



ADVANCING  
DISABILITY INCLUSION  
& WORKFORCE  
INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

## CSAVR National News Brief

October 6, 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.

---

### HIGHLIGHTS:

1. [NATIONAL NEWS](#)
  2. [2024 CSAVR FALL CONFERENCE](#)
  3. [RSA & ED UPDATE](#)
  4. [TAC NEWS](#)
  5. [NENA UPDATE](#)
  6. [REPORTS, TRAININGS, NEWSLETTERS, AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES](#)
  7. [COVID UPDATE](#)
-

## **NATIONAL NEWS**

Our thoughts are with all those in TN, FL, GA, VA, SC and especially NC who have suffered loss from Helene. The pictures of the damage and destruction are heartbreaking.

October is [National Disability Employment Awareness Month \[click.icptrack.com\]](http://click.icptrack.com), celebrating the talent workers with disabilities bring to America's workplaces and value they bring to the economy. As we know, building an inclusive and equitable workforce that includes employees with disabilities has many advantages for companies: studies continue to show that workers with disabilities are highly reliable and loyal, and companies that hire people with disabilities often boost their reputation in the marketplace. We hope you are celebrating NDEAM with your customer, partners, staff, legislators, and the general public. It is a great opportunity to address Strategic priority 3 of increasing public awareness of the value and services of the public VR Program and the work that you and your teams do every day. Hope you have some celebratory events planned like recognizing top vendors, going to the statehouse, and providing awards and recognition of legislators who support your program, thanking businesses that hire your customers, etc.

*Perceptions and bias of small business leaders in employing people with different types of disabilities. Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation, Volume 34(2), Pgs. 359-372. NARIC Accession Number: J94088.* This NIDILRR-funded study explored the motivations and challenges small employers face when hiring people with disabilities and how their attitudes and willingness to hire vary by disability type. In a survey of business owners and decision-makers at companies with fewer than 100 employees, the most important concerns employers reported about hiring people with disabilities were inability to discipline, unfamiliarity with how to hire and accommodate, and uncertainty of accommodation costs. While these concerns did not differ between employers covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and non-covered employers, ADA-covered employers were more likely to say they would hire an applicant with a disability. Among the disabilities examined, employers were least likely to hire someone with blindness, followed by mental health disabilities, intellectual disabilities, deafness, and physical disabilities, underscoring that employers do not view all types of disabilities as equally at work. Findings suggest greater openness among ADA-covered employers to hire people with disabilities, but the perceived barriers indicate a need for ongoing information on effective intervention strategies to increase hiring among all small employers. [Access the full abstract and ordering information in REHABDATA \[click.icptrack.com\]](http://click.icptrack.com).

## **2024 CSAVR FALL CONFERENCE**

In just two weeks we are looking forward to seeing you at our fall conference in Seattle, WA, October 19 - October 25, 2024. If you have not registered, please get to it because registration closes on Thursday, October 17, 2024. We have over 460 registered for the conference and over 180 for the Leadership Forum. The final agendas for the Conference and the Leadership Forum are on the CSAVR website. Directors you should have the agenda for the Directors Forum on Saturday. Also on the conference page are links to restaurant suggestions and things to do and see in Seattle. We hope to thank you for all your good work, energize you, give you new ideas and strategies to try, and work to make sure you are not totally sleepless in Seattle!

### **RSA & ED UPDATE**

Last Monday RSA issued [Dear Colleague Letter \(DCL\) 24-05 \[rsa.ed.gov\]](https://rsa.ed.gov) describing flexibilities available to reduce the burden on recipients with respect to the prior approval requirements, while ensuring program and fiscal accountability. It rescinds *Frequently Asked Questions for Prior Approval: OSEP and RSA Formula Grants* (October 29, 2019). If you have any feedback concerning this DCL please send it to me or John and thanks.

The RSA Fiscal Unit recently shared a DOE notice concerning attempted fraud utilizing compromised institutional email accounts of grantee entities or spoofed email addresses attempting to access Federal grant systems (including G5/G6) and divert funds housed there away from the recipient. Grantees were urged that if anything looks suspicious, to contact the Office of Business Support Services HelpDesk at 888-336-8930.

### **TAC NEWS**

VRTAC-QE has announced the dates for their *2025 National Symposium on Quality Employment* on May 21 and 22, 2025 with a pre-conference on May 20, 2025. VRTAC-QE is seeking proposals, for both concurrent and poster presentations, for its symposium. The proposal submission deadline is Friday, October 18, 2024 at 11:55 pm (PDT).

The symposium will be conducted in person but select sessions will be broadcast online. Presenters must be available to present in person in Madison, WI. The theme of the conference is, ["Evidence-based practices leading to Quality Employment of Persons with Disabilities."](https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com) [uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com]

The TACs entered their fifth and final year of funding on, October 1<sup>st</sup> and will run through September 30, 2025. If you need TA from QM, QE, AIVRS, and/or NTACT-C, call them now. If you want to talk to them in person, they will have informational tables at the upcoming Fall conference along with NCRTM and the Student Clearinghouse Rehabilitation Training Materials. Stop by and talk to them.

