2019 Program Directory for the
National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR)

The mission of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research is to generate new knowledge and promote its effective use to maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities of all ages.

The NIDILRR Program Directory is produced by the National Rehabilitation Information Center
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NIDILRR Mission

The mission of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) is to generate new knowledge and promote its effective use to maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities of all ages.

With the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in July 2014, the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) was renamed to the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) and moved from the Department of Education to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) at the Department of Health and Human Services.

This edition of the NIDILRR Program Directory lists all projects funded by NIDILRR during the 2019 fiscal year.

NIDILRR’s Research Programs/Funding Mechanisms

NIDILRR is committed to maintaining its focus on research and development; knowledge translation; and capacity building as strategic areas to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. Under the 2018-2023 Long Range Plan, NIDILRR supports a wide range of research, development, and other related activities aimed at improving outcomes in three major domains of health and function, employment, and community living and participation. NIDILRR also supports research, development, and other related activities in three areas that support outcomes across these domains: technology for access and function; disability statistics; and a nationwide network of technical assistance, training, and research centers to support implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). NIDILRR’s Long-Range Plan for 2018-2023 was published by ACL in January 2019. To download a copy, go to https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/about-acl/2019-01/NIDILRR%20LRP-2018-2023-Final.pdf.

The majority of NIDILRR grantees are universities or organizations of rehabilitation or related services. NIDILRR makes awards through several program mechanisms including ADA National Network Projects, Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects, Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects, Mary E. Switzer Research Fellowships, Model Systems, NIDILRR Contracts, Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers, Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers, and Small Business Innovation Research. Program descriptions are provided below.

ADA National Network Projects

NIDILRR funds the ADA National Network to provide information, training, and technical assistance related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to any persons or entities that have rights and responsibilities under the ADA, as well as conducting ADA-related research. The ADA National Network comprises ten ADA regional centers, an ADA collaborative research center, and an ADA Knowledge Translation (ADA KT) Center, funded under this program.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects

The Advanced Rehabilitation Research and Training (ARRT) Program increases capacity for high-quality rehabilitation 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.

This research training may integrate disciplines, teach research methodology, and promote the capacity for disability studies and rehabilitation science. Training projects must operate in interdisciplinary environments and provide training in rigorous scientific methods.

Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects

The Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP) program funds projects that include a range of activities that include research, development, demonstration, training, knowledge translation, technical assistance, and related activities. These projects may develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology to maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act.

Mary E. Switzer Research Fellowships

The Research Fellowships Program builds research capacity by providing support to highly qualified individuals, including those who are individuals with disabilities, to conduct original research in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. Only individuals are eligible to be recipients of Fellowships. Any individual who has training and experience that indicate a potential for engaging in scientific research related to rehabilitation and independent living for individuals with disabilities is eligible for assistance under this program. The program provides two categories of research fellowships: Merit Fellowships and Distinguished Fellowships. Merit Fellowships are awarded to individuals who are in the earlier stages of their career in research and have either advanced professional training or experience in independent study in an area which is directly pertinent to disability and rehabilitation. Distinguished Fellowships are awarded to individuals who have seven or more years of research experience in subject areas, methods, or techniques relevant to research on rehabilitation, independent living, and other experiences and outcomes of individuals with disabilities, and must have a doctorate, other terminal degree, or comparable academic qualifications. Institutions are not eligible to be recipients of Switzer research fellowships.

Model Systems

NIDILRR administers Model Systems programs for persons with burn injuries (BI), spinal cord injuries (SCI), and traumatic brain injuries (TBI). The Model Systems establish innovative projects for the delivery, demonstration, and evaluation of comprehensive rehabilitation services in those three injury areas. These projects collect and contribute longitudinal data on the individuals’ demographics, diagnoses, causes of injury, interventions, outcomes, and costs, to the Model Systems National Databases housed
at the NIDILRR-funded Burn, SCI, and TBI National Data and Statistical Centers. The Model Systems projects also conduct research, both independently and collaboratively with other Model System centers as well as coordinate research efforts with other related grant recipients. Beginning in 2006, NIDILRR funded a Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) to support knowledge translation activities of all three Model Systems.

**NIDILRR Contracts**

Through its contracts, NIDILRR seeks improved methods, systems, products, and practices to enhance its work. The contracts are for specific activities related to management, evaluation, and information dissemination.

**Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers**

The purpose of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) program is to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act by conducting 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.

RERCs conduct research and development that lead to the transfer of technology into commercialized or non-commercialized products that can be readily accessed and used to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities. Since 2008, NIDILRR has funded a center focusing on knowledge translation for technology transfer to assist RERC grantees in their technology transfer efforts.

**Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers**

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) programs conduct coordinated, integrated, and advanced programs of research, training, and information dissemination in topical areas that are specified by NIDILRR. RRRCs conduct research to improve rehabilitation methodology and service delivery systems; improve health and functioning; and promote employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. They also provide training, including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training, to assist rehabilitation personnel to more effectively provide rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities. RRRCs serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research for providers and for individuals with disabilities and their representatives.

**Section 21 Program**

The Section 21 program focuses on research capacity building for minority entities, such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and institutions, serving primarily Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian or Alaska Native students, as well as non-minority entities with an interest in improving understanding about the needs and outcomes of individuals with disabilities from minority populations. Program activities include assisting minority entities with networking that supports enhanced collaboration between minority entities and non-minority entities, and the exchange of expertise and advanced
training across program areas. NIDILRR’s Section 21 program includes grants from across NIDILRR’s other grant funding mechanisms, i.e., Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers, Advanced Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers, Field-Initiated Projects.

Small Business Innovation Research

The purpose of NIDILRR’s Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) program is to help support the development of new ideas and projects that are useful to persons with disabilities by inviting the participation of small businesses with strong research capabilities in science, engineering, or educational technology. Small businesses must meet certain criteria to participate: The company must be American-owned and independently operated, for-profit, employ no more than 500 employees, and the principal researcher must be employed by the business. NIDILRR supports Phase I and Phase II projects. 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 and to begin to explore the potential for commercialization.

Grant Numbers

Active grants originally awarded before October 2014 will include grant numbers as assigned by both the Department of Education and the Administration for Community Living. Grants awarded after October 2014 will only have the ACL-assigned grant number.

NARIC and the NIDILRR Program Directory

The Program Directory is compiled by the National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC). NARIC functions as a specialized library, providing the public with disability- and rehabilitation-related information and services to help locate those materials and resources. Since 1977, NARIC has been the primary source of rehabilitation and disability information about, and information generated by, NIDILRR-funded projects.

NARIC also produces REHABDATA, an index of disability and rehabilitation literature produced by NIDILRR grantees as well as commercial publishers. Grantees submit copies of NIDILRR-supported research products to NARIC and they are added to the reference collection and REHABDATA database. Information about holdings is available online at http://www.naric.com.

Neither NARIC nor NIDILRR assumes liability for the Directory’s contents or the use thereof. NARIC does not evaluate or certify the programs or products of the organizations listed in the Directory.

This Directory is not intended for use as a fiscal document to show how NIDILRR funds are allocated; its purpose is to display the range of programs that NIDILRR supports. This listing is current as of December 29, 2019. The directory includes some projects that will be officially complete by the directory’s publication date.

NARIC operates under Administration for Community Living contract GS-06F-0726Z.
Employment and earnings are essential to independence, self-determination, and contribution to society. NIDILRR’s employment research focuses on the lifelong challenges to, and opportunities presented by transitions into employment, experienced by people with disabilities. Employment research addresses methods to integrate the unique needs of employers and disability populations to improve employment outcomes across the life span. NIDILRR supports centers and projects that address unemployment, underemployment, and unnecessary dependence on public benefits. The research and development activities in this domain examine employment policies and practices, vocational rehabilitation services, and technologies and accommodations that contribute to improved employment and career outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Employment for People with Physical Disabilities

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www.sralab.org/research/labs/rrtc-employment-and-disability

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/238-4572

Project Number: 90RTEM0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to promote job retention by persons with physical disabilities. Toward this goal, this center conducts a randomized control trial comparing an evidence-based, telehealth pain self-management intervention, adapted to address risk and protective factors for employment disability, to a waitlist control in adults who are employed; assesses employer-, client-, job-, and environment-related barriers and facilitators of job retention after vocational rehabilitation; evaluates an implementation science approach to employment interventions in people with Parkinson’s disease; and evaluates job accommodation strategies and assistive technology resources for rural and low resource environments. Outcomes include producing empirical evidence to support a telehealth pain self-management program; developing a deeper appreciation of barriers to and facilitators of job retention, and strategies to surmount them; identifying strategies to and interventions that support employment for people with progressive neurological disorders; developing accommodation strategies and assistive technology resources that are suitable for rural and low resource environments; and promoting knowledge translation that enhances employment outcomes for persons with physical disabilities and the professionals who work with them. Project partners include Northwestern University, the University of Washington, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and two regional ADA Centers.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Massachusetts

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Advancing Employment for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Principal Investigator: John Butterworth, PhD; Allison Hall, PhD
Public Contact: 617/287-4357 (Butterworth); 480/264-7215 (Hall); Fax: 617/287-4352

Project Number: 90RT5028 (Formerly H133B140026)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $874,999; FY 18 $874,999; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 6/30/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this RRTC is to address the elements needed to bring integrated employment to scale for all adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Research suggests that bringing individual and local successes in employment to scale requires an integrated approach that engages all stakeholders in addressing: individual and family expectations and knowledge; employment consultants’ ability to provide high quality individual employment services and supports; community rehabilitation providers’ effectiveness to rebalance resources and transform their organizations to a focus on integrated employment; and states’ effectiveness at implementing policies and practices that establish employment as the first priority across all service systems including vocational rehabilitation, education, and I/DD. The Center: (1) develops and tests a comprehensive information, outreach, and support framework for individuals and families; (2) assesses a cost-effective strategy for improving the implementation of employment support practices by integrating online training, data-based performance feedback, and facilitated peer supports; (3) develops and tests an evidence-based intervention to support organizational transformation and rebalancing across networks of community rehabilitation providers; and (4) analyzes state employment systems policies and practices and their relationship to individual outcomes at a multi-agency level and defines policies and practices of high-performing state employment systems. This project includes a cross-stakeholder network of advisors and seven organizational dissemination partners to extend the effectiveness and utilization of project findings and resources. Project partners include The Arc of the United States, the University of Minnesota, the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, SABE, and APSE. Participation of a cross-stakeholder network of advisors and eight organizational dissemination partners extend the effectiveness and use of project findings and resources.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Massachusetts

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Principal Investigator: Marianne Farkas, ScD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549; Fax: 617/353-7700

Project Number: 90RT5029 (Formerly H133B140028)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,596; FY 15 $574,991; FY 16 $574,956; FY 17 $574,959; FY 18 $574,965; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)
Other Funding: FY 14 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 15 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $375,400 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve employment outcomes through the development and testing of Thinking Skills for Work, a tablet application to extend a work-focused cognitive remediation intervention; research to predict employment outcomes with client and program characteristics, work environment, and community characteristics; a randomized clinical trial to evaluate the efficacy of the peer-run Vocational Empowerment Photovoice (VEP) program; development and testing of Opening Doors, a career education and career development project; and a study of the impact of federal and state government policies and practices on employment outcomes for people with psychiatric disabilities. To achieve this goal, this project develops a National Resource Center (NRC) on Employment and Vocational Recovery to provide technical assistance, conduct training, and develop and disseminate resources. Technical assistance is provided to organizations delivering employment and vocational recovery services and to support state-level SAMHSA grantees in providing high-fidelity, evidence-based supported employment. Training includes two programs: Advanced Practitioner and Peer Specialist Skills (APPS): Building Partnerships for Employment and Vocational Recovery Through Distance Learning and Moving Along to Employment: Exposure Training to Inspire Networks of Support. Development and dissemination projects include the National Resource Center on Employment and Vocational Recovery Online and “Let’s Talk Employment”, a family toolkit for educating families about employment and vocational recovery. This project is a collaboration between the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Westat, and other organizations from around the nation.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Improving Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Principal Investigator: Marianne Farkas, ScD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
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Project Number: 90RTEm0004
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kirstin Painter, PhD, LCSW
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $874,415; FY 20 $874,887; FY 21 $874,846; FY 22 $874,554; FY 23 $874,575

Abstract: This project conducts a coordinated program of research and knowledge translation projects and activities that builds on existing evidence-based supported employment and improves employment outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Project objectives include: (1) conducting a qualitative study of the barriers and facilitators to accessing individual placement supports (IPS), (2) creating a typology of provider-generated adaptations to IPS, (3) examining performance-based incentives and their effects on clients and IPS specialists, (4) testing an intervention of self-management strategies for workplace success, (5) developing and testing an innovative metacognitive intervention to improve work outcomes, and (6) testing an integrated career guidance and supported education intervention to improve employment outcomes and income. To achieve these objectives, the National Resource Center (NRC) on Employment and Vocational Recovery provides technical assistance, conducts training, and develops and disseminates resources to increase utilization of research findings. NRC also (1) provides academic and in-service training to help providers and stakeholders improve employment services, (2) tests an innovative approach to benefits counseling, (3) conducts online technical assistance to improve employment services, (4) conducts online dissemination activities, and (5) develops and tests a mobile application to change providers’ low expectations about work, particularly in treatment settings. This project increases awareness and adoption of promising enhancements to IPS, increases knowledge and skill about benefits counseling, increases access to facts and resources about employment, and increases positive attitudes about work. Dissemination and products include training and technical assistance programs, research syntheses, briefs, manualized interventions and curricula, mobile phone applications, and publications and presentations. This project is in partnership with the Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation at Boston University and its network of collaborators around the nation.
The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

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Project Number: 90RT5031 (Formerly H133B140040)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,596; FY 15 $499,593; FY 16 $499,595; FY 17 $499,593; FY 18 $499,593; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)
Other Funding: FY 14 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 15 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $375,400 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: This project focuses on school-to-work transitions with an integrated research program examining this developmental stage for transition-age youth and young adults (Y&YAs) with serious mental health conditions (SMHCs). The Center develops and translates knowledge from state-of-the-art rigorous research on education and work in 14-30-year-olds with SMHCs. Research is conducted in real-world settings in partnership with Y&YAs with lived experience and informed by family input to address three critical areas: (1) identifying the range of paths in the transition to employment and the factors that contribute to the variability in educational and working success of Y&YAs with SMHCs; (2) continuing to develop and test interventions with preliminary evidence of efficacy; and (3) continuing to examine the ways in which state vocational rehabilitation, child mental health, and adult mental health agencies can improve employment success within subpopulations of those vulnerable to poor transitions to employment (i.e., young parents and individuals with justice-system involvement). This fundamental research increases capacity-building for service providers, and the movement of findings into practice and policy. The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood Rehabilitation Research and Training Center provides national leadership in this area and shares developing knowledge with key stakeholders including youth and young adults, their families, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Massachusetts

The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

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Principal Investigator: Maryann Davis, PhD
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Project Number: 90RTEM0005
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kirstin Painter, PhD, LCSW
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $874,991; FY 20 $874,998; FY 21 $874,997; FY 22 $874,995; FY 23 $874,994

Abstract: The Learning and Working During the Transition to Adulthood RRTC (L&W RRTC) develops and shares new knowledge about core concepts, interventions, and policies to greatly improve the transition to employment for youth and young adults (Y&YAs) ages 14 to 30 with serious mental health conditions (SMHC). The Center uses research and knowledge translation to help ensure that polices, programs, and supports for transition-age Y&YAs with SMHC help them build the strong cornerstones that support successful long-term adult work lives. This RRTC conducts a coordinated and comprehensive set of activities that: (1) further the evidence base for interventions that build these capacities, (2) explore factors that contribute to successful transitions to employment in vulnerable subgroups of Y&YAs with SMHC, (3) provide national statistics on how Y&YAs with SMHC and their vulnerable subgroups are faring in education and employment, and (4) explore barriers and facilitators to access that Y&YAs with SMHC have to Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act-mandated services for students with disabilities and Perkins Act-mandated Career and Technical Education. Through state of the science knowledge translation processes, the L&W RRTC speeds capacity-building for service providers, the movement of findings into practice and policy, and prepares the future research workforce in this area. The L&W RRTC’s activities are deeply embedded in the participatory involvement of Y&YAs with SMHC, their families, service providers and policy experts.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Mississippi

Employment for Individuals with Blindness or Other Visual Impairments

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twitter.com/MSU_NRTC

Principal Investigator: Michele C. McDonnall, PhD; Karla Antonelli; Jennifer Cmar; Adele Crudden, PhD; BJ LeJeune
Public Contact: 662/325-2001

