



## Director's Corner

### The Success of the ND Paid Caregiver Program

North Dakota's Direct Support Professional (DSP) workforce is critically understaffed, with many in-home service provider agencies unable to fill positions due to low wages and high turnover, threatening to leave people with disabilities without the critical support they need. The in-home services provided are not luxuries — they are medically necessary and fundamental to the well-being and rights of North Dakotans. Like most other states, the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services has struggled to find a response to the direct support professional (DSP) workforce crisis that has existed for decades but has intensified during and since the Covid pandemic. [Read on](#)

## Did you know about?

Learn about services and organizations in our community we think you should know about!

**Interview with Rikki Trageton**  
Employment Service Coordinator  
Community Living Services



This month, we spoke to Rikki Trageton from CLS about software they are using in a partnership with ND Vocational Rehabilitation to enhance independence in some of the people served by CLS' Employment Department. The app is called ***Avail by Central Reach***. There will be a training and educational session about how your organization can utilize this program put on by ND Vocational Rehab on June 10th. **AVAIL Training**

#### What is the app's purpose?

The app was developed by a woman in Ireland named Lisa Marie Clinton as a tool that enables people with disabilities to use technology to increase their independence at home and on the job. CLS has only used it in the work setting, but other agencies across the US, in Ireland, and the UK also use the app to assist people in their homes as well. It can be used for things like cooking, hygiene routines, and reminders when people don't have staff or do not want to have to rely on staff at home or at work.

#### How have you used it?

The app allows us to upload checklists, videos and other prompts to supplement job coaching. It isn't intended to replace job coaches. It is intended to supplement job coaching services. We have used it to help people with the activities surrounding employment such as riding the bus, getting themselves ready for work, or making sure they have items they need for the day. Not everyone has staff at home when they are off the job to help them get prepared for their shift. On the job, we can take pictures of what a completed task looks like, make a video of the person doing a task so they can refer back when they need to do it again like clocking in, and put in tasks lists. or prompts of what to do after a duty is done. This has been really helpful to keep employees on task. It has also been helpful to remind users how to take breaks for the proper amount of time.

#### What has been the best part of using this app?

AVAIL has allowed people to be more independent in the community. We want people to be employed and integrated into the community and less dependent on staff. We want people to be able to work without a job coach following them around, because that is not typical. We don't want the people we serve to stand out that way. People are also able to use the app to augment their problem solving skills without needing the assistance of a coworker or job coach.

#### How do you know if people use it?

Every time a user logs in, the app tracks that data for us. I can see how many times they watch a video or look at their task list. It is great for a goal tracking perspective. We can then figure out if something needs to be changed or maybe we accomplished our goal and they do not need assistance with it anymore.

Will other agencies be able to use this app?

Will other agencies be able to use this app?

Yes, I am excited that more people are going to be able to have access to this app. Vocational Rehabilitation is hosting a webinar on June 10th for Community Rehab Providers, DDPMs and Voc Rehab Counselors to learn more about AVAIL and how a person can access AVAIL.

What do you think the biggest potential impact this app could have to our state?

I think the greatest impact will be improving the independence and inclusion of people with disabilities in community employment. AVAIL also has the potential to positively impact rural communities. Pre-covid CLS could get job coaches out to serve the rural population, but now we just don't have enough staff to serve those rural communities. AVAIL is not the same as having on site job coaching but it may be a creative resource to allow us to serve additional people in some of those rural communities.

[Learn more about the app](#)

[Learn more about CLS](#)

## Program Opportunities at The Arc



Monday, June 9th



**YES! I AM CREATIVE!®**

Engaging, Encouraging & Celebrating Your Creative Side

With Kay Hilde

**10:00 am, 1:00 p.m. or 2:00 p.m.**

at The Arc of Cass County

We will be tape-resist painting with Kay Hilde!

Please RSVP by Thursday, June 5th by emailing [arcassistant@arccassnd.org](mailto:arcassistant@arccassnd.org) or call (701)293-8191.



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King.....\$399	King.....\$1080

## Ashlie Hybrid Pillowtop

Our Price	Their Price
Twin.....\$299	Twin.....\$499
Full.....\$349	Full.....\$699
Queen....\$399	Queen....\$799
King.....\$499	King.....\$899

*Not eligible for discounts. Fabric may vary.*

\*Meet in the donation area behind the store.



### Dates:

- May: 8th, 22nd
- June: 5th, 19th
- July: 3rd, 17th, 31st
- August: 14th, 28th
- September: 11th, 25th
- October: (tentative) 9th, 23rd

Time: 2:00 pm



Please register by emailing  
[arcassistant@arccassnd.org](mailto:arcassistant@arccassnd.org)

## Opportunities for Community Engagement

Applications for the Cross Disability Advisory Council are open until June 10th. If you are feeling moved to play a more active role in improving the lives of individuals with disabilities (and their families), we highly encourage you to apply!

During the 2025 Legislative Session this Council was given praise by the Health and Human Services Committee as being one of the most effective and informative Councils to come out of legislative action. It is a great opportunity to make a difference, learn more about services, provide feedback, facilitate change, and improve your advocacy skills.

### Application

**\* FREE FOR ALL \***

### CHARITY FISHING TOURNAMENT

JOIN US FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL WHEELCHAIRS & WALLEYES CHARITY FISHING TOURNAMENT FOR KIDS AND YOUNG ADULT WHEELCHAIR USERS AND/OR OTHER PHYSICAL ADAPTIVE NEEDS

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**LAKE SAKAKAWEA**

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## Good Reads

### North Dakota Events

- AVAIL Virtual Job Coach Training June 10th @ 10 am

### North Dakota News

- WDAY/INFORUM -Fargo North students headed to Smithsonian with project about Arc Lawsuit
- KVRR - Program helps rural residents gain access to mental health resources
- North Dakota well-positioned to deal with proposed Medicaid changes

## US Disability News

- Physicians' Perceptions Of People With Disability And Their Health Care
- As special ed students are integrated more at school, teacher training is evolving
- Vrbo Rolls Out Improvements Geared Toward Travelers With Disabilities



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