

Careers and Business Relations News Brief

February 2, 2025



CSAVR Careers and *Business Relations News Briefs* is a regular series covering The National Employment Team (NET) activities, business relations initiatives, media stories, business research initiatives, webinars, reports, conferences, and employment activities of interest to the membership.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Lunar New Year 2025 began on January 29th which aligns with the first new moon of the lunar calendar. 2025 is the Year of the Snake. The Lunar New Year is celebrated by millions around the world as a time for reunions, cultural traditions and hopes for good fortune in the coming year! The celebrations will continue until February 12th.

Black History Month [calendarr.com] also known as African American History Month, started February 1 and lasts all month. The month is celebrated to honor the historical achievements and contributions of African Americans. [Black History Month celebrations began almost 100 years ago \[bing.com\]](http://bing.com).

HIGHLIGHTS

1. National Updates

- a. CSAVR Spring Conference – VR Workforce Studio
- b. Comments on Proposal to Develop a Centralized TAC (combining QE and QM)

2. NET Updates

- a. Microsoft Scholarships Announced
- b. Amazon Hiring Connections
- c. Windmills Virtual Training
- d. Feature: NET Business Partner - Cleanlogic

3. Articles and Features of Interest

- a. Updates from OFCCP
- b. Federal Hiring Freeze

NATIONAL UPDATES

CSAVR Spring Conference SPECIAL REQUEST: *As we approach the spring conference in Bethesda, we are thrilled to relay that we have reached an agreement with the VR Workforce Studio podcast to lead our opening session. They will be featuring some amazing VR success stories, and they would also like to showcase and reference VR leadership and staff during the session. If you have a great VR success story that can be showcased in a brief video, please contact Rick Sizemore at rick.sizemore@dars.virginia.gov for more information.*

AND...[SPRING 2025 REGISTRATION IS OPEN! \[csavr.org\]](https://csavr.org)

Comments Requested on Proposed Creation of a National VR TAC - On January 17, 2025, ED published a [notice calling for comments on the proposed creation of a national VR TAC \[federalregister.gov\]](#) which would combine the current VRTAC **QE** and VRTAC **QM** functions into one center. Comments are due on or before **February 18, 2025**.

There are many key Notices listed above, and whether you are a Blind, General or Combined agency I must call your attention to the Notice above seeking comment on one national VR TAC. The work of QM and QE has been so important, and a continued robust TAC is crucial. You as customers know better than anyone else what TA will be needed for your continued success in serving your dual customers and continuing to increase your staff skills as well as those of your partners.

CSAVR is working on preparing comments to submit. We would like to hear from you and from our committees about their focus areas. What will be most important is for

ED to hear directly from you and your partners and customers. Share this Notice with your staff, partners, and customers and prepare comments to submit on or before February 18th.

NET UPDATES

Microsoft Scholarships Announced - Microsoft has opened their applications for eight \$20,000 scholarships for candidates with disabilities who are passionate about technology and are pursuing careers in engineering, computer science, computer information systems, law, business, or a related field (e.g. paralegal, pre-law, finance, business administration, or marketing). They are accepting applications through March 13, 2025. Additional details and the application information can be accessed through this link: <https://aka.ms/msdisabilityscholarship> [aka.ms]

Amazon Hiring -



Happy New Year From Amazon Team!

As we dive into 2025, we're excited to streamline how you and your job seekers can connect with us for job opportunities.

Interested in joining our team? Simply scan the QR code attached or click the [link](#) [\[hiring.amazon.com\]](https://hiring.amazon.com) to apply and receive alerts when positions become available. It's quick, easy, and can be done right from your phone.

We're looking forward to connecting your candidates with new opportunities this year! [People with Disabilities](#) [\[hiring.amazon.com\]](https://hiring.amazon.com)

Windmill's Virtual Train-the-Trainer: Certificate Program

Sponsored by Council of State Administrators Vocational Rehabilitation National Employment Team (NET) and Milt Wright & Associates, Inc.

