



ADVANCING  
DISABILITY INCLUSION  
& WORKFORCE  
INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

## CSAVR National News Brief

August 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.

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## **2023 CSAVR FALL CONFERENCE**

The registration page for the Fall Conference which will be in Savannah, Georgia from October 28<sup>th</sup> to November 1<sup>st</sup> is up and running. Register now! Don't forget about the Leadership Forum on Sunday and the Directors' Forum on Saturday.

CSAVR's theme this year is History Illuminated – Future Unlocked: *Celebrating the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 – Innovating for Tomorrow*. There will be six (6) general sessions and up to twenty-one (21) concurrent sessions at the in-person conference.

We have issued a Call for Proposals for the conference and hope to get a great response. There is a link to the Call for Proposals on the CSAVR website on the [Events page \[csavr.org\]](#). Proposals are due September 29<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm ET. Please email proposals to [tferguson@csavr.org](mailto:tferguson@csavr.org) if you are submitting by pdf. If you have any questions regarding the Call for Papers, please contact [tferguson@csavr.org](mailto:tferguson@csavr.org) and [thamrick@csavr.org](mailto:thamrick@csavr.org). **We encourage you to consider developing a proposal.**

Some of you may be wondering if there will be any virtual sessions offered. Based on your feedback from the spring, we are not going to tie any virtual training sessions to the fall conference.

Realizing the value of virtual sessions, we do hope to offer three 90-minute webinars whose topics will be based on responses to a survey sent to SVRA training coordinators asking them to identify the top three most pressing training needs for field staff. Results are in and we are in the process of making decisions on next steps. We plan to offer these sessions prior to the end of the calendar year so stay tuned.

### **CSAVR PROJECT & OPERATIONS MANAGER POSITION**

CSAVR is seeking a highly qualified Project and Operations Manager. Hopefully, you have received our Notice of this excellent opportunity and are sharing it with potential candidates. The position has been posted on our homepage at [www.csavr.org](http://www.csavr.org) [[csavr.org](#)].

Qualified applicants are asked to electronically submit a comprehensive education and employment resume, along with three letters of reference to:

Stephen A. Wooderson, CEO  
CSAVR  
[Swooderson@csavr.org](mailto:Swooderson@csavr.org)

Application deadline is 5p eastern time, Friday September 8, 2023.

## NATIONAL NEWS

This year has seen catastrophic weather in the form of floods, blizzards, tornados, etc. The most recent example of Mother Nature's fury are the wildfires in Maui where several communities especially the town of Lahaina have been devastated. According to some reports, the fires moved a mile a minute, and residents had little time to leave ahead of the flames. Our thoughts go out to all those who have suffered loss this year, especially to those in Maui. Seeing the pictures of the once beautiful town of Lahaina are very sobering. We hope all those especially members of are VR family are able to recover quickly.

There is a new NIDILRR-funded study, understanding persons with disabilities' reasons for not seeking employment. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin (RCB), Volume 66(1), Pgs. 3-12*. NARIC Accession Number: J90458, which as the title implies identifies reasons that people living with disabilities in the United States reported for not seeking employment and categorized the reasons by demographic, socioeconomic, and disability characteristics. The researchers found that medical conditions, functional limitations, or their disability were more likely to be reported as reasons for not seeking work, rather than situational reasons associated with workplace engagement, such as "lack of job opportunities." To learn more [Access the full abstract and ordering information in REHABDATA \[click.icptrack.com\]](#).

Speaking of work, the NIDILRR-funded [Rehabilitation Research and Training on Employment Policy: Center for Disability-Inclusive Employment Policy Research \[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (90RTEM0006) released the third season of the [Let's Get to Work - Reimagining Inclusive Employment Policy Podcast \[click.icptrack.com\]](#). The podcast offers insights and policy ideas from subject matter experts with diverse backgrounds. The areas of focus include telework, artificial intelligence and algorithmic bias, inclusive apprenticeships, and the impact of COVID-19 on the employment of people with disabilities. The episodes share the importance of changing systems, structures, and supports throughout the life cycle of employment.

Almost 34 million Americans age 16 years and over have a disability, [according \[bls.gov\]](#) to the Current Population Survey, a monthly poll of households conducted by the Census Bureau. The figure is up by more than 4.9 million over the past three years.

Interesting new research findings from our colleagues at Mathematica:

Shenk, Marisa. "[What Vocational Rehabilitation Services Do Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum Engage with, and What Are Their Outcomes? \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)" Mathematica.

Shenk, Marisa. "[Vocational Rehabilitation and Autistic Young Adults: Characteristics, Service Use and Outcomes \[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)." Mathematica.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued a notice of proposed rulemaking under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that aims to improve web and mobile applications (apps) access for people with disabilities and clarify how public entities, primarily state and local governments, can meet their existing ADA obligations as many of their activities shift online. Public comments are due by October 4, 2023.