Project Number: 90RT5040
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $874,947; FY 16 $874,807; FY 17 $874,881; FY 18 $875,853; FY 19 $874,801

Abstract: This project conducts research that generates new knowledge about the efficacy of rehabilitation services and technology used to support employment outcomes for individuals who are blind or visually impaired (B/VI), utilizing multiple stages of research. Research and related training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities contribute to improving competitive employment outcomes for individuals who are B/VI, including subpopulations such as youth, persons who are deaf-blind (DB), and persons with combined traumatic brain injury (TBI) and B/VI. Project 1 is an intervention development project to create an app for parents of youth who are B/VI or DB and youth who are B/VI to help them focus on the steps they need to take, starting early in the youth’s life, to obtain employment upon completion of their education, including a checklist of age-appropriate activities that should be accomplished to aid in the transition process. Project 2 is an intervention efficacy project that involves adding a guided job search component to an existing summer work experience program conducted by a vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency with youth in their local community. This modification is supported by research that indicates finding a job independently is associated with better employment outcomes later, whereas sponsored work activities are not beneficial. Project 3 evaluates the effectiveness of different approaches to a first meeting between a VR representative and an employer. This intervention efficacy project evaluates the ability of four different approaches to change attitudes and intent to hire. Project 4 implements and evaluates the effectiveness of an evidence-based approach to VR counselor training on working with businesses. Project 5 is an exploratory study, surveying with individuals with B/VI to
identify factors that helped them retain their jobs and a survey with VR agencies to explore policies for job retention cases. Analyses with RSA-911 and survey data explore job retention cases nationally and evaluates the impact of agency policies on consumer employment outcomes. Case studies provide more in-depth information. Project 6 is an exploratory study utilizing two large secondary databases to increase our knowledge about subpopulations (youth and adults who are DB, persons with combined TBI and B/VI) and the impacts on employment outcomes of changes associated with WIOA legislation.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
New Hampshire

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment Policy and Measurement

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researchondisability.org/epm-rrtc

Principal Investigator: Debra L. Brucker, PhD 603/862-4320
Public Contact: Matthew Gianino 603/862-2300; Fax: 603/862-0555

Project Number: 90RT5037
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employment Policy and Measurement (EPM-RRTC) supports the disability and policy communities as they take on important policy issues, generating and translating new knowledge about disability employment policy and ways to measure the labor market experiences of people with disabilities. The Center conducts 11 research projects and 12 knowledge translation projects that involve a range of dissemination, training, and technical assistance activities. These research projects support the disability and policy communities in three priority areas by generating new knowledge about the interactions of public programs, assessing the potential impact of SSDI policy reform options, and developing and disseminating innovative, valid, and reliable methods of measuring employment outcomes. Dissemination projects promote access to timely and relevant information through monthly reports that track employment trends in a timely manner, a compendium of state-level policy variables, policy briefs, compiling journal volume research findings around a unified theme, publications in peer-reviewed journals, and the Center website. Training projects improve the utilization of evidence-based information by increasing the capacity of end users to effectively utilize disability employment policy research and data through monthly webcasts designed to facilitate knowledge translation to practitioners, policy makers, and people with disabilities; a State-of-the-Science conference; presentations at scientific conferences; and a junior researcher training program. Lastly, technical assistance projects further build and cement the utilization of evidence-based information by providing technical assistance to policy and program stakeholders and information/referral services.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Virginia

Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC) on Employer Practices Leading to Successful Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities

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Principal Investigator: Paul Wehman, PhD
Public Contact: 804/828-1852

Project Number: 90RT5041
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $874,220; FY 17 $873,973; FY 18 $874,877; FY 19 $874,397; FY 20 $874,408

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Employer Practices Leading to Successful Employment Outcomes for Individuals with Disabilities provides needed information in employer practices that are associated with better employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. The cornerstone of this research is a series of studies embedded in businesses to examine the business practices that facilitate the hiring and advancement of individuals with disabilities. These studies examine the complex interactions between a wide range of variables that directly impact the employment outcomes of people with disabilities. The researchers actively involve business professionals, including human resource professionals, hiring managers, and coworkers, in the design and implementation of the research, and resulting knowledge translation activities. Studies examine, in real time, the decision-making processes that frontline supervisors go through when deciding to hire, retain, or promote individuals with disabilities, to understand the factors that influence these important decisions. Employers share their diversity policies, employer practices, accommodation process, and factors that influence businesses to employ and retain workers with disabilities, as well as the characteristics of the businesses that employ individuals with significant disabilities. The VCU-RRTC works collaboratively with stakeholders in the design and implementation of the research by establishing a Business Advisory Board. Some of the key activities for the VCU-RRTC include establishing a National Resource Center that is related to the employment of people with disabilities and providing informational and technical assistance to stakeholder groups. This research is conducted in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Bon Secours Virginia Health System.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)  
Virginia

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Employment of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Project Number: 90RTEM0003  
Start Date: September 30, 2019  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000; FY 23 $875,000

Abstract: Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (VCU-RRTC) on Employment of People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) provides needed information in employer practices that are associated with better employment outcomes for individuals with I/DD. The cornerstone of this research is a series of studies to examine the critical variables that can improve competitive integrated employment (CIE) outcomes for individuals with I/DD. These studies empirically examine the complex interactions between a wide range of variables directly impacting the employment outcomes of people with I/DD including: (1) understanding how a major corporation implements a demand side approach to hiring workers with I/DD, (2) identifying ways young adults from minorities with I/DD acquire technology skills to enable them to access careers in information technology (IT) fields, (3) understanding how college students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can use cognitive technology to impact their academic and employment outcomes, (4) assessing how parent intervention impacts parent expectations and their children’s CIE outcomes, and (5) understanding how training employment specialists using a competency based curriculum can improve CIE outcomes. VCU-RRTC establishes an advisory committee comprised exclusively of people with I/DD that assist in all stages of research and knowledge translation activities. These activities include establishing a National Resource Center for individuals with I/DD and their families and conducting a variety of customized dissemination and knowledge transfer activities. The new knowledge generated from this RRTC’s research improves the CIE outcomes for individuals with I/DD and enhances rehabilitation professionals and other stakeholders’ capacity to provide employment opportunities and supports. This project is in partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Vanderbilt University, and Kent State University.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Virginia

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

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Project Number: 90RTEM0002
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000; FY 23 $875,000

Abstract: The RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities generates evidence-based interventions to assist youth to enter competitive integrated employment; and addresses the need for evidence-based research for youth with disabilities, family members, school personnel, vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors, and other stakeholders on information and interventions that can impact the employment outcomes of transition-age youth. Working with a consortium of researchers, this project conducts the following six research studies: R1 is a systematic review of the literature to assess and organize the relevant research. R2 is a pilot intervention developed from a randomized controlled trial (RCT) on effective knowledge translation (KT) methods for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) counselors working with students with significant disabilities ages 14-16. R3 is an RCT on the effects of paid internships for at-risk youth with disabilities prior to graduation. R4 is an RCT on the effects of technology for college students with traumatic brain injuries. R5 is intervention development RCT on the effects of paid work in high school of youth with severe disabilities. R6 is an intervention to test the effects of an online course and subsequent technical assistance for postsecondary staff providing employment supports for college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Project research findings are disseminated through products and technical assistance to all stakeholders in the transition field. This project is a consortium of Virginia Commonwealth University, Vanderbilt University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Kent State University.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Colorado

Securing Employment and Economic Keys to Stability (SEEKS)

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Project Number: 90DPCP0005
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 48 months

NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $410,844; FY 20 $496,660

Abstract: This project aims to improve education and employment outcomes, increase gross monthly income, and expand community participation for Coloradans with disabilities. Securing Employment and Economic Keys to Stability (SEEKS) delivers services to individuals applying for SSA disability benefits while concurrently receiving services from an employment specialist to obtain employment and a comprehensive benefits planner through the Center for Independent Living (CIL) system in partnership with the department of vocational rehabilitation. Project objectives are to: (1) Connect persons with disabilities applying for SSI/SSDI with competitive employment; (2) train CIL staff to utilize SOAR strategies; (3) train CIL staff in Customized Employment; (4) provide comprehensive benefits counseling to persons with disabilities applying for SSI/SSDI; (5) provide Community Partner Work Incentive Counselor training to CIL staff so they can provide comprehensive benefit counseling to persons with disabilities applying for SSI/SSDI; and, (6) increase connections for persons with disabilities who are seeking independent living services.
Workplace Accommodation Expert Support System (Work ACCESS)

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Project Number: 90DPEM0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $474,999; FY 19 $474,997; FY 20 $474,998; FY 21 $474,997; FY 22 $474,996

Abstract: This project develops Work ACCESS, an online tool and mobile application to help employers assess the workplace accommodation needs of their employees with disabilities to improve the provision of accommodations that increase workplace performance and participation, while providing a user-friendly tool that employers and employees can use together to make informed, evidence-based decisions. Project objectives are to: (1) develop, with the help of crowd sourcing, an expert system that uses decision trees and information about personal, task, and environmental factors to determine potential solutions; (2) incorporate workplace accommodation best practices from published and new research, and from feedback from system users on accommodation effectiveness; (3) provide resource links to facilitate accommodation implementation; (4) optimize the website/app’s content and usability; (5) evaluate how employers and employees utilize the system in the field; and (6) disseminate Work ACCESS through employment and disability employment networks. Project outcomes include employers and employees using the tool to explore accommodations that better fit their employees’ needs, which are also more cost-effective and likely to be used.
Promoting Entrepreneurship Among Low-Income Youth with Disabilities

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Project Number: 90DPEM0002
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $474,993; FY 20 $474,999; FY 21 $474,994; FY 22 $474,999; FY 23 $474,994

Abstract: The RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities generates evidence-based interventions to assist youth to enter competitive integrated employment; and addresses the need for evidence-based research for youth with disabilities, family members, school personnel, vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors, and other stakeholders on information and interventions that can impact the employment outcomes of transition-age youth. Working with a consortium of researchers, this project conducts the following six research studies: R1 is a systematic review of the literature to assess and organize the relevant research. R2 is a pilot intervention developed from a randomized controlled trial (RCT) on effective knowledge translation (KT) methods for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) counselors working with students with significant disabilities ages 14-16. R3 is an RCT on the effects of paid internships for at-risk youth with disabilities prior to graduation. R4 is an RCT on the effects of technology for college students with traumatic brain injuries. R5 is intervention development RCT on the effects of paid work in high school of youth with severe disabilities. R6 is an intervention to test the effects of an online course and subsequent technical assistance for postsecondary staff providing employment supports for college students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). Project research findings are disseminated through products and technical assistance to all stakeholders in the transition field. This project is a consortium of Virginia Commonwealth University, Vanderbilt University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Kent State University.
Integrated Scaling Approach: A Model for Large Scale Implementation of Effective Interventions for Employment

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Project Number: 90DP0096
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $499,984; FY 17 $499,412; FY 18 $499,799; FY 19 $499,844; FY 20 $499,765

Abstract: The goal of this project is to more efficiently expand delivery of effective employment interventions, by developing a comprehensive, integrated approach that increases the demand for and the supply of such practices, through interactive technology and personal contact. “Scaling up” evidence-based employment practices (EBP) involves increasing access to effective programs in order to benefit more people over time. Despite having effective employment practices for people with psychiatric disabilities, widespread implementation remains difficult due to factors such as the resource intensive methods traditionally used, negative stakeholder attitudes towards work for people with psychiatric disabilities and lack of knowledge about existing EBPs. This project focuses on two Development Stages (Proof of Concept and Proof of Product) through four objectives: (1) establishing the conceptual elements of an innovative approach for scaling up employment interventions, designed for people with psychiatric disabilities (Integrated Scaling Approach: ISA); (2) testing a working prototype for ISA; (3) evaluating the resulting product; and (4) transferring the technique for others to use in scaling up future effective employment interventions. Outcomes of this project include a better understanding of large-scale implementation of new employment practices; more providers with increased skills in new employment practices across several states and more agencies with the capacity to embed such practices. Project products include: a systematic review of the scaling literature; scaling up of the two practices; a certificate program; two toolkits to promote positive messages about work for people with psychiatric disabilities; an ISA Handbook; and an evaluation of the approach itself and the application of these learnings to other sites, states, providers and stakeholders.
Helping Youth on the Path to Employment (HYPE):
Creating Economic Self-Sufficiency

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Project Number: 90DPGE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kirstin Painter, PhD, LCSW
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $474,980; FY 19 $474,991; FY 20 $474,990; FY 21 $474,998; FY 22 $474,995

Abstract: The goal of this project is to create a career development program, Helping Youth on the Path to Employment (HYPE), to improve the negative education and employment outcomes of young adults with mental health conditions (MHC). The HYPE program aims to minimize disruptions of post-secondary education and promote degree completion to drive competitive employment in meaningful careers and financial self-sufficiency. Project activities include: (1) conducting a fully-powered randomized trial testing HYPE’s efficacy; (2) establishing implementation sites meeting HYPE fidelity standards; (3) providing high quality HYPE-coordinated postsecondary education and employment services; (4) recruiting and retaining college students; (5) and collecting and analyzing data on HYPE recipients and an active control group of college students over two years related to academic progression and performance, and employment in benefitted jobs. Project outcomes include developing HYPE data and products in preparation for wider implementation, and scale-up testing and adoption. Dissemination products include a mobile application on accommodations; peer-reviewed publications, policy white paper, and cost-analysis; informational tip sheets, webinars, presentations; and HYPE webpage.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
New York

The Diversity Partners Intervention: Moving the Disability Employment Needle Through Value Added Relationships Between Talent Acquisition Providers and the Business Community

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Project Number: 90DP0065 (Formerly H133A140011)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,999; FY 15 $499,999; FY 16 $499,999; FY 17 $499,999; FY 18 $499,999; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/31/2020)

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates the Diversity Partners Intervention (DPI) to augment the knowledge, skills, and behaviors of general placement professionals (GPPs) and disability placement professionals (DPPs) with the purpose of improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities. DPI prepares GPP and DPP provider organizations in the development of organizational practices and policies which support meaningful relationships with employers and aids in the development and testing of intervention tools designed to provide on-going support to placement professionals in their daily practice. The DPI enables placement professionals to build relationships with employers by adding value to employers’ efforts to hire and fully include employees with disabilities. Placement professionals improve their knowledge of best practice around all aspects of employing people with disabilities; strengthening their ability to engage employers around hiring and retaining employees with disabilities; and helping employers to build disability-inclusive organizational cultures and practices that support their on-going recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of people with disabilities. The project also creates systems and tools to support national dissemination and broad adoption of these tools in provider organizations within the context of their work and their local communities.
Translate and Adapt VR Assessment Tools into ASL

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Project Number: 90DP0067 (Formerly H133A140053)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $489,988; FY 15 $489,999; FY 16 $489,998; FY 17 $489,995; FY 18 $489,956; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This goal of this project is to improve vocational rehabilitation (VR) services and enhance employment outcomes for individuals who are Deaf. The project: (1) translates and adapts widely used VR instruments into American Sign Language (ASL) and validates these assessment tools for use with VR consumers who are Deaf; (2) develops a vocational assessment instrument in ASL designed specifically for use with Deaf VR consumers; (3) develops online access to these ASL-based VR assessment instruments for Deaf consumers; (4) evaluates the feasibility, usability, and adoption of online assessment resources by VR counselors and consumers who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing; and (5) promotes utilization of DRRP-developed ASL resources to state and territorial VR agencies with a targeted knowledge translation strategy.
A Professional Development and Case Management (PDCM) Model for Seamless Transition Planning: Improving Postschool Outcomes

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Project Number: 90DPEM0003
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $475,000; FY 20 $475,000; FY 21 $475,000; FY 22 $475,000; FY 23 $475,000

Abstract: This project focuses on seamless transition planning for youth with cognitive, intellectual, and developmental disabilities, including youth with traumatic brain injury, autism, and multiple disabilities. Researchers work with 25 vocational rehabilitation special education (VR-SPED) teams across 4 regions in Ohio to provide transition services and coaching to 125 youth. VR-SPED teams receive professional development and coaching, including summer follow-up, in developing individualized education and employment plans (IEP/IPE), as well as joint goal processes and an improvement monitoring tool. Researchers advise and consult with VR-SPED teams to support placement of youth in competitive employment, maintain and evaluate Professional Development and Case Management (PDCM) model processes, and develop materials for dissemination to prepare for wider utilization of the program. Outcomes include joint and evidence-based IEP/IPE planning, seamless transition services between school and post-school, and improved post-school outcomes for participating youth.
Successful Employment and Quality Work Life After Severe Disability Due to Spinal Cord Injury

