



ADVANCING
DISABILITY INCLUSION
& WORKFORCE
INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR National News Brief

July 5, 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.

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NATIONAL NEWS

On June 28th the [White House Office of Science and Technology Policy \(OSTP\)](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] hosted a webinar to provide an [overview of the recently released Request for Information \(RFI\) seeking input from the public to help inform the development of the Federal Evidence Agenda on Disability Equity](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)].

OSTP is asking the public for feedback to understand the full scope of inequities faced by people with disabilities and to identify gaps in current knowledge. This information will steer the development of the Federal agenda, which will ultimately support the government in making data-informed policy decisions to advance equity in all areas—including health, employment, education, and others—for people with disabilities.

Comments for the RFI must be submitted by July 15th. Questions may be directed to disabilitydata@ostp.eop.gov.

Like any new tool, sometimes there are bugs that need to be worked out. AI is no different. We understand that there are applications being prepared for the new DIF grant that will address the use of AI in the VR program. This is good. McDonald's recently decided to end their experimental use of AI-powered drive-thru windows at more than 100 locations, after customers complained of frequent errors, such as adding nine sweet teas and \$222 worth of McNuggets to orders and topping and ice cream cone with bacon. Not a tasty treat!

According to a recent *Bloomberg* article businesses are luring workers back to the office with a more traditional perk, their own desk. As businesses downsized it became a fashionable cost savings measure to introduce hoteling or hot desking so that workers had to share desk space. It seems this has given many workers more reason to stay home rather than come to the office. While some may think this is about having one's own space to display the family photos and nick knacks it is more about efficiency. Workers report that with hoteling they must spend time each day readjusting such things as the chair position and screen height so lost production time.

DIRECTOR UPDATE

Congratulations to Sigrid Adams who after serving as acting director has been named as the Director of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), General agency.

TAC PRODUCTS

VRTAC QE has released three of their Learning Communities final toolkits available on their website. They are Career Pathways, Customized Training, and Apprenticeship toolkits. [The toolkits can be found here.](#) [[tacqe.com](#)]

[VRTAC-QM Manager Minute: Navigating Case Management System Upgrades \[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com\]](https://managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com) - Join us for an insightful episode of the VRTAC-QM Manager Minute as Brittney MacIver and Sarah Clardy from the VRTAC-QM team share their expertise on case management systems. Brittney, an expert in Program and Performance within our Quality Management team, and Sarah, the Program Director for Fiscal and Resource Management, delve into best practices and the growing trend of states seeking to upgrade their systems. Learn about the nuances of state requests and the RFP process, and gain valuable knowledge to help you decide whether it's time to stay

with your current system or make a move. **Listen Here** [\[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com\]](https://managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com)

NENA'S NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The NENA Board announced the following candidates have been elected to their Board of Directors:

- Hannah Schoenberg
- Sherri Stone
- Matthew Silverstein

WHATS NEW WITH ABLE

Recently, ABLE today developed a first-ever [Search and Compare tool \[abletoday.us14.list-manage.com\]](https://abletoday.us14.list-manage.com) for those researching ABLE savings plans. The interactive platform allows users to view state ABLE programs and compare items such as program fees, maximum account balance, state tax benefits, in-state or out-of-state residency, and more.

ABLE today collaborated with the DC Bar Association to develop a [free CLE \[abletoday.us14.list-manage.com\]](https://abletoday.us14.list-manage.com) for attorneys across the country. The CLE offers accreditation nationwide.

The course, "**Focus on ABLE Accounts: A Financial Tool Specifically for People with Disabilities (On-Demand)**" provides an overview of how ABLE accounts can positively impact people with disabilities, their families, and their caregivers.

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW DIRECTOR TRAINING CURRICULUM

Thanks to all of you who responded to our request for input on possible curriculum for the development of a New Director training. This will be separate and distinct from the Leadership Forum. Our next step is to review all the great input we got. May not be able to use all the ideas in this training and certainly the comments will be helpful too

for consideration as topics for future Monthly membership Calls and possibly even conferences.

Stay tuned for more.

CALL FOR PEER REVIEWERS

As you are aware, the latest DIF opportunity is creating a lot of interest. OSERS/RSA are seeking qualified peer reviewers for the Fiscal Year 2024 Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) - Creating a 21st Century Workforce of Youth and Adults with Disabilities through the Transformation of Education, Career, and Competitive Integrated Employment Model Demonstration Project.

Individuals who have an active account in G5/G6 and have a general background and related experience in the following area(s) of interest are encouraged to apply:

- Youth and/or Adults with Disabilities
- Competitive Integrated Employment
- Advanced Technology and/or Assistive Technology
- Justice-Involved Youth with Disabilities or with the Juvenile Justice System
- Acquired Disabilities
- Disconnected Youth and/or Disconnected Adults with Disabilities
- Special Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation or related discipline.

