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**Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC)  
on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities**

## **A National Delphi Survey of New Immigrating Populations and Trends' Impacts on State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies**

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LU-RRTC State-of-the-Science Conference  
September 28-29, 2017  
Atlanta Georgia

# Presentation Objectives

- + Present results garnered through a mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative analysis) Delphi survey approach with State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency professionals on their perspectives to predict new immigrating populations and national trends on SVRA systems' capacity to serve new citizens and legal permanent residents with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations (Blacks [e.g., from Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon], American Indians or Alaskan Natives [e.g., from Mexico], Asians [e.g., from China, India, Vietnam, Korea, Japan], Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders [e.g., from the Philippines], and Latinos [e.g., from Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, Dominican Republic]).



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# Presentation Objectives (cont'd)

- + Describe strategies that could be considered for strategic planning inclusion to address such challenges.
- + Translate key findings that will serve as a mechanism to assess SVRAs' current systems' capacity to serve these populations, and develop a five-year forecast of system-wide policy and practice implications of such trends.



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# BACKGROUND

The United States is a nation that is becoming increasingly diverse (Duncan & Trejo, 2011; Xu & Chi, 2013), and to date migration trends have given impetus to an increased growth population and a continuous shift in its demographic structure (Passell, 2011; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010).

Since the 1990s, the total growth population has increased at a steady rate of roughly 1 million new U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents annually (Passel & Cohn, 2011; Rumbaut & Komaie, 2010), and this population is expected to comprise 82% of the nation's natural increase from 2005 to 2050 (Duval-Couetil & Mikulecky, 2011).



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# BACKGROUND

- + Immigration continues to contribute to this titanic ethnic and racial demographic shift (U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2013).
- + These unceasing migration patterns raise concerns about the capacity of the 80 state vocational rehabilitation agencies (SVRAs) in the U.S. (i.e., general, blind and combined) to effectively respond to this growing crisis.
- + These agencies are likely to be effected by emerging migration patterns inclusive of new citizens and legal permanent residents with disabilities from racial and ethnic populations with exotic customs, beliefs, values and norms unfamiliar to the typical rehabilitation counselor (Bua-lam & Bias, 2011).



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# BACKGROUND

## + Prevalence of Disability and Health Conditions Among Underserved Groups:

- + Among individuals between the ages of 18 and 64, 10.4% of non-Hispanic Whites, 7.9% of Hispanics, and 4% of Asians reported having a disability in 2011 compared to 13.6% of African Americans, and 17.1% of Native Americans or Alaskan Natives (Erickson, Lee, & van Schrader, 2012)
- + Adult Hispanics, Native Americans or Alaska Natives, and Blacks or African Americans with disabilities are significantly more likely to report fair or poor health (55.2%, 50.5%, and 46.6%, respectively) when compared to non-Hispanic White individuals with disabilities (36.9% and 24.0%, respectively) (Wong & Miles, 2014)

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# BACKGROUND

## + Need:

- + Health and functional limitations may cause psychological impediments to employment (Hill & Fritz, 2011). In regards to securing competitive employment, such psychological limitations may bring about crushing obstacles that immigrant consumers find difficult to overcome, including:
  - + Language and communication barriers
  - + Little or no educational attainment
  - + Loss of occupational status
  - + Limited knowledge and access to U.S. employment resources/networks
  - + Transportation barriers
  - + Acculturative stress and cultural barriers (Chung, Bemak & Grabosky, 2011)



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# Research Questions

- What is the priority of importance of emerging and new U.S. citizen and permanent residency population trends on SVRAs' capacity to serve immigrants with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations?
- What is the priority of significance for strategies that could be implemented by SVRAs to address micro and macro level impacts of emerging and new immigration trends on service capacity to new U.S. citizens and permanent residents from racial and ethnic populations?