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Project Number: 90DP0050 (Formerly H133A120122)
Start Date: October 01, 2012
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 12 $499,805; FY 13 $499,412; FY 14 $498,646; FY 15 $499,195; FY 16 $499,790; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The purpose of this project is to perform a state-of-the art study of employment after spinal cord injury (SCI) to identify factors related to successful employment throughout the life cycle. Research and service delivery models of employment after disability typically focus heavily on transition or return to work, rather than a focus on maintaining employment, advancing in career, and maximizing earning potential. This is a two-stage research study beginning with a qualitative component that elicits factors related to successful employment from the perspective of stakeholders with SCI, including those who have had highly successful careers. A large-scale, quantitative study, incorporating the qualitative findings and input from advisory panels is used to develop econometric models of participation in employment and quality employment outcomes throughout the work life cycle. The project includes an integrated program of dissemination, training, and technical assistance to ensure the new knowledge generated may be translated into policy and practice.
VR-ROI Project: Estimating Return on Investment in State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs

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Project Number: 90DP0070 (Formerly H133A140095)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,856; FY 15 $499,902; FY 16 $499,530; FY 17 $499,819; FY 18 $499,771; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project examines the return on investment (ROI) in eight state vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs. ROI information for the state-federal VR program is increasingly seen as a way to demonstrate the effectiveness of VR. Recent years have seen substantial growth in the numbers of ROI studies of state VR programs. However, the analytic methods, time periods covered, and data used in existing VR ROI studies have varied widely. Most recent analyses have serious shortcomings that limit the credibility and utility of their results. This project refines and tests existing ROI models using a more heterogeneous set of state agencies and a more recent cohort of applicants for VR services. The project also tests a “turnkey” approach to ROI analysis that can generate rigorous and credible estimates for any size agency, for individuals with virtually any type of disability, and for different types of VR services. The project includes development of a user-friendly, web-based “ROI Estimator” to allow state agencies to simulate the impact of different VR services on the employment outcomes of VR clients, and to develop ROI estimates for the entire state program. Project activities include VR ROI estimates for specific populations, including youth in transition, individuals with several low-incidence disabilities, and individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds; development and dissemination of training materials for state VR agencies interested in conducting ROI analyses; and training in effective use of both the project’s methodological framework and the agency-specific results produced by the ROI Estimator. This project is a collaboration of the University of Richmond, the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and George Washington University.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Virginia

Effects of Customized Employment on the Employment Outcomes of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities: A Randomized Clinical Trial

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Project Number: 90DP0085
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $499,932; FY 17 $499,945; FY 18 $499,983; FY 19 $499,881; FY 20 $499,902

Abstract: This project researches the use of customized employment (CE) as an intervention to assist individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) and/or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) to achieve integrated employment outcomes. Project activities include: (1) operationalizing the term customized employment as an evidence-based practice for individuals with ID/ASD; (2) evaluating and comparing the employment outcomes of individuals with ID/ASD who receive the CE intervention to those who receive “services as usual; “ and (3) conducting knowledge translation activities (e.g., training, technical assistance, utilization, and dissemination) to facilitate vocational rehabilitation professionals’ and other stakeholders’ implementation of customized employment as an evidence-based practice. Outcomes include: (1) improving the employment outcomes of individuals with ID/ASD in careers of their choice, (2) maximizing their full inclusion and integration into community employment, and (3) enhancing vocational rehabilitation professionals and other stakeholders’ capacity to provide customized employment services to these individuals. Dissemination activities include: (1) providing training activities such as webcasts, an online course on customized employment, participation in national, state, and local conferences, and face-to-face training as requested; (2) disseminating research findings through a project website and other means including use of social media, scholarly articles and articles in popular media, research briefs, fact sheets, and a project replication manual; and (3) providing technical assistance through an online rapid response database and through other traditional means (e.g. telephone, TDD, e-mail, etc.) as requested. This project is a collaboration of the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) in partnership with TransCen, Inc.; the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (VA/ DARS), the state’s general vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency; and Griffin-Hammis, Inc.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
California

Career Outcomes of Certified Peer Specialists with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Project Number: 90IFRE0029
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,988; FY 20 $199,965; FY 21 $199,954

Abstract: This collaborative project conducts a systematic, national study of employment outcomes of individuals with psychiatric disabilities who have obtained a certified peer specialist (CPS) credential. CPSs are mental health workers who have a psychiatric history and use this lived experience plus formal training to support other people with psychiatric histories. The overarching goal of this study is to produce new scientific knowledge about how the CPS certification process contributes to new graduates’ employment outcomes and opportunities for career advancement. Using an observational prospective cohort study design, researchers recruit and follow a sample of 675 working age adults who recently received a CPS in one of six US States. This project explores three research questions: (1) What characterizes employment outcomes after certification as a peer specialist? (2) To what extent are employment outcomes associated with peer specialist graduates’ local labor markets? (3) How does certification impact peer specialist graduates’ psychological and economic outcomes? Study outcomes provide a greater understanding of the correlates of labor force and work-related psychological outcomes, maximize employment opportunities of individuals with psychiatric disabilities with a CPS credential; and provide recommendations for vocational rehabilitation policy and practice. Products and dissemination include published findings for the use of state certification bodies and coalitions of CPSs and their supporters, as well as free and accessible public reports on the Internet for target audiences.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Georgia

Assistive Software Knowledgebase for Computers and Mobile Devices

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Project Number: 90IF0125
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project develops the Assistive Software Knowledgebase, a centralized resource for information about computer software/apps that enable an employee with a disability to use a computer or perform other work tasks. The project goal is to improve the provision of workplace accommodations by providing a tool that employees with disabilities, employers, and rehabilitation professionals can use to make informed choices about selecting, acquiring, and using assistive software. The site includes searchable information about features, usage tips, compatibility, and user experiences with a variety of software, such as screen readers or scheduling apps. Project objectives are to: (1) create a database of product descriptions, leveraging Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access’ (CATEA) Assistivetch.net/ATWiki, Tools for Life’s Our Favorite Apps, and Raising the Floor’s Unified Listing and Marketplace; (2) engage stakeholders through social networking and crowd sourcing to post tips and reviews; (3) optimize the site and mobile app for usability; (4) provide training on mobile apps as work accommodations; and (5) disseminate the tool through Assistive Technology Industry Association (ATIA), state Assistive Technology Act projects, and employer, disability, and rehabilitation provider networks. Stakeholders can explore accommodations that better fit their needs, are more likely to be used, and may be cheaper. Products of this three-year project are the Assistive Software Knowledgebase, a mobile app version, and trainings on workplace apps. CIDI is a consortium of the CATEA and AMAC Accessibility / Tools for Life (Georgia’s Assistive Technology Act Project). Partners include Raising the Floor and ATIA.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)  
Georgia

Field Initiated Project on Contingent Employment of Individuals with Disabilities (FIP-CE)

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Project Number: 90IFRE0004  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 36 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $198,376; FY 18 $198,343; FY 19 $198,281

Abstract: This project produces empirical evidence about the participation, practices, and characteristics of people with disabilities engaged in contingent work, as well as their rationales, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences in contingent work arrangements. Millions of American workers, including people with disabilities, have contingent work arrangements that differ from standard work arrangements characterized by permanent jobs with traditional employer-employee relationships. Contingent workers include agency-placed and direct-hire temporary employees (temps), contract company workers, independent contractors, on-call workers, and day laborers. The recent emergence of online-based or mobile app-based employment opportunities has further contributed to the redefinition of employment and the labor market. Researchers interview individuals with disabilities engaged in various forms of contingent employment, including the so-called “gig economy.” Findings from this qualitative research are used to develop, test, and administer a Survey on Contingent Employment Practices by People with Disabilities. Research instruments and evidence-based findings from the survey may be used by researchers on employment statistics and measures, disability and employment policymakers, and employer groups that rely on contingent employment arrangements.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Illinois

PRIDE (Partners of Refugees in Illinois Disability Employment)

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Project Number: 90IF0110
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,495; FY 17 $196,262; FY 18 $196,623; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)
Abstract: The Partners of Refugees in Illinois Disability Employment (PRIDE) project develops innovative strategies and tools to improve vocational rehabilitation (VR) access and employment outcomes for refugees with disabilities. The PRIDE project has four goals: (1) building organizational capacity among refugee service providers; (2) providing comprehensive training interventions and supports to promote competitive and self-employment; (3) improving connectivity between refugees with disabilities, VR providers, and potential employers by developing and field testing an information technology application; and (4) disseminating PRIDE’s outputs and products in culturally relevant ways. The PRIDE project offers culturally tailor employment training to 50 job-seeking refugees with disabilities. Concurrent with the training sessions, participants receive personalized case management services from staff of partner agencies, peer mentoring, and personal consultation with a business consultant. By facilitating new connections between the state VR systems, refugee-serving agencies, and employers, the PRIDE project assists in building economic self-sufficiency of refugees who have disabilities, while shaping future VR and employment policies and practices pertaining to this underserved group.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Illinois

Career and Occupational Readiness Experience (CORE): Enhancing Supported Employment for TAY with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Project Number: 90IFRE0032
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,973; FY 20 $199,927; FY 21 $199,975

Abstract: This project implements, tests, and refines the Career and Occupation Readiness Experience (CORE), a provider-developed add-on to Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Supported Employment. The goal of CORE is to improve IPS responsiveness and meet the vocational needs of vulnerable and at-risk transition-age youth (TAY) with youth-onset psychiatric disabilities. CORE is a 15-week intervention delivered by IPS Specialists and TAY Peers that includes 3 weeks of multi-modal experiential learning to boost vocational knowledge, skills, and confidence; and 12-weeks of in-vivo learning in career-related paid internships. Project objectives include: (1) examining CORE feasibility and refining CORE practices and protocols through key stakeholder partnerships (e.g., TAY, Vocational Peer Mentors, IPS Specialists, and TAY experts); (2) pilot testing CORE across 3 agencies with 120 TAY with psychiatric disabilities; and (3) widely sharing generated knowledge and tools. Outcomes result in: (1) successful CORE implementation and engagement; (2) increased TAY vocational skills, knowledge, self-efficacy, and competitive employment rates; and (3) CORE being translatable to other providers. Products include a CORE implementation manual, CORE Coordinator and Vocational Peer Mentor training manuals, web-based and in-person trainings, a community of practice, and provider technical assistance.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2019 - Employment
1-30
Helping Young Adults Succeed at Work and School Through
IPS Supported Employment

Principal Investigator: Gary R. Bond, PhD
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Project Number: 90IFRE0034
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for young adults with psychiatric disabilities, a priority population in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. IPS, an evidence-based model, has not yet been adequately studied in this population. In collaboration with the IPS Learning Community (a network comprised of state vocational rehabilitation and mental health leaders, clients, and others from 24 states and 300 IPS programs), this project conducts a mixed-methods, prospective, 1-year cohort study of 150 young adults (ages 16-24) with psychiatric disabilities enrolled in 10 established IPS programs in 5 geographically diverse states. Quantitative component objectives examine: (1) the range of young adult populations served, (2) organizational adaptations of IPS services, (3) employment and education outcomes over a 12-month follow-up period, (4) IPS fidelity using a newly-developed adaptation of a standard scale, (5) the correlation between IPS fidelity and client outcomes, and (6) client factors associated with better outcomes. Qualitative component objectives examine: (1) barriers to employment and education; (2) interagency collaborations; and (3) organizational, financial, and system barriers. Project outcomes include the formation of the IPS Young Adult Network, a mini-learning community embedded within the IPS Learning Community; improved employment and education outcomes for 150 youth adults; and dissemination of knowledge within participating States, nationally at the annual IPS Learning Community conferences, and online at ipsworks.org. Products include resource materials to assist state leaders and IPS practitioners working with young adults, and a well-validated fidelity scale for the young adult population.
Progressive Employment for Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities

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Project Number: 90IFRE0009
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,932; FY 18 $199,880; FY 19 $199,943

Abstract: This field-initiated project is researching the progressive employment (PE) model for individuals with the most significant disabilities and significant disabilities served by state vocational rehabilitation agencies and community rehabilitation providers. The PE model is a dual-customer strategy that uses work-based learning strategies to meet the needs of both the business and the jobseeker with a disability while minimizing the risks for both parties. Fidelity to the model is measured in the key areas of: (1) dual-customer design; (2) team approach; (3) focus on high-risk or difficult to place consumers; (4) emphasis on rapid engagement; (5) mechanism for set asides or training offsets for work experience pay; (6) liability and workers’ compensation insurance for trainees; and (7) data tracking tools for PE. The objective of this project is to determine the impact of PE, when implemented with fidelity, as a strategy for improving competitive employment outcomes for people with barriers to employment. To meet this objective, researchers conduct systematic data collection and secondary analysis of progressive employment implementation data and vocational rehabilitation case file data recorded in four states; create a PE fidelity of implementation scale and measure PE model implementation integrity; compare employment outcomes for groups receiving PE and not receiving PE services in a three-to-four year period; and disseminate research findings to inform future randomized control trials of PE.
ES-Coach: A Smartphone and Web-Based Performance Coaching Application for Employment Specialists and Teams

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Project Number: 90IFDV0009
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,999; FY 20 $199,999; FY 21 $200,000

Abstract: Bridging the gap between evidence-based employment supports and what is implemented by employment specialists is necessary for ensuring job seekers with disabilities receive high quality employment services and achieve jobs that support career growth and self-sufficiency. The goal of this project is to build ES-Coach, a performance coaching application that supports employment specialists to implement established standards of practice leading to improved employment outcomes of job seekers with disabilities. The objectives are to: (1) develop a complete ES-Coach application that supports employment specialists to reflect on their work, set goals, and engage in continuous quality improvement; (2) implement beta testing with 60 employment specialists; and (3) develop a technology transfer plan. Outcomes include employment specialists and their teams incorporate ES-Coach in their management practices, set goals to improve support practices, and engage in continuous learning. The long-term outcome is improved employment outcomes for job seekers with disabilities and reduced time to hire.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Massachusetts

Testing the Effectiveness of Mainstream Coaching Tools to Increase Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction and Decrease Turnover Among Peer Providers

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Project Number: 90IFRE0027
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,970; FY 20 $199,967

Abstract: The employment of peer providers in mental health settings has grown, with many states now training and certifying peer providers for work in mental health programs. Research suggests that peer providers experience workplace challenges, such as stress due to role ambiguity, conflict, and overload as well as burn out. The result can be high turnover and job dissatisfaction yielding in sub-optimal services for thousands of individuals receiving peer support in mental health programs. This project develops and refines Coaching and Achievement for Peer Providers – CAPP, an intervention informed by mainstream best-practice executive and business coaching as well as by the unique challenges experienced by peer providers. Project researchers conduct a randomized trial to test CAPP’s effectiveness using a sample of peer providers recruited through national collaborators, randomly assigning participants to CAPP or to an “enhanced control” group and following them over nine months to assess key outcomes. A qualitative study is also conducted to better understand the mechanisms of action of the model.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Massachusetts

Developing and Validating a Measure of Career Advancement for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities: A Field Initiated Research Grant

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Project Number: 90IFRE0023
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,242; FY 19 $199,856

Abstract: This project develops a standardized measure of career advancement for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Increased attention is being paid to the career development of individuals with psychiatric disabilities, particularly for young adults. However, little is known about the concept of career development for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Assessment of career advancement is a critical first step in understanding the vocational trajectory of individuals with psychiatric disabilities and determining the longer-term impact of employment services. The goals of this project are to: (1) Develop a theoretical framework for a measure of career advancement for use with adults with psychiatric disabilities, especially young adults; (2) conduct rigorous psychometric testing of the instrument and assess its utility in practice; and (3) disseminate the scale widely to key stakeholders, including consumers, researchers, and evaluators in the mental health and rehabilitation fields, using a variety of mechanisms.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Minnesota

Evaluating the Effectiveness of CareProfiler Post-Hire System for Staff Supporting People with Disabilities and Age-Related Needs: A Cluster Randomized Trial

