



Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

CSAVR National News Brief

June 18, 2023

CSAVR National News Brief is a regular series covering national news, research initiatives, webinars, conferences, and national advocacy activities of interest to member state VR agencies.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: In recognition of Juneteenth National Independence Day, the CSAVR Office will be closed on Monday June 19th. We hope all will take a moment on the 19th to reflect on the significance and importance of the day and of the work yet to be done.

HIGHLIGHTS:

1. [NATIONAL NEWS](#)
 2. [TIP OF THE EDITION](#)
 3. [DIF APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED](#)
 4. [BUILD AMERICA, BUY AMERICA ACT \(BABAA\) & VR](#)
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NATIONAL NEWS

Based on a survey of some 28,000 employees across 16 countries, the authors of “*Your Workforce Includes People with Disabilities. Does Your People Strategy?*” noted that 25% of respondents stated that they have a disability or health condition that limits activities of daily life. This figure stands in sharp contrast to that reported by most large-scale enterprises that place the proportion of employees with disabilities at around 4%-7%. Alexiou, Gus.

[“Companies Grossly Underestimating How Many Disabled Employees They Have, Study Shows \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Forbes*

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income checks are likely to grow again in 2024, according to a new analysis, though not by nearly as much as this year. A projection this month from The Senior Citizens League, a nonprofit that advocates for seniors, suggests that benefits will increase by around 3.1% starting in January. Heasley, Shaun. [“SSI Benefits Expected to Rise Next Year \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Disability Scoop.*

In an effort to better serve individuals in underserved populations, SSA has used data to identify and reach out to underserved communities in rural and urban areas across the country where it noted the greatest decline in SSI applications since the pandemic, and where the majority of people living in those zip codes are people of color and/or people living at or below the 150 percent Federal poverty threshold. They are using a variety of ways to reach people, including radio and television public service announcements (PSA), radio ads, mailers, bus shelter and other large signs, flyers distributed to local stores, and printed publications in several language options. Nesbit, Jeff. [“Social Security Administration Expands Outreach and Access for Supplemental Security Income \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\].”](https://links.news.mathematica-mpr.com) *Social Security Matters*

The labor participation rate for women Ages 25 to 54 reached a record high 77.5% in April, surpassing a peak reached in 2000, according to US data going back to the 1940s. Participation among women 55 and older has been stuck near pandemic-era lows. *Bloomberg*

From the financial world, roughly 1 in 2 people who work in finance would change jobs- or already have- if their managers required them to spend more days in the office. About 40% of financial professionals say they already work from the office four days or more a week.

Bloomberg

TIP OF THE EDITION

RSA has posted all the FY 22 107 monitoring reports on the public portion of their website at [RSA.ed.gov](https://rsa.ed.gov) [rsa.ed.gov]. Reports from prior years are also on their website. If you think your agency might be identified to be in the next round of monitoring, you may want to review these reports and other more recent ones in preparation. They can help you identify areas which you may wish to strengthen in terms of your fiscal and/or programmatic operations. Another great resource is the MTAG that RSA publishes which is also available on their website.

DIF APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

The application deadline has been extended to Friday, July 7, 2023, 11:59:59 Eastern Time. We continue to get many questions about which VR agencies are applying. Probably the predominant questions are Why are more VR agencies not working with partners to develop applications? and Can our programs have any money not claimed? We realize the challenges of applying and then implementation. If there is anything CSAVR can do to assist with an application, please let us know.

BUILD AMERICA, BUY AMERICA ACT (BABAA) & VR

As previously reported, we are starting to hear rumblings that compliance with BABAA may be resulting in delays in home modification services to customers. Part appears to be concern that smaller “mom and pop” vendors do not have the administrative capacity to meet the BABAA requirements so their capacity is being lost again to the detriment of customers.

Please let us hear from you if compliance with BABAA requirements is impacting your ability to serve your customers. We are seeking specific examples of the impact such as delays in service provision especially with home modification, loss of vendors, etc. Also, we understand that questions are beginning to be raised as to the interpretation of BABAA’s application to home modifications so if you have done any research in your agency in this regard or have thoughts, please send these our way too.

TAC NEWS

Where did all the staff go? Addressing your Recruitment Woes- A Conversation with Dr. Jim Herbert -Penn State.

Dr. Jim Herbert, Professor of Counselor Education and Rehabilitation and Human Services at Penn State, joined Carol Pankow in the studio. In this first part of a two-part series, Jim discusses the recruitment challenges identified in his study- Recruitment and Retention of State Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors: A Mixed Methods Analysis.

