




December 1, 2011

FROM: Linda Moore, Administrative Coordinator

RE: ***The next meeting will be Tuesday December 6, 2011***, at the Development Services Building, 5 County Complex Court, Woodbridge, VA in Room 107A/B. Agenda/Minutes will be available on the web site at [www.pwcgov.org/dsb](http://www.pwcgov.org/dsb).

**Upcoming seminars and conferences:**

- ❖ **December 5, 2011, 7:30pm – 9:00pm. Successfully Navigating the IEP Process – Overcoming the Challenges Between Families and Schools.** Participants will learn how to navigate the top 10 challenges of the IEP process. Topics covered will include IEP meeting expectations, defining the responsibilities of the parents and the school staff, how to set measurable IEP goals and what to do when not everyone agrees. No matter what county you live in or what disability your child has, these practical tools, from the perspective of both an administrator and a parent/educator, can help the IEP process run smoothly for everyone. For more information or to RSVP contact Erin Roundtree at [erin.roundtree@mcleanbible.org](mailto:erin.roundtree@mcleanbible.org) or 703-770-2938. McLean Bible Church, Tysons Campus, Room 2400 (upper level near the café). 8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA.
- ❖ **December 17, 2011, 9:00am – 5:00pm. Multi-Vendor Fair.** Free Admission – Northern Virginia Resource Center (NVRC). 3951 Pender Drive, Suite 130, Fairfax, VA 22030. Light refreshment will be provided.
- ❖ **January 17, 2012, 2:00pm – 3:30pm. Refresh on the 2010 ADA Standards.** Effective March 15, 2012 new construction and alterations undertaken by entities covered by the ADA will be required to comply with the 2010 ADA Standards. Many conferences, workshops and webinars have been devoted to training design professionals, business owners, state and local government officials and advocates about these changes. Yet, the ADA National Network continues to field inquiries from individuals who either do not understand how the new standards will impact them or are unaware of the changes. With less than 2 months before the compliance date this session is designed to give an overview of the major differences between the 1991 ADA Standards and the 2010 ADA Standards. Join this session to refresh your understanding of the new standards and how they apply to you. To register please visit: [ADA-Audio](http://www.ada-audio.org/Registration/)  (<http://www.ada-audio.org/Registration/>)

### **Employment Resources – Putting Experience to Work.**

- ❖ **Virginia Workforce Center in Woodbridge** – 13370 Minnieville Road, Woodbridge, Virginia 22192. 703 792-0000 or [www.myskillsource.org](http://www.myskillsource.org). The Center will serve jobseekers and businesses and will house local and state government agencies and not-for-profit organizations, including the local Community College, Virginia Employment Commission and Department of Rehabilitative Services. The state-of-the-art facilities feature shared programming open to the public in areas such as resume writing, educational training for GED, post-secondary education, financial management and job services. The Centers focus on in-demand occupations and career opportunities, including opportunities for persons with disabilities, veterans, older workers and ex-offenders.
- ❖ **Job Opportunities for Veterans with Disabilities.** Job Opportunities for Veterans (JOFDAV) is a state of the art online recruitment application specifically for American veterans with disabilities. disABLEDperson Inc. has an alliance with regards to JOFDAV with the U.S. Department of Defense in their "America Supports You" initiative. disABLEDperson Inc. is a 501 (c) 3 public charity since 2002 whose mission is to reduce the unemployment rate among Americans with disabilities. Currently there are over 5000 jobs with new jobs being posted to the site daily. American veterans with disabilities are invited to come to JOFDAV.com and post their resumes. It is a free service for the veterans. Spread the word to all the veterans with disabilities that you know. Ask them to visit [www.JOFDAV.com](http://www.JOFDAV.com) and post their resumes. There are employers there waiting to hear from them.
- ❖ **Senior Employment Resources** – Senior Employment Resources (SER) fills jobs with those job seekers who live in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. and who are registered with SER. For information on becoming register at [www.seniorjobs.org](http://www.seniorjobs.org).

