

VR WORKS:

INNOVATION, ACCESS & ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

The logo for CSAVR, featuring the letters 'C', 'S', 'A', and 'V' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The 'A' and 'V' are connected, with a stylized 'R' to the right. A purple and blue gradient bar is positioned behind the 'A' and 'V'.

ADVANCING
DISABILITY INCLUSION
& WORKFORCE
INNOVATION

Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation

2026 Spring Conference



Grand Hyatt Washington – March 28-April 1, 2026



CSAVR

2026 Spring Conference

#CSAVRSpring2026

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION WORKS: INNOVATION, ACCESS, AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

In partnership with George Washington University Center for Rehabilitation Counseling, Research & Education (GW-CRCRE)

SATURDAY, MARCH 28 – WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2026

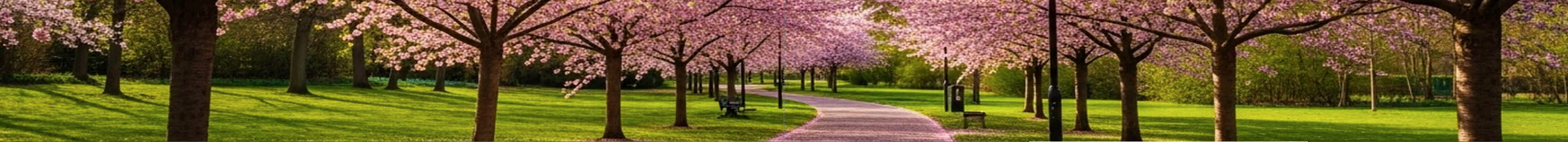


SATURDAY, MARCH 28

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM	CSAVR LEADERSHIP FORUM	Constitution A
8:30 AM – 4:30 PM	NATIONAL COALITION OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS (NCSRC)	Constitution D-E
<u>SUNDAY, MARCH 29</u>		
8:30 AM – 4:15 PM	NATIONAL COALITION OF STATE REHABILITATION COUNCILS (NCSRC)	Constitution D-E
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	CSAVR DIRECTOR CONNECTOR (INVITE ONLY)	Constitution B
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	CSAVR DIRECTOR'S FORUM & BUSINESS MEETING	Constitution A
3:00 PM – 5:30 PM	CSAVR REGISTRATION	Constitution Foyer

MONDAY, MARCH 30

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	CSAVR Registration & Coffee	Constitution Foyer
9:00 AM – 9:45 AM	<u>WELCOME</u> Maggie Koziol, CEO, CSAVR Shannon Austin, Director, DC-C Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, President, CSAVR Director, AL-C	Constitution Ballroom
9:45 AM – 10:30 AM	<u>GENERAL SESSION #1</u> Talent That Works – Elevating the Business Voice in Vocational Rehabilitation This session will feature a live podcast serving as the official launch of the Talent That Works campaign, which aims to elevate and amplify the business voice in vocational rehabilitation (VR). Bobbi Stephenson, Director of the Business Relations Program, AL-C Russell DuBose, Vice President of Human Resources, Phifer Inc. Heath Hendrix, Key Account Manager, The Onin Group Grace Miller, Associate, Brit Crampsie Communications Rick Sizemore, Podcast Host, VA-G Betsy Civilette, Podcast Host, VA-G	Constitution Ballroom



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MONDAY, MARCH 30—cont'd:

Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, NET@CSAVR

PRESIDING: Dacia Johnson, Director, OR-B

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

GENERAL SESSION #2

Constitution Ballroom

Congressional Staff Panel: Federal Policy Priorities and the Path Ahead in the 119th Congress, Second Session

This panel brings together senior Congressional staff from key committees and leadership offices to provide an inside look at the federal policy landscape shaping disability, workforce, education, health, and appropriations priorities in the Second Session of the 119th Congress.

