



FRIDAY FOCUS

A NYSRA Member Service

The Insight Exchange | Employment Opportunities | www.nyrehab.org | June 19, 2015

In This Issue

[Legislative Update](#)

[NYSRA and Collaborative Associations Pen Letter to Wage Board](#)

["Snapshot" Deadline: July 10](#)

[ROADS to Financial Independence](#)

[National Endowment for Financial Education: Resource Kits Available for Providers](#)

Legislative Update

In what was an anti-climactic end to the regularly scheduled legislative session, the NYS Senate headed home late Thursday night and the NYS Assembly did the same on Friday after failing to come to an agreement on several high profile issues. Among those that created gridlock was the extension/changes to the rent regulation laws - a short term extender for which was enacted very late Thursday night. While both houses of the legislature have new leaders still learning their roles, the Governor was nonetheless unable to exercise sufficient influence over them to create agreements on many of the outstanding matters. It is widely expected that the legislature will return next week, despite no prospects for agreements on these major outstanding issues.

Perhaps of greatest interest to NYSRA members was the passage of the Achieving a Better Life Experiences (ABLE) Act, which would create the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to save money in accounts similar to those available to individuals saving for college through the 529 College Savings Plan. Unfortunately, we also saw legislation passed in both houses that would require individuals with developmental disabilities choosing to continue to receive state-operated services to remain in developmental centers until such time as state-operated community-based services are created. NYSRA and others will be weighing in with the Governor's office on these pieces of legislation as the Governor considers whether he will sign or veto these bills.

NYSRA and Collaborative Associations Pen Letter to Wage Board

This week, NYSRA was joined by 16 other associations on a [letter to the members of the Wage Board](#) recently empaneled by Governor Cuomo to examine and make recommendations for a potential minimum wage increase for employees in the food services industry. This letter is just the first step in what is shaping up to be a larger campaign to make sure policy makers understand the impact that disparities in the minimum wage could create, and government's responsibility to pay contracts, rates and fees sufficient enough for entities contracted/licensed by NYS to pay such a minimum wage. NYSRA will report more on this in the coming weeks and months.

"Snapshot" Deadline: July 10

Have you completed the "Snapshot" survey? If not, there is still time to do so and weigh in on the minimum wage discussion for the disability field

As we have shared, the Wage Board convened by Governor Cuomo is deliberating on a minimum wage increase for Fast Food Workers resulting in a rate of \$15 per hour. NYSRA and our colleague Provider Associations (NYSACRA, NYSRA, NYSARC, IAC and the CP Association) have combined our advocacy efforts to create a unified and comprehensive strategy to best serve our members and the disability field. The "Snapshot" will provide us with current data on Direct Service Professional wages, turnover, vacancies and overtime. Because this is a collaborative effort where the associations are distributing the same survey we ask that you only respond to *one survey link*. Survey data will be compiled and your agency's name will not be included in the resulting data that will be used for advocacy.

Please note: In question #13 of the survey, we are looking for the 1/2 time differential amount (the half-time OT ONLY).

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CNRTMXP>

PLEASE COMPLETE BY JULY 10, 2015.

On behalf of the aforementioned Associations thank you for your assistance with our combined advocacy efforts.

ROADS to Financial Independence

The National Disability Institute (NDI) and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) recently announced the launch of Reach Outcomes. Achieve Dreams. Succeed (ROADS) to Financial Independence.

ROADS to Financial Independence is aimed at improving the financial well-being and economic security of individuals with disabilities who are currently working or transitioning into the workforce. ROADS integrates financial counseling with employment, independent living, and other support services that are being provided to individuals with disabilities. Participants in the initiative will have the opportunity to complete a financial health assessment, have access to a financial counselor, set financial goals such as improved credit scores, lower debt levels and increased personal savings.

NYSRA Member, Challenge Workforce Solutions is the lead disability organization for the New York Finger Lake region. ROADS to Financial Independence will operate in six national sites and provide people with disabilities, already working or transitioning into the workforce, coordinated services to increase their financial stability and improve their economic future. The sites include:

- Birmingham, Alabama: United Way of Central Alabama and Disability Rights and Resources
- Greater Washington, D.C. Metro Area: ServiceSource Virginia and Capital Area Asset Builders
- State of Delaware: Delaware Department of Health and Social Services and ServiceSource Delaware
- New York's Finger Lakes region: Alternatives Federal Credit Union, Cornell Cooperative Extension Center, Finger Lakes Independence Center, Ithaca Housing Authority, Tompkins County Workforce New York, Challenge Workforce Solutions and the United Way of Tompkins County
- Austin, Texas: Goodwill Central Texas

Seattle, Washington: The Washington State Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Neighborhood House, City of Seattle, The Financial Empowerment Network, and the Washington Access Fund.

National Endowment for Financial Education: Resource Kits Available for Providers

National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) has created financial workshop kits that provide the tools and resources needed to deliver financial education information to underserved audiences, including individuals with disabilities. Financial workshop kits provide a level of focus and specialization that providers can use to be more comfortable, more efficient and more effective in delivering financial education to their consumers. The kits include workshops, tools and other valuable resources to empower more people to make the best financial decisions for their particular circumstance.

New York State Rehabilitation Association
155 Washington Avenue, Suite 410, Albany, NY 12210
518.449.2976
www.nyrehab.org

