for those living in the Caribbean Republic of Haiti, as well as the Haitian American Diaspora. This is an opportunity to celebrate Haitian achievements and contributions, both historical and current. The observance also highlights aspects of Haiti’s rich culture, such as its food, art, music, and other distinct traditions. These cultural aspects and their histories are represented in events such as parades, programs, and exhibits organized by Haitian-led organizations across the country. The 2026 theme is “Preserving Legacies, Building Futures: Empowering communities through heritage.”

Jewish American Heritage Month

During Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), hundreds of organizations and Americans of all backgrounds join to discover, explore, and celebrate the vibrant and varied American Jewish experience and contributions from the dawn of our nation to the present day. First known to have arrived in New Amsterdam in 1694, Jewish Americans have continuously shaped America’s history. For JAHM, many organizations across the country traditionally participate in providing the public with programs and resources to highlight and celebrate Jewish Americans. The National Museum of Jewish American History offers a selection of online resources detailing significant Jewish American figures, museum artifacts, and more, relevant to Jewish American history.

Resources:

- <https://jewishamericanheritage.org/>
- National Museum of Jewish American History: <https://theweitzman.org/>

Mental Health Awareness Month

Mental Health Awareness Month is observed to help bring visibility to the millions of Americans currently living with mental health struggles in their daily lives. The activism surrounding this month aims to challenge the historical stigma around mental illness that persists today, while providing support for those affected by mental health conditions. Advocating for mental health also means actively fighting for policies that make mental health support and treatment more accessible to everyone and encourage these individuals to seek help when needed. The 2026 theme is "More Good Days, together!" which encourages us all to reflect on what a "good" day looks like, both for ourselves and for our communities.

Resources:

- Join the Conversation for resources and a pledge to stop stigma at <https://letstalkstigma.org/>
- Call or text 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
- <https://www.monroecounty.gov/mh-services>
- <https://www3.erie.gov/mentalhealth/about-department>
- <https://www.211wny.org/>
- Finger Lakes: <https://www.211lifeline.org/>
- Mental Health America: <https://www.mhanational.org/>
- <https://www.nami.org/stay-connected/events/awareness-events/mental-health-awareness-month/>
 - Rochester affiliate: <https://www.namiroc.org/>
 - Buffalo & WNY affiliate: <https://www.namibuffalony.org/>

Military Appreciation Month

Celebrated every May, it is a declaration that encourages U.S. citizens to observe the month as a symbol of unity. Introduced in 1999 by Sen. John McCain, Military Appreciation Month encourages Americans to reflect on the sacrifices made by soldiers, sailors, and all current and former military personnel.

National Speech-Language-Hearing Month

This month is dedicated to raising awareness regarding various communication disorders, the importance of early treatment, efforts to eradicate the stigma attached to communication disorders and celebrating the contributions of professionals in the speech-language-hearing industry. Founded in 1927, one of the major initiatives is to spread the word by encouraging annual hearing testing. Testing can help identify potential communication issues early on and allows for the opportunity to seek treatments available from audiologists and speech-language pathologists. The 2026 theme focuses on "**Access Changes Everything**," highlighting the need for equitable access to audiologists and speech-language pathologists.

Resources:

- People Inc.'s Rehabilitative Services provides a comprehensive team approach to address various needs, including specialized plans for people with developmental disabilities. Our clinical professionals provide occupational, physical and speech/language therapy, accessibility services, social work counseling and psychology evaluations. <https://www.people-inc.org/rehabilitative-health-services-and-social-work/>

National Stroke Awareness Month

A time to raise awareness regarding the incidence of strokes, their impact on people who suffer strokes and the actions one should take in the event of a stroke. By encouraging individuals, communities, and health providers to spread the word and share resources regarding strokes, National Stroke Awareness Month advocates for reducing stroke risk factors and acting quickly as a response to a stroke. In addition to knowing the signs and symptoms of a stroke, the campaign of National Stroke Awareness Month encourages people to remember the acronym FAST (F for Face Drooping, A for Arm Weakness, S for Speech Difficulty, and T for Time to call 9-1-1) and act accordingly and quickly when these symptoms appear.

