



# The

# Cultural

# Network

**October 2025**

## Table of Contents

President's Welcome  
2

Student Center  
4

Counselor's Corner  
5

Budget Beat  
6

Legislative & Governance  
7

Membership Minute  
9

NAMRC Save the Date  
10

NAMRC x Verizon Partnership  
11

SERNRA \*NAMRC\* NRA Conference  
12

Call for Nominations  
14

NAMRC Leadership  
15

## From the Desk of the President

Hello Everyone,

For many years a strong underlying philosophy for our Association has been focused on “having a seat at the table.” Since Dr. Robert McConnell introduced this statement, it has resonated with me, and I have embraced it. During my educational experience and professional career, I remember being the only person of color at the table and being afraid to say anything. I have grown to respect my inherent capability while exercising my rights and responsibilities to share my knowledge and perspective “at the table.” Having a “seat at the table” signifies being included in high-level decision-making conversations and having one's input on programs and policy valued and respected. It implies having a position of influence and authority, where one's opinions matter and can help shape outcomes impacting people and policy.

Key aspects of having a seat at the table:

- Inclusion: Being part of the group's discussions and decision-making processes.
- Influence: Having the power to shape decisions and contribute to the group's direction.
- Recognition: Being acknowledged as a valuable and important member of the group.
- Accountability: Being expected to contribute and be responsible for the outcomes of decisions.
- Representation: Having someone who represents your interests and advocates for your perspective.
- Competence and capability: Having confidence in one's knowledge, skills and lived experiences in order to add value to the discussion.

Now the activity surrounding the table has changed. Those controlling the table want to return to the past where the marginalized were sidelined, unheard, or ignored when important matters were being considered and decisions were made irrespective of or independent of our input. As we consider this cultural shift, we need to adjust our thinking, modify our practices and work strategically, in order to use our voice in this new environment. The words of the Black National Anthem, Lift Every Voice and Sing, seem like apropos in today's world. These are expressions of hope, faith, and the struggle for freedom and equality. It serves as a call for action, encouraging people to use their voices to speak out against injustices and work towards a better future. So, I ask you to “find your voice” and discover or develop your own unique way to express yourself, both verbally and in writing. Think about your values, beliefs, and perspectives; think about what is important to you and people with disabilities, then do something.

For the last couple of months, I have received lists of words that I can't use in meetings or conferences because they are related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Words like advocate, African American, barriers, bias, Black and Latinx, cultural differences, disability, diverse groups, females, gender, Hispanic, inclusion, inequality, marginalized, minorities, multicultural, privileges, race/racial, social justice, stereotypes, trauma, underserved, victim, and women just to name a few. But there are words that I can use such as listening/collaborate with other people/professionals, fair and accessible opportunities, workplace for all to feel valued and accepted, and data driven decision making. By using these alternative terms and reframing the conversation, we can create a more positive and constructive dialogue around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

As we move forward in this new arena, we should remember the following:

- We are much more than a representative of a marginalized community; we are a combination of the professional knowledge, skill sets, expertise and lived experiences we bring to the table. It is the expertise and professional knowledge that will continue to serve us well at the “new table.”
- There are a large number of allies out there; the apparent cultural shift is not representative of everyone;
- Those who are marginalized by virtue of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability and national origin represent a fairly significant population; opportunities for collective action and collaboration may still represent powerful tools;
- Underutilized tools in the political action arena are still open to us as American citizens and can be activated;
- And while being invited to a seat at the table because you represent a marginalized group is no longer valued, denial of your seat at the table because you represent a marginalized group is illegal.

I invite you to find your voice and share your thoughts and ideas regarding strategies and activities that will serve us well in the new environment. Thanks for listening!

