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DISABILITY INCLUSION
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INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR National News Brief

June 29, 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The next CSAVR weekly will be published the weekend of July 19-20. This coming Friday we celebrate the 249th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence over a three-day weekend. The next weekend, July 12-13 staff and CSAVR leadership will be just returning from our summer Executive Committee meeting in Nashville, TN.

MassAbility is actively recruiting for [Director of Career Services Operations \[massanf.taleo.net\]](#). MassAbility (formerly Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission) seeks a leader who will be responsible for day-to-day operations of the Career Services (Vocational Rehabilitation) program.

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NATIONAL NEWS

Much of our country has been suffering from the extreme heat and some areas with very severe weather. We hope you all are staying safe and comfortable. Our office will be closed on Friday, July 4th for the federal holiday. Be safe out there and enjoy as we celebrate our nation's birthday.

Medicare & Social Security Trust Funds

In mid-June the Medicare and Social Security Trustees released their annual reports on the financial status of the trust funds. The Medicare Trustees project that the Medicare Hospital Insurance (HI) trust fund will be insolvent in 2033 with a 75-year shortfall of 0.42 to 1.28 percent of payroll. Meanwhile, total gross Medicare spending will continue to grow. The 2025 Social Security Trustees Report projects Social Security is only eight years from insolvency. Read the full Social Security and Medicare Trustees reports [annual reports \[j6bjn7bbb.cc.rs6.net\]](https://www.ssa.gov/annualreports/j6bjn7bbb.cc.rs6.net).

Senate Medicaid Proposal

Senate Medicaid Proposal (not yet passed by the Senate) [Full section by section here \[finance.senate.gov\]](https://www.finance.senate.gov/record/2025/06/25/medicaid-proposal).

Some key takeaways:

- Increases eligibility checks to every six months (from 1 year) for the expansion population
- Disallows federal reimbursement for Medicaid coverage until an individual has proven citizenship
- Work/community engagement requirements for able bodied adults without dependents
- 80 hours a month required

Some Exemptions:

- Veterans with a disability rated as total, and,
- Individuals who are blind, have a substance use disorder, disabling mental disorder, a physical or intellectual disability that significantly impairs their ability to perform one or more activities of daily living, or a serious or complex medical condition.

Last Thursday plans to bring the bill to a vote in the Senate hit a snag when the Senate Parliamentarian rejected key provisions in the bill including a plan to cap states' use of health care provider taxes to collect more federal Medicaid funding, a proposal that

would have generated hundreds of billions of dollars in savings to offset the cost of making President Trump's corporate tax cuts permanent.

Supreme Court Ruling on Combat Related Special Compensation

The US Supreme Court ruled unanimously that a six-year time limit under the Barring Act does not apply to claims for combat-related special compensation (CRSC), paving the way for thousands of retired service members to receive retroactive payments. The decision is expected to affect over 9,000 veterans and could lead to more than \$50 million in retroactive payments. Advocates hailed the ruling as a major victory for medically retired veterans.

DOL Secretary Calls for Modernization

DOL Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer called for modernization in her testimony before Congress in support of the Trump administration's proposed 2026 budget, which would cut \$50 million from OSHA and reduce its workforce by over 200 positions. Despite the reductions, she argued that modernizing operations — through digital tools, data-driven inspections, and regulatory streamlining — would allow OSHA and MSHA to maintain enforcement capacity. The strategy shifts focus from aggressive enforcement to increased compliance assistance, hoping to help employers voluntarily meet safety standards.

DOE Repeal of 504 Requirements

The Department of Energy has released a "Direct Final" rule repealing section 504 requirements from new DOE buildings. The Department's rule cites that the section 504 requirements are overly burdensome and redundant when contractors already must be compliant with section 10 CFR 1074.1 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The Department is repealing only 10 CFR 1040.73 which is the more specific section linking the accessibility requirement to 504 specifically instead of 1074 which is broader.

