ADA State of the Science
Research Conference
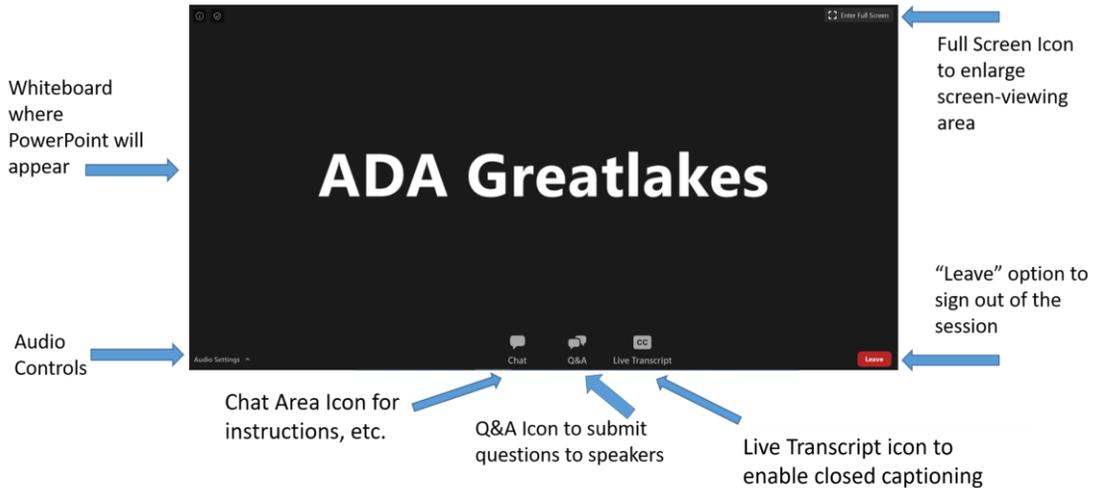
Day 1: February 26, 2026

Presented by the ADA National Network

ada National Network
Information, Guidance, and Training on the
Americans with Disabilities Act

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ZOOM WEBINAR Interface

Whiteboard where PowerPoint will appear

Full Screen Icon to enlarge screen-viewing area

Audio Controls

"Leave" option to sign out of the session

Chat Area Icon for instructions, etc.

Q&A Icon to submit questions to speakers

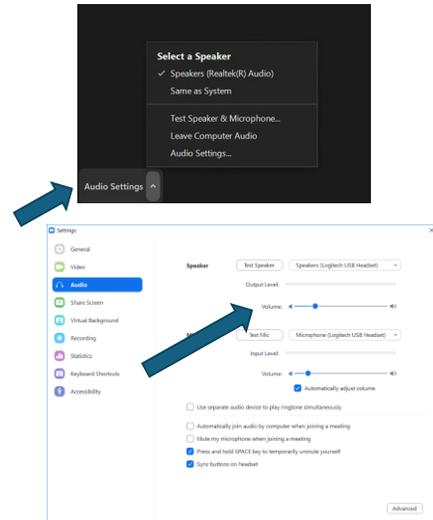Live Transcript icon to enable closed captioning

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Listening to the Webinar via Your Computer

- Please make sure your speakers are turned on or your headphones are plugged in.

- You can verify your audio settings using the Audio Settings Option in the lower left corner of the screen.

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Video Sign Language Interpreter

- Sign Language is being provided via Video Spotlight
- There will be two Sign Language Interpreters. They will be "swapping" their images as they switch interpreters during the session. This will cause a "pause" or brief interruption in the Sign Language.
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Changing Screen View
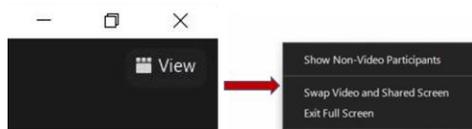
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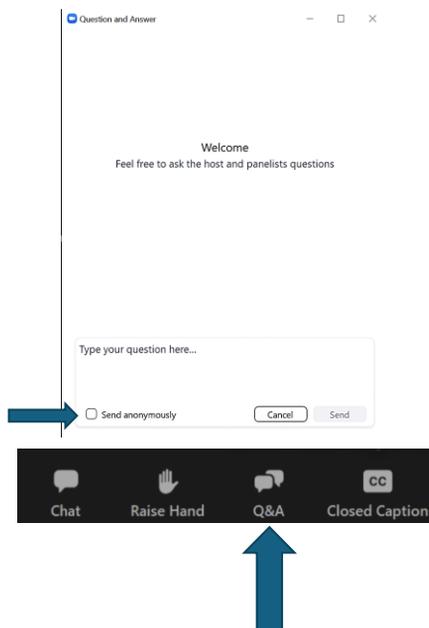
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Welcome to the 2026 ADA State of the Science Research Conference