Dr. L'Tanya Fish

Interim President, National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns

Edited by Dr. Bob McConnell, NAMRC Legislative & Governance Committee-Co Chair



# The Student Center



## Becoming Agents of Change: How Students Can Advocate for Social Justice and Policy Change

As counseling students, particularly those of us from marginalized and underrepresented communities, we are current voices of advocacy. Advocacy is not just something that happens in state capitals or large forums, it can take place in everyday life. We walk into classrooms, internships, and community spaces carrying lived experiences that can be used as professional tools. It is important as students to remember that these tools can help dismantle systemic barriers in mental health and rehabilitation services. Advocacy allows us to challenge unjust policies amplify the voices of the unheard, and push for access.

### Four Ways Students Can Advocate for Social and Policy Change:

#### 1. Start Local

- Explore opportunities through campus and community engagement
- Volunteer with organizations that serve underrepresented populations
- Work with your university's counseling center in outreach efforts to communities

#### 2. Get Informed

- Stay up to date with legislation that affects counseling and rehabilitation services
- Follow professional organization like NAMRC, ACA, NBCC for updates and alerts

#### 3. Use Your Voice

- Join letter writing campaigns for mental health legislation
- Share your lived experiences and research at conferences and town halls

#### 4. Connect with Others

- Find mentors who are active in advocacy work
- Attend workshop/webinars that focus on systemic change

Counselors do more than provide individual support. We exist through clinical care and connection to community. Many of our clients are among populations who face challenges that cannot be addressed solely in the therapy room. As a counseling student, don't be afraid to ask questions, get involved, and take action! Let's continue to learn, organize, and raise our voices together.

Letoria Brown  
 NAMRC Student Representative  
 lcsbrown@gmail.com



# Counselor's Corner

## Nurturing the Nurturer: Five Steps to Strengthen Self-Care in the Current Climate

Dear Colleagues,

As the landscape of mental health care and rehabilitation services continue to shift, many clinicians are carrying increased emotional and professional demands. Between supporting clients through collective stressors, managing growing caseloads, and navigating systemic changes, it can be easy to overlook our own well-being. Yet, sustaining ourselves is not a luxury, it's an ethical and professional necessity.

Below are five gentle reminders and actionable steps to help you reconnect with your own care, so that you can continue showing up with presence and compassion for those you serve.

### #1

**Reconnect with Your "Why":** Amid full calendars and complex cases, take a few moments to revisit the deeper purpose behind your work. Reflecting on what first drew you to this field can rekindle meaning and motivation. Consider journaling or sharing reflections with a trusted colleague or supervisor to help ground you in that original sense of calling.

### #3.

**Prioritize Micro-Restorations** Self-care doesn't have to wait for a weekend. Integrate brief, mindful pauses throughout your day and stretch between interactions with clients, take a short walk outside, or simply breathe deeply before your next client. These micro-moments of restoration accumulate to reduce stress and restore balance

### #5

**Reassess Your Own Care Plan** Encourage yourself, as you would a client, to review what's working in your self-care routine and what might need adjustment. Explore supportive resources like therapy, supervision, or creative outlets. Regularly tending to your well-being ensures that your empathy and energy remain sustainable.

### #2

**Set Realistic Boundaries with Compassion:** Boundaries protect your capacity to care. Evaluate where your time and energy are being stretched too thin, and allow yourself to say "not right now" when needed. Remember that modeling healthy boundaries not only preserves your own well-being but also demonstrates emotional health for your clients.

### #4

**Foster Peer Connection and Support** Therapeutic work can be isolating, especially in virtual or high-demand environments. Create intentional spaces for connection, whether through peer consultation, case discussions, or informal check-ins. Shared reflection and community care are powerful antidotes to burnout.



### Closing Thought

The work we do is deeply human and so are we. Taking time to nurture our own wellness allows us to continue this work with clarity, compassion, and endurance. Let's commit to caring for ourselves as thoughtfully as we care for others.