Federal Medicaid officials recently shared they will extend some flexibilities for home and community-based services that emerged during the pandemic in a bid to help the disability services sector stay afloat. In guidance, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said that states can continue relying on changes that were adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic while they work to officially incorporate them into their waiver programs.

Congratulations to our friend Dr. Andre Washington, PhD, from Langston University on receipt of the Bobbie Atkins Research Award from the [National Association on Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns \(NAMRC\)](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)]. Dr. Washington was recognized for his significant volume of exemplary research and associated publications, research related to multiculturalism and disability, and development of research that has or will make a difference in rehabilitation practices within the multicultural arena.

### **TAC NEWS**

#### ***VRTAC-QM Manager Minute- Maximizing VR Services: Leveraging Resources so Counselors Can Get Back to Counseling-Wisconsin VR- STOUT Partnership***

Joining Carol Pankow in the VRTAC-QM studio is Delora Newton, Division Administrator for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and Kyle Schemenauer, Director of Services, Eligibility and Order of Selection Unit at the Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SRVI).

Delora and Kyle talk about the partnership that reduces the time for eligibility determination while freeing up counselors' work time by outsourcing and streamlining the pre-eligibility work to SRVI.

This partnership has brought an objective and consistent process utilizing a per-customer rate fee. It has been working for Wisconsin VR as applicant rates are soaring, keeping SVRI busier than ever. **Listen Here** [[managerminutevrtac-qw.libsyn.com](#)]

This past week you received the compendium compiled by VRTAC-QE comprising a special series of 27 articles published in four different journals: *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*; *Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Journal*; *Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education*; and *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. In addition to providing the articles in this compendium, electronic copies can be found on the VRTAC-QE website (<https://tacqe.com/tacqe.com>).

Also, the VRTAC-QE conducted a comprehensive review of statewide needs assessments, state plans, monitoring reports conducted by RSA, and other publicly available documents. The comprehensive review is available for download on the project website.

### DOE/RSA/OSERS UPDATE

On August 11<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education issued [FAQ 23-01 \[lnks.gd\]](#) related to the Program Year (PY) 2022 performance assessments. The Departments have determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the WIOA title I, III, and IV core programs for PY 2022 for the following performance indicators, as applicable:

- Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit;
- Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit;
- Employment Rate 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit; and
- Credential Attainment Rate.

They also have noted other performance indicators for which they feel there is not reliable data to produce estimates. Contact your [RSA State Liaison \[lnks.gd\]](#) with any questions.

OSERS released a [new blog series \[lnks.gd\]](#) as part of a continued effort to emphasize the need for more cohesive secondary transition planning for students with disabilities. To learn more about OSERS secondary transition efforts, visit the [OSERS' Successful Transitions for All blog series \[lnks.gd\]](#)

As previously shared, RSA announced details for the FFY 2023 reallocation. The deadline for response was *August 15, 2023 and this was extended to August 18th*.

As you are aware, the Hill for the past few years and an increasing number of others have been interested in the amount of federal dollars our program has been returning unmatched. We want to get ahead of the Hill in answering the question that will surely come, which is *Why are these dollars continuing to go unmatched?* Again, please help us be prepared and send to Tonia at [Tferguson@csavr.org](mailto:Tferguson@csavr.org) and copy John at [Jconnelly@csavr.org](mailto:Jconnelly@csavr.org) whether or not your agency will relinquish or request additional funds and the amounts or neither and the WHY especially behind amounts being relinquished.

Many thanks to those who have already responded. At the writing of this, we have only heard from five of the 78 agencies. Please take a few minutes to respond to this request so we can be prepared to respond to the Hill. Since our last National News Brief, we now have an opportunity to brief OMB and we want to be prepared so thanks again and in advance for your help.

The U.S. Department of Education is once again seeking public comment on a proposed Build America, Buy America Act (BABAA) Public Interest Waiver for Certain Previously Planned Projects for Department Grantees. The waiver has been published for public comment on the Department's [Build America Buy America Waivers \(ed.gov\) \[lnks.gd\]](#) webpage under the **Waivers Opened for Public Comment, Approved or Denied** section in accordance with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (P.L. 117-58) sec. 70914(b)(1).

It is currently open for public comment until August 31, 2023. To access the waiver directly, click on the following link: [U.S. Department of Education Public Interest Waiver for Certain Previously Planned Infrastructure Projects for Department Grantees. \[lnks.gd\]](#)(PDF, 197KB)

## **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STUDY/PHASE 2**

This past week you received a RehabNet request from the CSAVR Operations and Personnel Committee working in partnership with the rehabilitation faculty at Penn State University (Drs. Jim Herbert, Amber O'Shea and Hyung Joon Yoon) to help with Phase 2 of the Recruitment and Retention Study. In this phase we hope to learn from RSA scholars working in SVRAs why they seek employment there and why they then stay or leave.