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# Delphi Technique

- Developed at the Research and Development Corporation (RAND) in the 1950s to forecast technological innovations and social and economic impacts of technological changes (Vázquez-Ramos, Leahy, & Noel Estrada, 2007)
- Recognizes human judgment as legitimate and useful inputs in generating forecasts (Nelson et al., 2013)
- The technique's popularity is centered on the fact that it allows the anonymous inclusion of a large number of individuals across diverse locations and expertise and avoids situations where a specific expert might dominate the consensus process (Krell & Pérusse, 2012; Nelson et al., 2013)
- The technique consists of a series of steps taken to elicit and refine perspectives of a group who are either experts in the area of focus or representative of the target population (Krell & Pérusse, 2012; Vázquez-Ramos et al., 2007)



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# Delphi Survey Development

## + Procedure:

- On April 2, 2014, at the inaugural LU-RRTC National Advisory Panel meeting, it was suggested that a needs assessment survey be developed in order to inform the Round 1 Delphi framework.
- A needs assessment survey was administered to five respondents (i.e., SVRA rehabilitation counselors ) employed by three different SVRAs using the psychdata.com online system on February 1, 2015. The needs assessment survey contained 32 questions relating to issues that involve SVRAs' policies and practices on service delivery across several broad topics.



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# Needs Assessment Findings

## I. Policy

- Category 1. Procedures for Determining Eligibility/Ineligibility for VR Services
- Category 2. Budget and Financial Resources
- Category 3. Human Resources/Qualified Personnel
- Category 4. Special Programs
- Category 5. Access to Services/Recruitment
- Category 6. Staff Education and Awareness Training
- Category 7. Community Rehabilitation Program Partners/Collaboration
- Category 8. Counselor Training
- Category 9. Retention Efforts
- Category 10. Community Outreach
- Category 11. Citizenship Status of New Applicants for VR Services



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# Needs Assessment Findings (cont'd)

## II. Practice

Category 12. Outreach to Minority Communities

Category 13. Cultural Norms

Category 14. Case Management

Category 15. Communication Challenges

Category 16. Services (Access/Provision)

Category 17. Job Readiness

Category 18. Accessibility Analysis



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# METHOD

## Panelists recruitment

- The sample of panelists were recruited through a collaboration effort between the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) and researchers at the Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for minority entities (LU-RRTC).
- Inclusion criteria:
  - SVRA professionals (i.e., SVRA directors, field managers, vocational rehabilitation counselors or rehabilitation professionals) and field experts (i.e., academicians, researchers, immigration policy professionals) with a wide range of knowledge and/or familiarity with emerging immigrant populations
  - Experience using electronic mail in order to send and receive messages; experience printing from electronic mail; and have the ability to download and upload computer data files.



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# METHOD (cont'd)

- + A peer nomination process was used to recruit SVRA field service directors, practitioners, experts, and advocates to participate as panelists in the Delphi study.
- + The initial solicitation to participate in the study was conducted by email and included a cover letter and peer nomination form.
- + CSAVR mailed out peer nomination forms to 80 SVRA directors from their internal database and/or listserve on February 28, 2016.
- + A total of 29 unique nominations were received. Nominees were asked to confirm their participation via a confidential online process through Psychdata.



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# METHOD (cont'd)

## + Round One:

- + Once the panelists were confirmed, the initial correspondence, which included a letter request for participation, and an introduction and description of the study was e-mailed to each of the 24 panelists.
- + Questions about participants' demographics and SVRAs' policies and practices regarding their capacity to serve this emerging group were included in the survey.
- + Panelists were asked to provide remarks to identify their perceptions on topics in eighteen (18) specified categories and one (1) category for miscellaneous comments.
- + The time window for this round was six weeks.



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# METHOD (cont'd)

## + Round Two:

- + The same 24 panelists were provided with the 51 themes that were, as previously mentioned, developed within four broad categories.
- + The panelists were asked to rank and rate them by category and by items within category.
- + Participants rated the categories and items within categories in terms of its importance.
- + A total of 22 panelists participated in this round, as two participants were lost due to attrition.



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# METHOD (cont'd)

## + Round Three:

- + Researchers provided the panelists (n = 22) with the same 51 issues presented to them in Round Two as well as the corresponding ranking and average rating for importance for the panel's responses.
- + They were asked to again rank and rate items using the same interval scale used in Round Two given the average response of the panel by category and by items within the category.
- + The 4 different overall categories/themes were ranked by assigning "rank points" to each item.
- + The top ranked items in each category/theme were selected by assigning "rank points" to each items.