Brianna Tibbetts, Education Policy Advisor, Senate Committee, Health, Labor and Pensions Committee

Sarah Mueller, Disability Policy Director, Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee

Grace Hart, Disability Senior Policy Aide, Special Committee on Aging

Cole Adams, Legislative Assistant

Guy Reschenthaler, Chief Deputy Whip

Phoebe Ball, Senior Counsel, Committee on Education and Workforce

PRESIDING: Kathie Smith, CSAVR President-Elect, Director, NC-G

12:00 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch on Your Own

1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS ONE

Track #1

Constitution B

Building Smarter Systems: How Quality Data Enables Responsible AI

Brian N. Phillips, Associate Professor, Utah State University

Allison R. Fleming, Associate Professor, The Pennsylvania State University

Renee Sansom Briscoe, Statewide Transition Coordinator for the Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)

PRESIDING: Sarah Brenna, Director, UT-C

Track #2

Constitution A

Reimagining WIOA Youth Services: Integrated Strategies Across VR and Workforce

Drew Karhan, San Diego State University

PRESIDING: Elisha Jenkins, CSAVR Customer Services for Transition and Youth Committee Co-Chair, Director, DE-G

Track #3

Constitution D-E

Building Careers for VR Customers Through Proactive Strategies with Business

Michael MacKillop, Director, WA-B, Co-Chair, CSAVR Careers and Business Relations Committee Co-Chair



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MONDAY, MARCH 30—cont'd:

Toni Wolf, Director, MassAbility, CSAVR Careers and Business Relations Committee Co-Chair

Rick Laferriere, Lead Director, CVS Health, Workforce Initiatives Team

Duane Rohr, Senior Manager, CVS Health, Workforce Initiatives Team

Joana Lisboa, Senior Manager, CVS Health, Workforce Initiatives Team

Stacey Butler, Senior Manager, CVS Health, Workforce Initiatives Team

Erika Bailey, Manager, CVS Health, Workforce Initiatives Team

PRESIDING: Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, NET@CSAVR

2:45 PM – 3:15 PM

Break

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS TWO

Track #1

Constitution B

If Leaders Can't See It, They Can't Fund It: Making Fiscal Information Work for VR

Carol Pankow, Project Director, GWU Team with VR Technical Assistance Center on Quality Management (VRTAC-QM)

Nicky Harper, Director, WY-C

Aubree Porter, VR Accounting Manager, WY-C

Dacia Johnson, Director, OR-B

Kat Martin, Chief Financial & Information Officer, OR-B

Chris Clause, Director, MO-G

Sara Hagenhoff, MO-G

PRESIDING: Natasha Jerde, Director, MN-B

Track #2

Constitution A

Redefining Access: Innovative Pathways Through Pre-ETS

Felicia Hopson, Director, NJ-G

Toni Scott, Program Planning and Development Specialist Youth Services, NJ-G

Aaron Samuels, WIOA Youth Technical Coordinator, NJ-G

PRESIDING: Chanda Hermanson, CSAVR Customer Service for Transition and Youth Committee, Director, MT-C

Track #3

Constitution D-E

Removing Systemic Barriers to Successful VR Outcomes

Jennifer Jackson, Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Vocational Rehabilitation

Rebecca Treadway, Executive Director, The Arc of Mississippi

PRESIDING: Lindy Foley, Director, NE-G

4:30 PM – 5:30 PM

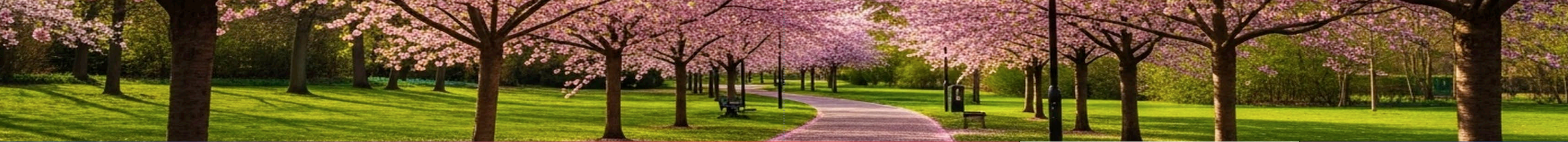
Leave Behind Education Day Packet Pickup (Hill Attendees Only)

