



ADVANCING
DISABILITY INCLUSION
& WORKFORCE
INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR National News Brief

March 10, 2024

CSAVR *National News Brief* is a regular series covering legislative activity, media stories, research initiatives, webinars, reports, conferences, and national advocacy activities of interest to member state VR agencies.

ANNOUNCEMENT: SPRING CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND HOTEL RESERVATION LINKS [CAN BE FOUND HERE \[csavr.org\]](#).

HIGHLIGHTS:

1. [NATIONAL NEWS](#)
2. [CSAVR SPRING 2024 CONFERENCE AND RELATED EVENTS](#)
3. [RSA UPDATE](#)
4. [ABLE NEWS](#)
5. [NENA AND SSA HAPPENINGS](#)
6. [TAC UPDATE](#)
7. [REPORTS, TRAININGS, NEWSLETTERS, AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES](#)
8. [NCRTM RECRUITMENT](#)
9. [RECENT ARTICLES](#)

NATIONAL NEWS

March is [Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month \(DDAM\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), organized by the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities and its partners. The theme for 2024 is A World of Opportunities, celebrating people working together to remove obstacles so all can succeed.

The [Department of Transportation \(DOT\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), [Safe Accommodations for Air Travelers with Disabilities Using Wheelchairs \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), that would expand the rights and protections of airline passengers who use wheelchairs and strengthen DOT's rule implementing the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). The DOT proposes to mandate annual, hands-on training for airline staff and contractors who physically assist passengers and who handle passengers' wheelchairs; allow passengers to choose the company that will repair or replace their wheelchair if it is mishandled with the airline covering the costs; and clarify that airlines must provide prompt, safe, and dignified assistance to all passengers, among other standards. Comments may be filed at [regulations.gov \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) within 60 days of the date of publication in the Federal Register.

Americans with disabilities have been a driving force in building back the nation's post-pandemic labor market, and JPMorgan Chase & Co. says there are more gains to be had. Individuals with disabilities account for nearly a third of the growth in the labor force over the past three years according to JPMorgan's Chief US Economist Michael Feroli. Participation rates for both men and women with disabilities both hit records last year and are still hovering near those levels, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

CSAVR SPRING 2024 CONFERENCE AND RELATED EVENTS

We are looking forward to seeing all of you in Bethesda in about four weeks. We have a great conference agenda with something for all.

Thanks to those of you who responded to our Call for Proposals. We had more than we had room and time – a good problem, but also wish we could have plugged them all into our spring meeting.

Details about the conference and related events are on the CSAVR website under the EVENTS page. Hopefully, you have already been there and registered.

Let me share a few highlights with you.

- Registration is open and will close on April 2nd with the early registration fee available through March 15th.

- Registration for CSAVR does not register you for NCSAB or NCSRC. You must register with each organization separately:
- NCSAB website: <http://www.ncsab.org/> [[ncsab.org](http://www.ncsab.org/)]
- NCSRC website: <https://www.ncsrc.us/> [[ncsrc.us](https://www.ncsrc.us/)]
- Draft agendas for the leadership forum and conference are posted on the CSAVR website.
- The Hyatt Regency Bethesda, the conference hotel, is sold out on 4/6,7, and 9. The Hilton Garden Inn Bethesda is listed on the website as an overflow hotel with a reservation link.

Again, we look forward to seeing you in Bethesda!

RSA UPDATE

The U.S. Departments of Education and Labor (the Departments) issued a [final rule \[federalregister.gov\]](#) in the Federal Register (89 FR 13814) that defines the sixth performance indicator - effectiveness in serving employer - as *Retention with the Same Employer* and requires it be reported by one WIOA core program on behalf of all six WIOA core programs within each state. The [final rule \[federalregister.gov\]](#) is effective March 25, 2024.

