

Week of December 13, 2021

NATIONAL, HILL AND DC NEWS:

Senate Democrats on Tuesday softened their optimism that their party's sweeping safety net and climate spending and tax package will pass before Christmas, citing uncertainty about whether Sen. Joe Manchin III, D-W.Va., is ready to support it and procedural steps that are far from complete.

The House passed a \$2.2 trillion version of the appropriation bill last month. Senate Democrats have released updated text for nine of their 12 committees that have jurisdiction over the package. The Energy and Natural Resources Committee that Manchin chairs is among the three committees that have not released text, along with Environment and Public Works and Judiciary. The Democratic leadership held a call Tuesday morning where they discussed details of how to get the bill done before Dec. 25th.

Lawmakers in Congress will likely cross paths often next year, but several times members of the Senate will be in Washington while their House counterparts are out of town. The Senate's newly released calendar envisions the chamber being in session for 171 days in 2022, 146 before Election Day, including parts of 36 different weeks.

The calendar, unveiled Tuesday, shows that senators are scheduled to return to Washington during the first week of January, a week earlier than the House. The calendar calls for weeklong breaks in January and February for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Presidents' Day holidays, and a two-week break over Easter and Passover.

Some of that overlaps with the House schedule that was released in late November, but while the House is scheduled to be out of session for the entire months of August and October, the Senate is set for smaller breaks. The week of Memorial Day at the end of May and the newly created federal Juneteenth holiday on June 20 will be the other breaks before the summer recess, which is set for Aug. 8 until Sept. 6. Every House seat is on the ballot on Nov. 8, but only 34 of the Senate's 100 seats are up this year.

After a full month of work in September, taking only Rosh Hashana off on Sept. 26, the Senate is set to take off two weeks in both October and November. The schedule builds in more than two straight weeks off in the run-up to Election Day, as senators facing competitive races look to ramp up their campaigns. The calendar calls for the chamber's adjournment on Dec. 21.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) this past week released an estimate of how much it would cost to make most temporary provisions in the House-passed Build Back Better Act permanent.

Under assumptions requested by Ranking Members of the Budget Committees, CBO finds a permanent version of the Build Back Better Act with no further offsets would increase budget deficits by \$2.75 trillion before interest, as opposed to by \$158 billion as the bill is written.

The Build Back Better Act relies on a number of arbitrary sunsets and expirations to lower the official cost of the bill. These include extending the American Rescue Plan's Child Tax Credit (CTC) increase and Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) expansion for a year, setting universal pre-K and child care subsidies to expire after six years, and making the Affordable Care Act (ACA) expansions available through 2025, among other provisions. CBO estimates that making most of these provisions permanent would add about \$2.3 trillion to the cost of the bill (and lose roughly \$260 billion of revenue from imposing the state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap beyond 2025). Most of this increase is due to the cost of extending temporary provisions, though a small amount is likely because some the proposals will cost more in the early years if states and other entities expect them to be permanent.

Assuming these provisions are made permanent without any offsets (*note that President Biden has committed to offset extensions*), the bill would add \$2.75 trillion to the deficit before interest and \$3.0 trillion including interest. That debt increase would grow to \$3.2 trillion if lawmakers also make permanent a temporary delay of amortization of research and experimentation expenses.

In a blog post published this week, Adobe accessibility boss Andrew Kirkpatrick shared results of a study conducted by the company meant to survey the employment opportunities available to people with disabilities, as well as the role companies have in actively recruiting and retaining such talent. The study included a thousand full- and part-time workers and students. People with and without disabilities participated.

Amongst the findings, Kirkpatrick highlights several insights. 84% of respondents felt their workplace could benefit from some types of accessibility, while 77% said they are interested in leaning more about accessibility practices such as supporting mental health and various learning styles. 84% said they consider the needs of disabled coworkers “at least sometimes.” For those in the disability community, Kirkpatrick notes accessibility and inclusivity benefits “are a deciding factor” in judging a job opportunity, as it should be and has always been.