VRTAC-QE has announced their October webinar on 10/17/24. Here are the details:

Title: Using the VRC Self-Employment Proficiency Scale

Presenters: Tim Riesen and Molly Sullivan

About the Event: Join us for an insightful webinar on the VR Self-Employment Proficiency Scale, where you'll learn about the development process behind this valuable tool and its key purpose in vocational rehabilitation (VR) services. We'll explore how the proficiency scale can be used by VR agency staff to assess self-employment readiness and support client development. By the end of the session, you'll have a clear understanding of how this scale can enhance the effectiveness of VR programs and improve client outcomes. Registration Link:

<https://tacqe.com/trainings/vrc-se-proficiency-scale/> [[tacqe.com](https://tacqe.com)]

## **NENA UPDATE**

NENA has announced plans for their 2025 NENA Conference in Las Vegas, NV at the Flamingo from September 16 – 18, 2025. Work has already begun on the conference which will be their 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Amy Wallish is the NENA Outgoing Board Chair and Christa Nivens, NENA Incoming Board Chair.**

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

Join Mathematica's Center for Studying Disability Policy and the National Academy of Social Insurance for a virtual event on **Tuesday, October 8, at 1 p.m. Eastern Time** to examine the state of SSI today, 50 years after the program's first payment, and to discuss evidence-based reforms that could strengthen the program for the next 50 years. This event will include closed captioning and accessible materials that will be posted on the [event landing page \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) before the event. [You can use this registration link \[mathematicaorg.webex.com\]](https://mathematicaorg.webex.com).

The [Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Accommodations, Employment Supports, and Success for People with Physical Disabilities \(ACCESS-PD RRTC\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) will host a webinar, [Exploring Accommodation Options with Work ACCESS \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com), October 9th, 2 – 3 pm ET. Presenters will discuss and demonstrate Work ACCESS, a tool that employees with disabilities, employers, and rehabilitation professionals can use together to make informed decisions about

workplace accommodations. Registration is free and required. Continuing education credits are available upon request.

The [Great Lakes ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host a webinar, [Ask an ADA Professional: Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices \(OPDMD\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), October 9th, 2 - 3 pm ET. Presenters will answer questions related to the rights of people with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) when it comes to their use of OPDMDs such as ebikes, scooters, and golf carts. Individuals may submit questions in advance. Registration is free and required. Continuing education credits are available upon request.

For the golfers among you, [Great Lakes ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host a webinar, [Bringing People to Golf - Creating Accessible and Inclusive Environments \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), October 10th, 2 - 3:30 pm ET. Presenters will discuss educational resources, best practices, and networking opportunities that connect the game of golf to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Registration is free and required. Continuing education credits are available upon request.

The NIDILRR-funded project [Translating Findings on Supports for Community Life Engagement \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host a 30-Minute Lunch Break Series, [Community Life Engagement in Action \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), beginning October 23rd, 1:30 - 2 pm ET aimed at helping service providers develop and improve supports that lead to meaningful community life engagement (CLE) outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The first session will cover what participants can expect from the series as well as key concepts and tools in CLE outcomes. Registration is free and required. For more information, contact [darla.domin@umb.edu](mailto:darla.domin@umb.edu).

The [National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will host a webinar, [Is Your Kid Often Angry, Cranky, Irritable? \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), October 23rd, 12 - 1 pm ET, to help parents, caregivers, and educators learn about disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD). Presenters will provide an overview of DMDD and how it differs from typical mood swings and share practical approaches and coping strategies that families can use to support their child and manage daily challenges, when it is crucial to seek support, how to navigate the path to getting help, and exploring intervention options for DMDD. Registration is free and required.

The [Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center \(RERC\) on Universal Design and the Built Environment \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) debuted the [Inclusive Housing Stock Plans Project \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The project offers a set of building plans designed to help individuals looking to build homes that work well for everyone, including people with disabilities. Users can select from several base models that vary in affordability, each with variations to fit different needs, and download plans in formats ready for consumers and developers.



The [Temple University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Community Living and Participation of Individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses \(TU Collaborative\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) released two new resources. The primer, [Deaf Peer Support: An Overview. An Introduction to a Growing Subfield of Peer Services \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), provides information for the growing field of peer support services for Deaf individuals who are experiencing mental health challenges. It discusses the benefits of working with Deaf peer providers and provides additional resources. The guide, [Mental Health Disclosure: A Repository of Resources Related to Disclosure \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), provides information regarding disclosure and nondisclosure in a variety of settings and situations related to community participation.

[Temple University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center \(RRTC\) on Community Living and Participation of Individuals with Serious Mental Illnesses \(TU Collaborative\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) seeks participants with mental health challenges for conversations on how they make a difference in their communities, how they got started, and what it means to them. Participants will meet with researchers via videoconference for 30 - 45 minutes and will be asked questions about what they do to make a difference in their communities. To learn more or to volunteer, email [KTPLACE@temple.edu](mailto:KTPLACE@temple.edu).

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), in collaboration with the [Administration for Community Living \(ACL\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), launched the [Community Champions for Disability Health Challenge \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The challenge is open to community-based organizations in the US that seek to improve health equity for people with disabilities. The competition offers a total prize of \$485,000, plus training and mentoring opportunities. Additional information is available from the [challenge.gov website \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). Submissions are due by November 1st, 2024.

## **COVID UPDATE**

The hidden crisis: Long COVID's association with housing stability and home accessibility among people with disabilities. Disability and Health Journal. NARIC Accession Number: J94103.

This study examined the impact of Long COVID on housing stability and home accessibility, explored challenges faced by people with Long COVID, and identified potential strategies to address them. Comparing data from people with disabilities with and without Long COVID, individuals with Long COVID exhibited significantly higher rates of housing instability and financial concerns, such as worries about high rent or mortgage. They also reported more frequent issues with pests and mold in their homes. Analysis of narratives from study participants revealed financial setbacks, difficulties in obtaining support, and the challenges of home accessibility. Associations between Long COVID and challenges related to housing stability and home accessibility highlight the need for systemic changes, financial support, and advocacy. [Access the full abstract and ordering information in REHABDATA \[click.icptrack.com\]](#)