### **Volunteer Opportunities**

- ❖ **Special Olympics:** Volunteers are urgently needed for coaches in basketball, swimming and track and field. If you are interested in volunteering to help with Special Olympics, please call (703) 680-6661 or email chairman @pwosva.org. Leave your name, phone number and a description of your interest in Special Olympics. Special Olympics guidelines recommend at least 1 coach for every 4 athletes. *To become an athlete:* If you or someone you know is at least 6 years old, they may be eligible to participate in training programs with Special Olympics. Anyone who is at least eight years old can compete in a competition. Call 703-680-6661 to request a registration package or download the form from the web site: [www.specialolympicsva.org](http://www.specialolympicsva.org) . Click on Be an Athlete then click on download under Registering an Athlete. Mail your completed form to: Prince William Special Olympics, 12914 Lockleven Lane, Woodbridge, VA 22192
- ❖ **ACTS Food Pantry Needs You!** Be a volunteer at the ACTS Food Pantry. Do something that makes a difference. Flexible hours, Full-time or Part Time. To apply call Linda at (703) 221-3186 ext. 24 or email [acts\\_foodpantry@comcast.net](mailto:acts_foodpantry@comcast.net) or visit the Food Pantry for an application.
- ❖ Arc of Greater Prince William has volunteer opportunities. Contact Joy Ocetnik at 703-670-4800
- ❖ “Special Guys Bowling” Saturdays at Dale City Bowling Center, Contact Paul Weisenberger 703 774-6896 or 703 670-8009

Handicapped parking citations for Prince William County, the month of November:

In this newsletter:

1. Social Security Announces 3.6 Percent Benefit Increase for 2012
2. Think Beyond the Label (TBTL) Created New Jobs Portal for People with Disabilities.
3. New Website Offers Guide To Disability Services
4. Emergency Preparedness for Families of Children with Special Needs.
5. EEOC Post Guidance Regarding Americans with Disabilities Act.
6. Disney Parks Offer Many Services for Guests with Disabilities.
7. Study Suggests Hearing Loss Is More common Among People With Diabetes.
8. NASA Goddard Space Flight Center Set the Bar on Earth for Disability Hiring.
9. "Glee" Star tapped For President's Disability Committee.

- 1. Social Security Announces 3.6 Percent Benefit Increase for 2012 - Cost-of-Living Adjustment is First Since 2009.** Monthly Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for more than 60 million Americans will increase 3.6 percent in 2012, the Social Security Administration announced today.

The 3.6 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will begin with benefits that nearly 55 million Social Security beneficiaries receive in January 2012. Increased payments to more than 8 million SSI beneficiaries will begin on December 30, 2011.

Some other changes that take effect in January of each year are based on the increase in average wages. Based on that increase, the maximum amount of earnings subject to the Social Security tax (taxable maximum) will increase to \$110,100 from \$106,800. Of the estimated 161 million workers who will pay Social Security taxes in 2012, about 10 million will pay higher taxes as a result of the increase in the taxable maximum.

Information about Medicare changes for 2012, when announced, will be available at [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov). For some beneficiaries, their Social Security increase may be partially or completely offset by increases in Medicare premiums. The Social Security Act provides for how the COLA is calculated. To read more, please visit [www.socialsecurity.gov/cola](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/cola).

- 2. Think Beyond the Label (TBTL) Created New Job Portal for People with Disabilities.** TBTL's online jobs portal connects job seekers with disabilities to employers actively looking to hire them. This new job-search engine (<http://www.thinkbeyondthelabel.com/Job-Board/Job-Board.aspx>) gives people looking for employment opportunities free access to nearly 1 million job listings from more than 90,000 screened employers in the private and public sectors.

- 3. New Website Offers Guide To Disability Services.** A new website launching this week with backing from the federal government is offering a one-stop overview of the services available to people with developmental disabilities in each state.

The site, dubbed the [Medicaid ReferenceDesk](http://www.thedesk.info/) (<http://www.thedesk.info/>), offers a breakdown of the various Medicaid benefits — including medical and social services — offered to those with disabilities based on where they live.

Though the federal government mandates that Medicaid programs in each state meet certain requirements, states have significant leeway. As a result, the benefits available from one location to another and eligibility requirements for programs can vary wildly.

The reference desk is designed to help families wade through the bureaucracy, according to officials at The Arc, who created the new website with funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition to providing basic information about each state’s offerings, the reference desk also features a glossary of common terms and a selection of frequently asked questions about Medicaid benefits.

“This website helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and others access and gain knowledge about Medicaid, which is an essential lifeline for millions of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families,” said Peter Berns, CEO of The Arc.

