

DBTAC- Northeast ADA News Bulletin: Nov 04, 2009

The Disability & Business Technical Assistance Center- Northeast provides training, technical assistance and materials on the ADA and related disability issues throughout New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

FOR QUESTIONS REGARDING RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THE ADA AND/OR OTHER DISABILITY ISSUES, CALL **1.800.949.4232** OR EMAIL **DBTACNORTHEAST@CORNELL.EDU**

What's New in Our Region:

Jobless in New Jersey (NJ) Urged to Look to "NJ Helps" for Assistance:

NJ residents have experienced the loss of 6.9 million payroll jobs since the start of the current economic downturn, which has resulted in one third of the jobless being unemployed for over six months. While unemployment insurance has been expanded to up to 79 weeks, 32,000 NJ residents were notified in September that their unemployment benefits have run out. That number is expected to double by the end of the year. The NJ Department of Human Services is urging residents to turn to NJ Helps, an online service to assist with a range of issues including preventing eviction, utility assistance, and low cost medical care. NJ Helps is free to use and walks through basic eligibility criteria online to enable residents to formulate a customized list of programs and services for assistance that is specific to their situation. NJ Helps tells you where to go for help and what documents are required to get it. It also makes it possible to apply for some programs, like food stamps, online. To use NJ Helps, visit <http://www.nj211.org/layoff094.cfm> .

Mixed Reaction to New Office of Autism Services in New Jersey:

New Jersey Governor Corzine has announced plans to open an Office of Autism Services within the state Department of Human Services. His proposal is meant to give disability more attention, but some fear it will dilute the focus on other intellectual and developmental disabilities such as Down Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy. Furthermore, some are concerned that this may create another bureaucracy, while many are left without the tangible support they need. Read the full article at: http://www.philly.com/inquirer/local/nj/20091018_Reaction_mixed_to_NJ_office_on_autism.html

What's New in the Rest of the Country:

Job Accommodation Network (JAN) Latest Electronic News:

The JAN E-News is a quarterly online newsletter designed to inform readers about

low-cost and innovative accommodation approaches; the latest trends in assistive technology; announcements of upcoming JAN presentations and trainings; and legislative and policy updates promoting the employment success of people with disabilities. This issue includes topics such as mobility enhancing devices, the campaign for disability employment, what constitutes a request for a reasonable accommodation, and small businesses and the Recovery Act. Access the Enews at: <http://www.jan.wvu.edu/ENews/2009/Enews-V7-I4.htm>

Draft Guidelines for Federal Outdoor Sites Released for Public Comment:

The U.S. Access Board has released for public review a **draft** of final guidelines covering access to outdoor sites managed by the Federal government, including national parks and recreation areas. These guidelines address how to achieve accessibility in outdoor developed areas, specify where compliance is required, and provide detailed technical criteria for new or altered trails, beach routes, and picnic and camping facilities. The draft guidelines are available for review and comment until **December 18, 2009** at www.Regulations.gov . For more information, go to: <http://access-board.gov/news/outdoor-draft.htm>

Blake Watson's "Meet Sue" Wins the What Can YOU Do? Video Contest!

Best Buy and the Campaign for Disability Employment have announced the winner of the "What Can YOU Do?" Video Contest- Blake Watson, a Mississippi Web designer. The contest attracted over 130 videos promoting the talent and skills that people with disabilities bring to the workplace. For more, and to view the winning video, go to: <http://jfactivist.typepad.com/jfactivist/2009/10/meet-sue-wins-what-can-you-do-contest.html>

Social Security (SSA) Will Become Accessible to Those with Visual Impairments:

SSA is now required to provide accessible communication to 3 million recipients and represented payees who are blind or visually impaired as a result of a national class-action lawsuit brought by the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund on behalf of the American Council of the Blind and others. The judge ruled that SSA failed to comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and ordered they communicate via Braille and CD no later than April 15th, 2010. Read more at: <http://www.poconorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20091022/NEWS/910220333>

New Automated System for ADA-Compliant Job Descriptions:

DBSquared, a software development company, recently launched DBDescriptions, a web-based product that will allow organizations to create and maintain comprehensive and ADA-compliant job descriptions easily through an automated system that serves as a job description repository that can be accessed anytime.

Read more at: <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2009/10/prweb3092414.htm>

Hate Crimes Bill Protects People with Disabilities:

On October 28th President Obama signed into law legislation to make crimes committed against a person based on their disability, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity a federal offense. This legislation expands on the 1968 hate crimes act which states that crimes committed based on a person's religion, race, or national origin are protected under federal law. Access the article and video of Obama's comments at:

<http://jfactivist.typepad.com/jfactivist/2009/10/president-obama-sign-s-hate-crimes-law-protecting-people-with-disabilities.html>

Disability Law Index Updated in light of ADA Amendments Act:

The Disability Law Index created by the DBTAC Southwest ADA Center has been updated to reflect changes made by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. New case law and Letters of Finding issued by the Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights have been added. It contains federal regulations organized by subject with court case opinions and legal articles that help interpret federal disability-related laws. Access the Index at: <http://www.southwestada.org/html/topical/index.html>

National Institutes of Health (NIH) Awards Grants to Boost Autism Research:

The NIH awarded more than 50 autism research grants, totaling more than \$65 million, which will be supported with American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. These grants are the result of the [largest funding opportunity for research on autism spectrum disorders](#)

[to date](#) . For more information and examples of awarded studies, go to:

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/science-news/2009/nih-awards-more-than-50-grants-to-boost-search-for-causes-improve-treatments-for-autism.shtml>

Federal Government Helps Low-Income Households with Energy Costs:

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released more than \$2.6 billion to help low income citizens with their bills for the rest of this year. These funds represent grants under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program which helps eligible families pay the costs of heating, insulating, and cooling their homes in winter and summer. For a list of state allocations, go to:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/news/press/2009/liheap_2010.html .

