



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

Mailing Address: 55 Utley Drive Camp Hill, PA 17011  
phone (717) 975-2004 (888) 250-5175 fax (888) 524-9282 TTY (717) 737-0158  
Email: [parac@parehabilitationcouncil.org](mailto:parac@parehabilitationcouncil.org) [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org)

## WEEKLY UPDATE: July 23, 2021

### PaRC MISSION STATEMENT

***The mission of the Council is to inform and advise the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the State Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Legislature, and the Governor on the diverse issues affecting employment of people with disabilities.***

### A NOTE FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR:

Without stating the obvious, it has been a challenging time marked by historical events and unforeseen changes to our lives both professionally and personally. It has been a time of learning for all of us and I am so proud of the PaRC members as they have carried on with the same devotion and dedication to improving employment opportunities of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. I want to thank everyone for their collaborative efforts and look forward as we continue to reimagine the future.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce the new PaRC Administrative Assistant, **Mr. Christopher Todd**. Chris worked for Keystone Human Services for 18 years providing supports for adults with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. During his time as a Senior Direct Support Professional, Chris grew to understand the importance of advocating for equal opportunities for all Pennsylvanians with disabilities, especially regarding employment and community involvement. Chris was most recently the General Clerk/Receptionist at ManorCare Camp Hill. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Chris was able to quickly adapt to the daily challenges the pandemic offered as well as hone his skills in communication, customer service, and office administration. With these skills, along with his experience in Human Services, Chris felt that this opportunity would be a great fit and was honored to accept the position of Administrative Assistant with the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council.

Thank you all so much for your patience as we work toward rebuilding our staffing team. We are excited to resume the PaRC's newsletter and look forward to continuing to provide support for the PaRC and their mission.

**Michelle Gerrick**

The PaRC 2020 Annual Report can be found on our webpage or by clicking on the following link:

<http://parac.org/reports/2020AnnualReport.pdf>

**\*\*\* PaRC Calendar Year 2021 – Please Mark your Calendars \*\*\***

## FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS

PaRC Full Council meetings are held quarterly. The Public is welcome to attend. Please refer to the following information regarding the final two meeting dates in 2021:

**August 25, 2021 - Virtual meeting from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM**  
**Please contact the PaRC Office to register**

**November 16, 2021 – In person meeting held at the Harrisburg Hilton from 9:30 AM until 3:30 PM**

Agendas, recordings and minutes of all meetings are posted on [http://parac.org/council\\_mtgs.html](http://parac.org/council_mtgs.html)

Look for information soon regarding 2022 Full Council meeting dates!

## Pennsylvania State Board of Rehabilitation

The Pennsylvania State Board of Rehabilitation meets quarterly to hear reports from directors of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) as well as the Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC), the Client Assistance Program (CAP), and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC).

These meetings are chaired by the Secretary of Labor and Industry. The next State Board meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 16, 2021**. This meeting will be held virtually, with details on how to connect coming soon. The Board does plan to meet in person in Harrisburg on **December 2, 2021**. The public is welcome to attend all meetings. For details, please email Cheryl Novak at [chenovak@pa.gov](mailto:chenovak@pa.gov).

## Citizen Advisory Council

**Find Your Local CAC Meeting Dates:** Please go to our website [www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org) and click on the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) link to find dates, locations, times, etc. for information on the nearest CAC.

The PaRC Social Media and Outreach Committee in partnership with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) produced videos of OVR individual and business success stories. We want to thank both the individuals and companies that participated in making these videos and OVR for supporting the project. The PaRC is pleased to present the following videos. Please feel free to share.

[PaRC Aha Moment](#)

[PaRC Dream Partnership PaRC Herr Foods Inc.](#)

[PaRC Keystone Blind Association PaRC Assistive Technology](#)

**PaRC COUNCIL OPENINGS:** The PaRC is currently reviewing applications for the following categories: **Sensory Disability** and **Community Rehabilitation Provider**. If interested in applying for either of these positions, please go to our website ([www.parac.org](http://www.parac.org)) and fill out an application.

## NEWS AND EVENTS OF INTEREST:

### **1.) Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion; Summer Workplace Inclusion Webinar Series**

June 16, 2021 by EARN Staff

Announcing EARN's Summer Workplace Inclusion Webinar Series!

July marks the 31st anniversary of the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In celebration, EARN and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) are hosting a three-part Summer Workplace Inclusion Webinar Series.