- 3. Emergency Preparedness for Families of Children with Special Needs.** This 15-page resource guide was a project of the Consortium for Infant and Child Health (CINCH) Children with Special Health Care Needs Work Group. It was revised in March 2011.

Topics covered are:

- Are You Ready?
- Types of Emergencies
- Planning & Recovery Resources
- Emergency Preparation Checklist
- Creating an Emergency Plan
- Emergency Supply Kit
- Practical Tips
- If an Emergency Strikes
- Tips for Supporting Your Children
- Personal Information Forms

Find it here:

<http://www.chkd.org/documents/CareConnections/EmergencyPreparednessforFamilies.pdf>

- 4. EEOC Post Guidance Regarding Americans with Disabilities Act.** The Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits an employer from discriminating against a qualified individual on the basis of a disability. Many employers struggle to interpret and apply this law, especially in

light of amendments made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Fortunately, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the governmental agency charged with enforcing federal laws that prohibit discrimination, provides helpful resources on its website.

One such resource is “[The Americans With Disabilities Act: Applying Performance and Conduct Standards to Employees with Disabilities.](http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/performance-conduct.html)” (<http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/performance-conduct.html>). This resource provides practical guidance, including examples, to demonstrate an employer’s responsibilities when performance and conduct problems arise concerning a disabled employee. This publication discusses the role of reasonable accommodations in preventing or addressing performance or conduct problems and the circumstances in which an accommodation should be granted. It covers topics such as attendance issues, dress code violations, alcohol use, and confidentiality concerns.

This publication uses a question and answer format to address questions employers might raise. For example, the publication addresses whether an employer may use the same evaluation criteria for employees with disabilities as for employees without disabilities and whether an employer may discipline an employee if the employee’s disability caused a violation of a conduct rule.

- 5. Disney Parks Offer Many Services for Guests with Disabilities.** To include unique ride cars that enable guests to remain in their wheelchairs, American Sign Language interpretation at live shows, special equipment and facilities for resort access, and disability-specific pamphlets and guidebooks. However, recently Disney has gotten even more accessible.

Disney guests with visual disabilities are now able to explore Disney parks in a whole new way. Utilizing an enhanced, 7.2-ounce Disney-designed handheld device, users first hear an interactive audio menu from which they may choose the type of information they would like to receive.

The assistive technology device's options include: descriptions of outdoor locations throughout the park including nearby attractions, restaurants and entertainment, or detailed audio description of key visual elements inside more than 20 attractions.

Guests with some hearing loss are covered also - assistive listening features include captioning to read while enjoying specific attractions, and visual indicator door knocks in resort hotel rooms.

- 6. Study Suggests Hearing Loss Is More Common Among People With Diabetes.** Some hearing loss can accompany diabetes and even pre-diabetes. People with diabetes may want to have their hearing checked, based on a study that found hearing problems twice as common among them as among people without diabetes.

Half of the 11,405 study participants were randomly assigned a hearing test, and nearly 90 percent of them completed the hearing exam and diabetes questionnaire. The test measured participants' ability to hear low, middle, and high frequency sounds in both ears. Participants

were asked if they had a little trouble hearing, a lot of trouble hearing, or were deaf without a hearing aid. In addition, 2,259 of the participants who received the hearing tests were randomly assigned to have their blood glucose tested after an overnight fast.

"Using the data from the hearing tests, we measured hearing impairment in eight different ways," said Catherine Cowie, PhD, of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). The study, the first nationally representative investigation of adults aged 20 to 69, found an association between diabetes and hearing impairment in people as young as 30 years. A link between diabetes and hearing loss was seen across all frequencies, with more people reporting hearing difficulty in the high frequency range. Even adults with pre-diabetes had a 30 percent higher rate of hearing loss compared to those with normal blood sugar after an overnight fast.

From: <http://www.diabeteshealth.com/read/2011/11/19/7354/study-suggests-hearing-loss-is-more-common-among-people-with-diabetes/>

Source of the article's information:

<http://www.annals.org/content/149/1/1.full?sid=dcfe3bbb-325c-4227-974f-cc15516bd5dd>

7. **NASA Goddard Space Flight Center Set the Bar on Earth for Disability Hiring.** The NASA Goddard Space Flight Center sets the bar for cutting edge technology and space exploration, but they also are setting the bar right here on Earth for disability hiring and inclusion. I recently had the unique opportunity to visit one of the most interesting agencies in the Federal Government and wanted to share with you some of the innovative things happening there.