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Project Number: 90IF0109
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $196,778; FY 17 $196,778; FY 18 $199,271; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project is based on a conceptual framework for the delivery of supports for employees with disabilities and their employers. The research for this project is designed to validate the CareProfiler Post-Hire system, which is designed to maximize the effectiveness of supports provided to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and age-related support needs (ARSN). This system builds the capacity of supervisors to serve as more effective leaders, increase job retention, and maximize the impact of organization training on staff skills and competencies by maximizing engagement with clients and one’s job. The Institute on Community Integration (ICI) at the University of Minnesota serves as an evaluator of the effectiveness of the CareProfiler Post-Hire System. The evaluation is designed as a cluster randomized control trial of the three components of the Post-Hire System on supervisor competencies and direct support staff engagement, skills, competencies, and retention on the job supporting people with IDD and ARSN.
Career Self-Management Through Job Crafting for People with Physical and Mild Cognitive Disabilities: A Mixed Methods Study

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Project Number: 90IFRE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,934; FY 18 $199,995; FY 19 $199,997

Abstract: The overarching goal of this project is to develop and test an intervention program to improve job retention and facilitate job growth among people with physical and mild cognitive disabilities by using career self-management strategies. The project is a mixed methods study to develop and test a career self-management intervention based on job crafting. Job crafting is an informal, idiosyncratic, strengths-based approach where employees are constantly redefining and renegotiating their daily job tasks. Job crafting includes modifying the physical (how and where the task is performed), cognitive (meaning attached to the job task), and relational (social interactions) boundaries inherent in the job task. Anticipated outcomes for study participants include: (1) improving occupational self-efficacy and work engagement, and (2) an understanding of how the job crafting approach can be used over the long-term to problem-solve barriers and to seize opportunities for career growth.
Using Virtual Reality to Improve Job Reentry in Adults with TBI: An RCT

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Project Number: 90IFRE0031
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,356; FY 20 $199,945; FY 21 $198,047

Abstract: Individuals who have sustained traumatic brain injury (TBI) have significant difficulty returning to work (RTW). Reduced social competence following brain injury has been shown to be a primary reason for difficulty in RTW. The goal of the current study is to improve the RTW process by implementing a Virtual Reality Job Interview Training (VR-JIT) program to target social competency skills needed for successful job interviewing. VR-JIT has been shown to be highly successful in autism spectrum disorder and schizophrenia in improving job interview skills and employment outcomes. However, the efficacy of VR-JIT has not been evaluated in TBI. Thus, the objectives are: (1) to examine the efficacy of VR-JIT in improving job interview performance, confidence and anxiety; (2) to examine the efficacy of VR-JIT in improving employment outcomes at long-term follow-up; and (3) to examine qualitative feedback regarding VR-JIT by members of the TBI community regarding appropriateness of the intervention for a TBI population. Participants are randomly assigned to VR-JIT or an active control group, and evaluated for interview performance, confidence, and anxiety, as well as rates of job offers at long-term follow-up. Qualitative data is used to understand how best to tailor the intervention to the TBI population and may be used to develop products such as a TBI-specific manual (to help those with cognitive impairment) to supplement VR-JIT.
Connecting Practices to Outcomes:
Lessons from the Federal Sector Workplace

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Project Number: 90IFRE0014
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project uses federal sector secondary data and qualitative focus groups to assess the impact of employer practice adoption on the retention, advancement, separation, and the workplace experience of individuals with disabilities. Further, it promotes the adoption of effective diversity practices with federal and private employers. The goal of the project is to increase capacity among employers to create an equitable and inclusive workplace for people with disabilities. Project objectives supporting goal achievement are to: (1) develop a thorough knowledge base of how diversity practice adoption impacts outcomes, such as disability representation, hiring, and advancement; (2) reveal whether diversity practice adoption moderates differential employee experiences and attitudes of individuals with disabilities and whether employee experiences and attitudes explain relationships between practice adoption and outcomes; (3) enhance understanding of findings and increase relevance to a target audience of employers through focus groups of employer representatives and employees; and (4) broadly share findings with the community. Outcomes for employers and other stakeholders include: (1) increased access to rigorous research on effective employer practices; (2) improved understanding of how to improve workplace practices; and (3) increased adoption and implementation of effective practices.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
North Carolina

**Efficacy of a Community College Transition Program for Young Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder**

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**Project Number:** 90IFRE0019

**Start Date:** September 30, 2018

**Length:** 36 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

**Abstract:** The goal of this project is to assess the feasibility, social validity, and efficacy of the TEACCH School Transition to Employment and Postsecondary Education (T-STEP) intervention for 17- to 21-year-old community college students with ASD. T-STEP is a transition program for young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) created by the University of North Carolina TEACCH Autism Program in partnership with the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and North Carolina Community Colleges. The program targets pivotal college and employment skills that address the specific challenges faced by young adults with ASD. The objectives of this study are: (1) to conduct a pilot study including key stakeholder feedback to refine the T-STEP to ensure social validity and feasibility in a community college setting; (2) to examine the efficacy of the T-STEP with 60 young adults with ASD receiving the intervention and 60 young adults in a waitlist control group; (3) to examine characteristics of adults who most benefit from the program; and (4) to describe employment and college outcomes four months after program completion.
Virtual Office Space (VOS): Improving Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Low Vision

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Project Number: 90IFDV0012
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard

NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,767; FY 20 $199,965; FY 21 $199,932

Abstract: This project evaluates a fully-integrated, high-resolution virtual desktop for individuals with low vision that can be accessed online from home or the workplace. Project goals include: (1) developing and perfecting a fully customizable Virtual Office Space (VOS) for individuals with low vision, as well as producing a virtual visual environment that permits satisfactory perception of information on the computer screen; (2) evaluating the acceptability and effectiveness of VOS technology specifically for individuals with albinism; and (3) dissemination of VOS technology testing results. Project goals are achieved through three objectives: (1) iteratively testing of VOS with individuals with low vision in four cycles using customizable features that allow for a positive visual experience; (2) evaluation by an expert panel to determine the effectiveness and acceptability of VOS with participants reporting improved and/or satisfactory experiences; and (3) dissemination of VOS research online and presented at professional conferences with VOS being available to consumers with low vision throughout the nation.
Collaborate for Change (C2)

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Project Number: 90IFDV0011
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,981; FY 20 $197,936; FY 21 $199,830

Abstract: This project develops and field-tests competencies to advance secondary transition collaboration among special educators and vocational rehabilitation counselors. Collaborate for Change (C2) combines theories of collaboration, secondary transition, and diffusion of innovations to develop these competencies. C2 has professional benefits for preparation to collaborate on activities which may increase the frequency of adoption and utilization for improved personnel and transition outcomes. The primary target populations are special educators and vocational rehabilitation counselors because they are the mandated transition collaborators. However, the targeted beneficiaries are the transition-age population with disabilities and their families, whom are the consumers of these services. The major goal is the development of validated competencies. Objectives include: (1) developing and validating competencies that are theory-based, and operationalized in the context of secondary transition, and (2) pilot field testing the competencies and developing a structural and measurement model. Outcomes are proof of adoption by expert/early adopters at the national, state, and local levels who have contextualized competencies to collaborate for change.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
Oregon

**Person-Centered Planning ToolKit: Development of an Application to Improve Workforce Participation for Individuals with Cognitive Disabilities Through Team Collaboration and Employment Discovery**

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**Project Number:** 90BISB0015
**Start Date:** September 30, 2019
**Length:** 24 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Hugh Berry, EdD
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 19 $279,056; FY 20 $295,925

**Abstract:** This project evaluates the usability and feasibility of a Person-Centered Planning Toolkit to address the need for increased opportunities for competitive integrated employment for individuals with cognitive disabilities. The Toolkit enhances implementation of person-centered planning (PCP), often limited by lack of follow-through on action items, and a lack of tools to match career preferences to specific customized employment opportunities. The goal of the project is to complete development of a prototype application with demonstrated usability and feasibility based on previous Phase I results from both transition students with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities and their PCP or Individual Education Program (IEP) team members. The first application, the Team Assignments, Collaboration, and Task Tracking tool (TACT) enables users to understand action items and due dates, systematically remind participants of commitments, and track completion in ways that clearly identify who is responsible and when items are completed. A second component, the Community Assets Mapping application (CAM) supports the employment discovery process by crowd-sourcing identification of community businesses, associations, mentors, and professionals who can be resources in exploring career discovery. Results are detailed on a mapping interface similar to Google Maps and are interoperable with the TACT. The toolkit is evaluated for usability and feasibility by transition students, PCP facilitators, and adults with disabilities. Effectiveness is evaluated through a randomized control trial with students recruited from throughout the State of Oregon and nationally. Project outcomes include a commercially implemented, cognitively accessible software tool (PCP Toolkit) to improve self-directed execution of employment-focused action items from person-centered plans for persons with disabilities as well as other PCP domains such as community participation, independent and supported living, health, and recreation.
Community Living and Participation

NIDILRR is committed to improving the opportunities and abilities of individuals with disabilities to live as integrated members of their communities and to participate in community activities of their choice. NIDILRR supports centers and projects to increase community living and participation through improvements in policy, services and support delivery, assistive technologies, environmental modifications, and person-centered planning and therapeutic interventions. Activities funded in this area are consistent with the underlying principles of the independent living programs authorized under the Rehabilitation Act and the ADA.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Family Support

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Project Number: 90RT5032 (Formerly H133B140046)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $874,999; FY 15 $874,999; FY 16 $874,995; FY 17 $874,983; FY 18 $874,989; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of the RRTC on Family Support is to bridge aging and disability research, practice, and policies to generate new knowledge in family supports which contributes to improvements in community living, participation, health and function, and other outcomes for individuals with disabilities from different racial and ethnic backgrounds who are supported by family members. The Center conducts six research projects: (1) Development of a Strategic Plan for Family Support uses a participatory approach to generate and prioritize research topics and questions, an expert panel to design research strategies, and secondary analysis of national data to answer identified questions; (2) Identifying Promising Practices in Family Support Services uses a participatory approach with stakeholders to nominate, investigate, and synthesize promising local and state family support practices that can be disseminated and used more widely; (3) Family Member Roles and Well-Being in Self-Directed Waiver Programs examines the relationship between self-directed waiver program components, family environment, and caregiver well-being; (4) Understanding Experiences, Trends, and Needs in Self-Directed Support Programs uses mixed methods to investigate national trends in self-directed support, and the experience and satisfaction of caregivers in self-directed support programs; (5) Family Support in Managed Care investigates the impact of transitioning from fee-for-service to managed care on families and individuals who receive services; and (6) Parents Taking Action: A Parent Training Program for Latino Families of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) tests the efficacy of an intervention that engages parents of children with ASD in providing education and training to other parents. The Center partners with the Lurie Institute for Disability Policy at Brandeis University, the National Resource Center for Participant-Directed Services at Boston College, the RTC on Community Living at the University of Minnesota, and the National Council on Aging as well as various organizational partners.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Kansas

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Promoting Interventions for Community Living (RRTC/PICL)

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Project Number: 90RT5043
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Promoting Interventions for Community Living (RRTC/PICL) promotes community participation outcomes for adults with physical and multiple co-occurring disabilities, living in the community or transitioning from nursing facilities to the community. The objectives of this Center are to use a person-environment fit model to investigate evidence-based, multifaceted interventions that target change in individual characteristics and environmental factors to support enhanced community participation. The Center’s research begins with a systematic literature review on multifaceted community-based interventions and progresses to a single research project that involves three studies: (1) development and refinement of the Out and About Intervention, teaching problem solving and goal setting to support community participation; (2) an efficacy study that utilizes a randomized control trial to study the impact of the Home Base intervention to empower consumers to self-assess their home environment and to provide support to enhance their home usability, resulting in a guide for assessing home usability; and (3) a second efficacy study that investigates the impact on the community participation of consumers that receive both interventions. Outcomes are measured quantitatively and qualitatively, including increased usability of consumers’ homes, increased health and reduction of secondary health conditions, personal goal achievement, and increased participation in the community. Dissemination activities include systematic reviews, webinars, publications, and a National Community Living Resource Center.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Massachusetts

Community Living Policy Center

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Project Number: 90RTCP0004
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This Community Living Policy Center (CLPC) aims to improve policies and practices that promote community living outcomes for individuals with disabilities through a program of seven broad research projects in three priority areas: (1) Policies and Programs Related to Provision of Home and Community Based Services; (2) Policy Barriers and Facilitators of Community Living and Participation Outcomes; and (3) Rapid, Timely Data and Policy Analyses to Inform Policies and Programs that Promote Community Living and Participation Outcomes. The center also conducts knowledge translation activities, including dissemination, training, and technical assistance targeted to needs of stakeholders. An online CLPC portal, a key component of knowledge translation activities, serves as a national resource for research-based community living policy. Individuals with disabilities are integrally involved in and advise all research and knowledge translation activities through the Disability and Aging Collaborative, a coalition of 40 national organizations. Project partners include: University of California San Francisco, Association of University Centers on Disabilities, Autistic Self Advocacy Network, Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund, Disability Policy Consortium, Centene Corporation, National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, Human Services Research Institute, Topeka Independent Living Resource Center, and national policy expert Henry Claypool.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Minnesota

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Home and Community-Based Services Outcomes Measurement

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Project Number: 90RT5039
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $875,000; FY 16 $875,000; FY 17 $875,000; FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Home and Community-Based Services Outcomes Measurement (RRTC/OM) conducts research, training, and technical assistance activities to promote quality outcome measurement in home and community-based services (HCBS), working in close alignment with the National Quality Forum (NQF), the Administration for Community Living, and other stakeholders. Research activities identify and prioritize HCBS outcome domains, identify measure gaps and evolve new measures, catalog existing measures and evaluate these for validity and appropriateness, select the best measures for each outcome domain/topic area, test measures for reliability and validity, and assess measures using prioritized risk adjusters. Focus is on cross-disability measures at the individual HCBS recipient, organization, and systems levels gathered directly from people with disabilities or through program administrative and encounter data. Each measure is prepared and submitted for approval by the NQF. In addition to identifying and testing measures, the RRTC/OM investigates methodological issues with respect to outcome measurement by working with numerous outcome measurement programs to identify existing data collection/reporting methods, evaluate their rigor, and evolve recommendations for preferred data collection and reporting. The RRTC/OM also provides training and technical assistance to federal agencies, states, organizations, and other stakeholders on HCBS quality outcome measurement and systems. These activities include but are not limited to: training on how to use an online searchable database of HCBS measures by domain area, development and implementation of webinars regarding HCBS measurement, and participation in conferences and other coordinated dissemination activities.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Minnesota

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Community Living and Participation

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Project Number: 90RTCP0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This center conducts advanced research, training, and technical assistance and dissemination activities focused on community living and participation of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The center includes seven studies relevant to community living interventions, policy and outcomes. Studies include: analyses of National Health Interview Survey data to identify characteristics and needs of persons with I/DD; policy and outcome analyses using National Core Indicators (NCI), a random sample of 18,000 adults with I/DD from 46 states, and a longitudinal study using NCI data from Pennsylvania in years 2000-2022; intervention studies related on the direct support workforce, social inclusion for older adults, employment; and technology use in community living settings. The center also provides a comprehensive training program that continues to develop new generations of competent and skilled disability researchers and professionals.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Montana

Place-based Solutions for Rural Community Participation, Health, and Employment

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Project Number: 90RTCP0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: The goal of this RRTC is to conduct research and knowledge translation (KT) activities across health, community living, and employment domains to explore, develop, and test strategies to improve the quality of life of rural people with disabilities. To achieve this goal, this project fully engages people with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders in all aspects of research and KT activities, utilizes national service systems as research and KT partners to improve the reach and uptake of effective solutions, and evaluates the RRTC’s research and delivery sites for better understanding of how strategies and available community resources align to maximize impacts. This project conducts eight research projects and three additional KT projects, along with dissemination, training, and technical assistance (TA) activities. Research projects include: R1. Expanding the Availability and Quality of Rural Data, a collaboration with the RRTC on Disability Statistics to develop a rural addendum to the annual Disabilities Statistics Compendium; R2: Exploring the Rural Disability Penalty, a longitudinal data study using secondary panel data sources to investigate how health and disability evolve differently over the lifecycle for people living in rural and urban places; R3: Rural Access to Health Insurance and Health Care, a collaboration with the NIDILRR-funded Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living, to extend the reach of their national longitudinal National Health Reform and Disability Survey to allow for rural and urban comparisons about health insurance access and coverage related to changes in the Affordable Care Act; R4: Rural Resource Analysis, focusing on understanding contextual differences across place to provide contextual understanding for intervention development work in R5-R8 research projects; R5: Building Networks to Expand Living Well Delivery, promotes healthy rural community living through scale-up of the Living Well in the Community program in rural hospitals; R6: Rural Personal Assistance Services partners with consumers and providers of rural home- and community-based...
services to identify how personal assistance services (PAS) are secured, delivered, and consumed in rural places. The project examines aspects of care that increase health and community participation and use this information to translate existing PAS training for application and evaluation in rural places; R7: Rural Transportation Options, uses survey and informant interviews to explore how different transportation options impact community living outcomes for rural people with disabilities to inform rural transportation policy and development; and lastly, R8: Rural Self-Employment Builds Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and American Indian VR Service (AIVRS) explores capacity to support consumers who express an interest in self-employment by refining and evaluating materials that are responsive, appropriate, and prepared for intervention efficacy research.
Research and Training Center for Pathways to Positive Futures: Building Self-Determination and Community Living and Participation