Constitution Registration

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

RECEPTION

Constitution Ballroom



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TUESDAY, MARCH 31

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM **State Caucus Meetup Before Departing for Hill** **Wilson/Roosevelt/Cabin John**

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM **CSAVR Photo** **North Side Capitol Steps**

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM **GENERAL SESSION #3** **The Hart Senate Office Bldg., Rm. 902**

CSAVR Hill Educational Briefing
 This is a presentation where we, as the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) field, educate members of Congress and congressional staff about the Return on Investment of the VR program.
Maggie Koziol, CEO, CSAVR
Dr. Erik Bonner, Director, MD-C
Kathie Smith, President-Elect, CSAVR Director, NC-G
Emilea “Em” Hillman, CEO, Em’s Coffee Co.
MyKenzie Meike, Business Coach, Em’s Coffee Co.
Beth Keeton, Principal Investigator, Center on Self-Employment, Business Ownership & Telecommuting
Steve Sukup, CEO, Sukup Manufacturing
Sara Hart Weir, Executive Director, Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
Whit Downing, Vice President of Policy & Programming Kansas Council on Developmental Disabilities
Felicia Johnson, Director, SC-C
Jason Colson, IT Manager, SC-C
PRESIDING: Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, President, CSAVR Director, AL-C, and **Ryan Alford**, Self Advocate, AL-C

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM **Lunch on Your Own**

1:30 PM – 4:30 PM **Opportunity for Education Meetings on the Hill**



TUESDAY, MARCH 31

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM **Coffee** **Constitution Foyer**

9:30 AM – 10:45 AM **CONCURRENT SESSIONS THREE**

Track #1 **Constitution A**

From Visibility to Access: How Nevada VR Uses Digital Media and Online Services to Strengthen Engagement and Efficiency
Sheena N. Childers, Rehabilitation Bureau Chief, NV-C
Mechelle Merrill, Deputy Administrator of Programs, NV-C
PRESIDING: John Connelly, Director of Research and Grants, CSAVR

Track #2 **Constitution B**

Own It: A Partnership to Increase Future-Ready Skills and Reduce Barriers by Developing an Entrepreneurial Mindset
Megan O’Toole Hall, Director, VA-B
Kendall Morris, Founder & CEO, Founders Mark
PRESIDING: Antionette Gardner, Project & Operation Manager, CSAVR

Track #3 **Constitution D-E**

Improving Employment Outcomes in California Through Sector-Based Service Delivery
Kim Rutledge, Director, CA-C
Danielle Hackworth, Pathways to Success Project Manager, CA-C
Kelly Rocha, Pathway to Success Project Director, CA-C
PRESIDING: Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, NET@CSAVR



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TUESDAY, MARCH 31 –cont’d:

10:45 AM – 11:00 AM

Break

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS FOUR

Track #1

Constitution B

Reducing Systemic Friction to Advance Competitive Integrated Employment

Alberto Migliore, Senior Research Associate
Institute for Community Inclusion/University of Massachusetts Boston

Suzanne Freeze, Project Director, Institute for Community Inclusion/University of Massachusetts Boston

Russ Thelin, Senior Policy Fellow, Institute for Community Inclusion/University of Massachusetts Boston

PRESIDING: John Connelly, Director of Research and Grants, CSAVR

Track #2

Constitution D-E

Inclusive Higher Education as a Workforce Accelerator Progenitor: Leveraging TigerLIFE to Expand VR Access and Equitable Quality Employment Outcomes

