

The Region VI CRP-RCEP e-News Bulletin is published monthly through a grant awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration to the Department of Rehabilitation, Social Work & Addictions at the University of North Texas.

Editorial Staff

Editor

Martha Garber
Project Director

Contributing Authors

Margaret J. Cortez
Marcy Haag
Jim Humes
Yvonne Raffini
Zach Sneed

Principal Investigator

Linda Holloway

Any comments about the content or design of this e-Newsletter should be directed to [Martha Garber](mailto:Martha.Garber@unt.edu)

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From the desk of: Martha Garber

Rebecca Waters, Texas employment consultant, asked that we do a column on “default” diagnosis. She is referring to a situation where the diagnosis a person is given during the eligibility process does not fit neatly with the symptoms that the person presents.

While accurate diagnosis is very important in the rehabilitation process, for an employment consultant the diagnosis is of little concern. The truth is... when we are talking employment if we get too focused on the diagnosis, we may miss the person’s potential. What is vital is that we know the person in terms of employment — their strengths, career aspirations, functional challenges related to work, negotiable and non-negotiable job factors, and other work-related matters. When we know the person as a qualified job seeker, then we can be useful in finding the right job match. After all, businesses could care less about the diagnosis; employers need a person who can get the job done.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit Extended

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a popular incentive program for employers to hire individuals and others who have historically confronted barriers to employment, has been extended through 2011. Enhancements to the program include changes in eligibility criteria and the amounts employers can claim as a tax credit.

As a refresher on this vital tool for enhancing employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities, the WOTC targets individuals for employment who come from nine (9) groups including qualified veterans with a service-connected disability, vocational rehabilitation referrals, recipients of Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and ex-felons. The specific changes to the law, listed below, affect new hires who began employment after May 25, 2007:

- the high-risk youth target group was renamed Designated Community Resident and the age for eligibility was changed from 18-24 to 18-39;

Training Schedule

March 28 & April 4, 2008: [Emotional Intelligence for Rehabilitation Professionals](#), Online

April 2-3, 2008: [Vocational Strategies for Specific Disabilities: Mental Health & Substance Abuse](#), Arlington, TX

April 11, 2008: [Developing Your Business Plan](#), Online

April 18, 2008: [Disability Etiquette](#), Online

April 30, 2008: [Job Coaching](#), Hot Springs, AR

May 20-21, 2008: [Building Employer Relationships: Marketing](#), Shreveport, LA

June 5, 2008: [Workforce Reentry & the Ex-offender](#), Little Rock, AR

New Training At Your Desktop

From the expertise of Cary Griffin, internationally-known author, speaker and consultant, to Timothy Owens,

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- “disabled veteran” was added as a subset under the qualified veteran target group with a maximum tax credit amount of \$4,800;
- qualified wages for the disabled veteran subgroup increased from \$6,000 to \$12,000.

For more information on the WOTC changes, visit the Department of Labor website at <http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/>

Filing Income Tax Return Pays CA\$H!

Carol Lierette at the Lighthouse for the Blind in Houma, Louisiana suggested we alert you to the opportunity for cash payments. The Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 calls for the Treasury to deliver cash payments to 130 million taxpayers starting in May. All you have to do to get a stimulus check from Uncle Sam is file an Income Tax Return this year showing \$3,000 or more in qualifying income.

Qualifying income consists of earnings from wages or self-employment, Social Security, certain Railroad Retirement benefits, veterans disability compensation, and pension or veterans survivors' benefits. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is not included as qualifying income.

Even individuals who might not otherwise be required to file a 2007 income tax return, for instance low-income workers, will be required to do so this year in order to receive the stimulus payment. The 411 on the Economic Stimulus Act is extensive, but the IRS has developed a website with a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the program, a state-by-state listing of Taxpayer Assistance Centers, and other helpful links. [Click here to go to the IRS website.](#)

Support for Supported Employment?

For the 8th year in a row, the Federal Budget for 2009 does not include funding for Supported Employment (SE) State Grants. Using the rationale that Vocational Rehabilitation has successfully integrated supported employment into the fabric of its day-to-day client services, the current administration sees a separate line item for SE state grants as duplicative and inefficient.

Since supported employment provides time-limited job coaching, on-site training, and follow-along services to individuals with the most severe disabilities, the absence of this program could prove devastating to consumers in the workplace and to the vocational rehabilitation and community organizations that support them.

accomplished speaker, trainer, and facilitator, and our newest partner Dr. Brenda Lightfoot, educator, coach and consultant, we are pleased to offer three new essential trainings available to you without leaving your office:

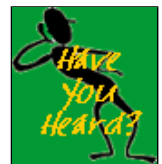
- Emotional Intelligence for Rehabilitation Professionals
- A Step-by-Step Approach to Writing Great Business Plans
- Disability Etiquette

Sessions are Fridays at 10 a.m. Full details and registration available on our website: www.crp.unt.edu

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To learn more about the Federal Budget for 2009 visit the links below:

[The White House Office of Management & Budgets](#)
[The National Rehabilitation Association](#)
[FY 2009 Budget Summary](#)

Transitions

Jim Hanophy is the new Assistant Commissioner for the Texas Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS). In an interview with e-News, Jim stated that he plans to continue the course started by his predecessor, Terry Smith, focusing on delivering exceptional services to Texans with disabilities.



Among Jim's priorities for DRS are to build stronger relationships with business, find new and better ways to partner within the community, and create a seamless path for youth with disabilities to transition to work, school or both. Reflecting on his latest collaboration with business, Jim wants to replicate what he sees as a dynamic connection between employers, job seekers, DRS and CRPs: Business gets qualified employees that can do the job; consumers secure great jobs that they really like; and, DRS staff and CRPs revel in making the right job match.

Many of you may remember Jim as an organizational consultant for UNT. Jim credits his time at UNT with the opportunity to know Texas as well as work with and build supported employment systems within the region. Jim is a "true believer" that people with disabilities who want to go to work can. Congratulations Jim!

Roseland Starks is the new director of Louisiana Rehabilitation Services, succeeding James Wallace, who retired after 38 years of state service. "LRS is fortunate to have Ms. Starks," said Wallace. "She brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position."



Roseland's depth and breadth of experience and education positions her well for her new duties. She has already set her sites on several goals focused on increasing the quality and quantity of employment services, forging linkages with business, and improving consumer access to services with special emphasis on Louisiana's disabled war veterans and transitioning youth. She is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities, and believes strongly in a well-trained professional staff to serve them.

A native of Oklahoma, Roseland earned a Bachelor's degree at the

participation is convenient, easy, and cheap! Just \$60 gets you 3 hours of continuing education credits.

The course includes instructions for use, technical support in case you run into problems with the technology, and a **Certificate of Completion** that's suitable for framing.

[Click here to register for Diversity & Rehabilitation Service Delivery.](#)

Upcoming Conferences

[CSAVR Spring Conference 2008](#), April 20-23, 2008, Bethesda, MD

[National ADA Symposium & Expo](#), May 12-14, 2008, St. Louis, MO

[Workforce Innovations 2008](#), July 15-17, 2008, New Orleans, LA

[2008 Annual Conference on Independent Living](#), July 21-24, 2008, Washington, DC

[2008 NRA National Training Conference](#), October 23-26, 2008, St. Louis, MO

[CSAVR Fall Conference 2008](#), November 16-19, 2008, San Diego, CA

University of Oklahoma and a Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling from Southern University. Congratulations, Roseland!

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