CSAVR DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS POSTING:

The posting period for this position has been extended through Friday, January 28, 2022. Additionally, the Official Domicile and Travel section of the posting has been amended to read:

Official Domicile and Travel: The successful candidate will ideally be domiciled in the Washington, DC metro area and work remotely from home. Applicants planning to reside outside the DC metro area will be considered, however, the primary duties of this position will require extended periods of time working with Congress, staff and other national organizations headquartered in the Washington DC area. Frequent travel may be required at times.

Directors have been provided the job description via direct email, plus information can be found on our Facebook page and my personal LinkedIn account. Any additional inquiries can be directed to my attention.

DIRECTOR NEWS:

Florida VR General will have an Interim Director on 1/1/22. Dr. Antionette Williams has been appointed as the interim. We welcome her. She is no stranger to FL VR as she has been working in the agency for many years. Welcome Antionette.

Allison, thank you for your state and national leadership. We will miss you in the Director ranks and are glad that your expertise and knowledge will still be available through the VRTAC QM.

NCSAB ELECTS 2022 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS:

CSAVR wishes to congratulate the following new 2022 NCSAB Officers and Directors. We look forward to working with you all in the New Year!

2022 NCSAB Officers

President – Dr. Bernice Davis, New Jersey

President-Elect – Carlos Servan, Nebraska

Treasurer – Tracy Brigham, Oklahoma

Secretary – Dr. Cassondra Williams-Stokes, Arkansas

2022 Directors-at-Large and Committee Chairs

Rod Alcidonis – Transition Committee, Pennsylvania

John Gordon – Randolph-Sheppard Committee, Illinois

Shirley Robinson – Employment Committee, Georgia

Cynthia Speight – IL Committee, North Carolina

Dorothy Young – Technology Committee, Mississippi

EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS MEASURES:

In the Spring 2021 Unified Agenda, the Biden Administration signaled that the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor planned to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in March 2022 to define the EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS performance indicator in joint WIOA regulations.

The Biden Administration recently published its Fall 2021 Unified Agenda and signaled that the Departments plan to issue this NPRM in May 2022, beginning the rulemaking process two months later. The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) partnered with the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education to include the Proposed Rule Stage.

Until the Departments define this performance indicator in final regulations and implement data collection and reporting across WIOA core programs, States will continue to report piloted EFFECTIVENESS IN SERVING EMPLOYERS measures in accordance with joint policy guidance (RSA-TAC-17-01). This will continue, at a minimum, for Program Years 2021 and 2022. Please email RSAData@ed.gov with any questions.

NET UPDATE:

Amazon - New NET connections this week: KS, KY, MO and NY. A special thanks to the Indiana and Kentucky team who are working with Amazon to identify a job coach for an employee who is blind.

Federal Opportunities - The number of federal opportunities continues to increase, this includes trainee positions, internships and seasonal work which are a pathway to a Federal career. The opportunities are shared nationally with NET members and the VR Training Center team as they are received by our Federal partners.

VR&E Meeting - Kathy and Inger had their monthly meeting with the national VR&E Employment team. Now that they have multiple candidates on TAP and are building their pool, the team will be working together to build a common marketing message for business outreach as well as a strategy for collaborating between the NET and VR&E at the regional and state level.

Careers and Business Relations team meeting - Jane Elizabeth and Michael met with Kathy and Inger this week to discuss the plans for the Committee and NET Regional Rep meetings in 2022. Based on the feedback from NET members, there will continue

to be a monthly meet with the Regional Reps as well as a NET Summit. It was proposed that, depending upon the timing, there be a in-person meeting and an option to join virtually. The NET Summit earlier this year included close to 300 attendees, several of the business team members from states joined and may be able to travel to in-person meetings based on budget or travel restrictions. The team is currently discussing a date after the CSAVR Spring meeting but prior to summer travel. There are business partners who have offered to host, when in-person meetings are supported.

The team also talked about feedback from the Directors Forum regarding the need to increase the connections between VRCs, business team members and other staff. One of the suggestions is to host two virtual forums a year that would focus specifically on Directors and leadership, keeping them posted on employment and labor market trends as well as other key areas related to training and career development. The NETworking session will also be made available to all VR staff so that they have access to key information from business, NET members and other partners. It will include the updated series of NET Train the Trainer modules that focuses on the strategies and planning behind the NET and TAP. The team is working with YesLMS and these courses will be offered for CRCC credit and CEUs.