The Goddard Space Flight Center has developed an inclusive culture from recruitment, to hiring, through training, and ultimately the retention of people with disabilities. In 2009, the Office of Personnel Management held the first ever Federal Government disability job fair; human resource managers from Goddard attended and actually hired candidates they met using Schedule A hiring authority, which expedites the hiring process for persons with disabilities. The agency also actively recruits folks with disabilities at great science and technology schools. They have a close working relationship with vocational rehabilitation centers, the Workforce Recruitment Program, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science's internship program for interns with disabilities who feed them highly qualified candidates in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). Thanks to these great practices, the Goddard center has reached its internal agency goals both for disability and veteran hiring.

But, for this agency, hiring individuals with disabilities is not viewed as a box to be checked. Goddard ensures that training for new hires is accessible, through a robust feedback mechanism which helps to reduce unintentional barriers. Goddard also offers development and learning sessions for current staff and managers, including the Diversity Dialogue Project which provides a space for conversation where employees can discuss barriers and combat insensitivity. They also run a very popular "Power and Privilege" series where employees can learn about disability history and discuss disability related issues.

One of the most significant barriers to successful employment for people with disabilities is the lack of reasonable accommodations. The Goddard Space Flight Center uses one of the best practices for ensuring that accommodations are provided to level the playing field for all employees—the agency maintains a centralized accommodation fund, meaning individual managers do not feel pressure to make reasonable accommodations decisions based on their department budgets.

Diversity in Goddard's hiring matches the diversity of the skillsets required to be on the cutting edge of earth and space sciences. We took a great tour of the facility which is currently building and testing parts of the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), a new powerful telescope the size of a tennis court which will be in orbit nearly one million miles from Earth (in comparison, the Hubble telescope was about 350 miles from Earth's surface). JWST is Hubble's successor and will enable scientists to help us understand more about the Big Bang.

The diverse employees of the Goddard Space Flight Center are responsible for inception, building, testing, and launching the coolest high-tech stuff around. From a blind equal employment opportunity specialist who welcomed us, to a thermal engineer with a physical disability who showed us a huge machine that simulates the space vacuum and extreme temperatures, to Deaf engineers who showed us mockups and test equipment they designed for the satellite's data and command center (its brain), this just once again proves that people with disabilities can work anywhere and do anything.

- 8. Virginia Governor's Reform Commission Recommends Consolidation of Dept. of Rehabilitative Services, Dept. for the Aging, and Dept. for Deaf and Hard of Hearing.** Earlier this week, on November 15, 2011, Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell's government reform commission recommended consolidating the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Department for the Aging, and Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The commission's recommendations intend to save the state money and cut bureaucracy.

Rachel Bavister, past president of the Virginia Association of the Deaf, spoke in opposition to the consolidation at the reform commission's meeting. She questioned whether the commission believed a one size, one agency model would fit all people with disabilities.

Recommendations by state legislators for consolidation of the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing seem to have become a regular event for our community. I am sure that many of us groan and want to smack our heads in frustration at the prospect of once again sacrificing precious time and energy in educating our legislators about why consolidation continues to be a bad idea.

In a state where there is unfettered access to communication for all, and widespread recognition of the talents and leadership of individuals who are deaf or have hearing loss, consolidation might be an acceptable option. We're certainly not there yet.

Also troubling is that this suggested consolidation is different. As Rachel Bavister noted in her speech to the reform commission, there is no mention of the Department for the Blind and

Vision Impaired. Past consolidation bills, during the years I have been at NVRC, have always called for consolidation of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired with the Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Today a Stakeholders Meeting was held in Richmond with representatives to discuss the proposed consolidation. NVRC was among the stakeholders represented. The purpose of the meeting was to assist the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Governor's Office in identifying the pros and cons of consolidation, and to consider ways that consolidation can result in more effective services for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

9. **“Glee” Star tapped For President’s Disability Committee.** President Barack Obama is soliciting advice on disability issues from an actress with Down Syndrome who has a regular role on Fox’s “Glee.” Obama said he plans to appoint Lauren Potter, who plays cheerleader Becky Jackson on Fox's “Glee,” to the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. The committee Potter will join is made up of 21 citizens and 13 federal representatives who are tasked with advising the President and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on issues pertaining to Americans with intellectual disabilities.