Day 1

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Funding Statement and Disclaimer

Funding Statement:

This conference is coordinated by the ADA Knowledge Translation Center with support from the ADA National Network Research Committee, and funded through the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) (NIDILRR grant number 90DPAD0004). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed in this conference are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views, positions, or policies of any entities they represent, the ADA Knowledge Translation Center, the ADA National Network, the University of Washington, or the federal government. Statements, views, and opinions expressed during any presentation or in any materials are those solely of the presenter. The information and assistance provided is not legal advice.

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Overview of Day 1

- Session A: Employment.
  - Four lightning presentations.
  - Moderator summary.
  - Questions and answer period.
- Break.
- Session B: Community Living and Participation.
  - Four lightning presentations.
  - Moderator summary.
  - Questions and answer period.
- Day 2 wrap-up.

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Employment

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How Flexibility Makes Work Work for People with Disabilities

LaWanda Cook (lhc62@cornell.edu)
Sarah von Schrader (sv282@cornell.edu)

Northeast ADA Center (Region 2)

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Purpose & Method
How Flexibility Makes Work Work for People with Disabilities

- **Goal:** Identify emergent workplace flexibility policies and practices and related ADA Title I implementation strategies.

- Collaboration with the Great Lakes ADA Center (Region 5).

- Interviewed 16 employer representatives with HR policy or ADA implementation responsibilities about how their organizations ensure access to flexible work options, including remote work and other flexibility as an accommodation.

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Results:
How Flexibility Makes Work Work for People with Disabilities

- Organizations offered various types of flexibility and differed in how centralized and formal they were when making decisions about these requests. **Themes included:**
  - a workplace culture that enables effective flexible work options;
  - flexibility is fine, so long as the work gets done;
  - flexible work options reduce the need for disability disclosure;
  - managers' discretion influences access to and use of flexible work options, and
  - remote work may adversely impact skill development and career advancement.

- **<u>Future Research</u>**
  - How decision maker's own disability identity might influence views about flexible work
  - Pros and cons of formal vs. Informal flexible work and reasonable accommodation processes from employer and employee perspectives

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Disability Employment Policy, Digital Access, and Economic Opportunity

- Dr. Fitore Hyseni, Syracuse University, fhyseni@syr.edu

Contact the Southeast ADA Center:

Phone: 404-541-9001

Email: ADAsoutheast@syr.edu

Web: ADAsoutheast.org

Syracuse University
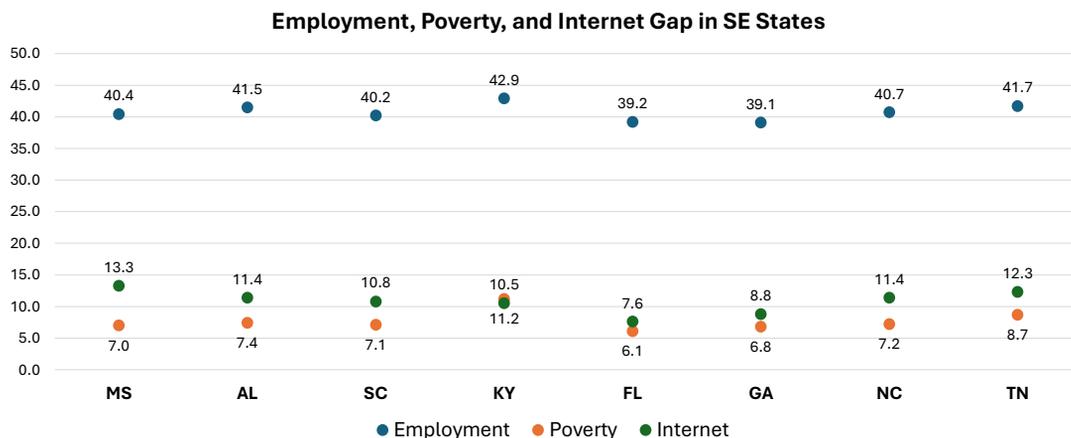Burton Blatt Institute