TAC – QE - Harley, Inger and Kathy completed a 101 Module on the NET and TAP and submitted it to the TAC-QE. It was a true team effort between pulling information, organizing it and formatting it into a session that captures a wealth of information from over the past 16+ years that we have supported the development of the NET. Thank you team!

TAC-QE - Inger and Harley attended the partner meeting for the TAC-QE this week and are working to provide support in key areas with VR agencies.

NET Partners: Kathy and Mike Corso met with **Cognosante** to discuss their requests for support related to their new role as the TTW Program Manager. In addition to inviting ENs onto TAP, we are also looking at the opportunity to provide briefings on business. As their role fully develops, Cognosante will also be managing the reimbursement to VR, Kathy will be meeting with John and I to discuss the details and how to coordinate CSAVR support.

TAP Training Report for December 16, 2021, Michelle Alford-Williams, TAP Trainer

Top states that added new candidates this month are VA VR&E 246, Michigan (G) 33, Texas (G) 13 & FLA (B) 10.

Provided technical assistance to several states that have had training in the past months and worked with Washington (B) and Maine to start their hierarchy for training in the new year.

TAP Statistics as of December 16, 2021

551,491 Jobs Posted

11,583 Jobs Viewed

61 Job Applications (CA 21, VA - VR&E 10, and FLA (B) 6)

New Candidates

State	New Candidates	Applications
California	8	21
District of Columbia	2	2
Florida (B)	10	6
Georgia	2	0
Illinois	9	3
Iowa (G)	2	0
Michigan (G)	33	0
Missouri (G)	1	2
Nebraska (G)	1	1
NENA	0	1
New Jersey (B)	0	2
New Mexico (G)	4	0
North Carolina (G)	2	1
Oklahoma	1	0
Oregon (G)	1	1
Texas (G)	13	5
VA VR&E	246	10
Virginia (B)	4	0

RSA NEWS:

On December 14, 2021, RSA issued [TAC-22-02: MODIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR WIOA STATE PLANS FOR PROGRAM YEARS 2022 AND 2023](#). This joint policy guidance describes the Administration's priorities, modification requirements, submission process, and deadline for the required modification of the WIOA Unified and Combined State Plans for PYs 2022 and 2023.

In accordance with WIOA, its implementing regulations, and the WIOA UNIFIED AND COMBINED STATE PLAN REQUIREMENTS information collection request, states must submit a two-year modification of their WIOA Unified or Combined State Plans to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education (the Departments). States should submit plan modifications by March 15, 2022, using the [WIOA State Plan Portal](#). Once submitted, the Departments will review and provide a decision within 90 days for the core programs.

Please contact your RSA State Liaison with any questions.

This past week RSA also released refresher training slides on the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services portion of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Year (PY) 2022 Unified and Combined State Plan modifications. The slides include the following:

Part I: Overview and Purpose of the State Plan

Part II: State Plan Descriptions a through i

Part III: State Plan Descriptions j through q

Part IV: Assurances, Certifications, and Appendix

Since the requirements have not changed, the training videos from the PY 2020 submission of the State plan can also be accessed for reference at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtTKoswWL1E&list=PLwnuWJZgeu6zCgXCBrMBuOi07YiPD8jVH>.

Note that the refresher training slides have been updated to reference the 2022 modifications; however, the videos still reference the 2020 State plan submission.

VR agencies are encouraged to follow up with their RSA State liaison to discuss any questions they may have regarding the content and development of the VR services portion of the State Plan. Additional information and training regarding the State Plan portal will be announced at a later time.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY, OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES APPOINTMENT:

Congratulations to Valerie C. Williams on her appointment as director of the Office of Special Education Programs. Prior to the appointment she spent five years as the Senior Director of Government Relations & External Affairs for the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE). In this role, she oversaw NASDSE's federal government public policy activities, federal regulatory affairs, public relations, all related external partner and stakeholder activities, and strategy pertinent to key initiatives to promote equity, and guide positive systemic change, thereby improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Prior to joining NASDSE, Mrs. Williams was selected to be the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Public Policy Fellow, and served on the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee, advancing disability policy and civil rights. Preceding her work in policy, Mrs. Williams had nearly 20 years of experience in finance and budgeting with the Department of Defense and other federal agencies, for multi-million-dollar acquisition, classified, intelligence, science and R&D programs.