Four-Part Series:

Schedule: Mark your calendar to attend all four days of the Four-Part Series, **March 25, 26, and April 1, 2, 2025**

Each day is a consecutive 4 hr. session with interactive activities and breaks

7am	- 11am	Hawaii
9am	- 1pm	Alaska
10am	- 2pm	Pacific
11am	- 3pm	Mountain
12pm	- 4pm	Central
1pm	- 5pm	Eastern

To register click the link below.

<https://www.miltwright.com/windmills-t-for-t-spring-2025-registration> [miltwright.com]

All registrants will have access to the **Windmills Virtual Train-the-Trainer** Four-Part Series and receive the full virtual copy of **Windmills – An Employment Disability Inclusion Program** - 2023 edition curriculum valued at \$600 with the option to order a physical copy for an additional fee.

Registration Fee: \$850.00 per person for Vocational Rehabilitation, Government, and non-profit professionals. For more information, contact Malia Wright-Merer (818)399-2255 maliawright@miltwright.com

NET Business Partner: Cleanlogic - We want to share with you a post from one of our incredible NET business partners - Cleanlogic. Thank you to Ryan Hyde and the Pennsylvania team for their support in recruiting for and supporting the Cleanlogic manufacturing plant in Audubon, PA.

Issac Shapiro, the President and Co-CEO understands the value and the talent that people with disabilities bring to the workplace. See his LinkedIn post below. Also included is a link where he shares his personal experience and his commitment to full

accessibility. **These messages from our business customers resonate! If you have stories and quotes like this, please share.**

Isaac Shapiro, President and Co-CEO, Cleanlogic

Social entrepreneur supporting inclusivity for all | Champion for accessible products | Empowering all people, with and without disabilities

*When I think about what we've built at **Cleanlogic**, I'm reminded of the lessons from Walgreens' Anderson Distribution Center. Thirteen years ago, they set out to study the impact of hiring people with disabilities with Anderson University (SC). What they found is surprising. There are 5 economic benefits to hiring people with disabilities. **It drives productivity, reduces turnover, and most importantly, it impacts safety.** We've seen that same impact here at Cleanlogic. Just recently, our team hit **1,058 days [that's 4 years] without a single workplace injury.** That number isn't just about safety. It's a reflection of the care, pride, and commitment our team brings to work every single day. I hope other businesses see this as proof: that inclusion isn't a risk. It's the smartest decision you'll ever make. Thank you to our warehouse and production team at our corporate offices for living out our values to think safe and work safe. If this resonates with you or your company, let's talk. The more we share these stories, the more we can inspire companies to create their own success stories because they hire people with disabilities.*

[CLEANLOGIC CO-FOUNDER'S INSPIRATION COMES FROM HIS MOM \[fightingblindness.org\]](https://fightingblindness.org)

ARTICLES AND FEATURES OF INTEREST

OFCCP Announcement Enforcing the White House Directive - **Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity**

On January 21, 2025, the White House and President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order: "[Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity \[links-1.govdelivery.com\]](https://www.govdelivery.com)", which revoked Executive Order 11246. For 90 days from the date of this order, Federal contractors *may* continue to comply with the regulatory scheme in effect on January 20, 2025.

The Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs shall immediately cease:

- Promoting "diversity".
- Holding Federal contractors and subcontractors responsible for taking "affirmative action"; and

- Allowing or encouraging Federal contractors and subcontractors to engage in workforce balancing based on race, color, sex, sexual preference, religion, or national origin.

It is important to note that requirements under Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. 793, and the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act (VEVRAA), 38 U.S.C. 4212, both enforced by OFCCP, **are statutory** and **remain in effect**.

90-day hiring freeze on Federal positions [THIS LINK \[govexec.com\]](https://govexec.com) provides additional details on the hiring freeze. We will share updates as they are available.