Southeast ada Center

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Project Description

- Three interconnected socio-economic dimensions:
  - Employment, Poverty, and Digital Access
- Data Sources:
  - American Community Survey, Survey of Income and Program Participation, National Telecommunications and Information Administration Survey
- Eight Southeast states:
  - Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

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Findings

Employment, Poverty, and Internet Gap in SE States

State	Employment	Poverty	Internet
MS	40.4	7.0	13.3
AL	41.5	7.4	11.4
SC	40.2	7.1	10.8
KY	42.9	11.2	10.5
FL	39.2	6.1	7.6
GA	39.1	6.8	8.8
NC	40.7	7.2	11.4
TN	41.7	8.7	12.3

● Employment   ● Poverty   ● Internet

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Use of Service Animals in Employment

Southwest ADA Center, Region 6

Vinh Nguyen & Monique Pappadis

- Understand how people with disabilities use service and emotional animals to assist them in the workplace.
- Explore their experiences and any barriers that they may encounter at work.
- Determine what factors regarding their animal and employment setting contribute to successful employment outcomes.

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Survey – n = 222

- **Trained** at a school or by a professional trainer (50.5%), by someone else (33.8%), by user (14.4%), untrained emotional support animal (1.4%).
- **Trained tasks** - physical tasks (58.2%), notification of sounds (19.5%), balance (18.2%), cognitive or psychological conditions (17.3%), visual guiding (15.0%), medical alert (13.2%).
    – Assisted in work or job – related tasks – (48.6%)
- Most have **obvious disability** (57.6%) and their animal had **identifying gear** (94.4%).
- Most work for **employer with 50+ employees** (62.8%) and worked either in **education or healthcare** (42.2%)
- Most had to **request** their animal to be at work with them (73.6%) and 25.7% **approvals** were on the same day
- Their **employer** were supportive (69.7%) and even more were their **coworkers** (75%)
- Those with a **hidden disability** tended to report **longer approval times** (p=.012), more likely to be asked for its **certification or license** (p=.034), and their **disability proof** (p<.001), and for their service animal to demonstrate a task (p=.005) compared to those with a **obvious disability**.
- Most of the individuals with service animals not trained for job-related tasks report their employers as not being supportive (76.5%).

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Interviews – n=17

- Frequently linked their animals to their ability to **sustain employment**, both physically and psychologically. Animals' assistance with daily routines, travel, and emotional regulation ensured reliability and productivity.

- Most expressed how **employers and colleagues** had **positive and supportive attitudes** in regards to their animal. This allowed for them to not feel alienated or burdensome and focus on their tasks without worry. In contrast, participants described how some clients and customers exhibited fear or a lack of understanding about proper service dog etiquette.

- If any complications arose, such as a fear of animals or allergies, some mentioned being able to come to a **compromise** with their colleagues.

- Participants particularly appreciated the amount of **space** allocated to them in the workplace. Private office spaces or designated areas for service animals were beneficial in reducing distractions and ensuring the comfort of both the handler and their service animal.

- Those who **traveled for work** reported having consistent problems; from preparation to airlines and hotels.

- Many participants expressed the desire for **training and education** to occur in the workplace. They described feeling exhausted from constantly educating others in the workplace either on service animal etiquette or their rights under the ADA.

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The AI (Dis)Advantage: How Hiring Professionals Choose AI Advice Over Human Judgment in Recruiting People with Disabilities

Kartik Trivedi, Ph.D.

Postdoctoral Research Fellow

Institute on Disability, UNH, Durham

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AI is transforming hiring processes, but can we identify its limitations?