She has held numerous board memberships in local, state, and nationwide organizations dedicated to ensuring the education, self-determination, independence and empowerment of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society, such as the Arc and the National Down Syndrome Congress. Mrs. Williams is a graduate of the University of California at Berkeley and Johns Hopkins University.

She has a unique perspective, having experience on Capitol Hill, in advocacy organizations, supporting state special education leaders, and as the parent of a son with Down syndrome.

CSAVR had the pleasure of working with her at NASDSE and look forward to continuing to do so in her new role.

2022 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE COP:

Agencies scheduled to be monitored, both onsite and offsite, as well as those scheduled for performance plan reviews were invited to a newly forming CoP meeting this past week. This I believe is the fourth year in a row that Carol Pankow of TAC QM and John Connelly of CSAVR have teamed up to facilitate this CoP which past agency participants have found very helpful and hope that those in this new CoP will have the same experience.

VRTAC-QM MANAGER MINUTE:

RSA Monitoring: Surviving and Thriving Before, During, and After the Process
- Joining Carol Pankow in the VRTAC studio is Felicia Johnson, Commissioner of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, and Lindy Foley, Director of Nebraska VR. Today we are discussing how Felicia and Lindy prepared for the RSA monitoring process, what they experienced, and what they learned. They will share how they see monitoring as a continuous improvement process and an opportunity for growth.

The VRTAC for Quality Management has partnered with CSAVR to co-facilitate a community of practice for the cohort of agencies monitored each year. Over the past three years, we have found that much can be learned by those who are going through monitoring simultaneously sharing their experiences with each other. We provide tools that help you prepare for both the fiscal and programmatic aspects of the review.

[Listen Here](#)

You can find out more about VRTAC-QM on the web at:

<https://www.vrtac-qm.org/>

Please stay up to date by following [VRTAC-QM on Facebook](#) and follow us on Twitter [@VRTAC_QM](#)

CSAVR ATTORNEY NETWORK:

The network held its monthly meeting this past week. The current membership is 130 individuals from 45 states as well as DC and Guam. Among the items discussed was a survey of the membership that is underway to create a directory of members' areas of practice and expertise. There was also a discussion about planning for a CLE training to be held in Bethesda in conjunction with the CSAVR 2022 spring conference. The group also wrestled with the question of whether or not a consumer whose request to be assigned to a new counselor has been denied could appeal the denial to a fair hearing. The consensus was that such a decision is not appealable and does need to be addressed to ensure the counselor is providing good service to the consumer.

TAC NEWS:

VR TACs QE and QM had their partner meetings this past week. Both are working on their annual reports to submit to RSA for 2021.

QM shared that 65 agencies or 83.3% of the VR agencies received at least targeted TA from QM in its first year. Approximately, 3,406 individuals received TA. QM announced new additions to its team with Allison Flanagan coming on board from FL G as well as Bill Colombo from MI G.

QE shared its list of 102 webinars with the next one being on January 20, 2022. They are starting work on new 101 Modules for 2022 so stay tuned. A new initiative which was shared is that QE has been reaching out to academic institutions in state where they are providing TA and those of their project partners. They have shared a summary of available TA and other materials that might be helpful to students with these institutions and are getting a lot of interest.

In both instances there was discussion of ITA underway and states where negotiations were in process.

2022 SUMMIT GROUP WINTER FORUM:

The Summit Group, in cooperation with the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Management (VRTAC-QM), will offer three, free training and discussion forums for Summit Group members on January 12, 19, and 20 at 2:00 ET (1:00-2:30 CT, 12:00-1:30 MT, 11:00-12:30 PT).

The three topics will be:

- 1) Case File Review Systems (January 12, 2022)
- 2) Tracking Pre-Employment Transition Services (January 19, 2022)
- 3) Data Validation (Internal Control Processes; January 20, 2022)

Each session will be limited to 100 participants, so register early.

Accommodation needs should be entered at registration.