# The Budget Beat

brought to you by NAMRC's Finance & Economic Development Committee

## Be Prepared: Five Steps to Build Your Emergency Savings Fund

Don't let unexpected costs endanger your livelihood. Here's how to create an emergency savings fund to protect your personal finances. Your car breaks down. It will cost thousands to get it working again. What do you do? If you don't have an answer, it may be time to start building your emergency fund. Unfortunately, many of life's interruptions can't be predicted. Not having funds set aside for such an occasion can leave you racking up high credit card debt or putting yourself in other difficult financial straits. Follow these steps to get started toward this important savings goal:

**1 Do the math; set a goal.** If your first instinct is to save an enormous sum that will cover all expenses for many months, think again. While financial experts recommend having between 3 and 6 months of living expenses in an emergency fund, this number might not be realistic if you're just beginning to save. It's often a good idea to start with a smaller goal—\$500 or \$1,000. Then, as you get into the habit of saving, you can slowly start to raise your future goals until you reach the 3-to-6-month threshold.

**2 Decide where to put the funds.** The money in your emergency fund should be kept separate from accounts you use for paying bills or making purchases and be easily accessible when an emergency arises. Using just one account may make it far too easy to "borrow" from your emergency fund for non-essential items. Instead, place your emergency funds into an interest-bearing account that's specifically designated for this purpose. Good options include a savings account or money market account. Either can be easily accessed without penalties and allow your money to grow.

**3 Get creative and Save.** Building an emergency fund means you'll need to trim spending elsewhere. Quick fixes like evaluating your cell phone plan, cutting the cord on cable or bringing your lunch to work can help free up money for savings. Or, think bigger by refinancing any loans you currently have—like student loans, auto loans or your mortgage. Use a refinance calculator to see whether a new loan will save you money.

**4 Save unexpected windfalls.** You can boost the balance of your emergency fund when you least expect it with "found" money. Invest birthday or holiday cash gifts, work bonuses and tax refunds directly into your account and see how quickly you can reach your emergency fund goal. Since this money isn't part of your typical spending, it's easy to use it for saving without missing it.

**5 Make saving automatic.** We all know that saving money for the unexpected is a good idea, but it's easy to delay in favor of more pressing concerns. Treat your emergency fund like any other monthly recurring bill and have funds directly deposited into your savings account each month. You'll be less likely to miss the money and can sleep easy knowing you have a safety net when life interruptions occur. An emergency fund isn't a luxury—it's an important way to protect the things that matter most to you.



## **Benefits Changes for People with Disabilities: What to Know About the One Big Beautiful Bill**

### **What's Happening?**

#### **No Immediate Changes for Medicaid:**

If you are a Medicaid beneficiary, nothing changes right now. If you need care, continue using Medicaid. The new rules do not take effect until 2027 or later.

#### **2027: Major Eligibility and Coverage Shifts in Medicaid**

##### ***Retroactive Eligibility Limited***

- Coverage before application: reduced from 3 to 2 months for traditional (including disability) and from 3 to 1 month for expansion Medicaid.
- Impact: People with disabilities may have less time to enroll and cover past medical bills, increasing the risk of unpaid medical debt if enrollment is delayed.

##### ***More Frequent Eligibility Checks***

- Increased from once a year to every six months for expansion and targeted adult Medicaid.
- Impact: People with disabilities may face more frequent paperwork and risk of losing coverage due to administrative errors or missed deadlines.

##### ***Work/Service Requirement for Expansion Applicants***

- And able-bodied expansion applicants (not caregivers for a child under 14 or a person with a disability) must show at least 80 hours of work, school, or community service in at least one of the three months before applying.
- Impact: While this does not apply to people with disabilities, around 60% of expansion enrollees may have to prove they have a disability.

#### **2028: New Costs and Asset Limits for Medicaid**

- October 1, 2028: Copays can increase
- Copays for expansion enrollees between 100-138% of the federal poverty limit may increase from \$4 to \$35;
- And, providers can deny services if the client cannot pay. Impact: People with disabilities in this income group may struggle to afford needed care, including home and community-based services, risking gaps in treatment or supports if they are unable to pay.