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Project Number: 90RT5030 (Formerly H133B140039)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,600; FY 15 $499,600; FY 16 $499,600; FY 17 $499,600; FY 18 $499,600; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)
Other Funding: FY 14 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 15 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $375,400 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $375,400 (SAMHSA)

Abstract: This Center conducts research, training, and dissemination activities focused on building self-determination and enhancing community living and participation outcomes in young people with serious mental health conditions (SMHCs). The Center conducts six intervention-based projects: FUTURES tests an approach to improving college retention and success, as well as community participation and self-determination, among first-year college students with SMHCs who are, or have been, in foster care. EASA Connections tests a web-based psychoeducation and decision-aid intervention designed to increase the extent to which young people who are experiencing a first episode of psychosis are engaged and self-determined in regard to their treatment. A third project, Meaningful Networks Model (MNM), is focused on the creation of the MNM program curriculum to enhance social network development and community participation among young adults who are either experiencing or at risk for serious mental health conditions, and who are also expected to have limited support networks due to histories of out-of-home placement. For example, these may be young people with SMHCs who have histories of out-of-home placement through the mental health, child welfare, and/or juvenile justice systems or are currently in group placement or residential treatment. Two additional projects develop and evaluate interventions designed to increase providers’ skill in working with youth and young adults with SMHCs to increase their self-determination and enhance their community living and participation: Technology-Enhanced Coaching for Positive Development focuses on professional providers and their supervisors, while AMP+: Developing the Young Adult Peer Support Workforce works with young adult peer support providers and their supervisors and agency administrators. Both projects employ new technology to...
improve training, coaching, and supervision. Finally, System/Policy Analysis and Change is focused on understanding key system issues and policy challenges that impede or support accessible and effective services for young adults with SMHCs. This project also examines examples of young adult-led policy change and the challenges young adult advocacy organizations face when they enter the policy arena. Additionally, this RRTC assesses the utilization of Promoting Positive Pathways to Adulthood, a series of online training modules designed for service providers who work with youth and young adults with SMHCs. Collaborations with young people and other stakeholders, including providers, researchers and family members, ensure that interventions are practical and feasible, and that training and dissemination are relevant and useful. This project is also supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Pennsylvania

Temple University RRTC on Community Living and Participation of People with Serious Mental Illness

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Project Number: 90RTCP0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $874,999; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This project advances the development of interventions that maximize community living and participation of individuals with severe mental illness (SMI) through research and knowledge translation activities in partnership with consumers and other key stakeholders, and serves as a national resource center for people with SMI, their families, service and support providers, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders through knowledge translation activities based in state-of-the-art translational practices. This project conducts seven research studies resulting in new knowledge about the effectiveness of interventions in enhancing community mobility, using eHealth in promoting community participation, increasing parenting outcomes through family leisure, and advancing college student success using Photovoice. Additional studies identify new research and interventions, examine modifiable cognitive factors associated with community participation, highlight promising initiatives under taken by First Episode Psychosis programs, and elicit stakeholder-driven research priorities for promoting community participation within rural areas. Research data and project activities result in new knowledge that drives the next generation of policies, programs, and practices that directly impact the lives of people with SMI. The RRTC products include trainings for mainstream organizations, rights advocates, and providers; technical assistance that is responsive to the needs of key stakeholders; and dissemination through social media and podcasts to translate and transmit information leading to a real-world impact.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Pennsylvania

Center for Research, Training, and Dissemination of Family Support for People with Disabilities Across the Life Course

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Principal Investigator: Heidi S. Donovan, PhD, RN; Scott Beach, PhD; Bambang Parmanto, PhD
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Project Number: 90RTGE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $874,999; FY 20 $874,999; FY 21 $874,999; FY 22 $874,999; FY 23 $874,999

Abstract: The Center for Research, Training, and Dissemination of Family Support for People with Disabilities Across the Life Course focuses research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination efforts under the theme of Caregiver Support Empowers the Whole Family. The mission of this Center is to facilitate the rapid translation and dissemination of state-of-the-art research and training to inform direct services and support programs designed to improve care, health, and quality of life of people with disabilities (PwD) and their families. To achieve this mission of increasing access to family support, the center aims to: (1) Advance state-of-the-science research in caregiving, rehabilitation, and e-health self-management support in PwD and their family caregivers with the goal of maintaining independent living in the community; (2) train health and rehabilitation providers and researchers to support families caring for PwD; (3) leverage findings from center research projects to advance the capacity of healthcare and public health systems to deliver high-quality, tailored support to family caregivers of PwD, and; (4) utilize dynamic mechanisms to translate and disseminate knowledge to PwD, family caregivers, policymakers, service providers, researchers, employers, and other key stakeholders. Four research projects have been designed at the intersection of three domains of science: caregiving, disability/rehabilitation, and e-health self-management support with the goal of supporting family caregivers of PwD to maintain independent living in the community. R1 analyzes national data sets to characterize family support and its impact on health and quality of life outcomes among PwD across the lifespan and their family caregivers living in the community. R2 develops and evaluates an iMHere mobile health self-management intervention for family caregivers to be delivered in conjunction with an existing intervention for patients with brain and spinal anomalies. R3 scales up and disseminates CAPABLE (an established intervention to support older adults with activity limitations and their family caregivers with aging in place) into Area Agencies on Aging with the goal of increasing access to families who do not qualify for Medicaid and cannot afford services. R4 implements and evaluates an mHealth SmartRehab program (a caregiver self-management intervention with demonstrated efficacy) across a large healthcare system to optimize return to social participation for survivors of gynecologic cancer with participation restrictions and their family caregivers.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2019 - Community Living and Participation 2-13
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
District of Columbia

Financial Engagements as a Gateway to Community Participation:
A Multi-Level Intervention Study

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Project Number: 90DPCP0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $499,998; FY 19 $499,999; FY 20 $499,998; FY 21 $499,974; FY 22 $499,985

Abstract: This project examines the promise of ABLE accounts in increasing community participation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and cognitive disabilities. The ABLE Act of 2014 allows an estimated seven million individuals with significant disabilities to establish tax advantaged saving accounts exempt from means-tested requirements for federal public benefits (SSI, Medicaid, and SNAP), and prohibits reduction of public resources when an account is established. Individuals who contribute to ABLE accounts are able to build financial independence and set goals for the future. This research represents the first empirical longitudinal study of the impact of ABLE implementation. The project goal is to enhance understanding of the benefits of financial health trainings to improve outcomes. A randomized controlled trial study examines impact of (1) an ABLE account and (2) the joint impact of an ABLE account and Future Savers training program on community participation. Objectives include evaluation of self-directed engagement in ABLE accounts, evaluation of facilitated engagement in ABLE accounts, and a comprehensive training program that assists in planning for the future and managing finances to reach goals. Outcomes include community participation and its related and antecedent outcomes: self-determination, financial capability, life satisfaction, and quality of life. Deliverables include evidence regarding interventions that improve economic self-sufficiency and community participation, and knowledge translation strategies to replicate interventions nationwide.
I-CONNECT PLUS: Enhancing Community Participation for Adolescents and Adults with ASD Using Online Instruction, Coaching, and Accessible Self-Management Technologies

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Principal Investigator: Howard Wills, PhD
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Project Number: 90DP0058 (Formerly H133A130032)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $458,224; FY 14 $474,772; FY 15 $467,313; FY 16 $462,543; FY 17 $473,103; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project develops I-CONNECT PLUS, a technology-supported instructional system to teach social competence, problem-solving skills, and organizational/self-monitoring skills for adolescents and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The project provides remote tele-coaching by community providers, peers, and family members for promoting generalized use; and focuses on the use of self-management and monitoring of outcomes to promote independence and full engagement across settings. This project includes five objectives: (1) developing instructional technology including use of mobile applications (e.g., I-CONNECT PLUS) to teach social competence, problem solving, and organization/self-monitoring skills for adolescents and young adults with ASD; (2) developing tele-coaching materials to generalize skills to community settings; (3) adapting a self-management system to include applicable system features (e.g., skill task analysis, link to instructional modules) for I-CONNECT PLUS; (4) conducting initial pilot trial of the entire I-CONNECT PLUS program; and (5) assessing the feasibility of I-CONNECT PLUS program.
Enhancing the Community Living and Participation of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

The Trustees of Boston University
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Project Number: 90DP0066 (Formerly H133A140032)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $494,906; FY 15 $494,829; FY 16 $494,721; FY 17 $494,502; FY 18 $494,474; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)
Abstract: This project includes several studies targeting the development of a new measure of community living and participation for individuals with psychiatric disabilities and the development and effectiveness testing of an innovative peer-led intervention promoting community living and participation in this population, titled “Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice.” These development activities are informed by a comprehensive exploratory study examining the barriers and facilitators to the community engagement of individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Finally, this project provides training and technical assistance in the use of the Bridging Community Gaps Photovoice and widely disseminates the intervention manuals, the new Multi-Dimensional Assessment of Community Participation (MDACP) instrument, and findings from related exploratory research activities.
Parents Empowering Parents: National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities and Their Families

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Project Number: 90DPGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $500,000; FY 17 $499,999; FY 18 $500,000; FY 19 $500,000; FY 20 $500,000

Abstract: This project addresses the knowledge gaps regarding parents with disabilities and their families through: (1) population-based research and analysis of national datasets to inform policy and practice; and (2) the systematic analysis of state legislation and child welfare policies to identify facilitators and barriers to systemic change. Researchers are developing, adapting, testing, and scaling-up interventions that include: (1) a parent peer specialist model for parents with psychiatric disabilities; (2) a virtual peer support intervention for Deaf parents; (3) a parent-centered planning intervention for parents with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities; and (4) a targeted, informed legal services model for parents with diverse disabilities. Resources, tools, and training and intervention materials are made available through the accessible online Parents Empowering Parents Portal and its sister site, Padres Apoderando a Padres. The project is also building on the Disabled Parenting Project web site, where parents and family members currently interact, share knowledge, and empower each other.
Building Capacity to Improve Community Participation for People Aging with Long-Term Disability Through Evidence-Based Strategies

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Principal Investigator: Susan L. Stark, PhD; Kerri Morgan, PhD; Michelle Putnam, PhD; 314/273-4114
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Project Number: 90DPCP0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $497,342; FY 18 $493,489; FY 19 $497,204; FY 20 $496,635; FY 21 $497,343

Abstract: This project identifies and addresses barriers to successful community participation for people aging with long-term physical disability. People in this group are living longer and experiencing the challenges of aging, including the onset of secondary and age-related chronic health conditions, leaving them at high risk of diminished functional abilities and compromised participation. Goals and activities of this project include: (1) developing a community-based research network (CBRN), including long-term supportive services, to serve as a platform for continued intervention development and refinement and for the future implementation and dissemination of evidence-based practices; (2) identifying the barriers and supports to community participation for people aging with long-term physical disabilities to inform service delivery through an ongoing cohort survey; (3) translating and adapting an existing evidence-based intervention to enhance community participation for individuals aging with long-term disabilities; and (4) evaluating the feasibility, fidelity, and preliminary efficacy of the adapted intervention for the new target population.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
New York

Minority Youth and Centers for Independent Living (MY-CIL)

Research Foundation of the City University of New York
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Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Cardozo, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPGE0013
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $449,948; FY 20 $1,293,390; FY 21 $1,293,389; FY 22 $1,293,389; FY 23 $1,293,389
Other Funding: FY 19 $793,390 (Administration on Disabilities, Office of Independent Living Programs)

Abstract: The goal of Minority Youth and Centers for Independent Living (MY-CIL) is to generate and share new knowledge that empowers CILs to improve transition outcomes of out-of-school youth from minority backgrounds. The activities and objectives of this project are developed with input from CILs and other stakeholders. These activities and objectives include a survey of CILs; qualitative interviews with CILs; pilot testing practices and services with CILs; developing and testing a manualized randomized control trial intervention designed to improve outcomes for the target population, learning collaboratives; and technical assistance related to outreach, data analysis, collaboration, and other practices that show promise for improving outcomes for out-of-school youth with disabilities from minority backgrounds. Project outcomes include new knowledge on CIL practices and services, an expanded evidence base on effective CIL practices, and increased CIL capacity to deliver evidence-based best practices to improve transition outcomes more out-of-school youth from minority backgrounds. The products include CIL practice briefs, manuscripts for publication, podcasts, conference and webinar presentations, and a website and shareable media to disseminate these products widely.
The Community for All Project to Develop a Series of Six Online Toolkits to Improve Community Living and Participation for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Principal Investigator: Alan Foley, PhD; Katherine McDonald, PhD; 315/443-5087 (Foley); 315/443-5313 (McDonald)

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Project Number: 90DP0068 (Formerly H133A140063)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $420,139; FY 15 $484,055; FY 16 $499,972; FY 17 $495,699; FY 18 $404,305; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 7/31/2020)

Abstract: This project develops a six-part toolkit for self-advocates, families, professionals, and policymakers designed to improve community living and participation for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The toolkits are based on the 2004 Community for All: Resources for Supporting Community Living. The six components are entitled Deinstitutionalization for All (an update of the 2004 toolkit); Self-Advocacy and Choices for All; Community Participation for All; Lifelong Learning for All; Family for All; and Digital Communities for All. Each toolkit consists of downloadable materials, a website, and an app. Development and modification of the toolkits are based on literature, suggestions from participants in Policy Institutes for each toolkit topic area, and recommendations from a technology conference for self-advocates. Annual Design Institutes advise the project regarding universal design and accessibility, and the development of basic computer instruction videos. Each toolkit prototype is field tested in New York with final versions tested nationally. Technical assistance is available throughout the project and there are four planned toolkit trainings. This project is a collaboration between the Center of Human Policy, Law, and Disability Studies; Taishoff Center for Inclusive Higher Education; the University of Delaware; and the Self-Advocacy Association of New York State (SA-NYS).
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
New York

Understanding and Increasing Supported Decision-Making’s Positive Impact on Community Living and Participation Outcomes

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Project Number: 90DP0076
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $498,978; FY 16 $498,140; FY 17 $499,318; FY 18 $497,152; FY 19 $499,023

Abstract: This project creates and tests an intervention using a randomized control trial approach examining whether training individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), their families, and support networks to use Supported Decision Making (SDM) approach improves life satisfaction and integration in community living and daily life outcomes. In Study 1, researchers use valid and reliable measures to survey study participants in order to determine their decision-making methods, level of self-determination, and life satisfaction outcomes, including community integration. This study investigates decision-making methods that lead to greater self-determination, life satisfaction outcomes, and community integration; and demographic variables, including legal decision-making status, that are associated with self-determination, quality of life outcomes, and community integration. Study 2 is a field-based intervention examining variables to determine the extent in which training in SDM leads to improvements on community participation. Project findings are used to recommend changes in policy and practice with the target population across the life course (i.e., youth in transition, working-age adults, aging population). Knowledge translation activities target policymakers, service providers, persons with disabilities and their families, and supporters, focusing on the impact and benefits of SDM. Materials and technical assistance are customized to target audience learner needs and preferences. This project is a collaboration between the Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University, the Beach Center/Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities, and Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities.
Abtract: This project develops a socio-ecologic framework to examine the physical environmental factors associated with community participation of individuals with disabilities, and the effect of mainstream community planning practices and policies on their community participation. Project objectives include: (1) developing a computational model, using UrbanSim, of physical community environment context (housing, employment, services); (2) developing a computational model of social networks and activities of daily community living; (3) developing a computational model, using four-step demand forecasting, of community transportation context; (4) constructing a socio-ecologic framework describing the interdependent relationships between community environment context, transportation context, social networks, and activities of daily community living; (5) identifying current recommended community-scale planning best practices and model policies (codes and ordinances) which support the community living and participation of individuals; (6) using the socio-ecologic framework, examine these community-scale planning practices and policies effects on community participation and activities of daily community living (intervention efficacy research); (7) developing and disseminating a socio-ecologic community infrastructure planning tool which may be implemented in mainstream community planning to support the community living and participation of individuals with disabilities; (8) developing and disseminating validated community-scale planning practices and model policies (codes and ordinances) which may be implemented in mainstream community planning to support the community living and participation of individuals with disabilities; and (9) integrating interdisciplinary academic and community collaborative opportunities to enhance awareness and promote meaningful application of a socio-ecologic understanding of the role community environment and transportation contexts play in community living and participation. Project outcomes are disseminated as tools, practices, and policies which contribute to greater opportunities for people with disabilities to live more fully and independently, enjoy self-determination, contribute to society, pursue meaningful careers, and enjoy full inclusion and integration in economic, political, social, cultural, and education mainstream society.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Washington

Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living

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Project Number: 90DP0075
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $499,342; FY 16 $499,803; FY 17 $497,472; FY 18 $499,803; FY 19 $497,472

Abstract: The objective of the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living (CHRIL) is to provide disability stakeholders with accurate, current, and actionable information on how recent changes in health policy directly or indirectly impact the community living and participation of working-age adults with disabilities. The CHRIL brings together disability advocates and researchers from four institutions (Washington State University, the University of Kansas, George Mason University, and the Independent Living Research Utilization program at TIRR Memorial Hermann Hospital) to systematically investigate and disseminate essential findings about how the Affordable Care Act’s (ACA) implementation effects adults with disabilities. Specific CHRIL research activities include: (1) Documenting the experiences of working-age adults with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining health insurance, and identifying the impact of insurance on their access, health, and function through phone interviews, internet surveys, and analysis of the Health Reform Monitoring Survey (HRMS); (2) assessing the health insurance information, training, and technical assistance needs of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other disability stakeholders through internet surveys, phone interviews of CIL directors, and town-hall meetings at national independent living conferences; (3) analyzing post-reform insurance coverage trends among working-age adults with disabilities using the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS); (4) identifying gaps in coverage and potential areas of undue cost-burden for people with disabilities by analyzing health care expenditures, including premium costs, deductibles, and co-pays using the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS); and (5) assessing the impact of the ACA on disability program enrollment and workforce participation by testing how the Medicaid expansion influences SSI activity using the American Community Survey (ACS). The CHRIL engages in knowledge translation activities including: Presenting research findings at professional and scientific meetings; submitting manuscripts for inclusion in scientific and professional journals; offering webinars and creating self-paced tutorials on various aspects of health care policy, organization, and financing; and developing and maintaining the CHRIL website that includes access to all publications and presentations in accessible formats.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Alabama

CrossingPoints High Tide

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Project Number: 90IFDV0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,964; FY 19 $199,974; FY 20 $199,970

Abstract: The goal of the CrossingPoints High Tide project is to develop, test, and refine a model of off-campus integrated community living and participation for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) attending the CrossingPoints postsecondary program at The University Alabama. Drawing upon a pilot study involving summer on-campus dorm living, the objectives are to: (1) develop a replicable model of integrated off-campus community living and participation for students with ID; (2) develop a model of integrated peer living involving college students with and without ID; (3) develop partnerships with community residential providers to support integrated community living by college students with ID; (4) foster skills for independent college living and integrated community participation by students with ID; and (5) assess the impact of integrated off-campus community living and participation on both peer mentors and students with ID resulting from participating in the CrossingPoints High Tide Program.

Outcomes include: (1) a framework for colleges and universities with programs serving students with ID to provide integrated independent living and community participation; (b) peer mentors and college students with ID living and participating in integrated off-campus community settings; (c) community partners and other residential stakeholders supporting integrating off-campus student housing for students with and without ID; (d) students with ID demonstrating skills and competencies critical for successful independent living and participation in an integrated community; and (e) peer mentors demonstrating social role valorization while those with ID demonstrate increased self-determination and improved desired postsecondary transition outcomes.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Louisiana

Cooperative Learning and Individualized Mentoring to Build Self-Efficacy, Persistence, and Goal Attainment in Postsecondary African American Students

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Project Number: 90IF0103
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $200,000; FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project develops methods and procedures that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with severe disabilities, especially those from traditionally underserved groups. Project CLAIM strives to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Americans with Disabilities Act, via the conduct of theory-driven research and targeted dissemination activities designed for vocational rehabilitation (VR) clients, their families, communities, practitioners, and employers. Project CLAIM focuses on issues related to employment skills gap from the perspective of educational opportunities, access to multi-disciplinary services, and incorporation of demand-side placement strategies in vocational rehabilitation. The project uses a mixed-methods research study to construct and validate an effective pedagogical framework for promoting self-efficacy, persistence, and goal attainment among African American postsecondary education (AA PSE) students with disabilities. The project ensures achievement of goal by focusing on: (1) Offering of cooperative learning and self-directed career planning opportunities; (2) provision of individualized and culturally sensitive mentoring to assist in adjustment to college life; and (3) identification of modes of integrating needs of employers and AA PSE students with disabilities so that quality employment-related outcomes can be achieved. Project CLAIM utilizes the two well-known and evidence-based pedagogical techniques and two-pronged employment skills development training to guide AA PSE students with disabilities to academic persistence, goal attainment, and job placement: (a) Intervention 1: Cooperative learning, (b) Intervention 2: Mentoring, (c) Intervention 3a: On-campus employment skills development, and (d) Intervention 3b: Community-based employment skills development.
Community Life Engagement Guidepost Fidelity Scale
Development and Testing

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Project Number: 90IFRE0025
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,999; FY 20 $199,999; FY 21 $199,999

Abstract: This project develops and tests the Community Life Engagement (CLE) Guidepost Fidelity Scale (GFS). CLE is defined as a key outcome of day services and supports whereby individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) access and participate in the community as part of a meaningful day. The development of the GFS is based on assessing service provider’s adherence to the four guideposts for CLE, a research-based model for day services and supports that lead to CLE. Project objectives move existing research from the exploration and discovery stage to the intervention development stage and include: (1) advancing an existing self-assessment tool into a complete, scorable GFS; (2) assessing content validity of the GFS via a Delphi panel process; and (3) further testing of validity and reliability with a sample of 300 service provider personnel. The outcome of this project is to increase service provider capacity to deliver day services and supports that lead to CLE for people with IDD. Products include the GFS itself, one manuscript submitted to a peer-reviewed journal, conference presentations, webinars, research briefs for various audiences, and an online CLE training module for direct support professionals. This project is being conducted by the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), in partnership with the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), and the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE).
ACT Together: Using Technology to Facilitate Service Integration for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Project Number: 90IFDV0005
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,877; FY 19 $199,581; FY 20 $199,952

Abstract: The goal of this project is to leverage successful technologies developed in previous projects to create ACT Together, a technology platform for enhanced Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) service delivery for consumers with serious psychiatric disability. ACT is an evidence-based, team-delivered intensive care management model that supports comprehensive integrated community-based care for individuals with severe psychiatric disability to promote community living and participation. ACT emphasizes recovery, shared decision-making, and active consumer-driven treatment planning. It is resource intensive and requires ongoing coordination between team members, consumers, and community services and supports. Project activities are organized to meet the following objectives: (1) identify areas of adaptation and expansion of existing technologies through focus groups and interviews with consumers and ACT providers; (2) iteratively develop ACT Together using state-of-the-art, state-of-the-science, and industry standard user-centered processes that involve continuous input from consumers and provider team stakeholders, and (3) evaluate acceptance and feasibility of the ACT technology with four ACT teams in a 6-month implementation trial. The project assesses the impact of use of ACT Together on the following outcomes: implementation process, client service engagement, ACT provider job satisfaction, and consumer client empowerment and satisfaction with ACT care.
Abstract: Education is an essential part of childhood, and attending school is vital to community integration for children with special health care needs. These children continue to face significant barriers to obtaining a high-quality educational experience, despite decades of federal legislation designed to promote full inclusion and access to schools for everyone. Children with special health care needs often struggle with school functioning because chronic health problems increase the risk for lengthy illnesses and hospitalizations. Pediatric rehabilitation specialists assist these children and their families with the transition back to school after a health event. However, the educational outcomes of these children are largely unknown. Particularly, there is a profound lack of long-term information available to help clinicians, families, and educators plan for the dynamic experience of disability as a child develops and interacts with the school environment. Healthcare providers need this information to evaluate their transition services from hospital to community and develop new interventions that can improve the educational success of these children over time. In a previous study, the research team pilot tested the feasibility of using state educational records to understand long-term school outcomes for a very diverse population of children with special health care needs. This work identified and consented a large cohort of children who returned to school in New Jersey after an inpatient hospitalization and successfully linked to their education data. The purpose of the current project is to expand upon this initial work and engage former patients and their families to identify the school experiences and processes that affect quality of life. The researchers use a combination of educational records, focus groups, and interviews to understand the experience of return to school after pediatric rehabilitation. The goal is to develop a prospective process to identify the educational needs of children with special health care needs that can be implemented across a variety of healthcare settings. The information produced by this study will help improve the coordination between healthcare systems, schools, and families. Information from this study will also be used to develop guidelines to inform public policy for special education services, the development of interventions such as long-term social work follow-up and support, peer support groups, and medical education for clinicians about community integration issues faced by some of our most vulnerable children and adolescents.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
New York

Field Initiated Research Project on
Optimizing Accessible Public Transportation

The Research Foundations of SUNY
on behalf University at Buffalo
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Project Number: 90IFRE0010
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,968; FY 18 $199,968; FY 19 $199,743

Abstract: Accessible public transportation provides individuals with disabilities access to work sites, educational programs, health care facilities, and social and recreational activities. This Field Initiated Research Project focuses on a critical component of accessible public transportation—wheeled mobility device securement systems. Existing research and experience in practice has identified the need for innovation in securement. The four-point tiedown is the predominant form of securement in transit buses and paratransit vehicles in the U.S. though it poses usability challenges and safety risks for both wheeled mobility device users and bus operators. New technologies are being introduced, but there is no research to evaluate their efficacy on large accessible transit vehicles in fixed-route service, their value to transit providers, or their usability in other transit vehicle types. This research project evaluates the strengths and limitations of two innovative wheelchair securement systems in actual service: a three-point, fully-integrated forward-facing system (Q’Pod) and a fully automated rear-facing securement system (Quantum). Both systems have previously been evaluated in a laboratory setting and demonstrate significant benefits over the conventional four-point tiedown securement approach. Collaborating with the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and Q’Straint, the industry leader in wheeled mobility device securement, this project verifies the findings of the laboratory research in service conditions, quantifies the usability benefits for riders and the performance improvements for operators, and identifies the need for future design improvements to increase adoption of these systems. Phase I evaluates the use of both systems in large accessible transit vehicles in fixed-route service. Phase II evaluates the Quantum in a paratransit vehicle. Phase III explores the ramifications of introducing automated securement in autonomous transit vehicles. The project outputs include peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and recommendations for transit providers to guide them in their securement purchasing decisions.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Oregon

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Trainer Skill Builder

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Project Number: 90IF0124
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,990; FY 17 $199,994; FY 18 $199,939; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 4/30/2020)

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates the Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Trainer Skill Builder, an interactive education and training resource for paraprofessionals that addresses the specific needs of individuals with moderate to severe TBI. Individuals with moderate to severe TBI frequently experience significant, long-lasting changes in physical, behavioral, cognitive, and social functioning that affect their participation in activities of daily life at home and in the community. Project activities occur in three phases: development, usability, and evaluation. During Phase I and II, researchers develop and evaluate a prototype of the TBI Trainer Skill Builder resource for paraprofessionals with the goal of promoting knowledge and skill acquisition, ongoing review, and practice and feedback. During Phase III, researchers evaluate the effectiveness of the program through (1) an experimental single case study involving paraprofessionals and individuals with TBI, and (2) a within-subjects product evaluation study involving paraprofessionals and professionals only. The outcome of this project is a fully-developed, evidence-based skills builder that is a cost-effective, accessible resource for paraprofessional to work effectively with adults with TBI.
Getting Out: Development of a Web-Based Application to Leverage Social Capital and Enable Self-Directed Community Participation for Individuals with Significant Cognitive Disability

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Project Number: 90IFDV0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,974; FY 19 $199,939; FY 20 $199,948

Abstract: This project develops an innovative web application, Getting Out, that provides a cognitively accessible tool for individuals with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities to help them effectively maintain social relationships established during high school transition, build new relationships, and turn virtual connections with social network members with and without disabilities into real world relationships around activities of common interest and mutual support. The project has two goals: (1) to develop a proof of concept version of the Getting Out application in collaboration with the Eugene 4J Schools Connections Transition Program (Connections), and (2) develop a proof of product version of Getting Out and evaluate its effectiveness in the City of Eugene’s Adaptive Recreation Program as a tool to promote inclusive recreation and community participation, followed by extensive beta testing by similar organizations and the general public. Major objectives take place over a three-year period. During Year 1, the project develops and evaluates the Getting Out proof of concept, conducts feasibility testing, and publishes specifications for full development in partnership with Connections. Transition students aged 18-22 with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities including autism and intellectual disabilities are engaged as usability testers and feasibility study participants. During Year 2, the project develops a minimally viable application product for collaborative implementation with participants in the Eugene Adaptive Recreation Services Program, and evaluates the prototype using qualitative methods and a within-subjects repeated measures effectiveness study. In the final year, the project continues development and evaluation on social engagement with both collaborating program, as well as public beta testing in preparation for commercialization. Outcomes include increasing self-direction and community participation and increased creation of social capital for inclusion. Products include a web application with high-potential for commercial marketing that integrates with the Cognitopia Connect Platform to meet users’ need for life management tools, and dissemination of project results through written reports and multimedia presentations to diverse audiences.
Project B-JUST: Brain Injury & Juvenile Services Training: Empirically Defining Training Needs and Competencies for Juvenile Services Personnel for Young Offenders with TBI

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Project Number: 90IFRE0033
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000; FY 21 $200,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the service provision for young offenders with traumatic brain injury (TBI) in juvenile corrections settings through completion of Project B-JUST: Brain Injury & Juvenile Services Training. Research has illustrated that youth with TBI in juvenile corrections are not receiving the support needed to achieve positive outcomes. Many staff in juvenile correction facilities lack the knowledge and skills needed to adequately support youth due to little or no professional development relevant to youth with TBI. Objectives of this project are to: Identify the initial training needs of juvenile services personnel working with youth offenders with TBI; confirm those training needs through a more comprehensive survey of juvenile correction personnel training needs; and identify core competencies across correctional personnel roles to inform the development of initial training materials for each residential juvenile services personnel stakeholder group. The primary outcome of B-JUST is to empirically identify the core training competencies for the juvenile services personnel which, if utilized, will improve service provision and ultimately improve life outcomes of young offenders with TBI. The products ready for dissemination at the completion of this project include: (a) core training competencies for each type of juvenile services personnel, and (b) a collection of training materials (e.g., quick guides, tip sheets) targeting TBI services aligned with the training competencies.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Oregon

Our Lives: Safe and Strong Program Toolkit

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Project Number: 90IF0108
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)
Abstract: The Our Lives: Safe and Strong (Our Lives) Program Toolkit provides topic-specific, gender relevant, abuse-related training and technical assistance, and specialized training on the best practices of trauma-informed services delivery, to Centers for Independent Living (CIL) staff so they have the knowledge base and skill set necessary to work directly with CIL consumers with disabilities on issues related to interpersonal violence (IPV). The Toolkit is built upon previous field-tested, web-based abuse awareness tools: The Women’s and Men’s Safer and Strong Programs, which provide safety-planning options and resources for people with disabilities related to abuse, mistreatment, and neglect. A six-member CIL Consortium works together to implement and deliver effective IPV prevention and safety-planning supports and services to CIL consumers, and technical assistance to CIL staff to deliver IPV-related program activities. The CIL Consortium includes: Northern West Virginia Center for Independent Living (NWVCIL); Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR) of Hutchinson, KS; REACH Center for Independent Living of Plano, TX; Disability Network Wayne County/ Detroit (DNWCD); Eastern Oregon Centers for Independent Living (EOCIL) of Ontario, OR; and Living Independently in Northwest Kansas (LINK) of Hays, KS.
Increasing Community Participation in Young Adults with Autism Living in Rural Communities

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Project Number: 90IFRE0018
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kirstin Painter, PhD, LCSW
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,999; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $199,999

