

R. Joshua Drywater



Director of Native Initiatives, Virginia Commonwealth University Rehabilitation Research & Training Center

R. Joshua Drywater is the director of Native Initiatives at the Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center. Joshua works within the center on activities geared toward Indigenous inclusivity and Native Initiatives. Previously, Joshua served as the Program Manager for Native Initiatives at the University of Arizona's Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities. In this setting, he and his staff took pride in providing assistance to persons overcoming difficult barriers to employment.

Joshua attained an M.B.A. with an emphasis on Native American Leadership from Southeastern Oklahoma State University and is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute (OUEDI). Additionally, Joshua is an Army combat veteran, who was assigned as a platoon leader and executive officer during his stint in Baghdad, Iraq.

Joshua is a Cherokee Nation citizen with tribal government work experience managing several economic and workforce development programs. These include the Comprehensive and Accessible Reemployment through Equitable Employment Recovery (CAREER), Employment Recovery (ER), Trade and Economic Transition (TET), and Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) grants. He was responsible for oversight of portions of tribal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Public Law 102-477 funds.