Resources:

- American Stroke Association: <https://www.stroke.org/en/about-the-american-stroke-association/stroke-awareness-month>

Daily Observations

5/1 – Vesak

This day is a traditional Buddhist holiday commemorating the birth, enlightenment, and passing of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. It is considered one of the most important events in the Buddhist calendar. It is a time for reflection, meditation, charitable acts, and the sharing of good wishes and kindness with others. It is also a time for community and family, as people come together to celebrate the holiday. Buddhism is one of the oldest religions in the world, and millions of people around the world follow the teachings of Buddha.

5/5 – African World Heritage Day

First declared in 2018 by UNESCO, African World Heritage Day is an observance dedicated to celebrating the unique and rich cultural heritage of Africa. The day was established to draw awareness to African cultural heritage and its potential for driving poverty reduction and regional development throughout the continent. According to UNESCO, despite being the second largest continent, Africa is underrepresented on the World Heritage List, accounting for only 8% of the list with 98 registered sites. However, 15 of these sites are on the World Heritage List in Danger. Issues such as climate change and uncontrolled development threaten the preservation of irreplaceable cultural heritage.

5/5 – Cinco de Mayo

Cinco de Mayo is not celebrated in Mexico. It is a yearly celebration created by and for Latinx communities in the United States to celebrate Mexico's victory over the Second French Empire at the Battle of Puebla in 1862, which plays a significant role in Mexican history. The celebration of Cinco de Mayo is more about U.S. Latinx history and culture than Mexican history.

5/5 – Day for Awareness of Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls

This day brings attention to the high rates of violence faced by Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people across North America. It advocates for justice, awareness, remembrance and action to address these ongoing issues within Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

5/6 – National Interpreter Appreciation Day

Observed on the first Wednesday in May, National Interpreter Appreciation Day highlights the efforts of interpreters whose job bridges language barriers in every area of life, including, but not limited to, business, health, and entertainment. Starting in 2013, this observance reminds us that a world with thousands of languages requires many more interpreters to connect those with not only differing languages but also differing methods of communication. There are about 6,500 languages in the world, and on any given day, we are bound to encounter more than one of them. National Interpreter Appreciation Day celebrates the experts who connect with those who want to communicate but don't speak the same language. They also translate for government services, businesses, hospitals, organizations, and more.

Resources:

- People Inc. acknowledges the presence of interpreters as a critical component of accessibility. This notably applies to American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation to allow for effective communication between those who are Deaf or hard of hearing and hearing individuals. People Inc.'s Deaf Access Services promote communication access, awareness, and opportunities in the greater community. <https://www.people-inc.org/health-and-housing/deaf-access-services/>

5/7 – National Day of Prayer

In 1957, a law was passed calling on the U.S. President to set aside a National Day of Prayer, on which the people may turn to God in prayer and meditation.

5/14 – Ascension of Jesus Day

Also known as Holy Ascension, this day, observed 40 days after Easter in the Coptic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, marks the belief that Jesus Christ ascended to heaven. It's a day of prayer and reflection, symbolizing the promise of eternal life.

5/14 – Day of Service & Remembrance

In honor of the lives lost on May 14, 2022, The Clementine Gold Group is coordinating a day of service along the Jefferson Avenue Corridor and adjacent streets. Join People Inc. volunteers in a cleanup area along the section near our Jefferson Apartments or participate in several other ways that day. The 5/14 Day of Service & Remembrance is not a solution, and it is not closure. It is an invitation to begin or continue wherever we are—through acts of service, moments of connection, or simply by showing up for one another. It is a way to say: we have not forgotten. We will not look away. Visit the link to sign up and participate: <https://www.clementinegoldgroup.com/5-14>.

5/15 – Malcolm X Day

A day of observance to honor and celebrate Malcolm X, who was a civil rights leader. He was an African American Muslim minister who was a vocal advocate for black empowerment. Malcolm X emerged as the principal spokesperson of the Nation of Islam during the 1950s and 1960s. He organized temples, founded a newspaper, and led Temple No. 7 in New York City's Harlem.

