



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 20, 2022

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## **Michigan nominee Tameka Citchen-Spruce wins national ‘Champions of Equal Opportunity’ award**

**LANSING, Mich.** —The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) has recognized Michigan’s Tameka Citchen-Spruce as the winner of the 2022 Betty Williams Champion of Equal Opportunity Award.

The award recognizes experienced self-advocates for their national, state and local efforts to promote self-determination, independence, productivity and inclusion.

“I am honored to receive the Betty Williams Champion of Equal Opportunity Award,” said Citchen-Spruce. “Betty Williams was the first African American woman with a developmental disability to lead self-advocacy groups, so it's an honor to follow in her footsteps. Thank you to the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council for nominating me and NACDD for selecting me for the award. I hope to continue to build a platform that will advocate for the rights of people with disabilities from multi-marginalized groups.”

Citchen-Spruce sustained an automobile accident at 6 months old, which left her paralyzed from the mid-chest down with a Type-2 spinal cord injury.

Citchen-Spruce is a disability justice activist, independent film producer and screenwriter, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism from Oakland University. Citchen-Spruce produced the 2019 documentary “My Girl Story” about two African American girls from Detroit and the struggles they face in today's world. “My Girl Story” was an official selection for the 2019 I See You Awards and the 2019 Fearless Tribe of Fanatic Filmmakers.

In 2006, Citchen-Spruce won the Ms. Wheelchair Michigan pageant and used her platform to advocate for disabled women experiencing domestic violence and abuse. Two years later, she formed Women Empower Inc., an organization dedicated to helping disabled women live fulfilling lives.

Citchen-Spruce has also been involved in a voter information campaign to raise awareness of voting rights for people with disabilities. She also participates in a leadership development program to empower individuals with developmental disabilities to build leadership skills.

[NACDD](#) is the national association for the 56 Councils on Developmental Disabilities across the United States and its territories. The Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council works to analyze and improve systems and services to support people with developmental disabilities to achieve their life dreams.

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