

Ready, Set, VOTE! . . . on November 3

You are a very powerful person because you have the power to VOTE. You've probably heard it many times . . . "Every vote counts". . . and that is true, but it's easy for any one of us to start feeling small in the big picture of a National election. Another way to think of yourself is as part of a group of voters. Nearly one fifth of all Americans have a disability; think of yourself as a "disability voter" – now you are part of something that makes up a significant



percentage of overall votes. YOU, as a "disability voter," have the power to impact this election. Before you cast your vote, consider the candidates and where they stand on disability issues – not just what they say, but what they have done; do a little research. Do they understand the needs of the disability community? Do they respect and value people with disabilities as full members of society? What is their track record on disability issues?

Disability Network asks you to use your power and vote as a member of the disability community. Don't miss the opportunity to let your voice be heard, vote on November 3rd. When you cast your vote, whether by absentee ballot or in person, take a deep breath and feel the power of the entire disability community.

Have questions about voting in 2020? . . . We can help!

There is a lot of chatter in the news about the upcoming election and it's not all about the candidates. There are conflicting reports and opinions about absentee voting, registration status, and the safety of voting during a pandemic.

- Disability Network has compiled voter information, resources and links on our [website](#) about voting, registering to vote, and information about accessible voting in person and absentee.
- If you have any questions about registering to vote or voting, contact our Information and Referral department and our staff can help you: (269) 345-1516 or toll free: 1- 877-674-5209, or email: info@dnswm.org.
- Disability Network is holding a free, live webinar to address this year's voting issues. (See details on last page.)

Community Education Online Programing

Our Community Education programming will remain online through the end of the year. Participants can join using a computer or call in on a phone. Pre-register for the events you want to participate in and you will be sent the needed information to connect to the event. To register for any of these events, visit our website to register online or contact Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.



Community
Education
Online

In October

Webinar: [VOTE: Know Your Rights](#) **REVISED this year!**

(See back cover for details)

- Monday, October 5 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM **OR** • Tuesday, October 6 at 10:00 to 11:30 AM

Webinar: [Tips for Online Meetings for People with Disabilities](#)

In this live webinar, participants will learn tips on how they can make online meetings and presentations accessible and welcoming for people with all types of disabilities.

- Wednesday, October 14 at 1:00 to 2:00 PM **OR** • Thursday, October 22 at 10:00 to 11:00 AM

Web Movie: [Bottom Dollars](#)

This documentary film exposes the exploitation of people with disabilities in the workplace through personal stories and expert interviews. It also presents clear employment alternatives with competitive wages and community inclusion.

- Tuesday, October 20 at 10:00 to 11:30 AM **OR** • Wednesday, October 28 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM

Webinar Series: [Living Well in the Community](#)

(Turn the page to the inside flap to read more about this webinar series.)

- Tuesdays & Thursdays, October 6 through November 5 at 1:00 to 2:00 PM

November & December

Look for details on our website for these events as they get closer.

- Webinar: [Emergency Preparedness](#) **NEW presentation!**
- Webinar: [Do's and Don'ts of Service Animals](#)
- Web Movie: [Including Samuel](#)
- Webinar: [Ableism 101](#)
- Web Movie: [Carol of the Bells](#) **NEW for us!**

Disability Network Southwest Michigan has a fragrance-free policy. For the well-being of those with scent sensitivities, please do not wear scented products when visiting our office or attending events.

CARES Act funding helps provide relief during COVID-19

On March 27, the Federal government passed the CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) which, among other things, made funds available to assist vulnerable populations with needs specific to the pandemic.

Centers for Independent Living across the country received CARES Act funds to provide items such as life-sustaining food and personal protection equipment, as well as technology and communication resources, so people could continue to connect to needed supports from the safety of their home and also reduce social isolation. An emphasis was also placed on keeping people out of nursing facilities due to the higher risk of COVID-19 in a facility.

To date, Disability Network Southwest Michigan has assisted nearly 100 individuals and 15 organizations in seven counties through CARES Act funding. We have been able to provide assistive devices, food, and services to help people remain at home and independent. We have supplied technology and



equipment to allow people to remain connected to the resources in their community that they need to be safe and connect socially with others. We have provided many masks and personal protection equipment both to individuals and organizations to help keep people safe.

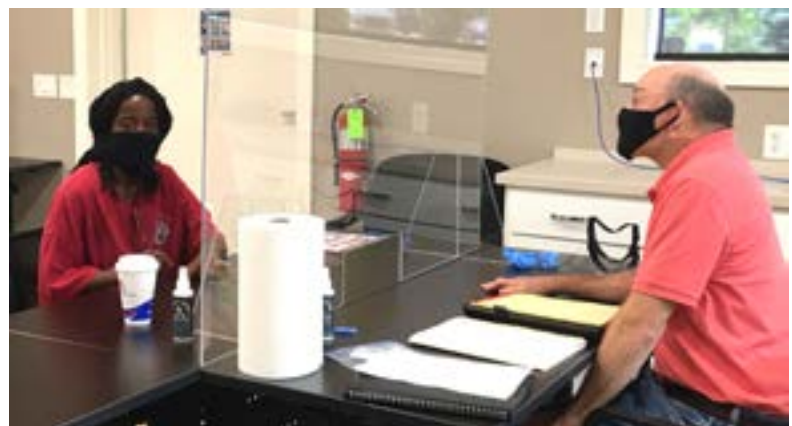
CARES Act funding is available through the remainder of this year and into next year to assist people in need related to Coronavirus.