Chrisann Schiro-Geist, Director, University of Memphis Institute on Disability

Patrick J. Kroluk, Researcher, University of Memphis Institute on Disability

PRESIDING: Antionette Gardner, Project & Operation Manager, CSAVR

Track #3

Constitution A

From Pilot to Practice: Driving Economic Opportunity Thru CIE

Charyl Yarbrough, Assistant Commissioner, NJ-G

Quiana Brifu, Project Manager, NJ-G

PRESIDING: Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, NET@CSAVR

12:30 PM – 1:30 PM

Lunch on Your Own

1:30 PM – 2:45 PM

CONCURRENT SESSIONS FIVE

Track #1

Constitution B

Enhancing Fiscal and Programmatic Collaboration: New Mexico VR’s Approach to Financial Transparency and Data-Driven Decision-Making Client Service Delivery

Antionette Holmes, Deputy Director Statewide Programs, NM-G

Rosalva Lucero, Program Manager, NM-G

Charlene Chavez, State Wide Transition Coordinator, NM-G

Carol Pankow, Project Director, GWU Team with VR Technical Assistance Center on Quality Management (VRTAC-QM)

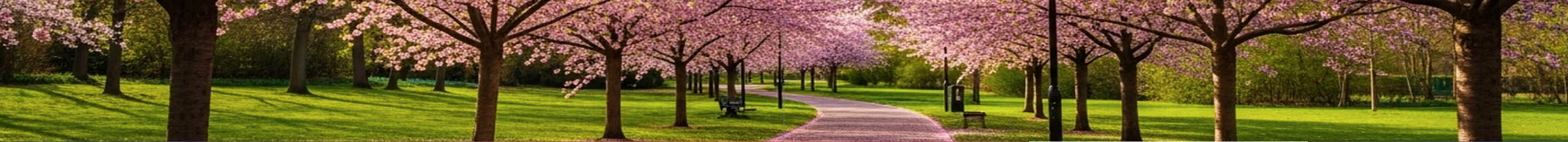
PRESIDING: John Connelly, Director of Research & Grants, CSAVR

Track #2

Constitution A

Engaging Families to Expand Competitive Integrated Employment Outcomes for Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities: Lessons from Virginia’s SWTCIE Grant

John Stewart, Project Manager, VA-G



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TUESDAY, MARCH 31 –cont’d:

Nickie Brandenburger, Co-Director of the Center for Family Involvement at VCU’s Partnership for People with Disabilities

Chris Martin, Director of Employment Services, SOAR365

PRESIDING: Antionette Gardner, Project & Operation Manager, CSAVR

Track #3

Constitution D-E

Customized Employment: Is It Time to Try Another Way?

Beth Keeton, Executive Director, Griffin-Hammis Associate

Therese Fimian, President, Marc Gold & Associates

Donna Bonessi, Director of Employment Services and Special Program, VA-G

PRESIDING: Kathy West-Evans, Director of Business Relations, NET@CSAVR

2:45 PM – 3:00 PM

Break

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

REGIONAL MEETINGS

(CT, ME, MA, NH, NY, RI VT)	Region 1	Bulfinch
(DE, MD, PA, VA, WV, DC, NJ)	Region 3	Cabin John
(AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, TN, PR, VI)	Region 4	Latrobe
(IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, WI)	Region 5	Burnham
(AR, LA, NM, OK, TX)	Region 6	Roosevelt
(IA, KA, MO, NE)	Region 7	Renwick
(CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, WY)	Region 8	Wilson
(AZ, CA, HI, NV, GU, NMI, AS)	Region 9	Potomac
(AK, ID, OR, WA)	Region 10	Arlington

3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

VRTAC, NTACT-C & AIVRTAC OFFICE HOURS

Constitution C-E

Office Hours are informal drop-in sessions where you can ask questions and talk through challenges related to your VR program. Come with your questions!