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# Data Analysis

- + The rank points earned by each item were summed to compute the “sigma rank points” or  $\sum$ RankPoint score. Based on their  $\sum$ RankPoint scores, the items in each category were ranked from high to low and were assigned item numbers corresponding to the rankings of their scores.
- + Also calculated was a total of the category’s rankings ( $\sum$ Rank) and its overall group ranking based on this total.
- + Panelists were also provided an opportunity to comment on items during the Round Three iteration of the study.
- + Two successive rounds of rating and ranking were necessary to achieve a final consensus of those impacts, micro, macro and general strategies that panelists perceived as most affecting SVRAs’ capacity to serve new citizens and legal permanent residents with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations.



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# Research Questions

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# Results: Five-year Forecast Impacts

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
1. Poor staff salaries and incentives	258	12.28	4.32	293	13.95	5.70	1.67	1.38
2. Language and communication barriers	251	11.40	5.70	280	13.33	2.98	1.93	-2.72
3. Limited access to VRS	266	12.09	3.82	276	13.14	5.25	1.05	1.43

# Impacts (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
4. Heavy caseloads and paperwork	257	11.22	5.55	275	13.09	5.30	1.87	-0.25
5. SVRA budget cuts	255	11.59	5.85	263	12.52	4.46	0.93	-1.39
6. Negative attitudes and stereotypes	248	11.27	4.58	263	12.52	4.57	1.25	-0.01

# Impacts (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
7. Limited VR field offices in minority communities	232	10.54	4.69	225	10.71	4.05	0.17	-0.64
8. Lack of knowledge about VR	236	10.72	5.02	222	10.57	4.63	-0.15	-0.39
9. Transportation issues/barriers	209	9.50	4.97	220	10.47	4.11	0.97	-0.86



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## Impacts (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
10. Acculturative stress and cultural mistrust	229	10.40	5.08	187	8.90	4.21	-1.50	-0.87
11. Unqualified personnel	197	9.38	4.80	170	8.09	3.79	-1.29	-1.01
12. Inefficient immigration status/policy training	198	9.00	4.94	169	8.04	4.28	-0.96	-0.66

# Impacts (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
13. Community rehabilitation programs	168	7.63	4.34	158	7.52	3.51	-0.11	-0.83
14. Diversity issues in rehabilitation counseling education programs	164	7.45	3.39	148	7.04	3.77	-0.41	0.38



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# Impacts (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
15. Cultural dissonance	185	7.63	4.58	133	6.33	3.23	-1.30	-1.35
16. Poor relationships between SVRAs and community based partners	146	6.63	4.98	127	6.04	4.17	-0.59	-0.81

# Impacts (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
17. Need for research advocacy	140	6.36	4.61	103	4.90	3.75	-1.46	-0.86
18. Consistent strategic plans	134	6.09	4.47	84	4.00	4.46	-2.09	-0.01

# Macro Strategies and Policy Level Recommendations

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
1. Improve staff salaries and incentives	239	10.40	4.76	251	11.95	4.53	1.55	-0.23
2. Diversity training	240	10.90	3.06	250	11.90	3.91	1.00	0.85
3. Address diversity challenge in rehabilitation counselor education programs	219	9.95	3.28	229	10.90	4.02	0.95	0.74



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# Macro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
4. Increased language translators availability	208	9.45	4.07	225	10.71	2.68	1.26	-1.39
5. Monitor leadership and staffing patterns	188	8.54	3.87	212	10.09	3.57	1.55	-0.30
6. Create agency training standards	180	8.18	4.88	195	9.28	2.72	1.10	-2.16



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# Macro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
7. Refine case management systems	180	8.18	4.88	195	9.28	2.72	1.10	-2.16
8. Stronger collaborations with community based rehabilitation partners	159	7.22	3.23	155	7.38	2.85	0.16	-0.38