Abstract: This project assesses the impact of PArticipation in Rural Settings to Engage in Communities (PARSEC), an intervention for families of young adults with autism living in rural areas to increase community participation. Approximately 27,000 individuals with autism reside in a rural community in Pennsylvania. Individuals living in rural communities often experience multiple barriers to community participation. Recent data assessing community participation in young adults with autism demonstrated significantly lower rates and variability of community participation in comparison to same-age peers without autism. Participants are randomly assigned to participate in PARSEC or an active control group for 12 months. PARSEC is assessed to determine whether participants report higher number of days participating in community activities and more variation of community activities compared to a control group. Quantitative analyses are used to assess two primary outcomes (e.g., days of community participation, number of community participation activities) from self- and caregiver-report questionnaire. Qualitative analyses are used to assess for satisfaction with the intervention and identify barriers to engagement.
Enhancing Community Participation for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders Through Peer-Mediated Transportation Interventions

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Project Number: 90IFRE0013
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kirstin Painter, PhD, LCSW
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project develops and tests a peer-mediated intervention to reduce barriers to public transportation for transition-aged youth and adults with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Transportation is a major obstacle to accessing essential services and overall community participation for many individuals with ASD. Driving is often not a viable option due to the impact of the disability or lack of financial resources, resulting in a reliance on alternative modes of transportation. Public transportation is a low-cost option, although often avoided due to lack of training and experience. Preliminary research has demonstrated positive outcomes of training programs for people with disabilities to learn how to use public transportation systems, although none of the interventions explored the impact of peers as interveners. Peer-mediated interventions connect two individuals with a shared lived experience (i.e., condition of ASD), which is believed to enhance the interpersonal relationship, benefits of role modeling, and promote a more equal relationship. The goals of this project are to: (1) implement a randomized control study with 64 participants to determine the efficacy of an innovative peer-mediated intervention to reduce transportation barriers for transition-aged youth and adults with ASD; (2) determine dosing recommendations for the intervention; and (3) collect qualitative data to identify potential outcomes for future studies targeting peer-interventionists.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
South Carolina

PHOENIX: Development of a Spinal Cord Injury Peer-Supported Self-Management Intervention

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Project Number: 90IFRE0012
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,783; FY 18 $199,940; FY 19 $199,960

Abstract: This project develops, and pilot tests a spinal cord injury (SCI) peer navigator intervention for implementation across South Carolina, integrating online and telehealth platforms. The Peer-supported Health Outreach, Education, aNd Information eXchange (PHOENIX) intervention, which builds on a pilot Peer Navigator study, is specifically designed to promote self-management after SCI. The broad goals of PHOENIX are to improve participants’ community participation and quality of life and decrease subjective impact and occurrence of secondary conditions and re-hospitalization after SCI. Researchers complete translation of the existing in-person SCI Peer Navigation program for online and telehealth delivery, including integration of mobile technology to improve access and reach of PHOENIX, and development of additional multimedia online educational content. Next, the project conducts a randomized waitlisted pilot trial to identify potential logistical and methodological issues of both intervention implementation and study procedures including evaluation of feasibility, acceptability, and fidelity of intervention implementation and study design and procedures and obtaining estimates of variability of relevant outcome measures.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
South Dakota

Sinte Gleska University Disability Center

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Project Number: 90IFST0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $195,189; FY 18 $197,520; FY 19 $199,931

Abstract: The Sinte Gleska Disability Center (SGDC) program model seeks to improve the effectiveness of service delivery to the underserved and unserved populations of American Indians and Alaska Natives by enhancing the knowledge and education of professionals and non-professionals working or caring for those with disabilities. SGDC addresses awareness, education, and training needs of Tribal disability program personnel and family members in rural Tribal communities throughout the South Dakota Region (including neighboring states). Goals of the program are to: (1) Improve the effectiveness of culturally relevant disability services delivered to Rural Underrepresented Tribal Communities in the South Dakota Region for improved community living and inclusive participation; and (2) provide access to continuing education and training for personnel employed as providers of disability-focused services including Tribal rehabilitation service programs to maximize inclusion and integration into society through independent living, employment, family supports, and self-sufficiency. The focus area is South Dakota and neighboring states due to the high population and reservation representation, yet, the SGDC model can be implemented through other Tribal Colleges and Universities that want to better serve their Tribal members and students with disabilities.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Texas

Efficacy of the ASD Screening and Parent ENgagement (ASPEN) Intervention Program in Low-Resource Communities

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Project Number: 90IFST0004
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,998; FY 20 $199,873; FY 21 $199,999

Abstract: The goal of this project is to examine the efficacy of the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Screening and Parent ENgagement (ASPEN) intervention, a culturally-informed parent-mediated intervention (PMI) program when delivered to caregivers and children at risk for ASD who reside in low-resource households. The objectives are: (1) to assemble an advisory group comprised of community and parent leaders to inform the intervention development and implementation; (2) to deliver a PMI program to families with young children at risk for ASD in low-resource communities; (3) to improve developmental outcomes in young children at risk for ASD; and (4) to improve parenting practices among caregivers of children at risk for ASD. The result is an intervention that is culturally- and linguistically-informed, acceptable and feasible in these communities, and leads to gains in social communication and reduction in challenging behavior in children at risk for ASD and gains in knowledge and skills for their parents and caregivers.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Virginia

Identifying Predictors for Enhanced Outcomes for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

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Project Number: 90IFRE0015
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: The overall goal of this project is to determine what individual and service characteristics are associated with better outcomes for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (I/DD), and how these factors interact with costs. Researchers utilize state databases to retrieve and link individual-level data on demographic characteristics, support needs, Medicaid expenditures, and service outcomes. Data sources include the National Core Indicators Project Adult Consumer Survey, assessment scores from the Supports Intensity Scale, and Medicaid claims for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. Research objectives are to: (1) identify predictors of enhanced outcomes for people with I/DD who use Medicaid long term supports and services, and (2) examine how individuals’ outcomes change over time as Medicaid systems change policies and practices are implemented. Outcomes include research findings that can be used in advocacy and programmatic decision making to improve the participation of individuals with I/DD in community living, and documentation and national dissemination of a process for linking and analyzing state datasets, so that I/DD systems across the country can adapt project protocols to measure I/DD system quality and the impact of system changes in their own states.
Increasing Accessibility of Services for Individuals on the Autism Spectrum via Refinement of a Distance-Based Training and Supervision Platform

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Project Number: 90BISA0030
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $99,763

Abstract: Despite an increased awareness of and attention to effective, evidence-based treatments for young children with autism, there continues to exist several barriers to accessibility of these services, among these being a lack of adequate training and competence for providers tasked with working with these children. While families have increasing access to applied behavior analysis (ABA), an evidence-based treatment for young children with autism with emerging evidence for older youth and adults on the spectrum, they are often unable to access these services due to a paucity of providers that meet state mandated certification and licensing requirements. This is especially true for families in rural areas where inadequate access to behavioral healthcare is well-documented. While many distance education programs have been developed to meet the increasing need for BCBAs, there continues to be a lack of quality, evidence-based distance supervision opportunities for BCBA supervisees in remote areas. In an effort to meet this need, the OASIS-S supervision program was developed and made available through integration of a cloud-based supervision system. The OASIS-S supervision system provides 22 modules for a BCBA supervisor to work through with a supervisee in a way that allows for the development of imperative knowledge and application competencies in preparation of the BCBA examination or for individuals who are interested in applying an evidence-based approach to the instruction and support of children with ASD in contexts where certification and licensure as a behavior analyst are not required.
Maximizing health and function among people with disabilities is critical to the achievement of NIDILRR’s mission and the associated higher-order outcomes of employment as well as community living and participation. Functional ability reflects the complex interaction between individuals and the environments in which they live. NIDILRR supports centers and projects on health and function that improve understanding of health status, health needs, and health care access of individuals with disabilities. These centers and projects also develop and test interventions, including public policy interventions, to improve health outcomes, increase or maintain functional abilities, and contribute to more effective and more integrated rehabilitation and long-term services and supports.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Illinois

RRTC on Developing Optimal Strategies in Exercise and Survival Skills to Increase Health and Function

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Project Number: 90RT5027 (Formerly H133B140012)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD

Abstract: This RRTC develops and tests innovative strategies to enable people with disabilities to achieve and maintain their optimal health and function; assesses the optimal dosing, cost-effectiveness, and value of selected approaches to achieve and maintain their health and function; and disseminates information regarding these strategies to various stakeholders. Specific project objectives include: (1) establishing and operating a coordinated, comprehensive, and interdisciplinary Center comprised of a team of specialists with expertise in clinical rehabilitation and research methodology; (2) evaluating the contributions of the task-specific training parameters, intensity, and variability on lower extremity function post-stroke; (3) evaluating the impact of focused, intensive training applied during clinical inpatient physical therapy on mobility outcomes, health, and community participation in patients with acute neurological injury; (4) conducting a randomized clinical trial to compare the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of two different dosing methods for providing an Intensive Comprehensive Aphasia Program; (5) developing and evaluating the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of a targeted evidence-based Peer Health Navigator program for Medicaid beneficiaries with physical disabilities; and (6) assessing the economic and social value of each proposed research intervention. This project also conducts knowledge translation activities and builds research capacity through educating future generations of disability researchers, professionals, people with disabilities and their families, and the general public by providing them with the tools and training they need to be able to understand important information regarding health, function, community living, and research methods.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery

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Project Number: 90RT5038
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $574,951; FY 16 $574,991; FY 17 $574,986; FY 18 $574,937; FY 19 $574,927
Other Funding: FY 15 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 16 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 17 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 18 $300,000 (SAMHSA); FY 19 $300,000 (SAMHSA)
Abstract: This project creates, modifies, and improves self-directed models of medical care and mental health services that promote recovery, health, and employment for people with psychiatric disabilities. The goal of the Center is to enhance the health and well-being of people with psychiatric disabilities and co-occurring medical conditions, stimulate the development of self-directed recovery models that are peer-led, and improve employment outcomes. Research activities include: a multisite randomized controlled trial of self-directed care for adults with psychiatric disabilities, and development of a transition intervention that supports patients as they move from the hospital to the community using teams of community health workers and mental health peer specialists. Evaluation activities include: an evaluation of costs, medical service utilization, and 30-day readmissions following discharge from medical hospitalizations using the national Truven Health Analytics MarketScan Multistate Medicaid Database; and evaluation of the impact of personal budgets called Career Accounts on the employment outcomes of individuals receiving evidence-based supported employment services. The Center also implements the UIC Health & Recovery Solutions Practice, Policy, and Science Exchange to promote knowledge translation through training, dissemination, and technical assistance. Each component of the Exchange meets the specific needs of its audience with varied dissemination, training, or technical assistance formats. The Health & Recovery Solutions Suite is a set of tools, curricula, and manuals that help people with psychiatric disabilities, their supporters, service providers, and policymakers to promote self-directed recovery of health and wellness. The Health & Recovery Academy for Policymakers utilizes modalities that are tailored to the needs of human service system designers, including a policymaker mentoring initiative, legislative action alerts, and an online technical assistance web portal staffed by NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2019 - Health and Function 3-4
experts in state systems change and transformation. The Health & Recovery Solutions Science Showcase meets the needs of researchers, scholars, and students by informing them about the Center’s research and evaluation projects, creating or highlighting research tools, featuring recent publications on self-directed recovery and health care integration, and offering podcasts and free mini-courses on disability research topics. The Center also convenes a state-of-the-science national summit focusing on self-directed health and mental health care, integration of health and behavioral health care, and self-determination in the vocational rehabilitation process.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Maryland

Rehabilitation and Research Training Center on Health and Function for People with Physical Disabilities focused on Neurogenic Lower Urinary Tract Dysfunction

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Project Number: 90RTHF0003
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $874,963; FY 20 $874,964; FY 21 $874,985; FY 22 $874,988; FY 23 $874,999

Abstract: This Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Health and Function for People with Physical Disabilities focuses on people with physical disability who have neurogenic lower urinary tract dysfunction (NLUTD). NLUTD cuts across multiple types of physical disability and commonly affects people with spinal cord injury and disease (SCI/D), stroke, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, Guillain-Barre syndrome, brain injury, Parkinson’s disease, and others. As such, this project serves a broad range of people with physical disability with the three research projects. In R1, researchers examine the expanded use of intravesical Lactobacillus for urinary symptoms among people with NLUTD who use indwelling catheters for bladder management. In R2, researchers assess neuromodulation of the bladder using transcutaneous tibial nerve stimulation in a randomized controlled trial. In R3, in conjunction with an ongoing clinical trial, researchers describe the impact that bladder management has on quality of life and participation outcomes and assess these in the context of the first-in-human clinical trial of the Connected Catheter (a urethral prosthetic designed to allow for on-demand voiding in people with NLUTD). Consumer experts (i.e., people with or caregivers for people with NLUTD) are integrated with all research and dissemination efforts (including leading consumer dissemination activities) ensuring that research activities are relevant and impactful for the community of people with physical disability and NLUTD. The RRTC is a collaboration of rehabilitation centers including Georgetown University (GU), The Institute for Rehabilitation Research (TIRR), Children’s National Medical Center (CNMC) in partnership with national organizations such as the Neurogenic Bladder Research Group, Spina Bifida Association, United Spinal Association, and National Multiple Sclerosis Society.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Promoting Healthy Aging for People with Long-Term Physical Disabilities

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Principal Investigator: Michelle A. Meade, PhD  
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Project Number: 90RTHF0001  
Start Date: September 30, 2018  
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $874,960; FY 19 $874,935; FY 20 $874,913; FY 21 $874,927; FY 22 $874,984

Abstract: Despite evidence of the importance of environmental factors for health and functioning outcomes for individuals with disabilities, it is often personal factors which are the focus of healthy aging studies and interventions. The overarching goal of the Investigating Disability factors and promoting Environmental Access for Healthy Living RRTC (IDEAL RRTC) is to promote the healthy aging of adults with long-term physical impairments and disabilities. This is achieved by identifying factors at the intersection of the person and environment that impede or support positive health and function outcomes and creating solutions that improve the fit between the two. The objectives of the synergistic group of research projects under this center are to: (1) identify how different person-level characteristics interact with environmental characteristics to influence healthy aging for people with physical disabilities using national, longitudinal databases; (2) identify best practices for promoting healthy aging with physical disabilities across individuals from diverse socioeconomic communities; and (3) develop a suite of informed interventions that promote healthy aging at the intersection of person and environment. Outcomes include a better understanding of the person-environment fit so that persons with physical disabilities, their families, and care providers can optimize healthy aging. Center outputs include interventions that will serve as the basis for the Center’s training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities, including: (1) best-practices alerts for medical information systems; (2) tailored information about best practices and community programs; (3) on-demand environmental audits; and (4) policy briefs.
Can You Hear Me Now? Listening to People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Health Research

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Public Contact: Alexa Murray 614/685-3424

Project Number: 90RTHF0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: The goal of this rehabilitation research and training center is to conduct systematic research that contributes to improving the long-term health-related function and quality of life outcomes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD). The research objectives are to: (1) adapt diagnostic, health, and health-related quality of life measures to increase self-report in adults with I/DD; (2) determine the prevalence of mental health conditions and health outcomes among adults with I/DD; and (3) develop best practice guidelines for psychotherapy for adults with I/DD. Project outcomes include: (1) stronger voice for self-advocating adults with I/DD in health research; (2) known prevalence of people with I/DD and co-occurring mental health conditions; (3) better understanding of health outcomes in adults with I/DD and co-occurring mental health conditions; and (4) established psychotherapy guidelines to advance mental health treatment for adults with I/DD. Project outputs include: (1) new cognitively accessible, reliable, and valid health measures for adults with I/DD; (2) guidelines on providing mental health care for adults with I/DD; and (3) peer-reviewed publications, policy briefs, cognitively accessible data briefs, conference presentations, and training webinars. To ensure the quality and relevance of our work, the center engages people with I/DD throughout the project to emerge as a national resource on health and function for people with I/DD.
Abstract: The Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Access for Mobile Rehabilitation (mRehab) develops, evaluates, and disseminates information about mRehab interventions to optimize health and function of people with disabilities. mRehab refers to the delivery of rehabilitation services and support for home-based rehabilitation using mobile ICT. When executed successfully, mRehab can address key challenges of access and affordability of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities. mRehab interventions can support home-based interventions and instructions, support the use remote sensor technology to gather timely data on patient status rather than relying on imprecise recall during clinic visits, and update prescribed home therapy between visits. The centerpiece of the mRehab RERC is use of “Big Data” analytics to change the paradigm of outpatient rehabilitation with the goal of improving the effectiveness of conventional home-based rehabilitation through a combination of innovative digital health technologies such as: (1) app-based therapy management; (2) sensor-based activity tracking and gamified exercise; and (3) an advanced analytic toolset for monitoring, managing, and optimizing mRehab delivery. To cultivate the use of “Big Data” analytics, this RERC develops a repository with an artificial intelligence core trained on historical data from over 500,000 users. The repository is used to: (1) provide understanding of the factors associated with successful outcomes; (2) develop patient profiles to predict therapy adherence, engagement, and outcomes; and (3) develop algorithms to support patients’ progress through the clinical path based on their participation profile and measured performance at home. Development projects focus on building new mRehab interventions, including use of conversational agents and machine learning to develop voice-interface capabilities; and research efforts focus on usability and preliminary efficacy studies to verify proof of concept of newly developed interventions, and a hybrid effectiveness-implementation trial to compare effectiveness of outpatient therapy using mRehab management tools versus conventional approaches. Partners in the RERC include Duke University; University of California, Irvine; Moss Rehabilitation Research Institute; and commercial partners Flint Rehab and Pt Pal.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)  
Colorado

