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& WORKFORCE
INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR National News Brief

August 25, 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

As August winds down, many young people are heading back to school, including students with disabilities. For some students, this is the year their transition journey brings them out of secondary school and into college or the workforce. These students are working with their parents, teachers, and counselors to plan each step, exploring career and education paths and acquiring the skills needed to succeed on that path. NIDILRR has gathered a [quick round up of resources for students with disabilities and their families \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) from the NIDILRR community and elsewhere in our Spotlight blog.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released the annual update to the [Disability and Health Data System \(DHDS\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), providing quick and easy online access to state-level health data on adults with disabilities from the 2022 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). In a [press release \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), CDC highlighted that 1 in 4 adults in the US, over 70 million people, reported having a disability in 2022. For the first time, the BRFSS collected data on experiences with Long COVID, showing that Long COVID symptoms were more prevalent among people with disabilities than those without disabilities.

DIRECTOR NEWS

It is with mixed emotions that we share the following note from, Cheryl Fuller CSAVR Past President and Director of TX-C.

I am getting in touch this morning with some personal news. I will be retiring from State government on October 31, 2024. It has been a privilege and a joy to serve as the director of Texas General and Texas Combined for the past eleven years. Through it all, CSAVR has been an invaluable source of collaboration, support, resources, and encouragement. And you and the CSAVR staff have been fantastic to work with. I will miss you all and I will always treasure the friendships I've made through CSAVR.

I will continue to work through October 31st, so all will proceed as normal for a few weeks yet. I'll keep you posted on my replacement and/or designation of an interim director.

Cheryl, your leadership has been key to the successes demonstrated through our strategic priorities. Your legacy will live on. You will be missed.

We wish to welcome a new director to CSAVR. Congratulation and welcome to Kate Duder who has been named as the Director of Alaska Combined. She has served as Vocational Rehabilitation Manager and Deputy Chief of Services at the agency.

2024 CSAVR FALL CONFERENCE

We may not be able to compete with the recent political conventions and we are going to have a great conference in Seattle, WA October 19 - October 25, 2024. If you have not registered, please do so. We want to see everybody there. Don't forget the Leadership Forum and Directors Forum. I am sure you have seen the Call for Proposals. Submissions are due September 6th. Don't wait! Get yours in now.

2024 NET SUMMIT

The 2024 NET Summit is being sponsored by our partners at Wells Fargo. It is taking place in Charlotte, NC from September 17-18. We will hear from the Chief Accessibility Officer at Wells Fargo as well as the Enterprise Neurodiversity Program Executive, the Talent Acquisition team and have an opportunity to network with their Recruiters representing markets across the country. The agenda also includes other business partners and roundtable discussions. We have Directors as well as NET Points of Contact and business team members joining us for the Summit. You can learn more about the NET Summit at: <https://www.csavr.org/2024-net-summit> [[csavr.org](https://www.csavr.org)]

RSA NEWS

RSA published new policy guidance, [Allowable Costs for Vending Facilities and Equipment for Vendors Under the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program \(RSA-TAC-24-06\)](#) [rsa.ed.gov] to provide guidance on the allowable use of State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services program funds, both Federal funds and non-Federal funds used for matching purposes, for costs associated with vending facilities and other equipment acquired for the benefit of licensed blind vendors operating under the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program (RSVFP).

TAC PRODUCTS

VRTAC-QM in collaboration with RSA, developed and released the [VR Wellness Check](#) [vrtac-qm.org] self-assessment which is intended to help VR agencies assess their progress in achieving the gold standard in multiple domains related to quality program and performance management, and quality fiscal and resource management of the VR program.

Each completed [VR Wellness Check](#) [vrtac-qm.org] assessment results in a report of where the agency is at in achieving the gold standard established for each area. The reports can be used by the VR program to identify strengths and areas in need of further development through training or technical assistance. The tool will help VR programs identify where they may need to implement quality management strategies and practices that will result in improved service delivery and outcomes for individuals with disabilities served by the VR program.

The [Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment](#) [ncrtm.us13.list-manage.com] (VRTAC-QE) has developed a new

resource titled [“Good Work” for People with Disabilities: A Strategy to Get There \[ncrtm.us13.list-manage.com\]](#). This comprehensive guide introduces the Illinois Work and Well-Being Model (IW2M), an evidence-based framework designed to help VR professionals create effective rehabilitation plans. By focusing on individual context, career development, and participation, IW2M aims to improve employment outcomes and overall well-being for individuals with disabilities. [Explore this resource \[ncrtm.us13.list-manage.com\]](#) to enhance your support for job seekers with disabilities and help them achieve quality employment.

VRTAC-QM Manager Minute: Unlocking the Potential- Elevate Your Skills with Enhanced NCRTM Resources for Counselors, Supervisors, and VR Professionals:

Go behind the curtain at the National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation Training Materials (NCRTM) with Heather Servais, Project Manager. Join us as we delve into the vast resources available to vocational rehabilitation counselors, supervisors, and VR professionals. From employment navigation to disability-specific resources and cutting-edge training, Heather reveals how the revamped NCRTM website is a treasure trove of information and tools to enhance your practices and improve services. Tune in to explore these new features and see how the NCRTM can support you in your vital work. Don't miss this opportunity to unlock the full potential of this dynamic platform!