If you know anyone who would qualify, you might want to encourage them to apply.

REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The recordings of the NCSAB-NABM training webinars on Military Troop Dining I and Military Troop Dining II are now both posted on the NCSAB website. The posting location on the website has been moved. Previously, Military Troop Dining I was on the home page. The recordings are now available on the Randolph-Sheppard tab, under "hosted trainings". If you have any questions, please contact Catriona Macdonald at CMacdonald@LinchpinStrategies.com

The NIDILRR-funded [Northeast ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](http://click.icptrack.com) will host a webinar, [Engaging Kids About Disability Through Animated Cartoons \[click.icptrack.com\]](http://click.icptrack.com), July 16th, 1 - 2 pm ET. Presenters will discuss the center's unique animated school cartoon series that is designed to educate the next generation about the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and disability inclusion.

The [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Aging Among Adults with Serious Mental Illnesses \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host a webinar, [Making Sense of S.I.L.V.E.R. Research: Old Before Their Time \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), July 17th, 11 am - 12 pm, ET. Presenters will discuss findings from a recent study that compared the physical abilities of middle-aged adults with serious mental health conditions to those of older adults. Presenters will also discuss practical recommendations for interventions and policies to support these older adults. Registration is free and required.

The NIDILRR-funded [Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host a webinar, [A Park for Everyone: Adaptive Initiatives at Patapsco Valley State Park \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), July 17th, 2 - 3:30 pm, ET. Presenters will highlight efforts to ensure access to recreation opportunities for users of all abilities through adaptive programming at Patapsco Valley State Park. Registration is free and required.

The [US Census Bureau \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released a factsheet, [Anniversary of Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\): July 26, 2024 \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The factsheet shares statistics and demographics about people with disabilities in the US, using data from the US Census Bureau surveys. The factsheet highlights the number of people with disabilities living the community, employment rates, and earnings in 2022. The factsheet also includes links to more resources, including deeper statistics, blog articles, America Counts Stories, and infographics.

The [ADA Network Knowledge Translation Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released a new factsheet, [Job Coaches as Accommodations: A Guide for Employment Service Professionals \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The factsheet discusses how employment service professionals, such as job coaches, may be considered a reasonable accommodation in the workplace under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It explains how to guide employers through the reasonable accommodation process and what to do if the accommodation is denied. This factsheet is also [available in Spanish \[click.icptrack.com\]](#).

Researchers from the NIDILRR-funded projects [Lightweight and Affordable Soft Knee Exoskeletons to Enhance Independent Living for Broad Lower-Limb Disability Populations \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) and [Biomechanical Benefits of Lightweight Wearable Robots for Community-Based Mobility Assistance of Children with Crouch Gait from Cerebral Palsy \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) published an article, [Experiment-Free Exoskeleton Assistance Via Learning in Simulation \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (abstract), in the journal Nature. The research demonstrates a new method that leverages artificial intelligence and computer simulations to train robotic exoskeletons to autonomously help users save energy while walking, running, and climbing stairs.

The [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) posted an article, [Bringing Olmstead to Life: Celebrating the 25th Anniversary \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), in the ACL Blog. The blog post marked the anniversary of the Supreme Court's Olmstead v

L.C. decision, which affirmed the value of the lives and contributions of people with disabilities and recognized the importance of community participation for all. The article spotlights some of the achievements of the past 25 years, the work currently underway at ACL and other agencies, and what is needed to truly realize the full participation of people with disabilities in the community.

The NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Community Living and Participation Among People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released a Data Bytes brief, [Institutionalized Adults with IDD, 1967 to 2020 \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The brief looks at the long-term decline in the number of institutionalized people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), from nearly 30% of adults with IDD living in large state-run facilities to less than 1%. The brief discusses research that indicates a better quality of life in community homes and the support needed for transitioning individuals with IDD from institutions to community settings.

Research from the NIDILRR-funded [Disability Employer Practices Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) and the [Rehabilitation Research and Training on Employment Policy: Center For Disability-Inclusive Employment Policy Research \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) is featured in a [special issue of the Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation \(JOR\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The special issue includes cutting-edge original research on the current disability employment landscape in the US and the issues workers, employers, and policy makers face in improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities

COVID 19

Coronavirus infections appear to be [rising in 44 states and territories \[washingtonpost.com\]](#) as of June 25, with the sharpest increases in the West, according to CDC data. The new [FLiRT and LB.1 variants \[washingtonpost.com\]](#) plus [recently relaxed CDC guidelines \[washingtonpost.com\]](#) mean many workplaces and schools have dropped isolation requirements appear to be driving this trend.