For more information on the events and to register please use the following links: The password for accessing the session information and registration is: VRsummit

1) Case File Reviews: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-summit-group-winter-forum-case-file-review-systems-tickets-223716972487>

2) Tracking Pre-ETS: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-summit-group-winter-forum-tracking-pre-employment-transition-services-registration-221545467457>

3) Data Validation Session: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-summit-group-winter-forum-data-validation-internal-controls-tickets-223737564077>

RESEARCH NEWS, WEBINARS, CONFERENCES, EVENTS, REPORTS, ETC.:

In October 2018, the MA DMH funded two new Research Centers of Excellence: UMass Chan Medical School's Implementation Science & Practice Advances Research Center (iSPARC) & Massachusetts General Hospital's Center of Excellence for Psychosocial and Systemic Research. The Centers came together in June 2021 to **host their first annual conference**. The conference, held virtually, brought together people receiving DMH services and their family members, DMH staff, and providers to learn more about the work the Centers do, and for the Centers to learn how their research can best support DMH, its mission, and the people served by DMH.

iSPARC is a **Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH)** Center of Excellence for Public Mental Health Services and Implementation Research that aims to improve the mental and behavioral health of all citizens of Massachusetts and beyond. iSPARC's 2021 annual report, "**Working Together, Apart**" to the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health (DMH) is available to read and download. Their 2021 annual report covers work between July 2020-June 2021 and shows the major advancements in how they practice community engagement via virtual platforms and highlights the increase in access that these platforms created for many individuals with lived experience across the Commonwealth. Their goal is to continue to leverage these platforms beyond the scope of the pandemic to retain these recent gains in our accessibility to the Massachusetts mental health community. **View our annual report** to see what we've accomplished in 2021 and some of what we will be doing in 2022.

Join Mathematica's Center for Studying Disability Policy on **January 19, 2022, from 12:30 to 1:45 p.m. EST** for a webinar to learn more about the post-termination outcomes of former Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries. Mathematica Senior Researcher **Michael Anderson** and Research Analyst **Marisa Shenk** will present findings from the recent research. They will be joined by **Jarnee Riley**, an associate director at Westat. Westat is conducting a study for the Social Security Administration on the service, medical, and employment needs of people leaving disability programs because of medical improvement. **Stephanie Desrochers**, a benefits counseling services coordinator with Maine Medical Center, will offer context for the research findings based on her work with beneficiaries and service providers.

The Center on KTDRR hosted its 9th annual online knowledge translation (KT) conference on October 25, 27, and 29, 2021, with the help of several presenters and lively reactors to help lead discussion of the conference presentations about this year's theme: "Research Results for Policy Outcomes." The conference archive is now available for viewing at https://ktdrr.org/conference2021/expo/conf_materials.html.

Webcast: Next-Level Accommodation and ADA Challenges from the Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Monthly Series Training on January 13, 2022 / 2:00 – 3:00 PM Eastern Time. Level up your ADA and accommodation game by learning practical ways to master complex accommodation and ADA situations involving engaging in the interactive process, addressing performance issues, modifying workplace policies, managing leave and attendance, and providing reasonable accommodations in a post pandemic world. JAN Principal Consultant Tracie DeFreitas will share expert guidance on accommodation, ADA, and interactive process strategies to help your team win the game. To access online registration, please [visit](#).

<https://askjan.org/events/index.cfm?calview=eventdetails&dtid=88DC0CC0-FA3F-5222-1C54A2376C221015>

Webinar: How Former Beneficiaries Fare After Leaving Social Security Disability Insurance from the Mathematica Center for Studying Disability Policy on January 19, 2022 / 12:30 – 1:45 PM Eastern Time. Join Mathematica's Center for Studying Disability Policy for a webinar to learn more about the post-termination outcomes of former Social Security Disability Insurance beneficiaries. Mathematica Senior Researcher [Michael Anderson](#) and Research Analyst [Marisa Shenk](#) will present findings from the recent research. They will be joined by [Jarnee Riley](#), an associate director at Westat. Westat is conducting a study for the Social Security Administration on the service, medical, and employment needs of people leaving disability programs because of medical improvement. [Stephanie Desrochers](#), a benefits counseling services coordinator with Maine Medical Center, will offer context for the research findings based on her work with beneficiaries and service providers. To access online registration, please [visit](#).