DOT Pauses Enforcement of Airline Wheelchair Policy

Department of Transportation has extended pause on enforcement of airline wheelchair policy. The Biden Administration promulgated rules which detailed how airlines must manage individuals' mobility devices and consequences and liability for losing or damaging those devices. The Trump administration initially delayed the rule until around this time but has now extended the delay to August 1 citing concerns about the ability to comply from the airlines.

ED/RSA NEWS

Notices Inviting Applications for Federal Fiscal Year 2025 for the National Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center (NVRTAC; Assistance Listing Number: 84.264L) and the Rehabilitation Long Term Training Program (RLTT; Assistance Listing Number: 84.129) were posted in the Federal Register on June 17, 2025. Please refer to the NVRTAC Federal Register [Notice Inviting Applications \[federalregister.gov\]](#), and the RLTT Federal Register [Notice Inviting Applications \[federalregister.gov\]](#). Applications for both are due July 18th.

Also, this past week ED published a Notice Inviting Applications (NIA) and Notice of Final Priority (NFP) in the Federal Register under the Innovative Rehabilitation Training program (ALN 84.263G). Application deadline: Wednesday, July 28, 2025.

Here are links to some other application packages of possible interest:

[Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling; Assistance Listing Number 84.129B is ED-GRANTS-061725-002 \[grants.gov\]](#)

[Rehabilitation Technology; Assistance Listing Number 84.129E is ED-GRANTS-061725-003 \[grants.gov\]](#)

[Rehabilitation of Individuals Who Are Mentally Ill; Assistance Listing Number 84.129H is ED-GRANTS-061725-004 \[grants.gov\]](#)

[Undergraduate Education in Rehabilitation Services; Assistance Listing Number 84.129L is ED-GRANTS-061725-005 \[grants.gov\]](#)

[Rehabilitation of Individuals Who Are Blind, Have Low Vision; Assistance Listing Number 84.129P is ED-GRANTS-061725-006 \[grants.gov\]](#)

[Rehabilitation Long-Term Training program-- Rehabilitation of Individuals Who are Hard of Hearing; Assistance Listing Number 84.129Q is ED-GRANTS-061725-007 \[grants.gov\]](#)

[Rehabilitation Long-Term Training program-- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development; Assistance Listing Number 84.129W is ED-GRANTS-061725-008 \[grants.gov\]](#)

ED also issued a notice inviting applications for new awards for fiscal year (FY) 2025 for the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition for Students and Youth with Disabilities. Applications are due July 18th. See details in the Federal Register [Federal Register: Applications for New Awards 84.326E \[federalregister.gov\]](#) dated June 18, 2025.

TAC UPDATES

The VRTAC-QM Community of Practice (CoP) has launched an Evaluation Survey to gather data to help inform topics covered during meetings, highlight areas in need of improvement, and provide an avenue for members to share their experiences participating in each CoP.

Follow this link to the Survey: [Take the survey \[sdsu.co1.qualtrics.com\]](https://sdsu.co1.qualtrics.com). If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Meera Adya or Erica Taylor by emailing madya@sdsu.edu or etaylor2@sdsu.edu.

On July 31st from 2 to 3 pm ET NTACTION will begin its **Pathways to Possibilities webinar series**, which will explore foundational resources that support quality transition planning across stakeholder groups. From assessment tools to interagency collaboration frameworks, they'll walk through how educators, VR staff, families, youth, and others are applying these tools to improve outcomes. The presentation will be live on Zoom and registration is required. [Visit their website to learn more \[transitionta.org\]](https://transitionta.org).

NCRTM AND DIF CONNECTION

In April we shared that New Editions/NCRTM was coming out with a new newsletter devoted to the DIFs entitled the *DIF Connection*. Starting with the June edition, the NCRTM Newsletter and the DIF Connection Newsletter will be merged into a single publication.

The new format was released this past week. There are now distinct sections within the newsletter- one for general NCRTM updates and one for DIF-related content. Both sections are accessible to all stakeholders.

REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

IT'S EMPLOYMENT is offering a free training module for VR staff in July entitled *Using Technology for Employment Success* will discuss tools such as smartphones, tablets, smart watches, etc. that can be used to support employees. You can take this two-hour online module and earn 2 CRC credits any time during July.

On July 14th at 1 pm ET join ABLE for a 30 minute ABLE 101 presentation highlighting important topics such as: what is an ABLE account, who qualifies, how it works and much more.

On July 23rd the National Center of Self employment, Business Ownership, and Telecommuting will hold a free webinar on Self-Employment Policy with HireAbility Vermont which will address how they got started, key steps they took in the process, where they are now, the goals they have for the future, and lessons learned along the way.

The excitement is building for the **ACCSES 2025 Summer Conference**, July 20–22 at the Fairmont Washington, D.C., Georgetown! See the event highlights, and for all the details, [view the full agenda here \[accses.us6.list-manage.com\]](https://accses.us6.list-manage.com). Registration is \$799 for ACCSES Members and \$849 for non-members.

The National Research & Training Center on Blindness & Low Vision is recruiting their next class of Vision Specialists in Vocational Rehabilitation! Our online graduate certificate program, funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, lasts one year (January to December). The courses are designed for professionals to help them become more effective in their work with individuals who are blind or have low vision. Applications will be accepted until October 1, 2025. To learn more about this program and how to apply, visit [Vision Specialist page \[blind.msstate.edu\]](https://blind.msstate.edu) on our website. If you need any other information or have questions about this program, please email Tony Candela at anthonycandela66@gmail.com.

The National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) 2025 annual conference will take place July 21-24 at the Grand Hyatt Washington, DC. Registration is open. In the afternoon of the first day, they will march to the Capitol and hold a rally around the theme of *Our Lives, Our Homes, Our Communities*.

The National Disability Institute (NDI) is offering a five-part training focused on *Building Bank Partnerships to Expand Workforce Development Opportunities for People with Disabilities*. This series dives into how vocational rehabilitation agencies can create compelling partnership opportunities that align with the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) and attract financial institutions as collaborators. Sessions will be live and not recorded. Training Dates are July 30, August 6, 13, 20, 27 at 3:00 pm ET. You must register for the training.

The Association of Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (AVRT), a professional organization dedicated to bringing together rehabilitation experts to share ideas, information, professional practices, and experiences, is hosting their 2025 Annual Professional Development Conference in Milwaukee, WI on August 5-7. The theme is *Brewing Up Innovative Services: The Melting Pot of Rehabilitation*.

The National Center for Dignity In Healthcare and Community Living for People with Disabilities is currently inviting guest blog submissions from individuals with lived experience and expertise on disability-related topics. So enter your blog submissions below! You can see examples of their existing content here: thinkequitable.com [mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com]. Here's the submission form link to share: [Guest Blog Submission Form \[mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com\]](https://mxtws-cmpzourl.maillist-manage.com)

Upcoming Maryland Works training:

Revealing the Best Kept Secrets about Medicaid & Medicaid Waiver Programs: How to Help People Get Into Waiver Programs and Stay There

Providing Effective Employment Supports

July 28, 2025

9 AM - 12 NOON

Virtual

[Learn More \[mdworks.com\]](https://mdworks.com)

SSDI&SSI Work Incentives: How to Keep Benefits While You Work

August 13th & 14th

Day 1 - 9 AM -1 PM | Day 2 - 9 AM -12 PM

[Learn More \[mdworks.com\]](https://mdworks.com)

SUPERVISORY BOOT CAMP

August-September 2025

August 25th, 26th, 27th & September 2nd, 3rd, 4th

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Virtual via Zoom Meeting

[Learn More \[mdworks.com\]](https://mdworks.com)

For those exploring AI usage, you may wish to take a look at the [NARIC Collection Spotlight: Is Artificial Intelligence the Next Big Thing in Disability and Rehabilitation Research? \[ncrtm.ed.gov\]](#) (NARIC)