RSA published the [SAM for Program Years 2024 and 2025 \[rsa.ed.gov\]](#). The [SAM \[rsa.ed.gov\]](#) provides the first set of *Estimated Levels of Performance*, including the coefficients and State-specific values for each variable, for each of the five performance indicators. It is important to note that this estimate is but one of the factors RSA must consider in establishing *Negotiated Levels of Performance*. For information related to the other factors (e.g., continuous improvement), please see pages 9-10 of [TAC-20-02 \[rsa.ed.gov\]](#). In early April, RSA will contact the director(s) of each State VR program to propose *Negotiated Levels of Performance*. By mid-April, they will ask that State VR programs either accept their proposals or request further negotiation. If State VR programs request further negotiation, [RSA State Teams \[rsa.ed.gov\]](#) will schedule meetings soon thereafter.

The RSA funded NCRTM released Issue 85 of its newsletter. In this issue, discover a new Lunch and Learn Video featuring recruitment and retention strategies, self-employment success stories, and a new (free) online business financials course for VR professionals.

ABLE NEWS

On Thursday April 4th at 1 pm ET you are invited to attend a special webinar highlighting how ABLE accounts interact with Social Security Disability Benefits, Income/Asset Tests, Reporting ABLE information to SSA, and Representative

Payees managing ABLE accounts. The webinar is being presented by ABLE in collaboration with SSA. Registration is required.

NENA AND SSA HAPPENINGS

The NENA Ticket Operations Interest Group has prepared a TTW New Policies and Procedures Manual. Members can access it through the Member Dashboard area of the NENA Website by clicking on Ticket Operations or [clicking this link \[nenaticket.org\]](#).

On [February 15, 2024 \[nenaticket.org\]](#), SSA introduced a rule targeting improper payments in SSDI and SSI programs by leveraging electronic payroll data. Commissioner O'Malley highlighted the importance of timely wage data in reducing overpayments through systems like the Payroll Information Exchange (PIE). Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the public review and comment period until April 15, 2024. For further information, refer to the notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM) [here \[nenaticket.org\]](#).

SSA has shared a website with resources for seniors. Please go to [Eldercare Locator \(acl.gov\) \[nenaticket.org\]](#).

TAC UPDATE

You should have received the notice that the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VRTAC-QE) and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) have partnered to develop a needs assessment to determine what needs you and your staff have in their areas of TA as part of their efforts to assist in increasing capacity and improving services. Your input is critical. One response per SVRA is requested. The notice includes the link to the survey.

VRTAC-QM Manager Minute: DIF and California DOR - Discover how California's Department of Rehabilitation is revolutionizing job readiness through a sector-specific strategy. Mark Erlichman is in the studio today, Deputy Director of the VR Employment Division with the California Department of Rehabilitation. Learn how this DIF Grant innovates by aligning services with industry needs, not location, and creating targeted support in tech and more. They also combined the Career Index Plus with the artificial intelligence program SARA to create customized Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) portfolios. Operational in just three months! #Innovation #DisabilityEmployment #SectorStrategy. **Listen Here** [\[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com\]](#)

On Thursday, March 21st, at 1 pm ET VRTAC-QE will present its march Zoom webinar [Remote Career Guidance Services, Connections, and Collaboration Via Smart Tech and Helpful AI \[tacqe.com\]](#). The presenters are Andree Dolan and David Douglas of YoIbe Inc. They will explore the transformative impact of building social connections on

the career trajectories of individuals with disabilities and uncover the role of new generative AI tools in enhancing accessibility and support within career platforms, particularly for those with disabilities. Additionally, participants will delve into how advanced technology, such as assistive AT and innovative virtual platform features, fosters collaboration among vocational rehabilitation stakeholders, ultimately enhancing service delivery for clients with disabilities.

REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

[NFB has a webinar \[nfb.org\]](https://nfb.org) on March 26 from 2-330p eastern on the Basics of PDF remediation. It's free if you are interested in registering. Also, the Section 508 website has an 18-minute video on [Remediating PDF's for Accessibility \[section508.gov\]](https://section508.gov). When you go to that site, you also will see a number of other modules

The [ADA National Network Knowledge Translation Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) will host two webinars, [The Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) and Spanish Speaking Communities \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), in English, March 12th, and [in Spanish \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), March 14th, 2 - 3:30 pm ET. Presenters will inform and empower the Spanish-speaking community about their rights under the ADA. Presenters will discuss how to educate and engage with Spanish-speaking communities and will serve as a platform for outreach and promotion of the national network and regional centers. Registration for both webinars is free and required.