<https://www.mathematica.org/events/how-former-beneficiaries-fare-after-leaving-social-security-disability-insurance>

Conference: NAWB Forum 2022 from the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) on April 11-14, 2022 / Washington, D.C. The National Association of Workforce Boards invites you to Washington, D.C. for The Forum, the largest event in workforce development each year. 2022's conference will unite thought-leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders of all sorts at a moment of both persisting emergency and transformational potential. The Forum 2022 will take place at The Washington Hilton. Information on speakers, awards, lodging, schedules, and sponsorship opportunities will be released in the coming weeks. Please check the [FAQs page](#) for regularly updated information and answers to your questions. Early bird registration is open. <https://forum.nawb.org/>

Save the date for two workshops the Center on KTDRR is hosting on Tuesday, April 26, 2022, at the Ritz-Carlton Pentagon City in Arlington, Virginia. The NARRTC conference runs April 27–28, 2022. The morning offering will be our “Outreach to Policymakers” workshop, facilitated by Bayer Strategic Consulting. Learn about (and practice!) the best strategies for sharing research information with state and national policymakers from Mark Bayer of Bayer Strategic Consulting. Management Concepts will introduce the workshop with a short presentation describing restrictions on lobbying pertinent to federal grantees. You can register at the following link, and we’ll keep you up to date on details:

<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/6519151/Registration-2022-PolicyOutreachWorkshop> In the afternoon, you can attend “live and in person” the workshop that the American Association for the Advancement of Science facilitates for us on “Science Communication and Public Engagement.” Learn fundamentals from current science communication research and basic best practices for engaging with the public. Participants will develop individual plans that include a public engagement goal and ways to engage a relevant audience with tailored messages. Attendees also brainstorm an engagement scenario and identify steps to put their plans into action. Let us know you’re “in” and register now! <http://s.alchemer.com/s3/6ba62190258f>

SVRI has announced its 2022 Exam Preparation Workshops which continue to be popular for individuals seeking their CRCC certification. This unique opportunity prepares the applicant for the CRC exam by providing an overview of exam content, a facilitator to offer guidance, test-taking practice using tests similar to the CRC exam, and text messages for encouragement and preparation. [Learn More](#)

How-to-Guide for Using CareerOneStop's Suite of Career Tools from WorkforceGPS LMI Central helps case managers use CareerOneStop's suite of career tools. It helps counselors guide jobseekers through the career exploration and planning process.

[https://lmi.workforcegps.org/resources/2015/06/18/11/27/Navigating Online Career Exploration Planning Tools A Skills Gap Roadmap Case Managers](https://lmi.workforcegps.org/resources/2015/06/18/11/27/Navigating%20Online%20Career%20Exploration%20Planning%20Tools%20A%20Skills%20Gap%20Roadmap%20Case%20Managers)

Do you use an assistive technology (e.g. eyeglasses, wheelchair, hearing aids, Cochlear Implants, cane, service/support animals, etc.)? Are you at least 18 years old? If yes, please consider taking this online survey from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) that takes between 5 to 15 minutes to complete: [Assistive Technology Survey](#). Detailed information can be found at the beginning of the survey including your rights as a participant, the purpose, benefits, and confidentiality. In short, the survey was designed to be as accessible as possible for all participants, as well as the data of the survey being secure and confidential in order to protect participant privacy. This study is conducted by researchers from the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) and Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). It aims to gather feedback about including assistive technologies in the customization of social media avatars. Reporting of the research results may be provided through conference presentations and professional publications. If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the Principal Investigators:

Lizzie Codick at emc6595@rit.edu, Elissa Weeden at Elissa.Weeden@rit.edu, or Sharon Mason at Sharon.Mason@rit.edu. If you have other questions please contact the Human Subjects Research Office at hmfsrs@rit.edu.

Community inclusion and social determinants: From opportunity to health. Psychiatric Services, Volume 72(7), Pgs. 836-839. NARIC Accession Number: J87355.