Human- AI collaboration

- Decision-makers often **seek external advice to reduce their perceived risk** and responsibility when making uncertain hiring decisions, especially for candidates with disabilities. (Ajunwa, 2016; Jatobá et al., 2023)

- Both humans and algorithms can be biased. But when paired, are human advisors effective at detecting algorithmic bias?

Transparency impacts advice utilization

- Transparency has a positive impact on advice usage and decision quality (Schuetz & Venkatesh, 2020; Stritch et al., 2017; Yeomans et al., 2019)

- Trust in algorithms depends on transparency (Glickson & Woolley, 2020)

- Transparency significantly impacts the perceived trustworthiness of algorithmic and human advisors (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2022)

How does a candidate's disability status, advice source (human vs algorithmic), and transparency mechanisms jointly influence advice utilization by hiring professionals?

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People rely on AI, even when it is incorrect.
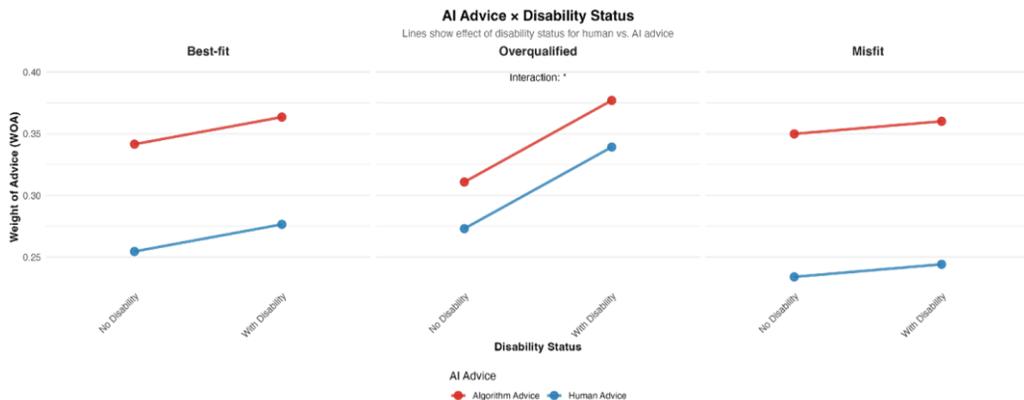
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Moderator Summary:
Employment

Moderated by: Denise Hoffman

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Q&A
Employment

You may submit questions in the Q&A area of the Zoom Platform.

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Break

Time to stretch!

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Community Living and Participation

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Aging with and Into Disability: Navigating ADA Rights in Community and Work

Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

- Ellen Fabian, Ph.D. Research Professor, Center for Transition & Career Innovation, UMD (efabian@umd.edu)
- Qianyu Zhu, Applied Psychology Program, School of Humanities and Social Science, Chinese University of Hong Kong
- Ann Deschamps, Ed.D. Director, Mid-Atlantic ADA Center

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Purpose and Methods
(Aging with and Into Disability)

Through two studies, we explored how older adults with disabilities access and use ADA protections in work and in the community

- Community Study: Focus groups of older adults with disabilities exploring barriers, advocacy and ADA utilization

- Employment Study: Surveys of older workers with disabilities comparing ADA accommodation use across recruitment groups

- Both studies share focus on awareness and utilization of ADA rights and resources

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Results and Key Take-aways

Results Across Two Studies:
- Persistent barriers to community participation and workplace for older adults with disabilities
- ADA knowledge strongly linked to accommodation use, advocacy, and participation
- Connection to disability organizations linked to knowledge and use of ADA rights

Take-aways
- Improve integration of aging and disability systems
- Expand ADA education/outreach to older adults

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Developing a Reasonable Accommodation Decision Aid

Mark Harniss, PhD, University of Washington

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Purpose & Method

Reasonable Accommodation Decision Aid

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Results

(Developing a Reasonable Accommodation Decision Aid)

Interviews
- Risk analysis
- Negotiation strategies
- Settling for partial accommodations
- Retaliation / Feeling punished for RA request
- Role models