The webinars in this series will explore topics related to disability employment and the future of work, including digital accessibility, telework

and emerging ADA implementation issues around COVID-19, the gig economy, the use of artificial intelligence and more. Participation is free, but registration is required, so register today to save your spot! The webinar that was scheduled for June 22, 2021 is now closed but two webinars for July 29, 2021 and August 12, 2021 are still open for free enrollment.

You may click the link provided for more information.

[https://askearn.org/news-events/announcements/workplace\\_inclusion\\_webinar\\_series](https://askearn.org/news-events/announcements/workplace_inclusion_webinar_series)

## **2.) Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion; The ADA @ 31: A Conversation with Bobby Silverstein and Susan Mazrui**

July marks the 31st anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This groundbreaking legislation has impacted nearly every aspect of daily life for people with disabilities, including employment. Join us for a discussion with Bobby Silverstein, principal at the law firm of Powers Pyles Sutter and Verville, PC, and Susan Mazrui, director of Global Public Policy at AT&T, exploring the past, present and future of the ADA as it pertains to employment. Learn about the role of the business and disability communities in securing enactment of the ADA and core principles of equal opportunity/nondiscrimination articulated in the legislation. The webinar will also address emerging ADA implementation issues, including those related to COVID-19, the gig economy, accessibility of websites and online systems, use of artificial intelligence and voluntary affirmative action recruitment and hiring policies.

You may click the link provided for more information.

[https://askearn.org/event/ada\\_at\\_31/](https://askearn.org/event/ada_at_31/)

## **3.) Mathematica; The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Youth Solutions Project**

The Supplemental Security Income (SSI) Youth Solutions project hosted a virtual conference to share and discuss 12 program and policy proposals that offer innovative and evidence-based strategies to increase the employment of youth and young adults who apply for or receive SSI.

This project, funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, supported the development of policy proposals selected

through a competitive solicitation process. The proposals identify program and policy solutions across national, state, and local levels that could help young adults join the workforce.

You may click the link provided for more information.

<https://www.mathematica.org/features/ssi-youth-solutions-conference>

#### **4.) ADATA.ORG – National Network Information, Guidance, and Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act; Accessible Autonomous Vehicles (AVs)**

The U.S. Access Board, in conjunction with other federal agencies earlier this year, completed a four-part series on the inclusive design of autonomous vehicles (AVs) for persons with disabilities. Join us as representatives from the Access Board provide an overview and summary of these sessions. In addition, this session will look at the next steps in ensuring AVs are accessible to and useable by persons with disabilities including persons with mobility, sensory and cognitive disabilities. Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions following the speaker's presentation.

The webinar will be held on Tuesday, August 17th, 2021 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM. Registration deadline is August 16th, 2021 for this event.

You may click the link provided for more information.

<https://adata.org/event/accessible-autonomous-vehicles-avs>

#### **5.) ACL.GOV - Administration for Community Living; Research that Reflects the Rich Racial and Ethnic Diversity of People with Disabilities**

June 21, 2021 By Kristi Hill, Deputy Director, ACL's National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research

As the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research works through the busiest time of our grants year, we have gotten a lot of questions from across the research community about how we are implementing the [Executive Order](#) On Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.

You may click the link provided for more information.

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/research-reflects-rich-racial-and-ethnic-diversity-people-disabilities>

## **6.) Disability Pride Month**

July is Disability Pride Month and at Qi Creative we would like to take a moment to tell you a little more about Disability pride, and what you can do to improve your allyship to disabled friends, family, neighbors, and community members.

Understandings about disability, in our particular lens as Canadians and as healthcare providers, has shifted greatly over time. What we may have found representative on TV channels, textbooks and lectures, popular culture and media, professional development conferences and disabled speakers and influencers may be long outdated.

You may click the link provided for more information.

<https://www.qicreative.com/news/disability-pride-month>

**\*If you no longer wish to receive this update, please contact Chris Todd at Christopher.Todd@parehabilitationcouncil.org to have your name removed.**

**NOTE:** This update is for informational purposes only. The PaRC and Support Staff are not responsible for the accuracy of this information. Some of the information found in this update you may have already received from another source. The PaRC or the Support Staff do not use this update as a vehicle to express their views and positions. As of **June 25, 2021**, all links have been verified. Please credit the PaRC Support Project for any information forwarded to others. Thank You.

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