New to the NARIC collection, this NIDILRR-funded review covers the history and development of the concept of community inclusion and the health-related outcomes that are expected to result from community inclusion efforts for people with serious mental illnesses. Indicators of community inclusion include the presence of policies, programs, practices, and environments that provide people with disabilities maximum choice and control about what they do, how much they do it, and with whom they do it. Incorporating fundamentals and indicators of community inclusion into mental health systems offers a paradigm for addressing social determinants and improving health as part of the larger healthcare agenda. [Access the full abstract and ordering information in REHABDATA.](#)

The [Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System Center \(NNJTBIS\)](#) (90DPTB0003) has posted videos from its annual speaker series [Moving Forward: Personal Perspectives on Life After Brain Injury](#), highlighting the experiences of individuals with TBI. The series featured individuals with personal and professional experience in TBI who discussed diverse topics including the recovery from TBI, COVID-19, art and art therapy, resilience, and more.

The [Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center](#) (90DPAD0008) announced the release of a video series, [Law Enforcement and First Responder Interactions with People with Disabilities](#). The public safety series provides information for people with disabilities, families, and caregivers about how people with disabilities can stay safe and get the accommodations they may need when interacting with first responders. Topics include speaking with the police in the community and during a traffic stop, what to know and do when calling 911, and tools such as information cards and comfort kits to help navigate anxious situations. The videos in this series are free and available to watch at any time. The series was produced in collaboration with [The Arc of Northern Virginia](#).

The [Center for Research, Training, and Dissemination of Family Support for People with Disabilities Across the Life Course](#) (90RTGE0002) will host the [2nd Conference on Caregiving Research](#), March 3rd - 4th, 2022, in Pittsburgh, PA. The conference will bring together a multidisciplinary group of national leaders in caregiving research, policy, and practice across the lifespan. Sessions will showcase innovations in research and will build bridges across disciplines and conditions to address the urgent community, clinical, and policy needs of family caregivers. Registration is required and there are related fees. For more information, contact the Center at caregiving@pitt.edu.

The [Southwest ADA Regional Center](#) (90DPAD0010) is conducting a [survey to identify and understand barriers to video gaming for people with disabilities](#). The survey is open to adults age 18 or older with any type of disability or limitation and any level of video

game interest or experience. The survey is anonymous and the information will be used to create and develop products and tools to make the process of gaming better for individuals with disabilities. The survey closes February 28th. For more information, contact george.powers2@memorialhermann.org

The [US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(EEOC\)](#) posted a guide, [Veterans and the Americans with Disabilities Act: A Guide for Employers](#). This guide describes how the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) applies to recruiting, hiring, and accommodating veterans with disabilities, and briefly explains how protections for veterans with disabilities differ under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the ADA. The guide also provides information and resources on laws and regulations that employers may find helpful in prioritizing the recruiting and hiring of veterans with disabilities.

People with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing primary and preventative healthcare. It is vital for medical care facilities and equipment, such as exam rooms and tables, diagnostic instruments and machines, and patient bedrooms and bathrooms, to be fully accessible to people with disabilities. The U.S. Access Board will host a virtual public event on equity in healthcare for people with disabilities on **January 12** from **2:30 - 4:00 p.m. (ET)**. The event will feature presentations on standards and resources related to healthcare accessibility, including inclusive medical equipment, healthcare facility design, information technology, and communication devices and systems. Members of the public will be able to pose questions during the event.

People with disabilities face significant barriers to accessing primary and preventative healthcare. It is vital for medical care facilities and equipment, such as exam rooms and tables, diagnostic instruments and machines, and patient bedrooms and bathrooms, to be fully accessible to people with disabilities. The U.S. Access Board will host a virtual public event on equity in healthcare for people with disabilities on **January 12** from **2:30 - 4:00 p.m. (ET)**. The event will feature presentations on standards and resources related to healthcare accessibility, including inclusive medical equipment, healthcare facility design, information technology, and communication devices and systems. Members of the public will be able to pose questions during the event.