Agency Office Operations & Customer Contact

Disability Network Southwest Michigan continues a phased-in process of resuming face-to-face meetings with our customers. We are meeting with people by appointment only; to schedule an appointment, call us at 269-345-1516 and a recorded directory will guide you to the general mailbox or to a specific staff person. You may also email a staff person to request an appointment by clicking their name on the [Staff](#) page of our website.

We are taking every precaution to protect our customers and staff from further spread of Coronavirus. For the safety of our staff, customers and the community, face coverings are required during in-person meetings. Customers will also be asked to answer a short health assessment.

In our Kalamazoo office, we have developed two customer stations in our Community Building where we can safely meet with customers. Our St. Joseph office remains closed, however, staff have supplies to safely meet with customers in public spaces. We are here for you and able perform all of our usual services, even if that looks a bit different now.



NDEAM: Increasing Access and Opportunity

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month, or NDEAM. The purpose of NDEAM is to raise awareness and educate people about disability employment issues and celebrate the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities. Workplaces welcoming the talents of all people, including people with disabilities, is a critical part of building an inclusive community and strong economy.

This year marks not only the 30th anniversary of the ADA, but also the 75th observance of NDEAM. Both milestones are being commemorated with a range of events and activities centered on the theme "Increasing Access and Opportunity."

NDEAM is led by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, but its true spirit lies in the many observances held at the grassroots level across the nation every year. Disability Network will be sharing more information about disability employment issues on Facebook throughout the month and we are hosting the movie [Bottom Dollars](#) online as part of our October Community Education lineup (see separate article for Community Education schedule).



Jamar's Path to Employment

Jamar is 20 years old and has an intellectual disability; he was referred to Disability Network by Michigan Rehabilitation Services, whose services he was using to try to find a job. When our staff first started working with Jamar on pre-employment training, he didn't take it very seriously at first and when he applied for a position at Taco Bell he didn't get the job.

After that experience, Jamar was disappointed and he wanted to work harder and try again. He submitted an application to McDonald's and paid more attention as our staff worked with him on "soft skills" to address employer expectations and interviewing. Staff did some role playing to go through the interview process and cover some

common questions he might encounter in case he got an interview. Staff also worked with Jamar on self-advocacy and talked about the "how, what and when" of disclosing his disability and his rights under the ADA for receiving accommodations.

A week after Jamar applied for the job he still hadn't heard back from McDonald's. Staff encouraged him to call and follow up on his application, and again they role-played how that phone call might go. By the time the meeting with him was over he was feeling much more confident. He made the call and received an interview the next day. Jamar nailed his interview and was offered a training position starting the next week. Congratulations Jamar, you've got this!

Living Well in the Community Webinar Series

Disability Network Southwest Michigan is partnering with Heritage Commons Senior Enrichment Center to present this ten session virtual workshop series focused on wellness. Living well in the community means empowering yourself to develop healthy living habits and do the things you want to do.

Have you experienced a physical or mental illness or injury that has limited you in your environment or community? Do you have a disability that resulted in a loss of function? Do you want some help living well in the community? Join us online for this free workshop series.

The workshop will be conducted over ten online sessions which will include facilitated discussion, fun activities, informative videos and useful information. Topics discussed are:

- Goal Setting
- Building Support
- Healthy Reactions
- Staying on Course
- Healthy Communication
- Seeking Information
- Eating Well
- Physical Activity
- Advocacy
- Maintenance



This series is open to anyone who is looking to develop healthy living habits and live the most satisfying life possible.

Please email Cathleen Knoll, manager at Heritage Commons Senior Enrichment Center, at cknoll@carewellservices.org or call her at (269) 719-0766 to sign up for this workshop. Let us know if you need an accommodation to participate.

The series will be conducted using Zoom video conferencing. After registering, you will receive a link to join the online workshop.



Our Publications:

The LINK is our quarterly newsletter, available in print or emailed in electronic format. And is available in alternative format upon request.

Disability Digest is a monthly e-publication focused on Disability Rights issues and upcoming Disability Network happenings. Available in electronic format only.

You can sign up online for our publications at www.dnswm.org; or contact Dale at abbott@dnswm.org or (269) 345-1516 x123. Current and past issues of our publications are available on our website at www.dnswm.org.





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Voting Webinar: **VOTE** – Know Your Rights

Whether you are voting for the first time or you are an experienced voter, you may have questions about the upcoming election and what process for voting best suits you. If you are a person with a disability, you may have additional concerns about casting an accessible, private vote.

In this live, interactive webinar we will discuss who can vote, how and when to register to vote, absentee voting, and accessible voting. There will be time in the presentation for your questions.

The live webinar will be offered on:

- [Monday, October 5, 2020 at 1:00 to 2:30 PM](#)
(Note: this session will be recorded)
- [Tuesday, October 6, 2020 at 10:00 to 11:30 AM](#)



Visit our website to [register online](#) or contact Miranda at grunwellm@dnswm.org or 269-345-1516 x120.

The first presentation will be recorded and made available to view if you are not able to attend the webinars.

Support Our Work: You can help support the work we do with a tax-deductible donation to Disability Network. Visit our website to donate online or call Kristen at (269) 345-1516 x119.