Please listen in as Carol and Jim unpack this study and discuss the four significant challenges and possible solutions you can apply to your situation.

Stay tuned as the focus shifts to the retention side of the study by Dr. Jim Herbert in the next episode of Manager Minute.

[Listen Here \[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com\]](https://managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com)

RSA & OSERS NEWS

During FFY 2023, RSA conducted annual reviews to determine whether States substantially complied with the requirements governing the provision of pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities. RSA has published 11 annual review reports on their [website \[rsa.ed.gov\]](https://rsa.ed.gov) and will publish the remaining reports in the coming weeks.

Beginning with Federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007, RSA has also published monitoring reports at [rsa.ed.gov \[rsa.ed.gov\]](https://rsa.ed.gov) and recently published all monitoring reports for reviews conducted during FFY 2022.

REPORTS, TRAINING, NEWSLETTERS AND CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

The [Center on Self-Employment, Business Ownership, and Telecommuting \[centeronselfemployment.org\]](https://centeronselfemployment.org) has developed a new six module online self-employment course, [Core Self-Employment Concepts \[centeronselfemployment.org\]](https://centeronselfemployment.org), that provides information and strategies for supporting each step in the self-employment path designed specifically for VR professionals. Access the course: [Core Self-Employment Concepts \[centeronselfemployment.org\]](https://centeronselfemployment.org)

The [Community Living Policy Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) (90RTCP0004) will host a [State of the Science series \[click.icptrack.com\]](https://click.icptrack.com) in June with three webinars featuring community living policy researchers and advocates, and other disability community stakeholders. A Reflection on Community Living Policy and Equity, June 12th, 1 – 2:15 pm ET, will focus on the work and accomplishments of the center, and introduce the Community Living Equity Center. Community Living Research: What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Learn?, June 23rd, 11 am – 12:15 pm ET, will feature panelists discussing what they have learned in the realm of

community living research and gaps to address in the future. Community Living Priorities and Issues: Feedback from Stakeholders, June 27th, 2 – 3:15 pm ET, will feature feedback from stakeholders, advocates, and community members about the priorities and issues that should be focused on in community living research. Registration is free and required for each session.

The [Southeast ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (90DPAD0005) will host a webinar, [Enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\) and Steps You Can Take Before You File an ADA Complaint \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), June 22nd, 10 – 11 am ET. There are many steps that a person can take prior to filing an ADA complaint to resolve a disability discrimination issue. During this session, presenters will discuss these steps and talk about the process for filing an ADA complaint with the various federal agencies that enforce the ADA. This is the sixth of ten sessions in the [4th Thursday ADA Talk Series \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). Continuing education credits are available upon request. Registration is free and required.

The NIDILRR-funded project [Promoting Mainstream Wireless Inclusion Through Technology Services \(PROMISE\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (90REGE0016) seeks participants for a [pilot of the ASSIST service delivery model \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (PDF) and its ability to support assessment of independent living skills and introduction of mainstream smart home technology for use as assistive technology to support participation of people with physical disabilities. Eligible participants must be over 21 years of age, use a power wheelchair as their primary means of mobility, and have reliable internet at home, among other criteria. Participants may get to keep the smart home technology provided for the study. To learn more about the study and to enroll, contact Jessica Boateng, at jsb145@pitt.edu.

The [Interagency Committee on Disability Research \(ICDR\) \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) will host the [annual virtual stakeholder meeting \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), June 28th, 12 – 4 pm ET. The interactive meeting will focus on inclusion of people with disabilities across all facets of the disability and rehabilitation research landscape. It will include a stakeholder panel discussion, presentations on emerging topics in disability and rehabilitation research, concurrent breakout groups for participants to discuss topics related to the ICDR's focus areas, and a federal agency panel discussion. Participants will have the opportunity to engage in a moderated question and answer period and discussion session after each panel and presentation. Registration is free and required and space is limited.

The [Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (90DPAD0008) will host a webinar, [Everybody Outside! Accessing the Inclusive Hiking Experience \[click.icptrack.com\]](#), June 21st, 2 – 3 pm ET. Presenters will explore the federal guidelines for accessible trail design and the multiple ways that individuals with disabilities experience hiking activities. Presenters will discuss how trail planners and managers may better anticipate the needs of diverse users and what people with disabilities may expect from accessible trail design and adaptive hiking equipment. Registration is free and required.