AmeriCorps Seniors is excited about our [American Rescue Plan Senior Demonstration Program](#) opportunity that provides resources to help the country recover from the pandemic. The AmeriCorps Seniors American Rescue Plan Senior Demonstration Program funding is designed exclusively for organizations new to AmeriCorps Seniors. Checkout the [Competition page](#) and read the [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) Sign up for technical training sessions. Apply by **Thursday, Feb. 3, 2022 at 5 p.m. ET**. If you have questions, Email AmericanRescueSDP@cns.gov at any time during the application period

Registration is open for the [2022 Annual Disability Statistics Conference and State of the Science on Disability Statistics Conference](#). This two-day hybrid event will provide, describe, and discuss the latest disability statistics and advancements in

disability statistic science. We'll also share the ANNUAL DISABILITY STATISTICS COMPENDIUM, ANNUAL DISABILITY STATISTICS SUPPLEMENT, and STATE REPORTS FOR COUNTY-LEVEL DATA.

Day One: State-of-the-Science Conference on Disability Statistics

Gain insights to new research and methods in disability data collection, analytical techniques, and advanced statistical analyses of key topics.

Day Two: 2020 Annual Disability Statistics Conference

Featuring the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium and related documents, discover the latest disability statistics, including demographic, intersectional, economic, social, and health statistics for people with disabilities with comparisons to people without disabilities.

COVID 19 NEWS:

This past week the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) updated its COVID-19 technical assistance adding a new section to clarify under what circumstances COVID-19 may be considered a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act.

EEOC's new questions and answers focus broadly on COVID-19 and the definition of disability under Title I of the ADA and Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, which both address employment discrimination. The updates also provide examples illustrating how an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 or a post-COVID condition could be considered to have a disability under the laws the EEOC enforces.

"This update to our COVID-19 information provides an additional resource for employees and employers facing the varied manifestations of COVID-19," said EEOC Chair Charlotte A. Burrows. "Like effects from other diseases, effects from COVID-19 can lead to a disability protected under the laws the EEOC enforces. Workers with disabilities stemming from COVID-19 are protected from employment discrimination and may be eligible for reasonable accommodations."

Key information includes:

In some cases, an applicant's or employee's COVID-19 may cause impairments that are themselves disabilities under the ADA, regardless of whether the initial case of COVID-19 itself constituted an actual disability.

An applicant or employee whose COVID-19 results in mild symptoms that resolve in a few weeks—with no other consequences—will not have an ADA disability that could make someone eligible to receive a reasonable accommodation.

Applicants or employees with disabilities are not automatically entitled to reasonable accommodations under the ADA. They are entitled to a reasonable accommodation when their disability requires it, and the accommodation is not an undue hardship for the employer. But, employers can choose to do more than the ADA requires.

An employer risks violating the ADA if it relies on myths, fears, or stereotypes about a condition and prevents an employee's return to work once the employee is no longer infectious and, therefore, medically able to return without posing a direct threat to others.

On July 26, 2021, the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued Guidance on 'Long COVID' as a Disability Under the ADA, Section 504, and Section 1557. The DOJ/HHS Guidance focuses solely on long COVID. This new EEOC technical assistance focuses more broadly on COVID-19 and does so in the context of Title I of the ADA and section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, which cover employment.

To assist the public, the EEOC has updated its guidance on employment and COVID-19 approximately 20 times throughout the pandemic.

RECENT ARTICLES:

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Hester, Olivia R. and Nicole C. Swoszowski. "**Using Check-In/Check-Out in Vocational Training for Young Adults with Intellectual Disability.**" CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION FOR EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS, August 2021.

Lee, Beatrice, Timothy N. Tansey, Fong Chan, Malachy Bishop, William T. Hoyt, and Laura M. Hancock. "**Exploration of the Effects of Protective Person–Environment Factors Between Functional Impairments and Stress in Individuals with Multiple Sclerosis: Mediation and Moderation Analyses.**" REHABILITATION COUNSELING BULLETIN, vol. 65, no. 2, January 2022, pp. 95–107.

Livneh, Hanoch. "**Psychosocial Adaptation to Chronic Illness and Disability: An Updated and Expanded Conceptual Framework.**" REHABILITATION COUNSELING BULLETIN, July 2021.

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Zapata, Mercedes A. **“Disability Affirmation Predicts Employment Among Adults with Visual Impairment and Blindness.”** REHABILITATION COUNSELING BULLETIN, vol. 65, no. 2, January 2022, pp. 120–128.

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