



Message from the AIVRTTAC Director



Loloma! Hello!

As the new project director, welcome to the first online American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC) newsletter that will be issued twice a year. The purpose of our newsletter is to provide the American Indian VR Services (AIVRS) programs with information on upcoming training and technical assistance (TA) events, updates on training and TA services and products, venue to network with key service providers, and spotlight and share individual program success stories.

We're very excited to launch the new training and TA center as it comes with many opportunities to renew our work with the AIVRS programs and its promise for program and staff growth. In addition, a means for continuous exchange of information and knowledge on emerging VR practices to improve services for tribal consumers. In Indian Country, we're aware of the existing needs and challenges of improving employment opportunities; thus, it is critical that we all be a part of finding meaningful pathways for tribal consumers to become financially self-sufficient and fully participate in their respective communities. These efforts clearly complement the Northern Arizona University, Institute for Human Development's vision that people with disabilities fully participates in all life experiences.

We will make sure that we take the time to listen to you and learn about your needs and priorities, and provide training and TA that are most important to improve staff education and services, which are key to serving tribal consumers for gainful employment. Learning is a continuous lifelong process, and we are all learners taking part in this new and exciting AIVRS journey to mutually improve tribal VR practices.

Kwak kway! Thank You for your spirit of commitment, enthusiasm, efforts and collective voice in making a difference in the lives of tribal members with disabilities and their families. We look forward to working with you in achieving common goals and invite your input to ensure the delivery of culturally appropriate and responsive training and TA to the AIVRS programs.

Respectfully,

Lee R. Gaseoma, Ed.D.
(Hopi Tribe – Sun Clan)

P.O. Box 5630 Phone: 928-523-4791
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5630 TTY: 928-523-1695
ihd@nau.edu Fax: 928-523-9127

About the Institute

The Institute for Human Development is a research and training program located on Northern Arizona University. Our program is part of a national network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD). In Arizona, we are designated as one of two Arizona University Centers on Disabilities (AzUCD).



Purpose of AIVRTTAC

In October 2015 the Northern Arizona University, Institute for Human Development, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, received a five-year cooperative agreement grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Rehabilitation Services Administration, titled “American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center”

Over the course of the project period, we will provide on-site training and TA for selected AIVRS programs, provide 14 webinars per year, facilitate community of practice forums, self-paced training on each of the priority content areas, conduct two annual regional trainings, disseminate quarterly evidence-based practice guides, publish two on-line newsletters per year, videos and FAQ documents.

The AIVRTTAC will offer three different types of training and TA to 83 AIVRS programs currently funded under section 121 (a) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act): a) intensive, sustained training and TA, b) targeted, specialized training and TA, and c) universal, general training and TA. The AIVRTTAC will develop and implement training and TA consistent with AIVRS program activities and tailored to the specific needs and challenges of the AIVRS programs. The three types and levels of training and TA are defined as:

“Intensive, sustained training and TA” means

- TA services provided on-site and requires a stable, ongoing relationship between the AIVRTTAC program staff and the AIVRS program.
- “TA services” are defined as negotiated series of activities designed to reach a valued outcome.
- This category of training and TA should result in changes to policy, program, practice, or operations that support increased AIVRS programs’ capacity of improved outcomes at one or more systems levels.

“Targeted, specialized training and TA” means

- TA based on needs common to multiple recipients and not extensively individualized. A relationship is established between the AIVRS program and one or more AIVRTTAC staff.
- This category of training and TA includes one-time, labor-intensive events, such as facilitating strategic planning or hosting regional or national conferences. It can also include episodic, less labor-intensive events that extend over a period of time, such as facilitating a series of conference calls on single or multiple topics that are designed around the needs of the AIVRS programs.
- Facilitating communities of practice can also be considered targeted, specialized training and TA.

“Universal, general training and TA” means

- Training and TA and information provided to independent users of AIVRS programs through their own initiative, resulting in minimal interaction with AIVRTTAC staff and including one-time, invited or offered conference presentations by AIVRTTAC staff.
- This category of training and TA also includes information or products, such as newsletters, guidebooks, or research syntheses, downloaded from the AIVRTTAC’s website by independent users of AIVRS programs.
- Brief communications by AIVRTTAC staff with AIVRS programs, either by telephone or email, are also considered universal, general training and TA.

The anticipated outcomes of AIVRTTAC’s delivery of culturally competent system of training and TA to the personnel of AIVRS programs will be to improve their grant management, knowledge, and skills to prepare tribal members with disabilities to engage in high-quality competitive integrated employment that will increase opportunities for economic self-sufficiency.