[Listen Here \[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com\]](#)

The VRTAC-QE has created toolkits for a variety of topic areas. These toolkits serve as implementation guides. For agencies that are looking to implement or refine their processes in any of the topic areas, we are still recruiting members. Each topic area has a webpage with a downloadable toolkit. I've also attached the toolkits. Thanks.

Career Pathways Toolkit

<https://tacqe.com/career-pathways-toolkit/> [tacqe.com]

Veteran Employment Needs Assessment Tool

<https://tacqe.com/veteran-employment-needs-assessment-tool/> [tacqe.com]

Customized Training Toolkit

<https://tacqe.com/customized-training-qe-toolkit/> [tacqe.com]

Looking to implement at your agency? Sign up to join our group here:

https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_bwNfmeeEspW7jMO?Q_CHL=qr
[\[uky.az1.qualtrics.com\]](https://uky.az1.qualtrics.com)

Apprenticeship Toolkit

<https://tacqe.com/apprenticeship-toolkit/> [tacqe.com]

Looking to implement at your agency? Sign up to join our group here:

https://illinois.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9oSM7CXtpilbkHQ [illinois.qualtrics.com]

VR Outreach Toolkit

https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dgMWHoZjpgGFVe6
[uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com]

Looking to implement at your agency? Sign up to join our group here:

https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0PWhVqmEX1czFL0
[uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com]

REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The [Office of Special Education Programs \(OSEP\)](#) [click.icptrack.com] at DOE will host the [Smart Beginnings 2024](#) [click.icptrack.com] webinar series, August 27th - 29th, 2 - 3:30 pm ET each day. The Smart Beginnings mini-conference is designed to help families, providers, and leaders better support and promote developmental outcomes and educational excellence for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families. Sessions will include a live question and answer session with presenters. Registration is free and required for each day.

On September 18 & 19 the National Center on Self-Employment, Business Ownership, & Telecommuting will hold a Virtual Self-Employment Conference 2024. The theme is **Diverse Abilities, Infinite Ventures**. We will explore self-employment systems and strategies aimed at fostering self-employment, business ownership, and telecommuting for individuals with disabilities. September 18 & 19, 2024, 12:00pm - 4:00pm Eastern. **Register online** [\[centeronselfemployment.org\]](#) today for free!

The [Great Lakes ADA Regional Center](#) [click.icptrack.com] will host a webinar, [Locked Out: Barriers to Accessible Technology Inside Prison Education Programs](#) [click.icptrack.com], September 19th, 2 - 3:30 pm ET. Presenters will discuss the challenges of providing accessible technology to individuals with disabilities in the correctional system, especially in prison education programs. Registration is free and required. Continuing education recognition is available upon request.

The [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Employment of People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision](#) [click.icptrack.com] launched a new course, [An Overview of Assistive Technology for People Who are Blind or Have Low Vision](#) [click.icptrack.com]. The course provides an overview of the types and uses of assistive technology devices and software for individuals who are blind or have low vision. The course also provides resources for more information and staying current with these assistive technologies. Registration is free and required.

The [RTC: Rural - Rural Solutions to Strengthen Disability Community Capacity \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) published a factsheet, [Examining the Equity of Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\) Services for Rural Americans \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The factsheet examined VR case services data through two studies to better understand how VR agencies serve diverse populations. The findings of the studies highlight continued disparities in the delivery of VR services for rural people with disabilities and the need for a more inclusive and accessible VR system.

Mark your calendars for the National Federation of the Blind [2024 Dare to Be Remarkable conference \[nfb.org\]](#), a three-day national conference, November 11 to 13 in Baltimore, Maryland, for education and rehabilitation professionals who work with blind students and adults. For more information, contact Nikki Jackson, Employment Programs Coordinator at [njackson@nfb.org \[nfb.org\]](mailto:njackson@nfb.org) or 410-659-9314, extension 2404.

The [Rusk Rehabilitation Traumatic Brain Injury Model System Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) seeks participants for a research study to test the Mindfulness, Exercise, Nutrition to Optimize Resilience (MENTOR) Program, a virtual wellness program for individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). To learn more or to volunteer, contact Olga Garduno-Ortega, research coordinator, at [917/376-2270](tel:9173762270) or Olga.Garduno-Ortega@nyulangone.org or Tamara Bushnik, PhD, principal investigator, at tamara.bushnik@nyulangone.org.

The [Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) at the Department of Labor released a toolkit, [Helping Workers with Disabilities Get Ahead Through Good Jobs: A Toolkit of Practical Strategies \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), for public and private employers working to build equitable pathways to good jobs for people with disabilities. The toolkit provides strategies and best practices to recruit, hire, retain, and advance workers with disabilities in construction, manufacturing, and clean energy industries. Sections cover defining disability, planning to include workers with disabilities, recruiting and hiring, retaining and supporting workers with disabilities, advancing workers with disabilities, and additional resources.

Drawing on data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth 1997 (NLSY97), Mathematica's Next Generation Project [new report \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#) explores how people's characteristics, contexts, and life events predict whether they participate in SSI in early adulthood. [Visit Mathematica's NextGen Project page \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)

The [Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research \(CeKTER\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released a brief, [Demographics and Employment Outcomes: Selected Findings from NIDILRR-funded Disability Employment Research in the 21st Century \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The summary discusses a systematic scoping review of NIDILRR-funded research on the employment of people with disabilities published between 2000 and 2020. The findings in this brief offer key insights related to education, gender, marital status, race, and age among people with disabilities, and

provide a clearer understanding of how these demographic factors influence employment outcomes within this community

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