##### ***Home Equity Cap for Long Term Services***

- Medicaid enrollees needing long term services or supports cannot own a home worth more than \$1 million.
- Impact: Some people with disabilities could be forced to sell their home, rent an apartment, or move to an institution.

##### ***Reduction in Provider Taxes and Directed Payments Reduced to Medicare's Rate***

- Current provider tax limit is 6%. Gradual reduction to 3.5% (except for nursing homes and intermediate care facilities) begins.
- Impact: Could result in fewer resources for Medicaid programs, possibly leading to service cuts or lower provider rates, which may limit access to care for people with disabilities.

## ***Other Notable Changes for Medicaid/Medicare***

- Delayed drug coverage for low income Medicare beneficiaries
- Delayed implementation of updated Medicaid eligibility rules may make it harder for low income Medicare beneficiaries to get Medicaid subsidized drug coverage.
- Impact: People with disabilities who are dual eligible may face higher out-of-pocket drug costs or barriers to medication access.

## ***What This Means for People with Disabilities***

- No immediate loss of coverage
- Changes do not take effect until 2027 or later. No one should lose coverage right away.
- Advocacy and ongoing updates:
  - The DLC and other advocates are talking to policymakers at the state and federal level about your needs.
  - We will try to shape state and federal rules so you are protected as much as possible.
  - We will tell you what we learn and how you can help.

## ***SNAP Changes***

Nationally, the One Big Beautiful Bill cuts \$186 billion from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program over a decade. Utah has one of the lowest SNAP participation rates in the country. Utahns with disabilities are also under-enrolled compared to the national average. Using the most recent available data, there were about 30,400 SNAP enrollees who had a disability or were older in 2022. This would be almost 17% of total program enrollment in March 2025.

The bill makes enrollment even harder by expanding the work requirement to adults up to 65 years old, veterans, and former foster care youth (individuals with a documented disability are exempt) and excluding the cost of an Internet connection from the Standard Utility Allowance. It also increases the amount the state has to pay to run the program from 5075% in October 2026. Additionally, if Utah's error rate (the percentage of cases in which eligibility or benefit amount is found to be incorrect) is above 6%, the state may have to pay for part of the program itself.

Interestingly, states are not penalized for incorrectly denying benefits or paying too little. Legislators will likely have to make some tough choices in the near future. Right now, estimates suggest a typical Utah SNAP family could lose an average of \$83 a month in benefits. The Disability Law Center (DLC) is a private, nonprofit organization, designated by the governor as Utah's Protection and Advocacy agency. The DLC believes in a society where abilities, rather than disabilities, are recognized; all people have an equal opportunity to participate; and where all people are treated with equity, dignity, and respect. DLC services are available free of charge statewide, regardless of income, legal status, language, or place of residence.

If you have further questions, please contact us. Even though our focus is on cases that can help as many people as possible because time and resources are limited we at least offer information and/or referral options to everyone who contacts us. Materials are also available in alternative formats such as audio, large - print, Braille and Spanish. Call (800) 662-9080 or apply for help online, and our staff will contact you within 13 business days.





# See You at the 2026 Conference!

Are you passionate about diversity, inclusion, and advocacy in the field of rehabilitation and counseling? Do you want to connect with like-minded professionals dedicated to advancing multicultural perspectives in rehabilitation and counseling services?

Look no further! NAMRC invites you to join our vibrant community of professionals committed to promoting multiculturalism, diversity, and equity in rehabilitation and counseling. As a member of NAMRC, you'll have the opportunity to network with other professionals within our field and who share our same passion for working with those with disabilities, access valuable resources, attend professional development events and develop advocacy and leadership skills.

Joining NAMRC is easy! We are a division of the National Rehabilitation Association. Access their website at <https://nationalrehab.org/web/login> and follow the instructions to become a member today. Please don't forget to add National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) to your shopping cart before completing your transaction.

