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U.S. Education and Labor Departments Release WIOA Final Rules

In July 22, 2014, President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) into law. Almost two years later on June 30, 2016, the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor released the five (5) final rules implementing WIOA. The purpose of WIOA is to increase high quality employment opportunities for everyone, including those experiencing barriers to employment, for instance, individuals with significant disabilities, through innovative and collaborative partnerships with community stakeholders.

To access the final rules, go to: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rso/wioa-final-rules.html>.

The final rules expanded the definition of "student with a disability" for purposes related to Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), to not only include students with disabilities ages 16-21 years old in secondary education or high school, but it now also includes students with disabilities enrolled in a

postsecondary or other recognized educational program. The broadened definition also includes students who are home-schooled and those participating in non-traditional secondary educational programs. High school drop-outs who are not engaged in any educational or training program are not covered.

Pre-Employment Transition Services are not exempt from a comparable benefit search. This means that VR agencies, consistent with Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act, may continue to explore and identify other public programs that are already providing Pre-ETS and coordinate with them for the provision of such services to students with disabilities. Pre-ETS includes: job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, and instruction in self-advocacy.

Transition Tips for Parents

The following tips or successful practices have been extracted from the CNMI OVR and PSS School to Work Transition Guide: Student Handout, which can also be found online at

www.ovrgov.net:

- #1** Become familiar with the services and representatives in your area.
- #2** Attend presentations related to Transition services and supports.
- #3** Invite public agency

representatives, including an OVR Counselor, to your child's IEP meetings.

- #4** Attend your child's IEP meetings and be an active partner in the process.
- #5** Encourage your child to prepare for and actively participate in her IEP.
- #6** Maintain regular contact and provide updates to all Transition team members.
- #7** Help your child to create a portfolio of Transition information.

#8 Help your child to research her job interests using different formats like the Internet.

#9 Research guardianship options, if appropriate, prior to your child's 18th birthday.

#10 Share school documents with outside agencies or vice versa to assist in the Transition planning process.

TO APPLY FOR VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES, CALL 322-6537/8.



November is National Family Caregivers Month

The Ayuda Network, Inc./Commonwealth Respite Service Program (ANI/CRSP) and partner agencies from government and non-government sectors will be celebrating the month of November as the National Family Caregivers Month wherein we honor and reflect on the role of family caregivers whose contributions are often diminished, overlooked, and are rarely reimbursed.

Being a Caregiver takes a lot of patience, comfort, compassion and support. Caregivers are key to providing basic medical care, love, hope, companionship, and devotion they bring to the people they serve. Each day can bring new challenges as the caregiver copes with changing levels of abilities and challenging behaviors that they may not be used to.

Giving care can be tough and can add increase stress and high risk of illness to caregivers. Stress takes a toll on our daily lives and our health and can lead to high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, anxiety and depression. They often feel lonely & isolated, they spend less time with other family members, and they go through mental health problems and burnout due to the lack of support from family or friends.

This November 2016, we ask our community and partner agencies from government and non-government sectors to join ANI/CRSP as they plan their series of events recognizing all caregivers in the CNMI. To let them feel that the community highly recognizes them as Heroes. So before November, if you know or see any caregiver around please show your appreciation to them for all the hard work they do.

For more information, please call ANI/CRSP at 322-7469 or email us at crsp.ayudanet@gmail.com.

"Health is by chance – Caregiving is by choice." – Brett H. Lewis

CNMI Council on Developmental Disabilities

5-Year State Plan for Federal Years 2017 - 2021

Goal 1: Self-Advocacy

Promote and support the development of leadership and self advocacy capacity among people with intellectual and development disabilities.

Expected 5-year Outcomes

Increase in the number of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that have leadership skills.

Increase in the number of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities that utilize their advocacy skills at the state level.

Increase in the number of individuals with intellectual and development disabilities leaders that mentor other individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to gain self-advocacy and leadership skills.

Goal 2: Service System Improvement

By 2021, the Council will work with partners on at least two (2) systems change initiatives and provide information, education, and skill building activities so that individuals and/or students with intellectual and developmental disabilities will have improved transition services from high school through post-school into meaningful outcomes with adequate services and supports and increased opportunities in employment in the CNMI.

Expected 5-year Outcomes

More people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will have improved transition services in high school through post-school and increased opportunities to integrated and competitive employment in the CNMI.



More employers and policy makers in the CNMI are aware of the benefits and capabilities of hiring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Goal 3: Respite Care

By 2021, family members and/or caregivers of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals who are medically fragile will have access to respite services made available through the Commonwealth Respite Services Program (CNMI PL 14-36).

Expected 5-year Outcomes

More family members and/or caregivers of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and individuals who are medically fragile in the CNMI will have access to Respite Services.

Goal 4: Emergency Preparedness

By 2021, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families will be afforded the same level of safety as all, be involved in the process to plan, advocate, and take charge for themselves when an emergency arise, and to have a clear idea of what to do in such situation.

Expected 5-year Outcomes

More people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families will have access to emergency preparedness information and be able to take charge for themselves in the event of an emergency.