Obama Seeks Additional \$250 Stimulus Payments for People with Disabilities:

President Obama is asking Congress to authorize \$250 more in emergency recovery assistance for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities to help those hardest hit by the recession. If approved, 57 million Americans including 5 million SSI beneficiaries would receive a one-time payment of \$250, totaling \$13 billion. Read

more at: <http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2009/10/14/250-payment/5809/>

Video of Panel on People with Disabilities in the Performing and Visual Arts:

On October 22nd, Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis convened a panel to discuss and answer audience questions about people with disabilities in the performing and visual arts. Before a standing room only audience, Secretary Solis was joined by Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy Kathleen Martinez, performance artist Fred Beam, and actor Robert David Hall. View the video of the panel session at: <http://www.dol.gov/odep/#stars>

Opportunities for You!

Join in the United We Ride National Dialogue November 2-13, 2009:

The Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) invites you to participate in the United We Ride National Dialogue. This web-based interactive dialogue will run from November 2nd to 13th and is designed to allow you to submit, comment, and rate suggestions and ideas on how to increase access to affordable and reliable transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited income. Your input will inform future policy, the CCAM Strategic Plan, and strengthen the CCAM's relationship with its partners and stakeholders, including governments, transportation agencies, human service agencies, healthcare providers, employment specialists, educators, and consumers. For more information and to register, go to: www.UWRdialogue.org

Virtual HIV Employment Conference November 18-20, 2009:

The ADAP Advocacy Association will convene an HIV Employment Educational Series: Promoting "Positive" Work on November 18th-20th in the Virtual World. The purpose of the virtual awareness event is to put you in touch with leading experts on a wide array of employment-related opportunities, resources and rights available to people living with HIV/AIDS, as well as provide useful tips about workplace accommodations and legal protections. This series is being supported by the [National DBTAC](#), [US Business Leadership Network](#), [Community Access National Network](#), [Bender Consulting](#), [GettingHired.com](#) and [Social Security's Ticket to Work program](#). More information about the program and registration is available at: <http://www.adapadvocacyassociation.org/events.html>

Don't Forget: Funding Opportunities for Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands:

The DBTAC-Northeast ADA Center is announcing the availability of a \$30,000 per year sub-contract to a Puerto Rico affiliate and a \$20,000 per year one for the U.S. Virgin Islands. The affiliates, who must be located in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, will be expected to provide outreach, technical assistance, local support,

and resources to businesses, employers, government entities, and individuals with disabilities throughout their territory for a period of up to 2 years. Puerto Rico applicants should note that while all communication (written and verbal) with the DBTAC-Northeast ADA Center staff will occur in English, the affiliate should also be fluent in Spanish to facilitate communication with stakeholders in Puerto Rico. This is a competitive Request for Proposals and one winning applicant from each territory will be selected. **Deadline for submitting proposals is December 1, 2009.** For more information, contact us at either 1.800.949.4232 or dbtacnortheast@cornell.edu .

Public Comments to EEOC on Proposed ADA Regulations Due Nov. 23rd!

The EEOC approved a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) revising its ADA Amendments Act regulations and is accepting public comments until November 23rd. The NPRM is posted at www.eeoc.gov , along with a question and answer guide about the proposal and how to submit comments. For the press release, go to: http://www.eeoc.gov/ada/amendments_notice.html

Participate in the National "What If Plan":

The "What If Plan" is an activity of the National ADA Symposium and the result of years of working with people throughout the country who are involved in implementing the principles of the ADA in their communities. This activity stems from the belief that government needs to hear recommendations from these very people in order to effectively plan the direction of ADA implementation for the next decade. This Plan consists of recommendations from prior ADA Symposium participants and you are now invited to contribute by providing comments on how the recommendations can be put into action. Comments will be periodically summarized and refined until a cohesive plan emerges, ideally in time for the 20th anniversary of the ADA next summer. To view the recommendations and find out how to offer comments, go to: <http://www.whatifplan.org/HowtoParticipate.html> .

Special Spotlight: 2010 for 2010 Campaign!

July 26, 2010 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Across the United States communities are already planning events to celebrate the progress made through the implementation of the ADA. The National ADA Symposium is sponsoring a unique project that recognizes the progress made toward the mission of the ADA- inclusion of people with disabilities into all aspects of American life, while addressing that there is still much work to be done: the 2010 by 2010 Campaign!

Their goal is to have 2,010 public entities submit a "Proclamation of Recommitment

to the Mission of the ADA" by the 20th anniversary. They have a dedicated website that will showcase and celebrate the public entities joining in the reaffirmation of the ADA. Please join in making the 2010 by 2010 Campaign a reality! People with disabilities, family members, and disability advocates are asked to approach your community leaders and encourage them to participate in this historic, national event, the 20th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, by reaffirming their commitment to accessibility and inclusion.

Along with this proclamation, The National ADA Symposium asks that participating public entities commit to activities that increase disability awareness and/or accessibility. For more information and to view a trailer, go to:

<http://www.adasymposium.org/2010.html>

See you in a few weeks!!!

DBTAC-Northeast

ILR-Employment and Disability Institute, Cornell University

1-800-949-4232 (NY,NJ,PR,VI)

Email: dbtacnortheast@cornell.edu

Website: www.dbtacnortheast.org