Attached to the request you received was an announcement that we hope you have or will forward to your professional staff (counselors, supervisors, administrators) who are RSA scholars. The announcement provides information about the study and asks that said staff complete a survey so we can gather their thoughts on recruitment and retention.

Addressing Recruitment and Retention challenges is one of CSAVR's three strategic priorities. Having staff positions filled, especially those of VRCs is crucial to helping us move the workforce participation rate needle for individuals with disabilities.

Thanks for your help. If you have any questions about the study or announcement, please contact John at [jconnelly@csavr.org](mailto:jconnelly@csavr.org).

## **CSAVR ATTORNEY NETWORK**

The Network held its monthly meeting this past week. It now has 138 members and has developed some standing committees to better serve the members as well as special work groups. At this meeting, the Training Committee announced that they will present a virtual *Ethics for Government Practitioner* training during the Networks October 19<sup>th</sup> meeting. Another project the Network via their Youth Consent/Pre-ETS work group being taken forward is addressing the RSA requirement that agencies must have the consent of both parents if they have joint custody and how to address this if one of those parents is unavailable to give consent or refuses to do so. Lots of good work going on here and we appreciate the leadership provided by Kelley Rice of IA-G and Daisy Hughes of CA-C.



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

The [Equal Employment Opportunities Commission \(EEOC\)](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] released updated guidance, [Visual Disabilities in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)], that addresses how the ADA applies to job applicants and employees with visual disabilities. Using a question-and-answer format, the guidance addresses when an employer may ask about visual disabilities, how to treat voluntary disclosures, types of reasonable accommodations, handling safety concerns, and preventing or addressing harassment or discrimination due to a visual disability. The publication includes example scenarios for each question.

The [Great Lakes ADA Regional Center](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] (90DPAD0012) will host a webinar, [The Fair Housing Act and the Accessibility Guidelines](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)], August 22nd, 2 - 3:30 pm ET. Presenters will explain the historical context, evolution, and scope of the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and will identify the accessible design characteristics covered by the FHA. Presenters will discuss reasonable housing accommodations and modification protections for individuals with disabilities. Presenters will also examine the development framework and content of FHA Guidelines and identify FHA resources and training opportunities. Registration is free and required.

The [Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] (90DPAD0008) will host a webinar, [Protecting the Rights of Disabled Parents Involved with the Child Welfare System](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)], August 23rd, 2 - 3:30 pm ET. Presenters will describe the experiences of parents with disabilities within the child welfare system and will explore the application of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to that system, including recent enforcement efforts by the federal government and court decisions. Presenters will also discuss strategies and solutions for representing disabled parents and their children. Registration is free and required.

The NIDILRR-funded project [Being Needed: Building Social Connections that Matter to Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] (90DPCP0011) published a report, [You Matter...but What Does Mattering Really Mean?](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] The report highlights findings from interviews with individuals with serious mental illness about what mattering meant to them and times when they felt like they did or did not matter. Participants highlighted three components of mattering: awareness, importance, and reliance. The report also discusses how organizations can honor those components to create a culture of mattering.

The [Pacific ADA Regional Center](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)] (90DPAD0006) will host a webinar, [ADA National Network Learning Session: Ensuring Telehealth Access for All](#) [[click.icptrack.com](#)], August 24th, 2:30 - 4 pm ET. Presenters will provide an overview of the National Consortium of Telehealth Resource Centers and the role of federally-funded Telehealth Resource Centers. Presenters will discuss strategies, best practices, and innovative solutions

that have been used to enhance accessibility of telehealth for people with disabilities. Presenters will also share a variety of telehealth and disability resources available to both patients with disabilities and providers. Registration is free and required.

[When is Gender Dysphoria Considered a Disability Under the Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)?](#) [\[click.icptrack.com\]](#), a new rapid research report published by the NIDILRR-funded [Rocky Mountain ADA Regional Center](#) [\[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (90DPAD0014), explores the timely issue of when gender dysphoria can be considered a protected disability under the ADA. The report defines gender dysphoria, gender identity disorder, and transgender, and describes how the ADA may or may not apply to people who identify with these terms. The authors note that federal case law is unsettled in this area, and cover recent relevant decisions in Circuit Courts and the US Supreme Court.