CNMI COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE

7 Apps for your Device to Use as Assistive Technology

Resource: <http://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/tools-and-research/7-apps-to-use-as-assistive-technology/>



Speak It!: A text-to-speech app, Speak It! can help your learner read or speak. Simply copy and paste selected text and Speak It! reads the words out loud. The app highlights each spoken word so that kids can more easily follow along with the text. This \$1.99 app gives a non-verbal child a voice so that he or she can interact with classmates. Just type what you want to say and Speak It! does the rest. The ability to save countless phrases adds convenience by eliminating the need to type the same phrases over and over again.



Read2Go: Read2Go corresponds with **Bookshare**, a digital library that makes books available to students with reading-related disabilities such as dyslexia and vision issues. The app costs \$19.99 but allows you to access Bookshare's expansive library featuring over 170,000 books via your iPad or iPhone. While Read2Go requires a Bookshare membership, an award from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs offers free memberships to schools and students who meet certain qualifications.



Dragon Dictation: Students who have difficulty writing due to disabilities can benefit from the free Dragon Dictation app. This voice recognition technology app enables a student's iPad or iPhone to capture and document what the child says. Users rave about the app's accuracy.



Notability: People learn differently and the note-taking app Notability embraces this notion. Kathleen H. McClaskey, a digital learning consultant and reoccurring guest on the special education-focused **The Inclusive Class Podcast**, noted during her September 14th 2012 appearance on this program that Notability works especially well with visual learners. Additionally, those who excel through listening will certainly find the \$1.99 app's audio recording component useful. Given Notability's versatility and low price, it's no surprise that Apple named the app 2012's bestselling note taker.



Virtual Manipulatives!: Another math-related app, Virtual Manipulatives! uses visuals to effectively teach fractions, decimals and percentages. Virtual Manipulatives! ranks among the top 50 free educational apps and received honors as an Apple staff favorite.



Draw Free for iPad: When a school project entails an artistic element, consider Draw Free for iPad. General education teacher and Learn It In Five website creator Mark Barnes specifically notes that the Draw Free for iPad works well for students with fine motor skills issues. Barnes has personally seen students with disabilities succeed inside his mainstream classroom using this free app.



Talking Calculator: If a visual disability makes using a calculator difficult for your child or student, the Talking Calculator app could become your ideal solution. Talking Calculator features large colorful buttons, creating an easy-to-use interface. Plus, as the app's name suggests, the calculator talks. Put your finger on the screen and Talking Calculator tells you what button your finger hovers over. Perform a calculation and the calculator vocalizes the answer. At \$1.99, Talking Calculator can change math from a dreaded subject into a fun and enjoyable experience.

For more information, please contact the Assistive Technology Program at 664-7003, TTY 664-7005 or email rdiaz.cnmicdd@gmail.com. Located in Capitol Hill Bldg. 1310.

Zika Virus Infection and Other Arboviral Diseases – Be Mosquito-Wise: Fight the Bite!

Zika virus infection (Zika) is a disease similar to dengue fever (dengue) and Chikungunya virus infection (CHIKV). Whilst humans carry these viruses they are all mainly spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes are the vectors carrying the virus from someone with the infection to someone who doesn't (yet) have the infection. Additionally however, recent evidence has shown that Zika can be transmitted sexually from men to women and from women to men; and during pregnancy (and possibly during child birth) from a mother to her child. There is no vaccine and no cure for Zika, and treatment is limited to pain relief.



vector as Zika, present similar symptoms and require similar mitigating measures. A recent WHO lead entomology survey on Saipan, Tinian and Rota showed



Zika infection there is no cure for microcephaly. Deaths from Zika are very rare.

CNMI does not have Zika (or dengue or CHIKV) at present, but all three of these virus infections are circulating in the Pacific. Currently there is a Zika outbreak in Kosrae FSM as well as American Samoa and recently in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Zika was previously in Yap FSM and has been or is currently in most of the South-Pacific island countries. Zika is also considered endemic in a number of regional countries including the Philippines. The recent Festival of Pacific Arts mass-gathering in the CNMI's closest neighbour Guam demonstrated the vulnerability to Pacific nations from traveller introduced exotic, emerging and re-emerging diseases with suspected cases of the mosquito borne Malaria identified in travellers from other Pacific Islands (and subsequently confirmed positive for dengue). Hawaii earlier this year had an outbreak of dengue fever.

Zika, dengue and CHIKV are transmitted by the same mosquito

that we do not have the main Zika mosquito vector *Aedes Aegypti* but we do have the secondary vector *Aedes Albopictus*. *Albopictus* is a daytime biter and is well adapted to the human environment and feeding on us. Typically up to 2-7 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito Zika symptoms may develop (up to 14 days for dengue and 12 days for CHIKV). Symptoms include joint and muscle pain, swelling of the hands, conjunctivitis or pink eye, pain or a headache behind the eyes and a rash on the body, arms and legs that may come and go within a couple of days. However up to 80% of Zika cases are asymptomatic and do not know they have the infection. For those with symptoms most will be mild and will typically dissipate within 7 days. The concern with Zika infection is the potential for birth defects after a pregnant woman is infected. The outbreak in the South America has shown that Zika can cause microcephaly and probably other congenital malformations. As with

