

America Needs ALL of us



100 Years of Investing in America



 Public Law 93-112
93rd Congress, H. R. 8070
September 26, 1973

An Act

To replace the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, to extend and revise the authorization of grants to States for vocational rehabilitation services, with special emphasis on services to those with the most severe handicaps, to expand special Federal responsibilities and research and training programs with respect to handicapped individuals, to establish special responsibilities in the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare for coordination of all programs with respect to handicapped individuals within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act, and the following table of contents, may be cited as the "Rehabilitation Act of 1973":

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- Sec. 2. Declaration of purpose.
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- Sec. 8. Allotment percentage.
- Sec. 9. Audit.
- Sec. 10. Nonduplication.

TITLE I—VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES



VISION 2020

Leading change. Today. Tomorrow. Together.

100 Years of Investing in America

Dear Friends,

This year marks 100 years since a major milestone in our nation's history—the establishment of America's public vocational rehabilitation (VR) program. Since 1920, this program has remained true to its founding premise that Americans with disabilities who want to work *can* work and have access to the services and supports to enable them to do so.

While its guiding premise remains the same, VR has evolved over the years to respond to changing public needs. Originally created by Congress to assist only people with physical disabilities, today the program serves people with a range of disabilities. It also pioneered the dual-customer approach to workforce development, working to understand the needs of business and meet them with qualified candidates as well as consultation and technical assistance.

In addition, as a core component of the nation's public workforce system, VR actively collaborates with public and community partners and helps inform and shape federal and state disability employment policy and practice. In fact, as the historical timeline in this issue of *Investing in America* illustrates, a partnership approach has been a hallmark of VR from the start.

As the collective voice for chief administrators of state VR agencies, the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) is proud to celebrate VR's centennial and use the occasion to showcase its value to individuals, employers and communities across the U.S. for the past 100 years. In that spirit, we hope you enjoy this look back at the events that shaped the program over the past 100 years as well as examples of its impact as of late. Of course, we also hope you'll join us in supporting VR's ongoing success—**Today, Tomorrow, Together.**



Stephen A. Wooderson
CEO, CSAVR



CVS Health NET Lifetime Achievement Award

**JOSHUA EATMON, SHIPPING
AND FULFILLMENT, CVS HEALTH,
ALABAMA**



**LUKE ROGIC, PHARMACY
TECHNICIAN, CVS HEALTH,
MARYLAND, WITH ERIKA BAILEY,
WORKFORCE INNOVATIONS TALENT
CENTER MANAGER, CVS HEALTH**

CSAVR's National Employment Team (NET) is recognizing CVS Health for its long-term partnership and commitment to the recruitment, hiring, training, advancement and retention of employees with disabilities. The partnership dates back to 2004, when CVS Health participated in a business forum sponsored by CSAVR. That forum led to the creation of the NET. CVS Health was at the table then and has been an integral partner since, providing training and guidance to assist in strengthening the NET's dual-customer approach. Reflecting its commitment, CVS Health recently worked with CSAVR to produce a video, aptly titled "Abilities in Abundance," that highlights the benefits of its partnership with VR—a partnership the NET looks forward to building upon in the years ahead.

View "Abilities in Abundance" at [CVSHealth.com/about/diversity/abilities-in-abundance-our-continued-commitment-to-inclusive-employment](https://www.CVSHealth.com/about/diversity/abilities-in-abundance-our-continued-commitment-to-inclusive-employment)

2020 NET Partner of the Year



To produce "Abilities in Abundance," CVS Health partnered with CSAVR to engage Engelman Associates, LLC, a disability-owned marketing firm based in Bismarck, North Dakota that focuses on helping its clients—among them several VR agencies and other disability-related programs—share their successes through effective storytelling. The video has been used by CVS Health internally, to strengthen its employer brand, as well as externally, to illustrate to other companies the benefits of partnering with VR from both the individual and organizational perspective. Engelman Associates was co-founded by Harley Engelman, former Business Relations Administrator for the North Dakota Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (NDDVR). During his time at NDDVR, Engelman assisted in developing a nationwide brand marketing plan for the NET.

Driving Forward in Utah

Travis Telford sought VR services in Brigham City, Utah as a condition of parole following 23 years of incarceration. Working together with multiple entities, including his probation and parole officers and mental health service providers, Travis's VR counselor helped him chart a path forward. Having never used a cell phone or the Internet, Travis feared he did not have applicable skills; however, he was eager to learn and rebuild his life. After exploring his strengths and interests, he chose to become a truck driver. The first step was obtaining his commercial driver's license. VR then assisted in ensuring Travis's prospective employer could participate in the Federal Bonding Program. Upon securing full-time employment in January 2019, Travis recounted his journey, simply stating, "Thank you for giving me a brighter future."