The National Rehabilitation Counseling Association (NRCA) and the Rehabilitation Counselors and Professionals Association of Arkansas (RCPAA) are co-hosting a rehabilitation conference in Little Rock, AR, beginning on September 20<sup>th</sup> and concluding on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. This will be a hybrid conference during which participants can attend either in person or online. Participants have an opportunity to earn a total of 15 hours of CRC credit, including 7 hours of ethics. Keynote speakers include Dr. Ian Shadrick (NRCA), and Ms. Pamela Shelmon (CRCC). For additional information visit

<https://nationalrehabcounselingassociation.wildapricot.org/page-18206>  
[\[nationalrehabcounselingassociation.wildapricot.org\]](#)

The [Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System Center](#) [\[click.icptrack.com\]](#) (90DPBU0008) seeks participants for the [Chronic Conditions Life Impact Management in Burns \(CLIMB\) Study](#) [\[click.icptrack.com\]](#) to participate as CLIMB Leaders. The study aims to assess the effects of a self-management program on health-related quality of life in the chronic burn survivor population. Eligibility and benefit information are available from the linked study page.

The Autism Society is seeking healthcare and community partners who are interested in increasing vaccination rates and improving the vaccine experience. Partners will receive training and support from the Autism Society and its trusted national network of affiliates. For more information email [vei@autism-society.org](mailto:vei@autism-society.org).

#### RECENT ARTICLES

Alderson, Hayley, Deborah Smart, Gary Kerridge, Graeme Currie, Rebecca Johnson, Eileen Kaner, and Amy Lynch. [“Moving From 'What We Know Works' to 'What We Do in Practice': An Evidence Overview of Implementation and Diffusion of Innovation in Transition to Adulthood for Care Experienced Young People](#) [\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#).” *Child & Family Social Work*, February 2023.



De Brouwer, Octave, Elisabeth Leduc, and Ilan Tojerow. "[The Consequences of Job Search Monitoring for the Long-Term Unemployed: Disability Instead of Employment?](#)" *Journal of Public Economics*, August 2023.

[\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)"

Friedman, Carli. "[Medicaid Home- and Community-Based Services Waivers for People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities](#)" *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 2023.

Machado, Alejandra, Azadé Azad, Emma Pettersson, Jan Hillert, Kristina Alexanderson, and Emilie Friberg. "[Gender Differences in Earnings Among People with Multiple Sclerosis and Associations with Type of Occupation and Family Composition: A Population-Based Study with Matched References](#)" *PLOS ONE*, August 2023.

Olischläger, Daphne, L.T., Li Xiang Y. den Boer, Eline de Heus, Linda Brom, Desiree J.S. Dona, Heinz-Josef Klümpen, Christina M. Stapelfeldt, and Saskia F.A. Duijts. "[Rare Cancer and Return to Work: Experiences and Needs of Patients and \(Health Care\) Professionals](#)"

[\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)" *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 2023.

Rondinone, Bruna Maria, Luca Fontana, Giuliana Buresti, Mauro Fedele, Grazia Fortuna, Sergio Iavicoli, Maria Giuseppina Lecce, and Benedetta Persechino. "[The Challenges of Managing Patients with Cancer in the Workplace: Needs, Opportunities and Perspectives of Occupational Physicians](#)" *PLOS ONE*, 2023.

Roux, M. Anne, Kaitlin K. Miller, Sha Tao, Jessica E. Rast, Jonas Ventimiglia, Paul T. Shattuck, and Lindsay L. Shea. "[Unrealized Cross-System Opportunities to Improve Employment and Employment-Related Services Among Autistic Individuals](#)"

[\[links.news.mathematica-mpr.com\]](#)" *Milbank Quarterly*, August 2023.

Sanderson, Kelli. A., and Jennifer L. Bumble. "[Parent Perspectives: Understanding the Postschool Concerns of Parents of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities](#)" *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, August 2023.

Smith-Hill, Rebecca. B., Charles B. Walters, Chelsea VanHorn Stinnett, and Anthony J. Plotner. "[Social Work as Social Justice: Supporting the Autonomy of Students with Disabilities Through Alternatives to Guardianship](#)" *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 2023.

## **SSA UPDATE**

SSA has announced two upcoming learning events as part of “EN Essentials,” a new series of supplemental trainings for both new and established Employment Networks (EN):

**August 23, 2023: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET (This is a date change)**

### **Developing and Maintaining Successful Individual Work Plans (Part 1)**

Discuss how to complete an IWP using Ticketholder intake information to create goals and identify the services and supports the Ticketholder needs. This session will cover Ticket assignment and amending the IWP as the Ticketholder moves toward their employment goals.

**September 20, 2023: 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. ET**

### **Developing and Maintaining Successful Individual Work Plans (Part 2)**

This session will cover Ticket assignment and additional compliance metrics for IWP completion, including the discussion summary and signatures required. The session will also stress the importance of ongoing communication and required documentation of services and supports the EN provides.

Mark your calendar to join these events, which will be held via Microsoft Teams. There is no need to register in advance. Two weeks prior to the event, SSA will send service providers the login information for participating.

Please send any questions, comments or suggestions for future topics to

[ENOperations@yourticketowork.ssa.gov](mailto:ENOperations@yourticketowork.ssa.gov). [[nenaticket.org](http://nenaticket.org)]