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# Macro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
9. Legislation driven policies/strategies (e.g. Workforce Investment Opportunity Act)	180	8.63	4.29	141	6.71	2.98	-1.92	-1.31
10. Diversity in human resources	154	7.00	3.79	132	6.28	2.79	-0.72	-1.00



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# Macro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
11. Conduct immigration research	158	7.18	4.00	118	5.61	3.73	-1.57	-0.27
12. Immigration policy training	135	6.13	4.50	111	5.28	3.74	-0.85	-0.76
13. Accessible marketing research	156	7.09	3.98	108	5.14	2.86	-1.95	-1.12



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# Macro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
14. Promote technology for outreach	127	6.04	4.43	106	5.04	3.59	-1.00	-0.84
15. Create special immigration units	130	5.90	4.51	81	3.85	4.13	-2.05	-0.38



# Micro Strategies and Policy Level Recommendations

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
1. Outreach to minority and immigrant populations	174	7.90	2.82	182	8.66	3.11	0.76	0.29
2. Promote consumer choice and empowerment	140	6.36	3.76	161	7.66	3.30	1.30	-0.46



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# Micro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
3. Enhanced collaborations with community-based rehabilitation partners	136	6.18	2.46	151	7.19	2.54	1.01	0.08
4. Job readiness outreach	131	5.95	2.57	134	6.38	1.20	0.43	-1.37



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# Micro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
5. Provide holistic counseling and guidance	121	5.76	3.04	134	6.38	2.97	0.62	-0.07
6. Translation service referrals	131	5.95	3.47	133	6.33	2.15	0.38	-1.32
7. Establish relationships with immigration entity personnel	140	6.66	2.90	133	6.33	3.67	-0.33	0.77



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## Micro Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
8. Enhance vocational rehabilitation office access	126	6.00	3.43	120	5.71	2.62	-0.29	-0.81
9. Case management training	121	5.76	2.77	102	4.85	3.18	-0.91	0.41
10. Innovative budget management	95	6.36	3.76	74	3.52	2.61	-2.84	-1.15
11. Immigration status/policy training	86	3.90	2.89	62	2.95	2.43	-0.95	-0.46

# General Strategies and Policy Level Recommendations

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
1. Hire bi-lingual counselors in SVRAs	108	4.90	1.92	136	6.47	.81	1.57	-1.11
2. Hire additional translators in SVRAs	104	4.72	1.90	111	5.28	1.48	.056	-0.42
3. Apprenticeship programs targeting immigrants	98	4.45	1.71	93	4.42	1.32	-0.03	-0.39



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# General Strategies (cont'd)

Key Themes	Round 2			Round 3			Changed Value (Mean)	Changed Value (SD)
	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD	$\Sigma$ Rank Point	MEAN	SD		
4. Develop Hispanic Outreach Units in SVRA context	92	4.18	1.76	89	4.23	1.81	0.05	0.05
5. Business Relations reps assigned to each VR office	89	4.04	2.31	56	2.66	1.52	-1.38	-0.79
6. Consumer Training Institutes	53	2.40	1.56	52	2.47	1.60	0.07	0.04
7. SVRA and Re-settlement agency partnerships	70	3.18	1.70	51	2.42	1.60	-0.76	-0.10



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# Limitations of the Study

- + Determining who is sufficiently expert to be on the panel can be problematic. The inclusion criteria for determining panelists' participation might be considered subjective as the criteria are developed solely at the discretion of the research team.
- + The Delphi process is time consuming, which may create opportunity for maturation effects to occur. Panelists may either grow tired or inattentive throughout the process, or panelists could become more learned or educated on the topic; such situations could significantly influence panelists' responses between the rounds of study.



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# Translation of key findings summary

- + These data will inform the development of a five-year forecast of system-wide policy and practice implications, which SVRAs may use to assess their current systems' capacity to serve new citizens and legal permanent residents with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations .



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# Knowledge Translation Resources & Deliverables

Cross, K. E., Moore, C. L., Manyibe, E. O., Aref, F., Washington, A. L., Umadjela, A., . . . Cyprian, D. (2015). New Immigrating Racial and Ethnic Populations and "Trends Impacts" on State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 46(2), 20.

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