



Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

## CSAVR National News Brief

February 23, 2025

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.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**SPECIAL REQUEST:** *As we approach the spring conference in Bethesda, I'm 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 you 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](mailto:rick.sizemore@dars.virginia.gov) for more information.*

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## **NATIONAL NEWS**

Kolodner, Meredith. "[Students with Disabilities Are Entitled to Job Training. Many Don't Get It \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)." *New York Times*

The number of job openings in the U.S. decreased to 7.6 million from a revised 8.2 million reading in November according to the Bureau of Labor. The number of vacancies per unemployed worker stayed at 1.1. In 2022, the ratio was 2 to 1.  
*Bloomberg*

## **DIRECTOR UPDATE**

Congratulations and welcome to Dr. Rosa H. Lugo-Cabán who is the new Director (Administrator) at the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration in Puerto Rico (PRVRA). Also let us welcome Ms. Adrian Vasai the new Director for American Samoa Vocational Rehabilitation, and Mike Pemble the new Director at Michigan Blind.

## **2025 CSAVR SPRING CONFERENCE**

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming Spring Conference April 4 to 9. Sadly or maybe not, it will be our last time at the Bethesda Hyatt (make sure you ride the escalators one last time). The conference theme is *Building on our Success: Beyond the Buzz*

If you have not been to the Events page of the CSAVR website please do so because there is a lot of information posted. Registration is open and closes April 1, 2025. Building on the theme above, the conference is structured around three tracks:

- *Track #1* – Building on our Successes: Policy and process streamlining
- *Track #2* – Building on Our Successes: Fiscal controls and management
- *Track #3* – Building on Our Successes: Personnel development, recruiting and retention

ALERT! Only a few days left to submit proposals for the nine concurrent sessions addressing the tracks noted above! We are excited to see the agenda filling in and having excellent concurrent sessions. We are hoping for more, so please send them [HERE \[docs.google.com\]](#).

Proposals must be submitted by the SVRA, and we encourage you to include partners and collaborators in your proposals!

## **POSSIBLE CSAVR COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL NETWORK**

The Customer Services for Adult Committee (CSA) met on February 19 and had several agency staff with communications responsibilities participate to brainstorm the idea of establishing a CSAVR Communications Professional Network. The consensus was “yes” and that it fits well with Strategic Priority #3 “Increasing Public Awareness”.

Before we start to dig into building the PN, I have reached out to Directors asking if you think

1. This is a good idea?
2. If developed, would you assign a staff member to this PN?

If I have not heard from you, please drop me a note. Thanks so much!

## **ACCELERATED VR TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM: NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Accelerated VR Training and Capacity Building Program: Needs Assessment is a new Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) project, funded by RSA, and awarded to the University of Wisconsin Stout VR Institute (SVRI). The aim is to increase knowledge, skills-based competencies, and proficiency specific to contemporary rehabilitation issues with professionals and paraprofessionals working in the state-federal Vocational Rehabilitation program as well as those working in CRPS.

The project which CSAVR is a partner in, is in the process of prioritizing and developing training content to meet your agencies’ needs and those of partners. To do this SVRI will be sending a Needs Assessment survey out to your leadership team. Your feedback is incredibly important as it will influence the design of the training program to ensure the DIF’s efforts meet the needs of your staff and vendors.

Please be on the lookout for an email from John Connelly with the survey link in the coming days. It will only take 10-15 minutes to complete, and you are welcome to share it with others in your agency.

Thank you in advance for your time-your input will be truly appreciated!

## **NENA 2025 CONFERENCE**

NENA has announced that it will hold its 2025 conference on September 16-18, 2025, at the Flamingo Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, NV. They will soon be issuing the RFP for breakout session submissions. NENA is now accepting presentation proposals for the conference. Please see additional information listed here, [2025 Proposal Submission Guidelines \[nenaticket.org\]](https://nenaticket.org), prior to submitting your proposal. Proposals must be received by March 14, 2025 to be considered.

Presenters will be informed of acceptance via email once their presentation has been reviewed by select members of the Conference Committee, at which time a bio and headshot will be requested via the Whova conference app.

Presenters and co-presenters who also wish to attend conference are required to register and pay published conference fees no later than June 27, 2025.

