

2023 Disability Employment Summit

“Celebrating our Accomplishments and Building for the Future”

Wednesday, March 15 – Thursday, March 16, 2023

Virtual Platform (Zoom)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023

**Start and End Times**

7:15AM – 7:45AM PT

8:15AM – 8:45AM MT

9:15AM – 9:45AM CT

10:15AM – 10:45AM ET

**President’s Welcome and Updates**

* Paul Barnes, President, National Rehabilitation Association

President’s updates will include the following: report on the status of the Association and our Mission, Vision, and Values – 100 years of advocating for our profession. What are we doing to improve benefits to our members. New ACH system and upcoming improvements to the membership platform, including reports. Newsletters to our members. Free webinars and quality conferences. Updated reports from Division, Regions, and Chapters and what that does for our leadership at these levels and Accountability and Professionalism of the National Leadership.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023 – CONTINUED

**Start and End Times**

8:00AM – 9:30AM PT

9:00AM – 10:30AM MT

10:00AM – 11:30AM CT

11:00AM – 12:30PM ET

**CEUs**: 1.5 General Credit

**Employment First: A Public Policy Roadmap to Achieving Competitive Integrated Employment**

* Julie Christensen, MSW, Ph.D., Executive Director of National APSE (Association of People Supporting Employment First)

Since the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, equal access to and participation in the general labor market has been a fundamental civil right for people with disabilities. More recently, the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) expanded on this right by codifying competitive integrated employment as the desired outcome for publicly funded disability services and supports. Yet despite these positive advancements in public policy, significant barriers continue to exist and the labor participation rate for people with disabilities has not yet met that of the general population. While some of these barriers are cultural and societal in nature, many are rooted in prevailing policy and law which directly conflict with the goals of the ADA and WIOA.

How can we use existing policy to achieve competitive, integrated employment for people with disabilities? In what ways does existing policy create barriers to success? And what policy changes do we need to advocate for to achieve our goals? In this session, we will unpack existing and proposed legislation and policies as we chart a course forward for the Employment First movement in 2023 and beyond. Particular attention will be paid to current threats to the ADA and to challenges with full implementation of WIOA, including the legacy use of 14c certificates which allow payment of subminimum wages to workers with disabilities.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023 - CONTINUED

**Start and End Times**

9:45AM – 11:15AM PT

10:45AM – 12:15PM MT

11:45AM – 1:15PM CT

12:45PM – 2:15PM ET

**CEUs:** 1.5 General Credit

**Beyond “Folding, Flipping, Filth, and Filing”— More than the Minimum for Workers with Disabilities**

* Ollegario (Ollie) Cantos VII, JD, Councilman, City of West Covina, Chairman, RespectAbility Board of Directors, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary Office for Civil Rights, US Department of Education
* Matan Koch, JD, Senior Policy Advisor, RespectAbility

Expectations are rising for and amongst people with disabilities, and rehabilitation professionals continue to play a vital role. Consumers within the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system encounter residual attitudes that all too often leave workers with disabilities resigned to low-wage, low-skill work, such as folding clothes, flipping burgers, cleaning jobs, and filing work. When rehabilitation professionals empower students and jobseekers with the power of being the lead in their own lives, it allows those individuals to gain a deeper sense of accountability, often leading to more advanced work, greater economic stability, and self-reliance. To meet this goal, VR professionals and people with disabilities must do their part to advance the kind of philosophy that empowers rather than increases reliance. This presentation will discuss the policy considerations in making this objective a reality.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15, 2023 - CONTINUED

**Start and End Times**

11:30AM – 1:00PM PT

12:30PM – 2:00PM MT

1:30PM – 3:00PM CT

2:30PM – 4:00PM ET

**CEUs:** 1.5 General Credit

**Reforming federal disability benefit systems to make them work-friendly**

* Andy Imparato, Executive Director of Disability Rights California

In this session, Andy Imparato, who served on the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Advisory Panel for the Social Security Administration and was Disability Policy Director for Chairman Tom Harkin on the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, will discuss ways to reform federal disability benefits programs to align them more with the goals of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.  Imparato is currently Executive Director for Disability Rights California, based in Sacramento.

THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023

**Start and End Times**

7:30AM – 9:00AM PT

8:30AM – 10:00AM MT

9:30AM – 11:00AM CT

10:30AM – 12:00PM ET

**CEUs:** 1.5 General Credit

**100 Years of Rehabilitation Advocacy – Then and Now**

**TITLE: Part I** – 100 Years of NRA's Rehabilitation Advocacy, 1923 to the Present- The Highlights

* Harold Wasner, M.A., LPC, Co-Chair, of the National Rehabilitation Association, Public Policy Team
* Barbara Schoen, Ph.D., CRC, Co-Chair of the National Rehabilitation Association, Public Policy Team
* Judy Smith, Transition Manager, ARS, Co-Chair of the National Rehabilitation Association, Public Policy Team

The presentation will provide the highlights of the foundational and historic public rehabilitation and disability advocacy activities of the National Rehabilitation Association, from its founding in 1923 to the present, from the early developments of the vocational rehabilitation program to its culmination in the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and its subsequent reauthorizations. The important advocacy activities of the association for the rights of people with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, and its amendments will be discussed.

**TITLE:** **Part II** – Rehabilitation and Disability Advocacy in the 118th Congress

* Tonia Ferguson, Esq., Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation,

Director Of Legislative Affairs

The presenters will discuss the makeup of the 118th Congress and how it will affect rehabilitation and disability advocacy. They will identify key congressional committees and leaders involved in rehabilitation and disability legislation, and effective strategies and advocacy messaging in this split congress. They will review the challenges facing the current public rehabilitation program, and its prospects going forward.

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**Membership Meeting**

* Russell J. Thelin, M.S., LVRC, CRC, CRL, 2023 President-Elect of the National Rehabilitation Association

In this first Membership Committee "All Members Call" for 2023, a state of the membership of the National Rehabilitation Association will be provided, along with information on prioritized membership related activities for the Association during the year. The majority of time will be for open discussion and comment from members regarding membership issues for the Membership Committee to be aware of, prioritize, and address during 2023 and beyond."

**Awards Ceremony**

**Historical background for the “Lead On Award”**

The National Rehabilitation Association, established in 1923, is a professional organization that provides advocacy for persons with disabilities and the professionals that provide services to them.  Past "**Lead On**" award recipients include Hillary Clinton, Steny Hoyer, the late Bob Dole, Tom Harkin, Bobby Scott and Bob Casey, Jr. and many more who have led efforts to secure a more accessible America for those with disabilities.  It is named in honor of Justin Dart, the "Father of the Americans With Disabilities Act" who gave us that call to "**Lead On**" and we continue to be inspired by this call for equality.

* **Award Recipient: US Congressional Representative, Debbie Dingell, MI-6th District**
* **Award Recipient: US Senator, Tammy Duckworth, Illinois**

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**CEU’s:** 1.5 General Credit

**Keynote Presentation**

**A Tipping Point: Honoring our past, acknowledging our present, and collectively reshaping our future.**

* Kyle Walker, CRC, CRL, CRM, Executive Director of the University of Wisconsin-Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI)

Organizing Premise & Theme:2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the public rehabilitation program. In 2025 we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the National Rehabilitation Association. How can we honor our history, face our current challenges, and boldly reshape our collective future as stewards of a social justice movement intent on the fully social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities. Now is our collective tipping point. Today we are being challenged from multiple fronts to reshape rehabilitation for the next 100 years. Within our current challenges lie the seeds of opportunity to recreate our future. We need strong, unified, inclusive, and engaged membership organizations now more than ever. And our rehabilitation focused membership organizations need you.