TRAVIS TELFORD

Combining the Ingredients for Success

Sasha Ferguson grew up cooking at her grandmother's side. As a young person with autism, she found it helped her focus and control her anxiety. Now, with support from Alaska's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, she's parlaying her childhood hobby into a career. Sasha is a student at the Alaska Culinary Academy, an accredited program of the Alaska Vocational Technical Center. After completing her studies, she plans to gain real-world experience and then pursue further training to become a pastry chef. To other young people with disabilities, she offers sage advice. "Get outside your comfort zone and be willing to put yourself out there," she says. For her, this meant being open about her disability and explaining to her instructors what accommodations she needed. If Sasha's experience is any indication, it's a recipe for success.



SASHA FERGUSON

Raising Expectations in the Evergreen State

A resident of Washington State, Chris Walden began working in sheltered employment right after graduating high school in 1991. Although his employer helped him switch to an integrated environment at one point, the job was solitary, and he returned after discovering that he did not like to work alone. Washington State Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) then stepped in, providing counseling and guidance to help him understand his skills, interests and abilities. With an approved plan for employment, DVR then provided placement assistance, and not long after, Chris began working as a service contractor providing grounds maintenance and janitorial services for Ackermann Electric in Mount Vernon, Washington. Once on the job, DVR provided job coaching and other supports to ensure he understood his job tasks and met expected performance levels.



CHRIS WALDEN

Prepping for a Better Future

A young woman from Kankakee, Illinois, Raeshetia Cook has mental illness and is also hard of hearing. After she was referred to Thresholds, one of the oldest and largest service providers for people with mental health conditions in the state, the organization's Kankakee Individual Placement and Support team assisted Raeshetia to prepare for and seek employment. Within two months, she was offered a job as a Food Prep worker at a Panera Bread bakery-café. As part of the process, her VR counselor helped arrange for interpreter services to help her train for the job and connected her with an audiologist, who in turn facilitated her getting hearing aids to help her manage better on the job. Clearly, Raeshetia managed very well—so much so that she was promoted from Food Prep to Line Cook during her 90-day probation period.



RAESHETIA COOK

Creating a Vision of Employment

Each summer, Massachusetts Commission for the Blind's (MCB) internship program helps college students from across the Commonwealth strengthen their vision for the future. Through the program, students spend six to eight weeks interning with public- and private-sector employers, such as Dunkin Brands, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and State Street Corporation, to name just a few. About 90 students participate annually, based on a competitive process. While MCB's vocational rehabilitation counselors help facilitate matches, students interview directly with employers to ensure a good fit. Prior to starting work, they also take part in a formal orientation program comprising mobility training as well as a refresher on "soft" skills. Once on the job, they receive ongoing support from MCB, including any assistive technology needed. Interns are not the only ones who benefit from the program, however. Participating employers gain insight into the skills and talents people who are blind offer their organization. They also often gain future employees. At completion, 70 percent of participants are on track for permanent employment.



MCB EMPLOYMENT SERVICES SUPERVISOR AND FORMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM PARTICIPANT JOE BUISON (SECOND FROM LEFT), WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM MCB EMPLOYER PARTNER CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE

Putting the Transition Pieces Together

For many people, the prospect of graduating high school is simultaneously exciting and stressful. For some transitioning youth in Nevada, however, the latter is lessened through an innovative program that helps students with disabilities learn more about what to expect and explore their options going forward. Sponsored by the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation in collaboration with a range of community partners, the Careers, Recreation and Vocational Education (CRAVE) camp convenes students with disabilities together for one week of activities, both formal and fun, designed to build skills for future education and employment success. Originally held only at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the program recently expanded to the University of Nevada, Reno, allowing a more diverse and larger population to participate. In addition to the urban areas of Las Vegas and Reno, campers have increasingly come from the state's rural communities such as Elko, Spring Creek, Winnemucca and Yerington. About 80 youth have participated in the past two years.