The [Northeast ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) will host a webinar, [Is an Accommodation Forever? \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), March 19th, 1 - 2 pm ET. Presenters will discuss the importance of continuing to monitor accommodations to insure that they remain effective over time and explore best practices for the employment service professional to consider in their work with employers and supported employees with disabilities when monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of workplace accommodations. This webinar will be offered in English and Spanish. Registration is free and required.

The [President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities \(PCPID\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) will host [a virtual meeting \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) March 21st, 12 - 5 pm ET, to address issues surrounding home and community-based services (HCBS) to be examined in the Committee's Report to the President. Registration is free and required. More information is available in the [Federal Register \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com).

The [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging Among Adults with Serious Mental Illnesses \(SILVER RRTC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) will host a webinar [Ask Me Anything: Forging a Resilient Alliance to Promote Connectedness Among Older Adults with a Psychiatric Disability \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), March 22nd, 1 - 2 pm ET. Presenters with professional and personal experience in aging with serious mental illness will lead

an interactive question-and-answer discussion on opportunities to address loneliness among older adults with these disabilities and community supports to keep them connected. Registration is free and required.

VCU with funding under a NIDILRR grant is offering a series of webinars entitled *Voicing Resiliency: State VR Best Practices with Indigenous Communities* starting on April 3rd. The remaining webinars are on April 24th, May 22nd, and June 12th. This past week you received a flyer providing more details.

The [National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research \(NCMRR\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) published a [Request for Information \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) as a first step in the development of the next NIH Research Plan on Rehabilitation. NCMRR seeks guidance from the community of stakeholders in several areas including potential priorities or areas of research to consider and emerging areas of science that will impact research on rehabilitation. Comments can be sent to rehabilitation1@nih.gov through March 29th. Additional information is available online.

Collaborative research from the [Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\) Model System Centers \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) is featured in a [special issue of the Journal of Head Trauma Rehabilitation \(JHTR\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The issue spotlights the results of a multicenter study using data from the NIDILRR-funded centers as well as those funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The issue includes 10 articles of research addressing key gaps in the understanding of TBI and chronic pain, including the finding that [chronic pain affects about 60% of TBI survivors \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), as highlighted by the Brain Injury Association of America. The preface and select articles are available free in full text.

The [ConnectionsRX: A Distance-Based, Community Participation Intervention for Young Adults with Serious Mental Illness \(SMI\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) seeks participants for a study on increasing community participation of young adults with serious mental illnesses. Full study description and compensation information are available from the project website. For more information or to volunteer, contact connectionsrx@temple.edu

The [National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center \(NSCISC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released the annual [Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury \(TSCI\) Facts and Figures at a Glance \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (PDF). This factsheet is a quick reference on demographic and condition status for nearly 37,000 people with TSCI collected through 2023 by the SCI Model System Centers and follow-up centers. It includes information on prevalence, incidence, race/ethnicity, and age at time of injury, as well as historical data.

Lauren Avellone, PhD, from the [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Employment of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)

[\[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), testified before the Senate Special Committee on Aging hearing [All Means All: Empowering People with Disabilities to Thrive in Careers and the Workplace \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) in February. Dr. Avellone spoke about the benefits of competitive integrated employment to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) to be full members of society and offered recommendations for increasing access to employment for people with IDD, including those with high support needs. [Dr. Avellone's testimony is available to download \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (PDF).

NCRTM RECRUITMENT

The RSA funded National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) is seeking current VR counseling graduate students or recent graduates to serve on a time limited NCRTM User Advisory Group. You should have received the announcement of this opportunity and the details this PAST week via RehabNet.

RECENT ARTICLES

Kurtzberg, Terri, and Ameri Mason. “**Beyond Compliance: A Randomized Trial of DEI Statements and Subsequent Signals for Job Seekers with Disabilities** [\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com).” *Disability and Health*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2024.