Proof-of-Concept Studies
- All in one place is great
- Still a lot of content to cover
- Legal concepts are hard

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Effective Methods of Engaging with the
Americans with Disabilities Act:
A Participatory Action Research Approach

- **Presenter:**
- **Taciana Ribeiro Saab,** Project Director
- **New England ADA Center, a project of the**
- **Institute for Human Centered Design**
- tribeirosaab@ihcdesign.org

NiDILRR
Grant #90DPAD0011

New England ADA Center

A project of the
Institute for
Human
Centered
Design

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Overview of the Research

Goal: People with disabilities from hard-to-reach communities have high disability prevalence rates and limited active participation in ADA rights – increase engagement to exercise rights

Objective: Learn about impediments to participation including attitude and effective access especially to information.

Research question: What do you think about disability and who that describes? What do you know about rights for people with disabilities? Where do you get your trusted information?

Method: We chose Participatory Action Research (PAR) to go directly to people most impacted by the problem to find out why and how to solve the problem in three states.
Three phases in Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island in majority minority municipalities:

   Survey (n-193)
   In depth Interviews (n – 24)
   Focus group to review draft materials (n-10)

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Key Findings

- **Disconnection From:** An identity of disability.
- **Critical Knowledge Gap:** While 56% had heard of the ADA, 75% knew nothing or very little about its protections.
- **Trusted Messengers:** Information is most trusted when it comes from healthcare providers, family, and community members who share their language and cultural background.
- **Need for Empowerment:** Pursuing rights requires both support and self-advocacy skills.
- **Material Preferences:** A strong preference for printed, multilingual materials was clear, though specific design choices (fonts, colors) varied by race and culture.
- **The Central Lesson:** The most effective engagement strategy is listening and authentic inclusion—partnering with the community in all aspects of the research and design process.

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How do communities implement health solutions? Findings from a multi- state evaluation

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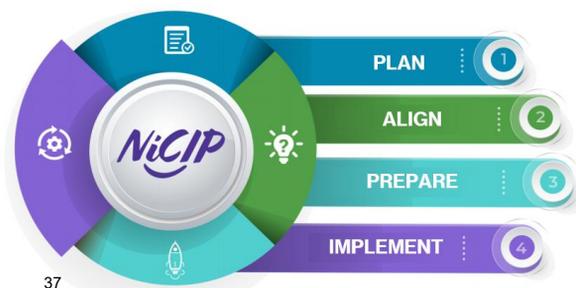University of Illinois Chicago
yeisen2@uic.edu

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Purpose & Method,
How do communities implement health solutions?

People with disabilities face barriers to accessing health promotion programs. Active engagement in planning and implementing accessible health solutions can help.

NCHPAD's 4-Stage Implementation Process (NiCIP)

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Testing the NiCIP

- 16 communities
- Funded for 1-3 years
- Evaluated through regular reporting, technical assistance, interviews, and surveys

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Results,
How do communities implement health solutions?

Types of Access Solutions

 Community

 Recruitment and Promotion

 Disability Representation

 Training

 Transportation

 Policies

 Data Collection

 Resource development and dissemination

Key Takeaways

Challenges to using the NiCIP:
- Competing priorities
- Implementor capacity
- Systems change
- Documentation and language
- Complexity of real-world settings

What helps the NiCIP:
- Facilitator skills
- Flexibility and pivoting
- Partner networks

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Moderator Summary:
Community Living and Participation

Moderated by:
Katherine Macfarlane

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Q&A
Community Living and Participation

You may submit questions in the Q&A area of the Zoom Platform.

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Wrap-up

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Register for Day 2 (March 12, 2026)

- Register for Day 2 of the 2026 ADA State of the Science.
  - Visit the conference webpage www.adata.org/sos-2026 or
  - Click the link in the chat or
  - Scan the QR code.

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Thank you for attending Day 1 of the 2026 ADA State of the Science Research Conference!

- Please remember to fill out your evaluation.
  - Click the link in the chat or
  - Scan the QR code.

- To watch presentation recordings or see the slides:
  - Visit the conference webpage www.adata.org/sos-2026.
  - Recordings will be uploaded to the webpage in the next few weeks.

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