CRAVE CAMP PARTICIPANTS

Previous NET Businesses of the Year



CSAVR developed the National Employment Team (NET) in response to a discussion with its business customers, understanding that the development of career strategies that result in the hiring, promotion and retention of people with disabilities depends not only on their vocational goals and interests, but also the employment needs and environment of the business. Based on feedback from business customers, CSAVR structured the NET as a cross-state team of Business Relations Representatives who collaborate, but also function as single points of contact for the VR agency at the state level. The NET's infrastructure facilitates a team approach to support individual businesses of all sizes. The goal is to develop ongoing relationships with and provide a variety of services to businesses, in addition to referring and supporting the retention of individuals who acquire disabilities during their employment lifecycle. The CSAVR-NET partnered with disABLEDperson and customers to develop a centralized talent pool of candidates with disabilities, known as the Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP).

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION: 100 Years of Investing in America



In the early 1900s, a confluence of factors helped spur the creation of a national VR program, including the experiences of disabled World War I veterans, an increase in workplace accidents in the growing manufacturing economy and changing agricultural industry, and efforts by charities and states to help people with disabilities find work. By 1920, 12 states had passed legislation to create their own VR programs, with six actually in operation.

1923

NATIONAL CIVILIAN REHABILITATION CONFERENCE

During a vocational education conference, a group of VR administrators meets for the first time, calling themselves the National Civilian Rehabilitation Conference.

1935

SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

In recognition of the program's economic benefit to individuals and the nation, the Social Security Act provides permanent federal funding for VR, with annual increases in appropriations.

1938

WAGNER-O'DAY ACT

The Wagner-O'Day Act requires the Federal Government to purchase certain products made in workshops employing people who are blind and authorizes a central nonprofit, the National Industries for the Blind, to facilitate distribution and administration. (In 1971, this program expands to include services as well as supplies and include people with other significant disabilities.)

As the economy began to recover, new threats emerged as a result of the start of World War II in Europe. When America entered the conflict in late 1941, the military draft created a shortage of workers to support the war effort on the home front. As a result, the nation turned to new sources for workers, including women and people with disabilities. Around this time, a formal process for providing VR services also emerged, giving structure to casework and identifying the technical skills necessary for successful outcomes.

1943

BARDEN-LAFOLLETTE ACT

The Barden-LaFollette Act makes significant changes to the VR program, expanding the nature of services that can be provided, extending eligibility to people with intellectual and mental health disabilities, and creating separate agencies to serve people who are blind. It also introduces a new funding scheme, requires states to submit written plans and changes the name of the legislation to the "Vocational Rehabilitation Act."



In the 1950s, under the leadership of Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Director Mary Switzer, VR emphasized its importance in addressing the needs of disadvantaged individuals and broadened the definition of rehabilitation to emphasize individualized planning in light of people's differing conditions, goals, skills and experience. As time moved on, the civil rights movement, changes in how society perceived people with significant disabilities and 1960s "Great Society" programs to reduce poverty also created new opportunities and avenues for VR.

1954

VR ACT AMENDMENTS

Amendments significantly expand the scope of the VR program. Services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and mental health conditions are increased, and grants for research, training for rehabilitation counselors and other wide-reaching enhancements are established.



1967

CSAVR

CSAVR is incorporated as an independent entity to serve as the collective voice of directors and leadership of state VR agencies in advocating for a strong, effective and efficient VR program.

America Needs
ALL of us

100 YEARS OF INVESTING IN AMERICA

1920

SMITH-FESS ACT/ CIVILIAN VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION ACT

President Woodrow Wilson signs the Smith-Fess Act, also known as the Civilian Vocational Rehabilitation Act, establishing a public VR program for civilians funded on a matching basis with the states. It is modeled on earlier legislation providing VR services to disabled veterans, the Smith-Sears Rehabilitation Act of 1918, and only serves people with physical disabilities. It also includes specific requirements that states coordinate with workers compensation commissions and agencies serving veterans.



1927

NRA

The National Civilian Rehabilitation Conference becomes the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA), establishing a collective voice to advocate for the VR program and emerging VR profession.



When the "New Deal" was implemented to stimulate the economy out of the Great Depression, advocates urged policymakers to understand how VR contributed to its goals by helping people with disabilities move from dependency to employment, thereby increasing tax revenue and consumption of goods and services. At this time, the VR program was still funded through periodic reauthorization by Congress, typically for four to six years at a time.

1936

RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD ACT

The Randolph-Sheppard Act creates a program through which people who are blind receive priority to operate vending stands in federal buildings. It also authorizes a study to identify other work opportunities for people with visual impairments.