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1

GENERAL SESSION #4

Constitution Ballroom

9:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Positioning VR for the Future: Federal Policy, Disability Alignment, and Systems Transformation

As the federal policy landscape continues to evolve, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs are uniquely positioned at the intersection of workforce development, disability rights, and economic advancement. This session will examine the critical federal policy developments shaping the future of VR and how partnerships are important now more than ever.

Andy Imparato, Chief Executive Director, Disability Rights California

Michael Gamel-McCormick, Senior Domestic Policy Advisor

Senator Jeanne Shaheen, New Hampshire

Taryn Williams, Former Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

Policy and Partnerships

Catriona Macdonald, President, Linchpin Strategies and Government Relations for the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind

Shelby Satko, President, National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils

PRESIDING: Tonia Ferguson, Director of Legislative Affairs, CSAVR

10:00 AM – 10:15 AM

Break



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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1 –cont’d:

10:15 AM – 11:00 AM

GENERAL SESSION #5

Constitution Ballroom

RSA Update: Advancing VR Program Performance and Accountability

This essential session will highlight the latest PY 2024 performance for the VR program and outline the process for the ongoing PY 2026/2027 performance negotiations.

Michael Quinn, Chief, Data Collection and Analysis, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U. S. Department of Education

PRESIDING: Felicia Johnson, Director, SC-G

11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

GENERAL SESSION #6

Constitution Ballroom

Federal Leadership Session: Federal Agency Priorities and Cross-Agency Collaboration

This session will convene senior federal officials from key agencies to provide timely updates on national policy priorities, funding, and strategic initiatives affecting education, disability policy, workforce development, and independent living.

Kimberly Richey, Acting Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)

Jennifer Sheehy, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor

Mary Lazare, Principal Deputy Administrator, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, serving as ACL Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging

12:00 PM

CLOSING SESSION

Constitution Ballroom

Nick Moore, Acting Assistant Secretary, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education

PRESIDING: Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, President, CSAVR Director, AL-C

Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, President, CSAVR, Director, AL-C

CSAVR
Council of State Administrators
of Vocational Rehabilitation

**PLEASE COMPLETE
YOUR EVALUATION:**

**WE THANK YOU
FOR ATTENDING!**

DISCLAIMER: References to any companies or providers, products, services, publications, programs, and service delivery methodology do not constitute an official endorsement by CSAVR. You are encouraged to thoroughly investigate options and providers that you think may be most appropriate to meet your agency’s and customers’ specific needs.