CHCC PHEP/ELC program has a Zika Action plan as a road map outlining the activities in place for Zika (and dengue and CHIKV) preparedness. The action plan includes enhanced surveillance, rapid response, laboratory testing processes and clinical team awareness. Mitigating measures for Zika, dengue and CHIKV are all the same – AVOID MOSQUITO BITES, followed closely by vector control through habitat reduction and in the event we find cases, source reduction. It is important to recognise and to emphasise that mosquito habitat reduction is a whole of government and all of community concern. Health and environmental agencies alone cannot tackle the problem. Everyone needs to be mosquito aware. Especially given the recent heavy rainfall we must all ensure there are no containers holding water that are the breeding sites for mosquitoes. So every week clean up your yard and around your workplace.

Be mosquito-wise, Fight the bite & clean your yard.

Dr Paul White (PhD) – Territorial Epidemiologist.



OVR Staff Profile



Matilde Selepeo, affectionately known as “Tilde”, is the newest addition to join the team up in Navy Hill at the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). Tilde started her employment at OVR on May 23, 2016, and joins the ranks of paraprofessionals providing direct VR services. With Tilde on board, OVR now has 2 full-time Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Aides, with the other being John Allen Cabrera who has been with OVR for several years now and counting.

Q: You are not new to the field of disability. What have you done prior to working at OVR?

A: *No, I am not new to the field of disability. I worked for the Center for Living Independently in the CNMI as an Administrative Assistant for 5 years. I resigned from the Center mid-January of this year (2016) to care for my son who was not yet a year old at the time. But before you know it, I was back on my feet and job hunting. I had the desire to work and contribute to my growing family. I had interviewed at several companies including OVR, and what a wonderful surprise it was when I received an email from them about a job offer. I quickly accepted the offer and was very happy to be going back to a field of work that I truly enjoy. As a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Aide, I am part of an organization that provides opportunities to individuals with disabilities to maximize their potential and achieve the jobs or careers of their choice.*

Q: What has been your greatest accomplishment or satisfaction working at the CNMI Center for Living Independently?

A: *Having worked at the CLI for a number of years has helped me to become a better person as I find myself to be more patient and understanding. I think it has prepared me well for my new career at OVR. And my greatest satisfaction having worked at CLI is knowing that I contributed to improving the lives of those who frequented the Center to receive Independent Living Services. I also learned a great deal from the clients.*

Q: So far, how do you like working at OVR? What do you find rewarding and challenging about your job?

A: *It feels great to be working here at OVR. Being part of the OVR team is a reward in itself. OVR has such great working teams that motivate each other. Because there is respect and dignity for each other, one is never put down. We are all encouraged to work hard and to also enjoy working.*

One of the challenges of my job is wanting to do more for the clients, but some tasks like vocational counseling and guidance are handled by the counselors. Another challenge is the VR process. Applying today does not mean you are made eligible and start receiving services the next week. Things actually take some time.

Q: There's a saying that there is never a dull moment at VR. Your thoughts?

A: *I agree with that statement. There's always work to be done at OVR and interesting things come up from time to time. Sometimes there's not enough hours in the day, but we do our best for our consumers every day. When you're learning every day, there's no room for boredom.*

Q: What activities do you engage in that help you to unwind from all the busyness of work?

A: *After working hours, my focus is on my family. I especially enjoy playing with my baby boy, and just seeing him happy makes all the stress go away.*

Q: Please tell us a little bit about your family.

A: *I have a small family, which consists of my husband (an employee of the Commonwealth Ports Authority for 8 years now), my daughter who's in middle school, and myself. And then last year in May, we welcomed the newest member to our family – through adoption – a baby boy, who is now a year and 3 months old.*

THE CNMI TRANSITION COALITION

PRESENTS

"PATHWAYS TO STUDENT'S SUCCESS"



Sept. 12, 2016 Kanoa Resort
8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Sessions Include:
Transition-High School vs. College
Successful Interviews & Resumé Writing
Self Advocacy/Leadership Training
Assistive Technology Today
(bring your smart phone, iphone or tablet)

Free

Sept. 13, 2016
World Resort
10:00 am - 11:00 am
Job Fair

For Parents!!!
Sept. 12, 2016 Kanoa Resort
5:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Parent's Sessions Include:
Parent Panel: Sharing Transition Success
Transition High School vs. College/Trade School
The VR Process / College Bound Info

UCEDD is bringing out the presenter Dr. Kelly Roberts from the University of Hawaii Manoa's Pacific Basin UCEDD

Sept. 14, 2016 Kanoa Resort
8:30 am - 1:00 pm

Sessions Include:
College Bound (NMC/NMTI/WIA)
Resumé Writing
Soft Skills (Business Etiquette)
Emergency Preparedness
Assistive Technology Today

(bring your smart phone, iphone or tablet)

REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION: If you require reasonable accommodation (e.g., large print, sign language interpreter) to participate, please contact Elvira Seman at 322-6537/8 at the OVR or Ruth Pangelinan at 664-7003 at CDD, at least 7 days before the scheduled event.