Priority Training Content Areas from RSA Survey

Each year as part of the AIVRS programs' submission of its annual performance report, each program is required to complete the RSA survey and identify their training and TA needs. For Year One, the AIVRTTAC will provide training and TA in seven priority content areas as identified by the AIVRS programs in the January 2015 RSA survey:



The AIVRTTAC Director, VR Training and TA Specialists, and a cadre of consultants will deliver training modules by web-based and e-learning formats, on-site AIVRS program training, and other training content to virtually any device (computer, smartphone, tablet, etc.). The AIVRTTAC staff recognizes that adult learning theory must be considered in working with AIVRS program staff who will participate in the training. The AIVRS personnel will come with their respective knowledge and skills, and seek to ensure that the learning is relevant and directly applicable to their jobs, as well as being involved in managing their own learning and be able to apply life experiences and knowledge to new learning.

AIVRTTAC Logo



The AIVRTTAC logo evokes strong Native American representation and a distinct brand associated with the current 83 American Indian VR Services Programs located in 25 states across the country serving tribal members with disabilities to prepare for meaningful employment.

The eagle, highly valued and respected by tribal members, represents strength, wisdom, power, and freedom. The eagle flying through the medicine wheel shows a breakthrough in one's life journey of overcoming challenges and restoring wholeness, harmony, well-being, and balance. The medicine wheel has different meanings to different tribes, but all are relatively similar in the use for health and healing. The medicine wheel, sometimes referred to as the Sacred Hoop, depicts the four cardinal directions as well as Mother Earth and Father Sky. The four directions (East, South, West and North) is represented by a particular color (yellow, red, black and white), and for some tribes stands for the human race. The four directions also represent the stages of life (birth, youth, elder, death) and aspects of life (spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical). The four arrows clutched by the eagle represents the sacred use of its feathers for ceremonial purposes. Several American Indian VR programs incorporate the medicine wheel as part of their program design relevant to their cultural identity and appropriateness in the delivery of rehabilitation services for tribal consumers, including the use of traditional healing services.

Navigating the AIVRTTAC website



The AIVRTTAC website (<http://aivrttac.org/>) is designed to be responsive to the needs of the AIVRS programs and created to give a navigable user experience. User tabs at the top of the website help end users navigate AIVRTTAC's products and the website's various features.

Lee R. Gaseoma, Ed.D., Director
American Indian VR Training & TA Center
PO Box 5630
Flagstaff, AZ 86011-5630
928-523-6829
928-523-9127
aivrttac@nau.edu

Click or navigate to the following link to view the AIVRTTAC Video Newsletter: <http://www.youtu.be/JeM2q7TeXXQ>

Stay Tuned to Upcoming AIVRTTAC Trainings and Opportunities



Fact Sheet: One Way of Knowing is not always the Best Way

The first fact sheet prepared by Dr. Trina Spencer is an introduction to Evidence-Based Practice from a broad perspective. The goal is to help the AIVRS programs focus on effective decision making that incorporates the best available evidence, clinical experience, and most importantly, the client's values, preferences, and context.



Fact Sheet: Resources for AIVRS Programs

The second fact sheet prepared by Dr. Trina Spencer is an overview of the AIVRTTAC three-tiered model of training and TA services and how the AIVRTTAC staff will work with the AIVRS programs to develop and support them around the priority content areas.



Webinar: Introduction to Assistive Technology

This one-hour webinar for the AIVRS programs will be presented by Janis Doneski-Nicol, Director of the Assistive Technology (AT) Center and the Graduate Certificate in Assistive Technology at NAU. The AT webinar will help participants understand what AT and AT services are, how the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (the Act), impacts the provision of AT for VR consumers, why AT should be considered and how the Quality Indicators of AT –VR (QIAT-VR) can guide this consideration process, and major categories and examples of AT tools that are used in vocational settings.

April 13, 2016, 10 - 11 am (PST)



Community of Practice: Assistive Technology

The first community of practice on Assistive Technology will be facilitated by Janis Doneski-Nicol, Director of the AT Center. The online community of practice provides an opportunity for the AIVRS programs to engage in a dialogue about the provision of AT services for tribal consumers.

April 15, 2016, 9 - 10 am (PST)



Webinar: Assistive Technology

The second follow-up webinar on Assistive Technology will be presented by Janis Doneski-Nicol, Director of the AT Center.

April 27, 2016, 10 - 11 am (PST)

Glossary of Terms

Community of Practice

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who work together to solve a persistent problem or to improve practice in an area that is important to them and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis. CoPs exist in many forms, some large in scale and deal with complex problems, others small in scale that focus on a problem at a very specific level.

Webinar

Live online internet presentation, training, or seminar that allows participant interactive dialogue with the facilitator through the use of the Adobe Platform connect.

Assistive Technology

Any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Evidence-based practice

Program decision-making framework that integrates the best available evidence, clinical experience, and client [consumer] values and preferences [consumer informed choice] when considering the selection, implementation, modification of [VR] practices.

E-learning

E-learning is the delivery of learning, training or education program by electronic means and involves the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g., mobile phone, tablet).

Disclaimer

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