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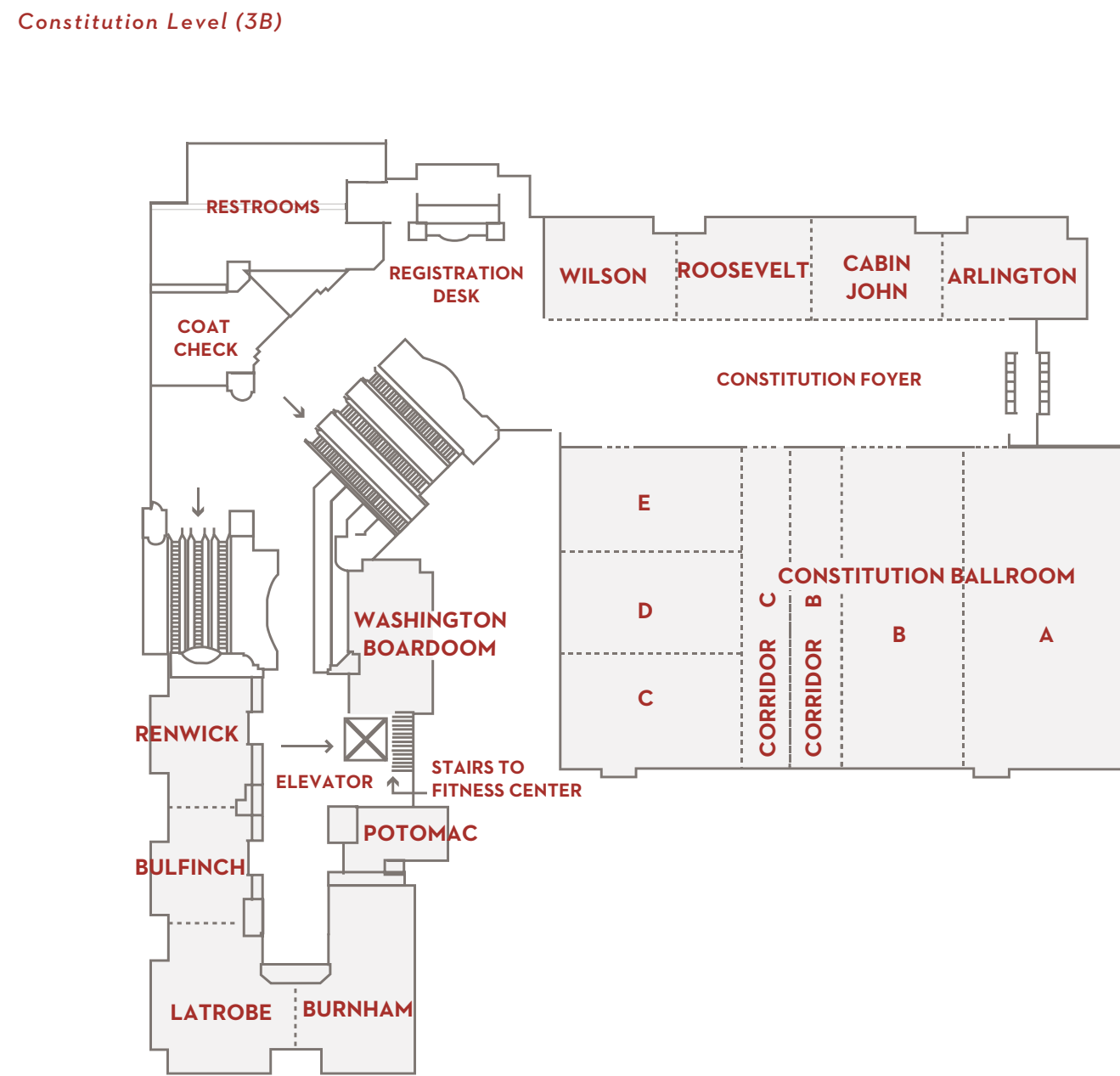
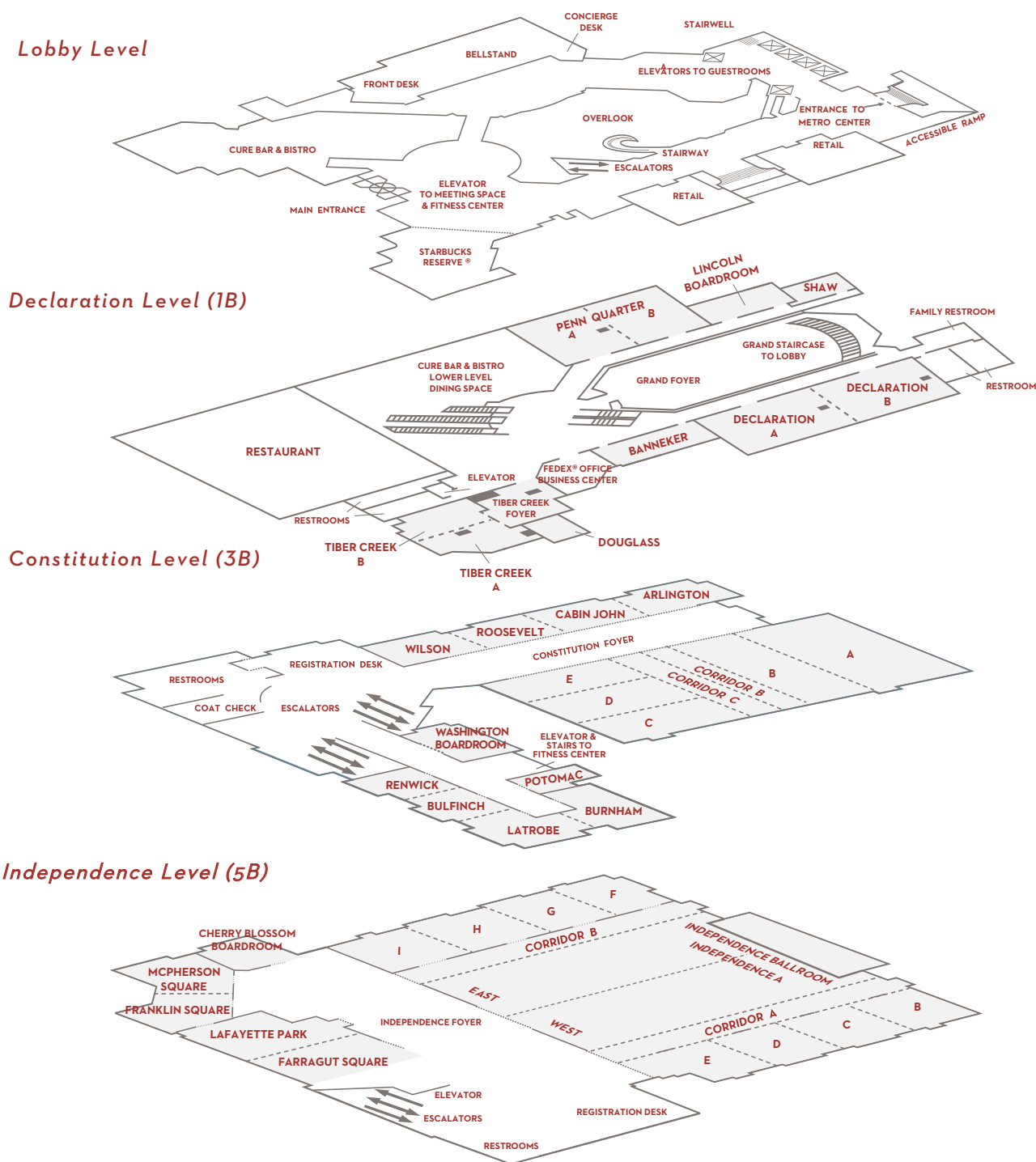