Together, let's continue to make a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Contact [membership@namrc.org](mailto:membership@namrc.org) for more info or assistance.

Thank you to everyone who signed up for new membership at our 30th Annual Conference in Raleigh, North Carolina. We greatly appreciate your support and encourage you to explore opportunities to serve on our Membership and Coalition Building Committee. For more information, please feel free to reach out to us at [membership@namrc.org](mailto:membership@namrc.org).

# SAVE THE DATE

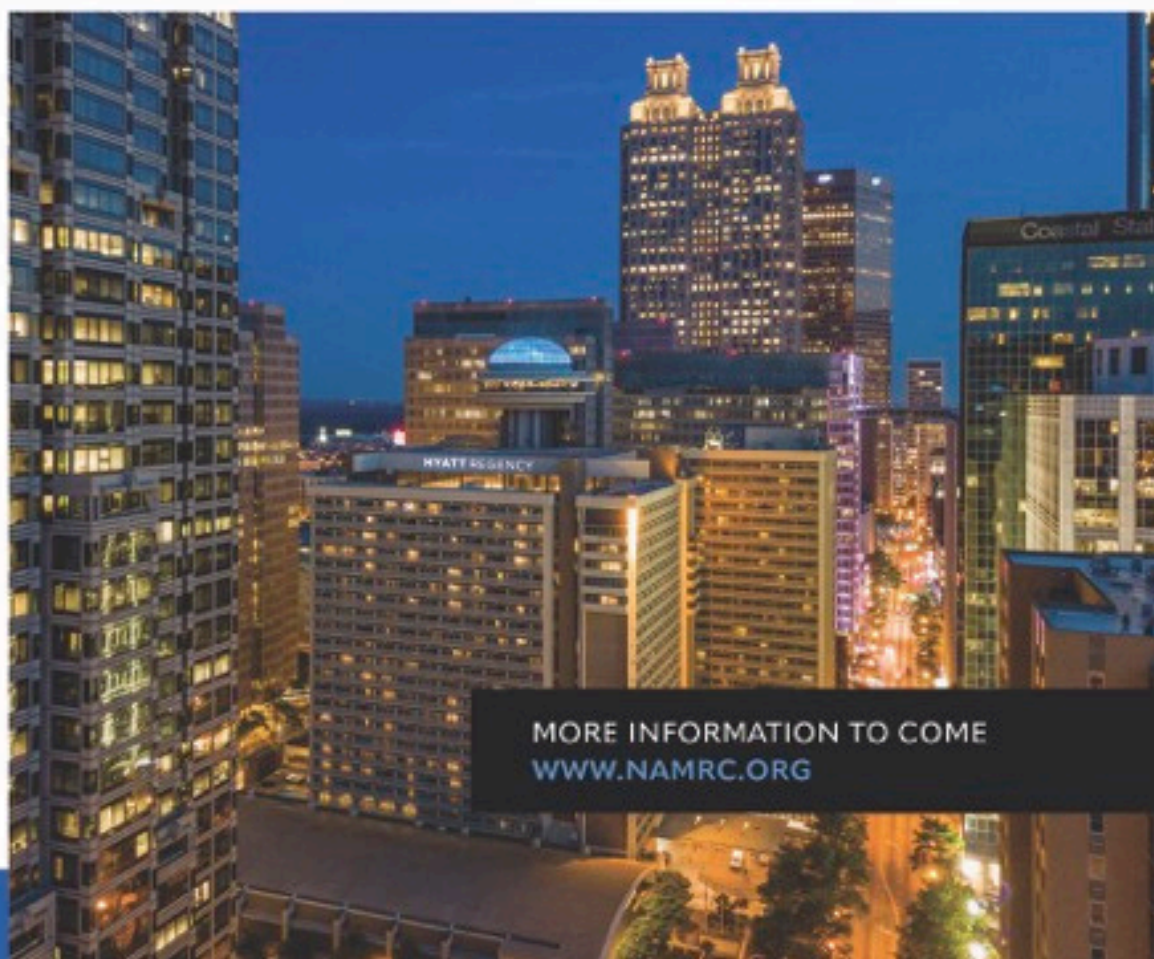


National  
Association of  
Multicultural  
Rehabilitation  
Concerns

## NAMRC 31<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE

**22-25** JULY  
**2026**

**HYATT REGENCY ATLANTA**  
265 PEACHTREE, ATLANTA, GA 30303



MORE INFORMATION TO COME  
[WWW.NAMRC.ORG](http://WWW.NAMRC.ORG)

# \$10,000 grants 50 recipients Apply now

Verizon is awarding \$10,000 to 50 small businesses just like yours. To become eligible to apply, enroll in Digital Ready (for free!), complete 2 Digital Ready courses or events and complete the application by 12/10/2025. Will you be the next recipient?



1. Enroll in Digital Ready ([https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/?utm\\_source=national-disability-institute&utm\\_medium=partner&utm\\_campaign=digital-ready\\_national-partner\\_namrc](https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/?utm_source=national-disability-institute&utm_medium=partner&utm_campaign=digital-ready_national-partner_namrc))
2. Complete 2 courses or events
3. Submit the grant application by December 10, 2025



# SERNRA | NAMRC | NCRA

TRAINING CONFERENCE · SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>-24<sup>TH</sup>

## Reconnecting: Rising Strong in Rehabilitation

From recovery to renewal – together we build  
a resilient future

Let us start by saying WOW and THANK YOU to all who worked tirelessly to put on such a successful conference and to all who attended, exhibited and sponsored this event! Marjorie and I are renewed and inspired by the tremendous collaboration that was on full display for the joint conference September 22-24, 2025, in Greensboro, NC. Three dynamic organizations: Southeast Regional National Rehabilitation Association (SERNRA), the National Association of Multicultural Rehabilitation Concerns (NAMRC) and the North Carolina Rehabilitation Association (NCRA) came together to ensure that rehabilitation professionals had a forum to reconnect, build new relationships while receiving premier training to enhance our work in the field of rehabilitation. By combining resources and audiences from different organizations, we were able to increase attendance and impact, establish a broader appeal to rehabilitation professionals, utilize greater budget/flexibility through merging of conference workers, shared costs, and diverse perspectives and program content.

There were approximately 250 people in attendance from different backgrounds, experiences, and locations across the United States. Engaging with a diverse audience requires understanding that different individuals have varied needs, preferences, and ways of interpreting information, necessitating a communication approach that is respectful, inclusive, and accessible for all.

We are proud to say that we accomplished the goals we set out to do by having a “down home” gathering that brought together a cross-section of attendees and provided opportunities for training as noted above, but also provided an environment where exchange of ideas, professional and personal camaraderie, support and affirmation for the work we do and for whom we do it remained a focal point...good food, fun, and dancing too! We honor those who have stood out in their accomplishments and contributions in our profession while also remembering those who did so but are no longer with us.

We are living, learning and working in unsettled times with challenges to funding, along with who and how we serve individuals, among other areas. There has been an undoing emphasis on the connotation of certain words as a driver for changing the work that we do in addition to how we educate and live our lives. We are not dependent on words nor are we allowing muddled categorizations of words to limit our collaboration, communication, resolve and resilience in performing our expansive work as practitioners, educators, students and all other aspects of rehabilitation. We encourage all of you to carry forward what we accomplished last month at the conference into our future endeavors. Again, thank you everyone!

