

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | July 30, 2020

Agencies co-host Americans with Disabilities Act presentation to recognize the 30th anniversary of this landmark civil rights law's passage

BISMARCK, N.D. – In recognition of the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Division and Options Resource Center for Independent Living are co-hosting a one-hour, prerecorded, online presentation on Wednesday, Aug. 12, 1–2 p.m., CT.

The program, titled “The Americans with Disabilities Act: 30+ Years of a Disability Rights Movement,” features Corey Birkholz, ADA accessibility specialist at Options Resource Center for Independent Living. Lori Rodgers, a business services specialist at the regional VR office in Grand Forks, will host the online event and facilitate the question and answer session following the presentation.

Participants will learn what the ADA is and why this landmark civil rights act is important. Birkholz will share information about the five titles of the ADA, the events that led to the signing of the ADA, current examples of the ADA developments and future implications.

“People with disabilities are the largest minority group there is. Accidents can happen and people will most likely experience changes in abilities as they age. The ADA benefits all of us,” he said. “I am pleased to be able to share information and help raise awareness about this important law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, such as jobs, schools, transportation, and public places and most private places.”

In his role at Options, Birkholz has been providing information and guidance on civil rights and accessibility, including guidance on the Americans with Disabilities Act, Federal Fair Housing Act and North Dakota and Minnesota human rights acts since 1999. He also provides training to people with disabilities and technical assistance and training to employers, businesses, architects, builders, cities, housing providers and other organizations. He has been a certified rehabilitation counselor since 1995 and earned a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from St. Cloud State University. He is a certified ADA coordinator.

Birkholz's presentation has been prerecorded with closed captioning and is being held as a Microsoft Teams meeting, with training materials and resources provided by the Rocky Mountain ADA Center, Northwest ADA Center at Cornell University and Independence Resource Center for Independent Living in Minot.

Individuals interested in participating can join the meeting online from this [LINK](#) or can contact Cindy Sullivan at 701-795-3102, 711 (TTY) or csullivan@nd.gov for accommodations or to receive an email containing the virtual meeting link. Individuals can also join by phone at 701-328-0950, Conference ID 560 325 947#.

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The department and its VR division are committed to assisting individuals with disabilities to achieve competitive integrated employment and increased independence. VR services include vocational counseling and guidance, job placement, assistive technology, vocational training, and pre-employment services for transition-age students with disabilities. VR business service specialists are also available to meet with employers to share information about hiring individuals with disabilities and retaining employees. They also work to break down barriers and the stigma about hiring individuals with a disability.

Options Resource Center for Independent Living is a private, nonprofit center that provides services to maximize the independence of individuals with disabilities. Options is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, non-residential center that provides an array of independent living services at no cost to individuals requesting them. The center serves residents of northeast North Dakota and northwest Minnesota.

For more information about the ADA, contact Options Resource Center for Independent Living at 800-726-3692, 218-773-6100 or options@myoptions.info.

For information about vocational counseling and other services supporting employment of people with disabilities, contact the department's Vocational Rehabilitation Division at 800-755-2745, 711 (TTY) or visit their website at www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr.

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