Reflecting the prevailing attitude at the time that people who were blind had little potential for employment in the community, the Smith-Fess Act had no provisions authorizing VR services for people with visual impairments, and only a small number accessed the program. Rather, their needs were addressed by other agencies and nonprofits. Things started to change in the 1930s. Advocates successfully fought for more disability-specific schools to educate and prepare people who were blind and deaf for employment. Also, two pieces of legislation focused on increasing economic opportunity and independence for individuals who were blind.

1940

STATES VR COUNCIL

The States Vocational Rehabilitation Council—a forerunner of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR)—is formed within the NRA to advise regarding the formulation of federal policies and standards affecting the states.

1944

COUNCIL OF STATE EXECUTIVES FOR THE BLIND

The Council of State Executives for the Blind—a forerunner of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB)—is formed to advise on the provision of VR services to individuals with visual disabilities.

1975

NCSAB

NCSAB is incorporated.



1998

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) amends the Rehabilitation Act and increases collaboration between VR and other federal employment and training programs. This means VR consumers are to be served by a variety of programs, with increased coordination across systems to improve efficiency and outcomes. As part of this, WIA mandates equal access to all state and local workforce services for individuals with disabilities. It also strengthens consumer involvement in the VR process, integrates citizen-led Rehabilitation Councils into state VR agency planning, and calls for coordination with colleges and universities in career planning.



2004

BUSINESS PARTNERS FORUMS

Based on information gleaned during forums with business partners, CSAVR formalizes a "dual-customer" approach to VR, through which it recognizes and responds to businesses' needs in tandem to those of individuals. It also develops a new position, Director of Business Relations, to lead this effort. The outcome is the National Employment Team (NET), a cross-state team of Business Relations Representatives who both collaborate and function as single points of contact at the state level to support businesses of all sizes.

2020

100TH ANNIVERSARY/ VISION 2020

The national VR program celebrates its centennial. In preparation, CSAVR implements the Vision 2020 initiative to guide the VR profession going forward.

VISION 2020

1973

CSAVR WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE

In response to efforts to dismantle the "Great Society" programs and to advocate for the passage of the Rehabilitation Act, CSAVR opens an office in Washington, D.C. and hires its first Executive Director.

1973

REHABILITATION ACT

The Rehabilitation Act replaces the VR Act, bringing sweeping changes to the VR program, including prioritizing serving people with the most significant disabilities and emphasizing evaluation and research as well as staff training. It also requires greater consumer involvement in the planning process and funds demonstration grants for independent living centers. Title V of the Act advances civil rights for people with disabilities, including in employment by federal agencies, federal contractors and recipients of federal funds, as well as in the provision of federally funded programs and activities. For the first time, legislation ties disability to major life functions, signifying a shift away from the "medical model."

1993

CANAR

Consortia of Administrators of Native American Rehabilitation (CANAR) is incorporated.



1990

ADA SIGNING

The passage of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) advances civil rights for people with disabilities, including in the workplace. Congress also reauthorizes the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, originally passed in 1975, and renames it the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Together, the ADA, Rehabilitation Act and IDEA represent the world's most comprehensive civil rights protections for people with disabilities, addressing inclusion across all sectors of society.



Amendments to the Rehabilitation Act in 1978, 1984, 1986 and 1992 expanded access to VR services. For instance, they funded the development of VR programs for Native Americans and Alaskan Natives living on or near federal or state reservations, emphasized the need for counselors fluent in sign language, and prompted the development of a Model State Plan for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf-Blind. They also strengthened the priority to serve people with the most significant disabilities and mandated that applicants be presumed employable and given greater choice. These changes reflected the emerging model of supported employment for people with intellectual disabilities. Furthermore, the "Projects With Industry" program recognized the importance of engaging businesses in order to identify long-term career paths for people with disabilities in the competitive labor market.

Leading Change Through a Collective Voice

The Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) is a membership organization comprising the 78 chief administrators of the public vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies that annually serve approximately one million people with disabilities throughout the U.S. These agencies constitute the state partners in the state-federal program of rehabilitation services mandated by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, with the U.S. Department of Education's Rehabilitation Services Administration serving as the federal partner.

The Vision 2020 initiative represents a reaffirmation on the part of state VR agencies to ensure their programs and services are proactive, respond to the principles of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and serve as models in the disability employment community. It is a strategic planning process through which state VR agency leaders, under the collective umbrella of CSAVR, are working together to assess progress and guide the profession as the system celebrates its 100-year anniversary in 2020.



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