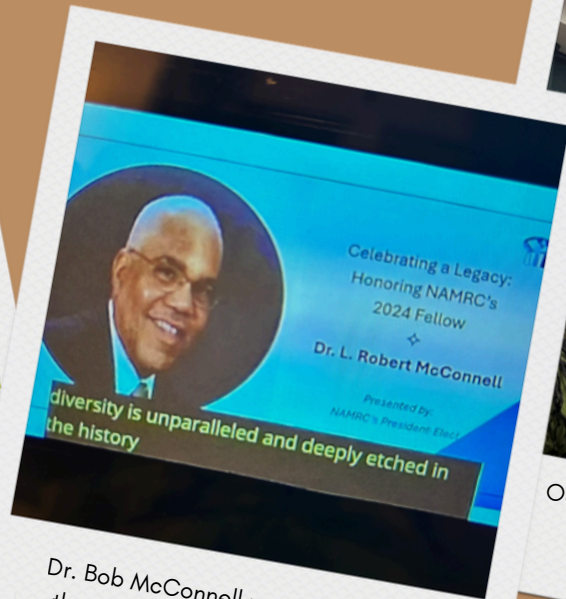
Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. L'Tanya Fish, Interim NAMRC President and Conference Co-Chair

Marjorie Donaldson, Program Co-Chair



Interim NAMRC President L'Tanya Fish awarded the SERNRA H.B. Cummins Award at the 2025 Conference



Dr. Bob McConnell recognized during the conference as NAMRC's Fellow



Our panelists at the pre-conference session



NAMRC Board members Nyree Cunningham & Tracy Broadnax



Past President Dr. Keisha G. Rogers serving as a moderator for the Pre-Conference panel



Nancy Vaughan Mayor of Greensboro



# CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



## WE NEED YOU!

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MULTICULTURAL REHABILITATION CONCERNS (NAMRC) IS SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS:

- THREE (3) BOARD MEMBERS AT LARGE (JANUARY 1, 2026 - DECEMBER 31, 2027)
- PRESIDENT-ELECT POSITION (JANUARY 1, 2026 - DECEMBER 31, 2027)
- TREASURER POSITION (JANUARY 1, 2026 - DECEMBER 31, 2027)



NOMINATION LINK:

[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/KVPSFPSU4PCSWYU86](https://forms.gle/KVPSFPSU4PCSWYU86)

PLEASE VISIT NAMRC BYLAWS 2023 FOR FULL DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH BOARD POSITION.

[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/NAMRC2023BYLAWS](https://tinyurl.com/NAMRC2023BYLAWS)

**NOMINATION DEADLINE : OCTOBER 26<sup>TH</sup> , 2025**

Any questions or concerns ,please email  
Keisha Rogers [Pastpresident@namrc.org](mailto:Pastpresident@namrc.org) or  
Bob McConnell [lrm805@comcast.com](mailto:lrm805@comcast.com)



National  
Association of  
Multicultural  
Rehabilitation

# NAMRC Leadership

President: L'Tanya Fish  
Past President: Keisha G. Rogers  
Secretary: Kelsey Webb  
Treasurer: Felicia Hunter  
Financial Secretary: Brenda Taft  
Representative to the NRA Board: Adrienne Robinson  
Student Representative: Letoria Brown  
Parliamentarian: Bob McConnell



## NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

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Kelsey Webb

Kayla Grayson

Brenda Taft

Keisha G. Rogers



National  
Association of  
Multicultural  
Rehabilitation  
Concerns

NAMRC is seeking dedicated volunteers to serve on various committees that are integral to advancing our mission of promoting inclusivity and belonging in rehabilitation services. By joining a committee, you will have the opportunity to collaborate with passionate professionals and students from diverse backgrounds, contribute to meaningful initiatives, and make a lasting impact in the field of multicultural rehabilitation. Whether your expertise lies in advocacy, education, policy, or community outreach, we encourage individuals committed to fostering equity to get involved. Your participation will not only help shape the future of multicultural rehabilitation, but also provide valuable networking and leadership opportunities. Join us in creating positive change. If you'd like to serve and share your time and expertise to make a difference, please reach out to [secretary@namrc.org](mailto:secretary@namrc.org).