## **VRTAC QM EVALUATION REPORT**

You should have recently received the comprehensive program evaluation report for year 4 of the QM project. If you have not reviewed it, take a moment to scan the 3-page executive summary. If you want more details, the full PE report is rich with information on how QM has framed their work for the last 4 years, activities and outputs, assessing and impacting needs, outcomes, and analysis of impact.

Our thanks to the team at the VRTAC-QM led by Dr. Chaz Compton. Their work and that of the other TACs in partnership with you has resulted in increased numbers and quality of outcomes realized by our individual and business customers. Further, working together with QM you have responded positively to the Congressional challenge to ensure all 110 funds are used by SVRAs and that the workforce participation rate of individuals with disabilities.

## **MARCH NCD MEETING**

The National Council on Disability will hold a quarterly [Council meeting \[f15lu5ebb.cc.rs6.net\]](https://f15lu5ebb.cc.rs6.net) on Thursday, March 6, 10 a.m. – 3:10 p.m. EST and Friday, March 7, 10 a.m. – noon EST at the U.S. Access Board Conference Room, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20004. The event will also be streamed live via Zoomgov for those not able to attend in person. [Registration \[f15lu5ebb.cc.rs6.net\]](https://f15lu5ebb.cc.rs6.net) is required.

The meeting will include Council reports and policy updates; NCD pinning ceremony for its newest member; Disabled Worker Tax Misclassification report release; panel discussion on recent experiences of people with disabilities during disasters; [public comment \[f15lu5ebb.cc.rs6.net\]](https://f15lu5ebb.cc.rs6.net) on younger people in nursing homes; and more.

CART and ASL will be provided.

## **REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES**

Registration is now open for the [Stout 2025 virtual Innovation Inspiration Expo \[uwstout.edu\]](https://uwstout.edu) on March 25-26, 2025.

### **RECENT PUBLICATIONS**

Anderson, O., V. McLennan, N. Buys, and C. Randall. [“Injured Worker Participation in Assessment During the Acute Phase of Workers Compensation Rehabilitation: A Scoping Review \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Disability and Rehabilitation*, vol. 47, no. 1, 2025, pp. 69–79.

Armour, P., and C. Gadwah-Meaden. [“Veteran Affairs Disability Compensation: Likely the U.S.’s Largest Disability Program, But What Do We Know About Its Impacts on Service-Disabled Veterans \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]?”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, vol. 44, no. 1, 2025, pp. 304–314.

Boland, E.A., W.W. Dagel, J.M. Emanuel, K.D. Roberts, and K.W. Beam. [“Building Relationships for Shared Cases Between State and Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Programs \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2025, pp. 33–38.

Chun, J., C.A. Anderson, and B.E. Gaertner. [“From Learning to Action: Advancing Career Pathways Implementation in Vocational Rehabilitation. \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2025, pp. 27–32.

Euhus, Rhiannon, Alice Burns, and Robin Rudowitz. [“5 Key Facts About Medicaid Eligibility for Seniors and People with Disabilities \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *KFF*.

Henriksson, M., C. Tikka, P. Juvonen-Posti, M. Virtanen, and T. Oksanen. [“Referring Psychiatric Patients to Occupational Health Services for Earlier Return to Work – A Qualitative Implementation Study of Barriers and Facilitators \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *BMC Health Services Research*, vol. 25, no. 109, 2025.

Jessiman-Perreault, G., P.M. Smith, A. Thompson, and M.A.M. Gignac. [“The Relationship Between Meeting Workplace Accommodation Needs and Job Disruptions Among Canadians Working with Disabilities: A Cross-Sectional Analysis. \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, vol. 67, no. 1, 2025, pp. e54–e60.

Kim, J., M. Lee, H. Choi, K. Zhou, and T.N. Tansey. "[Why Consider Trauma in Vocational Rehabilitation? Insights from Cognitive Model of PTSD and Self-Determination Theory \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com)." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2025, pp. 49–59.

Landon, T.J., B.N. Phillips, M. McKnight, S.A. Sabella, K.M. Kline, M. Poe, and M. Lockett. "[Insights on Turnover Intent in State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com)." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2025, pp. 82–87.

Rumrill, S., B. Austin, J. Knauf, and J. Kosciulek. "[Processes and Outcomes of a 14-Month Apprenticeship Learning Community: Toolkit Development and Practice Implications \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com)." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, vol. 62, no. 1, 2025, pp. 67–75.