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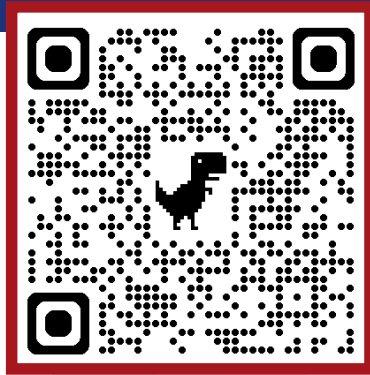


FLOOR PLAN

FLOOR PLAN



SCAN FOR OUR EVENT APP!



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CONNECT COMM MAGAZINE

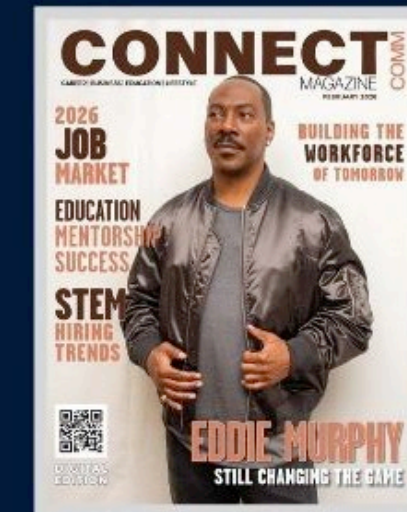
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