5/16 – Community Planting Day - Buffalo

Join the People Inc. group of volunteers at the annual community cleanup held in conjunction with the national Great American Cleanup and Home Beneath Our Feet. This year's project will include their Sensory Garden cleanup and planting day from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at 1117 Ellicott St., Buffalo, NY 14209. The site is an all-inclusive, wheelchair-accessible garden. Learn more about the garden by clicking the link here: <https://www.hbof.org/sensory-garden>. To volunteer, find the attached flyer below and use the QR code.

5/17 – International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia & Biphobia

This day promotes equality and fights against discrimination faced by the LGBTQIA+ community globally. It's an opportunity to stand up for inclusiveness, raise awareness, and foster a culture of acceptance.

5/21 – Global Accessibility Awareness Day

An annual opportunity that promotes digital inclusion and access for more than one billion people with disabilities. It encourages dialogue, learning, and action regarding web accessibility, encouraging developers and organizations to create inclusive digital spaces.

5/21 to 23 – Shavuot

The "Feast of Weeks" celebrates the covenant established at Sinai between God and Israel, and the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses. Those in the Jewish faith celebrate it by lighting candles, staying up all night to learn the Torah, hearing the reading of the Ten Commandments in synagogue, feasting on dairy foods, and more.

5/21 – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

Designated by the United Nations, this day celebrates not only the richness of the world's cultures but also the essential role of intercultural dialogue for achieving peace and sustainable development.

5/24 to 29 – Hajj

The hajj is the fifth of the fundamental Muslim practices and institutions known as the Five Pillars of Islam. In Islam, the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, the holiest city for Muslims, is required for every adult at least once in their lifetime. It is a journey of deep spiritual renewal, forgiveness, and total submission to Allah.

5/24 – Pentecost

On this day, Christians commemorate and celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles who had gathered following the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is believed that this was the beginning of the ministry of the Apostles. In

many churches, Pentecost Sunday is celebrated to recognize the gift of the Holy Spirit, realizing that God lives in all believers.

5/25 – Memorial Day

Memorial Day is a federal holiday in the United States for honoring and mourning the U.S. military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. From 1868 to 1970, it was observed on May 30. However, since 1971, it has been observed on the last Monday of May.

5/26 to 27 – Eid al-Adha

In the Muslim faith, this holiday remembers the Muslim Prophet Ibrahim, who was ready to sacrifice his son, Ismail at Allah's request, as a test of his faith and obedience. At the exact moment of sacrifice, Allah replaced Ismail with a ram to reward Prophet Ibrahim's willingness and devotion. This story may sound familiar to those who are not Muslim, and that is because in the Jewish and Christian beliefs, it is Abraham and his son Isaac who were asked to make the sacrifice. The day is celebrated with prayer, giving to charity and enjoying a festive meal.

5/28 to 29 – Ascension of Baha'u'llah

This day commemorates the passing of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i faith, and is observed with prayers and reflection of his teachings. It is a solemn day for Baha'is, honoring his legacy of unity, peace, and spiritual guidance.

5/28 – World Hunger Day

This day aims to raise awareness and inspire actions to end world hunger. 8% of the world's population is undernourished. 1 billion people are living in extreme poverty. Extreme poverty means that these people are deprived of their basic human needs, such as food, safe drinking water, sanitation, education, information, health, and shelter. Hunger is the cause of death in 45% of children under age 5. This year's World Hunger Day celebrates the contributions we all make: the hands that plant seeds, lift others up, learn new skills, build solutions, share knowledge, raise voices and open new futures.

5/30 – Rainbow Revolution Pride Festival

Cattaraugus-Allegany Liberation Collective is hosting Allegany County's annual Pride Festival, Rainbow Revolution, for a day filled with love, unity, and celebration of LGBTQIA+ rights. The event offers vendors, food, art building, workshops, and a story hour. Stop by the People Inc. information table from noon to 4 p.m. in Wellsville.