Castruita-Rios, Yazmin, and Veronica Estala-Gutiérrez. “**Unraveling the Factors Influencing Engagement in Vocational Rehabilitation Services Among Transition-Age Hispanic Youth: An Exploratory Study** [\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com).” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

Cheah, Kimberly J., Vivienne Riches, and Vimallan Manokara. “**Impact on Persons with Disabilities and Their Families When They Are Contributors to Society Through Volunteerism and Employment** [\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com).” *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2024.

Coñoman, Gabriela I., Vicenta Ávila, and Carmen Carmona. “**Initiatives to Support the School-To-Work Transition of People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Systematic Review** [\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com).” *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*, 2024.

Danielson, Elizabeth C., Matthew J. Smith, Brittany Ross, Kari Sherwood, Justin D. Smith, Marc Atkins, and Neil Jordan. “**Implementation Preparation Costs of Virtual Interview Training in Pre-Employment Transition Services: A Budget Impact Analysis** [\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com).” *Journal of Special Education Technology*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2024, pp. 27–40.

Fleming, Allison R., Brian N. Phillips, Tim Riesen, and Aimee Langone. “[Enhancing Transition Outcomes: A Toolkit to Facilitate Data-Driven Pre-Employment Transition Services](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

Mazzotti, Valerie L., Mary E. Morningstar, Allison Lombardi, Stephen Kwiatek, Ashley Taconet, Kathryn Buddeke, Jessica Monahan, et al. “[Policy and Practice Considerations to Support College and Career Readiness for Youth with Disabilities: A Systematic Mixed Studies Review](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2024, pp. 278–289.

McDonnall, Michele C., Jennifer L. Cmar, and Zhen S. McKnight. “[The Impact of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act on Agency-Level Vocational Rehabilitation Outcomes for Adults and Youth with Blindness and Low Vision](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, vol. 34, no. 4, 2024, pp. 299–308.

Murphy, Carolann, and Florian P. Thomas. “[Employment and People with Disabilities: Reframing the Dialogue in the Post-Pandemic Era](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *The Journal of Spinal Cord Medicine*, vol. 47, no. 2, 2024, pp. 187–189.

Poppen, Marcus, Anya Sheffel, Lauren E. Lindstrom, Dawn A. Rowe, Deanne Unruh, and Valerie L. Mazzotti. “[Transition Self-Assessment Tool: The Development and Field Testing of a Statewide Assessment of Pre-Employment Transition Services](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

Qian, Xueqin, Seunghee Lee, David R. Johnson, and Yi-Chen Wu. “[Expectations of Transition-Age Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder Toward Postsecondary Education](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, vol. 39, no. 1, 2024, pp. 35–44.

Rooney-Kron, Magen, Emily T. Malouf, Hannah R. Brenner, Josh Taylor, Holly Whittenburg, Sarah Carlson, and Lauren Avellone. “[A Scoping Review of Pre-Employment Transition Services for Transition Aged Youth with Disabilities](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

Rowe, Dawn A., Melissa Diehl, and Catherine H. Fowler. “[Leveraging the Stages of Learning to Optimize Pre-Employment Transition Service Delivery](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

Saavedra, Javier, Sergio González, Lara Murvartian, and Samuel Arias-Sánchez. “[Psychosocial and Vocational Impact of an Internship Program for People](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) [links.news.mathematica-mpr.com].” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

[Diagnosed with Severe Mental Illnesses \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com).”

Disability and Rehabilitation, 2024.

Taylor, Joshua P., and Holly N. Whittenburg. “**[The Promise and the Challenge of Pre-Employment Transition Services: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act at Ten Years Old \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com)**.” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.

Voermans, Moniek A.C., Ton Wilthagen, and Petri J.C.M. Embregts. “**[Informal Network Members’ Perspectives and Experiences on Work for People with Intellectual Disabilities: A Thematic Synthesis \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com)**.” *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*, vol. 34, no. 1, 2024, pp. 37–55.

Whittenburg, Holly N., Lauren Avellone, Joshua P. Taylor, Sara Park, Marcus Poppen, Yazmin Castruita Rios, and Tim Tansey. “**[State-Level Characteristics and Trends in Pre-Employment Transition Service Delivery to Students with Disabilities \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com)**.” *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 2024.