

National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research: Opportunities and Resources

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- Mission & History
- Areas of Funding & Focus
- Distinct Funding Mechanisms
- FY20 Priorities and Opportunities
- Peer Review
- Resources

- To **generate new knowledge** and **promote its effective use** to improve the abilities of individuals with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community; and
- To **expand society's capacity** to provide full opportunities and accommodations for its citizens with disabilities.

- Founded in 1978
- Authorized under Title II of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - NIDILRR is required to focus the research it sponsors on the experiences and needs of individuals with the most significant disabilities, as defined in the Act. NIDILRR focuses on individuals across the age continuum, including all disability subpopulations: developmental, cognitive, sensory, psychiatric, and physical.

- Domains of Funding
 - Community Living & Participation
 - Health & Function
 - Employment
- Broad categories with at times fluid boundaries
- Outlined in 5-year Long-Range Plan

- Investments to support outcomes across domains
 - Technology for access and function
 - Disability statistics
 - National network to support the ADA
- Investments to support the quality and use of NIDILRR research
 - Knowledge translation
 - Capacity building

- Within the Administration for Community Living (ACL) at HHS
 - ACL: \$2.2B in funding annually
 - Majority of funds go to programs under the Older Americans Act
 - Most dollars are formula grants (i.e. non-discretionary)
 - NIDILRR is the largest sources of discretionary dollars at ACL

- NIDILRR funding: \$111.8M in FY2020
- 30-32 FTEs
- Director position is now vacant
- Acting Director Kristi Hill
- Director Phil Beatty, Office of Research Sciences

- Strong sense of history and continuity
 - Builds on previous investments
 - Commitment to longitudinal programs
- Increased focus on knowledge translation
 - Increased funds devoted to KT
 - Mini-grants to previous grantees
- New investments occur, but thoughtfully
 - No radical shifts in priorities or funds

- Agency directed: Specific published priority in a given area
 - Example: Chronic disease management for people with traumatic brain injury
- Field initiated: A generic priority in a given domain area
 - Example: Disability and Rehabilitation Research Program: Health & Function

- Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers
 - Conduct advanced engineering research and development of innovative technologies designed to solve particular rehabilitation problems or remove environmental barriers. RERCs also demonstrate and evaluate such technologies, facilitate service delivery systems changes, stimulate the production and distribution of equipment in the private sector, and provide training opportunities to enable individuals (including individuals with disabilities) to become researchers and practitioners of rehabilitation technology. Awards are normally made for a five-year period.

- Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers
 - Conduct coordinated, integrated, and advanced programs of research, training, and information dissemination in topical areas that are specified by NIDILRR. They also provide training (including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training) to assist personnel to more effectively provide services to individuals with disabilities. RRTC's serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for providers and for individuals with disabilities and their representatives. Awards are normally made for a five-year period.

- Disability and Rehabilitation Research Program
 - The purpose of the DRRP program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities into society, employment, independent living, family support, and to promote economic and social self-sufficiency and improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act.

- ADA National Network
 - The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) National Network provides information, guidance, and training on how to implement the ADA in order to support its mission to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

- Model Systems Program
 - NIDILRR’s Model Systems programs in spinal cord injury (SCIMS), traumatic brain injury (TBIMS), and burn injury (BMS) provide coordinated systems of rehabilitation care and conduct research on recovery and long-term outcomes. In addition, these centers serve as platforms for collaborative, multi-site research, including research on interventions using randomized controlled approaches. The programs also track Model Systems patients over time in large databases.

- **Switzer Fellowships**
 - The purpose of the Switzer Research Fellow Program is to build research capacity by providing support to highly qualified individuals, including those with disabilities, to perform research on rehabilitation, independent living, and other experiences and outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

- Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program
 - The Advanced Rehabilitation Research and Training (ARRT) Program increases capacity for high-quality research by supporting grants to institutions to provide advanced research training to individuals with doctorates or similar advanced degrees who have clinical or other relevant experience. Grants are made to institutions to recruit qualified persons, including individuals with disabilities, and to prepare them to conduct independent research related to disability and rehabilitation, with particular attention to research areas that support the implementation and objectives of the Rehabilitation Act and that improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Act.

- Small Business Innovation Program
 - Helps support the development of new ideas and projects that are useful to persons with disabilities by inviting the participation of small business firms with strong research capabilities in science, engineering, or educational technology. During Phase I, NIDILRR funds firms to conduct feasibility studies to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of an idea. During Phase II, NIDILRR-funded firms expand on the results of Phase I to pursue further development.

- Field Initiated Projects
 - Field-Initiated Projects (FIPs) are a program of investigator-initiated research intended to supplement NIDILRRs agency-directed research portfolio. These projects cross all of NIDILRR’s domains, and generate new knowledge through research or development on a smaller scale relative to DRRPs and Center grants. Typical FIP awards are three years in duration.

- Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (\$925K/5 years)
 - Mobility and Manipulation (1); Rehab Strategies, Techniques, Interventions (1); Physical Access and Transportation
- Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
 - Employment of People who are Blind or Low Vision (1; \$875K/5 years)
 - Employment Policy (1; \$875K/5 years)
 - Health and Function of People with Psychiatric Disabilities (1; \$875K/5 years)
 - HCBS Outcomes Research and Measurement (1; \$875K/5 years)

- Disability and Rehabilitation Research Program
 - Community Living and Participation (Research/Development 2 + 2; \$500K/5 years)
 - Health & Function (Research/Development 2 + 2)
 - Knowledge Translation for funded projects (3; \$200K/5 years)
 - KT for Employment Research (1; \$500K/5 years)
 - Chronic Disease Management for TBI (1; \$500K/5 years)
 - Technology for Expressive Communication (1; \$500K/5 years)
- Switzer Fellowships (\$70-80K/6)

- Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program (\$200K/5 years)
 - Community Living and Participation (1)
 - Employment (1)
 - Health and Function (1)
 - Policy Research Fellowship (1)
- Small Business Innovation Program (10; \$100K)
- Field Initiated Projects
 - Open: Research/Development (15; \$200K/3 years)
 - Minority serving institutions (Research/Development 1 + 1; \$200K/3 years)

- Where can I find them?
 - www.grants.gov
 - CFDA: 93.433
- www.naric.com
 - Sign up for email alerts
 - Home page, left side, click ‘NIDILRR Announcements’

- Peer Review
 - Rigorous and Imperfect
 - Governed by HHS regulation
 - Independent: The scientific peer review process shall be conducted by individuals who are not Department of Health and Human Services employees. (§1330.22)
 - Myth: Incumbents always win
 - Reality: Highest scores win
 - Best way to understand the NIDILRR review process: Volunteer as a peer reviewer

- <https://acl.gov/about-acl/about-national-institute-disability-independent-living-and-rehabilitation-research>
 - Detail on different programs/funding mechanisms
- <https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=49f9d27cf507e53c307304a52551a1aa&mc=true&node=pt45.4.1330&rgn=div5>
 - Federal Regulations governing NIDILRR

- <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/29/762>
 - NIDILRR’s authorizing statute
- <https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/about-acl/2019-01/NIDILRR%20LRP-2018-2023-Final.pdf>
 - NIDILRR’s 2018-2023 Long-Range Plan
- <https://www.naric.com/>
 - NIDILRR’s online database of funded projects and deliverables

Questions?