ReInventing Yourself After SCI: A Multi-Site Randomized Controlled Trial of an Intervention to Improve Outcomes After Spinal Cord Injury

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clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03390140

Principal Investigator: Susan Charlifue, PhD; Kimberley Monden, PhD; Jennifer Coker, MPH  
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Project Number: 90DPHF0002  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,530; FY 18 $495,118; FY 19 $498,859; FY 20 $485,660; FY 21 $499,613

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to conduct a multi-site randomized controlled trial (RCT) to evaluate the replicability and efficacy of a structured six-week, manualized, group therapy intervention, ReInventing Yourself After Spinal Cord Injury (SCI), that delivers positive psychology concepts within a cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)-based model. The intervention is delivered through six sessions, each lasting approximately two hours. Eight skills are presented over the course of the intervention to address reframing a person’s method of looking at events, building confidence by focusing on personal strengths, developing methods of recognizing and appreciating the good in one’s life, and expressing gratitude for positive attributes. These skills are presented in a specific sequence through a workbook so that participants can gain mastery of introductory concepts before undertaking those that are both more difficult and complex. The goals of this RCT are to increase SCI-specific and general self-efficacy, enhance emotional well-being, and improve participation in society for people with SCI living in the community.
Characterization and Treatment of Chronic Pain After Moderate to Severe Traumatic Brain Injury

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www.rimrehab.org/our-services/brain-injury/traumatic-brain-injury-system/overview
clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03739307

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Harrison-Felix, PhD; Jeanne M. Hoffman, PhD; Kimberley Monden, PhD
Public Contact: 303/789-8565

Project Number: 90DPTB0017
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $600,000; FY 19 $600,000; FY 20 $600,000; FY 21 $599,999; FY 22 $600,000
Other Funding: FY 18 $127,000 (ACL TBI State Partnership Program)

Abstract: This project researches and evaluates the treatment needs of individuals with living with chronic pain; specifically, individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Living with chronic pain impacts almost all aspects of a person’s life: physical function, concentration and memory, sleep, and feelings of depression, and anxiety and irritability. The aims of this project include (1) determining chronic pain classification (musculoskeletal, headache, central/neuropathic); the prevalence, location, duration, and demographic associations of those living in chronic pain; and the injury severity, current level of functioning, and comorbidities in participants followed through the NIDILRR-funded TBI Model Systems, and Department of Veterans Affairs databases; (2) identifying extreme groups based on responses to pain (interference and perception of improvement and treatment), or chronic pain extreme phenotypes to determine key differences between those with positive versus negative outcomes; and (3) identifying treatment practices by clinicians who treat comorbid TBI and chronic pain to determine gaps in availability and accessibility of guideline level treatment, and highlight underserved populations were applicable. Study results provide a more detailed picture of the issues surrounding chronic pain after TBI, and identify treatment targets (behavioral, cognitive, biological, and molecular) to advance a personalized medical approach for treatment for individuals with TBI living in chronic pain. Outcomes include educational materials on chronic pain and pain management that benefit patients, family members, clinicians, and policymakers; and a data-driven impact on clinical practice.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)  
District of Columbia

Improving Assessment of Opioid Use Disorder in People with Disabilities Related to Chronic Musculoskeletal Pain

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www.air.org/project/improving-assessment-opioid-use-disorder-people-disabilities-related-chronic-musculoskeletal

Principal Investigator: Kathryn Paez, PhD, MSN 301/592-2229  
Public Contact: Daniel Harwell 202/403-6397

Project Number: 90DPGE0006  
Start Date: September 30, 2018  
Length: 36 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $499,979; FY 19 $499,909; FY 20 $499,826

Abstract: The goal of this project is to lay the groundwork for primary care providers and specialists to accurately assess for opioid use disorder (OUD) in people with disabilities who are taking opioids long term to manage musculoskeletal pain while using the best evidence to minimize OUD over- and under-diagnosis. The objectives are to: (1) conduct a systematic literature review to identify evidence-based best OUD assessment practices, tools, and resources; (2) identify barriers and facilitators to OUD assessment and treatment access through qualitative research; (3) adapt and test a screening tool to detect OUD in people who take opioids long term to manage musculoskeletal pain; and (4) develop an OUD assessment and referral toolkit and disseminate it through provider and disability organizations and those training providers in addiction medicine. The outcomes of this project are increased understanding of opioid misuse versus appropriate use in the target population, increased provider knowledge of steps to accurately assess for OUD, strategies for OUD risk stratification, and ways to facilitate transition into OUD treatment.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Florida

A Lifestyle Intervention Targeting Enhanced Health and Function for Persons with Chronic SCI in Caregiver/Care-Receiver Relationships: Effects of Caregiver Co-Treatment

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Principal Investigator: Mark Nash, PhD
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Project Number: 90DP0074
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $498,572; FY 16 $497,183; FY 17 $498,908; FY 18 $499,403; FY 19 $484,761

Abstract: This project evaluates and tests a population-specific lifestyle intervention (LI) in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) that significantly improves fitness, lessens the risk of cardiometabolic disease, and reduces body mass thus improving the execution of daily activities. An increase in body mass occurring early after SCI is widely reported to decay lifelong health and function. Obesity/overweight affects nearly 70 percent of the SCI population, imposing earlier and disproportionate risks for healthy-decaying cardioendocrine disease, inflammatory stress, musculoskeletal pain, and functional decline. These risks also impose significant physical and emotional stress on the caregivers of people with SCI, who are progressively challenged to maintain a reserve of health and function as they also age. Project goals include: (1) testing the impact of a model LI program on attributes of health and function that are recognized to compromise healthy aging in persons with SCI living in caregiver/care-receiver relationships, (2) examining the impact of the LI on the relationship of the caregiver/care-receiver dyad, and (3) determining whether co-intervention with the caregiver improves health/function for their partner. This two-center, randomized, parallel group, wash-in controlled study enrolls 60 men/women ages 18-65 with SCI for more than one year. Their caregivers are co-enrolled, and are defined as family members, significant others, or friends who provide social and/or physical support including personal assistance, routine emotional encouragement, and/or social interaction. All participants with SCI undergo an intense, 6-month LI program incorporating circuit resistance training, Mediterranean-style diet, and a customized 16-session behavioral intervention. A 6-month minimally supervised extension tests intervention durability. Half of the caregivers undergo a comparable, caregiver-targeted exercise, nutrition, and behavioral intervention; and the remaining caregivers receive a compilation of general exercise and nutrition recommendations vetted by medical and nutritional authorities. The outcomes for participants with SCI are examined for body mass and fitness; biomarkers of cardioendocrine risk and inflammation; function; multidimensional pain; and health-related quality of life, treatment acceptance, and symptoms of anxiety, and depression. Caregiver participants are evaluated for their function, multidimensional pain, and health-related quality of life, caregiver burden, life satisfaction, anxiety, and treatment acceptance.
A Consumer Advisory Board and Medical Monitor evaluate project progress and information, which is disseminated through consumer conferences, scientific presentations, juried manuscripts, web-based media, and conference symposia attended by health care professionals.
App Factory to Support Health and Function of People with Disabilities

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Project Number: 90DPHF0004
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $475,000; FY 20 $474,986; FY 21 $474,928; FY 22 $474,990; FY 23 $474,932

Abstract: The goal of this project is to promote the development of smart phone technology mobile applications (apps) to address high-priority health needs of people with disabilities. Mobile healthcare or mHealth is an important new tool for management of chronic conditions; however, the increase of these mHealth “apps” may increase health disparities, leaving behind vulnerable populations, including people with disabilities. In a targeted effort to promote mHealth apps addressing the needs of people with disabilities, this DRRP applies the successful App Factory model to achieve the following objectives: (1) identify the need for mHealth app development targeting health and function of people with disabilities; (2) develop and deploy a selection of several mHealth apps per project year based on an annual competition targeting high priority needs; (3) evaluate long-term use and impact of mHealth apps on users with disabilities health, function, and quality of life outcomes; (4) evaluate curated mHealth apps to determine their suitability for users with disabilities, and disseminate information about accessibility and clinical utility of these apps; (5) provide training and technical assistance to people with disabilities and their support workers to aid in selection, set-up, and use of mHealth apps; and (6) provide training and technical assistance to app developers to support development of apps that address the needs of people with disabilities. This project partners with existing LiveWell RERC collaborators (Shepherd Center and Duke University), the University of Montana, and numerous commercial application partners. Deliverables include a minimum of 16 mHealth apps, a website with information about curated apps that are suitable for users with disabilities, and published articles documenting effectiveness of selected mHealth apps on health and function outcomes of people with disabilities.
A Multi-Center Clinical Trial to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Intermittent Hypoxia Therapy in Individuals with Spinal Cord Injury

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Public Contact: 312/239-3919

Project Number: 90SIMS0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $899,985; FY 18 $899,824; FY 19 $899,984; FY 20 $899,940; FY 21 $899,725

Abstract: This collaborative project evaluates a promising new treatment strategy for persons with spinal cord injury (SCI), using brief reductions in oxygen levels in the inspired air. While treatment options for persons with SCI have greatly improved, they are still limited in efficacy. The goal of this project is to evaluate a new strategy called acute intermittent hypoxia (AIH), during which a person is administered brief bouts of low oxygen through a facemask. AIH triggers the synthesis and release of specific spinal proteins that promote effective increased neural plasticity, improving muscle contractions. The objective is to test whether daily AIH improves upper-limb function in persons with incomplete cervical SCI. Researchers evaluate training when AIH is used alone, in combination with task-specific traditional training, or using a sensorized robotic device (RAPAEL Smart Glove). The project aims to improve hand and arm function in individuals with SCI, enhance reintegration into social and vocational activities, and provide a greater understanding of hypoxia-induced neuroplasticity.
Thresholds Health Literacy and Wellness Promotion Center

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Principal Investigator: Lisa Razzano, PhD; Sheila O’Neill
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Project Number: 90DPHF0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,795; FY 18 $499,778; FY 19 $499,903; FY 20 $499,624; FY 21 $499,525

Abstract: The Thresholds Health Literacy and Wellness Promotion Development Center (TWC) seeks to address the health and wellness of individuals in recovery of psychiatric disabilities with other co-occurring disabilities and physical health conditions, focusing on health literacy and promoting wellness as a means to enhance recovery and function within the community. The developmental activities included in this Center include three projects. Project 1 is an exploratory longitudinal study of chronic physical health conditions among individuals with psychiatric disabilities, focusing on health screening and management of chronic health and utilization of health services over two years. Project 2 focuses on improving health literacy and promoting wellness among individuals with psychiatric disabilities and workforce providers. This project builds on data collected in Project 1 to develop, evaluate, and disseminate a 12-month comprehensive, coordinated series of health literacy and wellness promotion modules with integrated components specifically relevant to illness risk and health management for the target population and the workforce of providers. Project 3 focuses on developing, pilot testing, refining, and disseminating a state-of-the-science curriculum focused on promoting wellness and health and addressing needs related to sexuality and sexual behaviors among diverse individuals in recovery.
INROADS: Intersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction, and Disability Services

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Principal Investigator: Sharon Reif, PhD; Rachel Sayko Adams, PhD; Monika Mitra, PhD; Joanne Nicholson, PhD; Cindy Parks Thomas, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPGE0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $482,852; FY 19 $489,502; FY 20 $499,826

Abstract: The goal of the INROADS (INtersecting Research on Opioid Misuse, Addiction, and Disability Services) Project is to contribute to evidence-based policy and practice on behalf of people living with disabilities and opioid use disorder (OUD). The objectives are to: (1) conduct a systematic literature review on OUD and disability; (2) undertake comprehensive, targeted research activities with significant key informant input: and (3) engage the community of people with disabilities in shaping the research and informing INROADS products for widespread dissemination to diverse audiences. The project includes mixed methods research activities with analyses of quantitative data from multiple available national and state-level datasets, integrated with qualitative data from focus groups and key informant interviews, and examination of peer support services. Outcomes include knowledge transfer and dissemination of research findings to people with disabilities, advocates, practitioners, policy makers, and others, and, ultimately, improving access to care and facilitating lives in OUD recovery.
Motivating Self-Management Through Multi-Media Health Promotion

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healthycommunityliving.com/index.html
www.facebook.com/HealthyCommunityLiving
twitter.com/WeAreHCL
www.flickr.com/groups/healthycommunityliving
www.youtube.com/channel/UCVu6D_eCN5aRQ6tYueCyecg

Principal Investigator: Craig Ravesloot, PhD
Public Contact: 406/243-2992

Project Number: 90DP0073
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $499,811; FY 16 $499,999; FY 17 $499,780; FY 18 $499,815; FY 19 $499,952

Abstract: This project, called Healthy Community Living (HCL), develops two web-based workshop curricula for community-based agencies to deliver health promotion and independent living training, and services to people with disabilities living in the community. The first development product, Living Well in the Community, is a multi-media curriculum based on the 4th edition of Living Well with a Disability curriculum created by the Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities. The second product, Community Living Skills, is a new multimedia independent living skills curriculum based on Self-Determination Theory that increases consumer knowledge, motivation and confidence for engaging in self-management activities and for living independently in the community. These products help to (1) improve the health of people with disabilities by increasing accessibility to evidence-based health promotion curricula that has been shown to be cost-effective for reducing limitation due to secondary conditions, as well as (2) the opportunity to build important life skills to live independently in the community. While not focused solely on rural populations, this project partners with long-term collaborator, the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), who has recruited multiple Centers for Independent Living to participate as project development teams, pilot, and evaluation sites. These centers are located in urban areas across the country but also provide services to rural areas using satellite offices (e.g., Atlanta, Los Angeles, and Houston). The development teams worked in parallel to develop each online multimedia curriculum using an Iterative Participatory Curriculum Development (IPCD) procedure. Pilot team testing led to further curriculum iterations and adaptations. Knowledge translation activities include developing new HCL program training and technical assistance procedures, and dissemination of project outcome results to a variety of community-based programs (e.g., Centers for Independent Living, Aging and Disability Research Centers) and health promotion researchers.
Enhancing Parenting Skills:
Application of a Web-Based Three-Tiered Model

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Project Number: 90DPHF0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $474,502; FY 19 $474,347; FY 20 $474,507; FY 21 $474,217; FY 22 $474,686

Abstract: This project develops and rigorously evaluates an intervention to reduce challenging behavior in young children with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The objectives are: (1) to use input from stakeholders using a Community-Engaged Research framework to develop the Tiered Online Training and Support (TOTS) intervention, a web-based, three-tier model of parent training and support to manage behavioral challenges in home and community settings, (2) to test the efficacy of TOTS using a randomized controlled trial in collaboration with University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDDs) in Oregon and Ohio, and (3) to disseminate the intervention for broad implementation in UCEDD and community settings. Outcomes include: (1) improvement of child behavioral health and function in terms of reduction of challenging behavior and improvements in adaptive behavior; (2) improvement of parenting skills, self-efficacy, problem-solving, and child behavior management; and (3) an online intervention packages that provides families with access to intervention components tailored to their child and family needs.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Promoting Independence and Self-Management Using mHealth

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Project Number: 90DP0064 (Formerly H133A140005)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $499,911; FY 15 $499,562; FY 16 $499,291; FY 17 $499,619; FY 18 $499,581; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project develops and implements mobile health (mHealth) tools to support self-management and aid youth with brain and spinal anomalies (BSA) in their transition to adulthood. Individuals with developmental BSAs, who may have impairments in self-management skills, are susceptible to secondary conditions. The early teen years are a developmentally appropriate time in one’s life to seek separation from one’s parents and gain full independence with regard to self-management. Many teens fail to develop the self-management skills necessary to independently manage medical and self-care routines. One major barrier identified was the lack of developmentally appropriate tools to help in this transition. The mHealth tools incorporate mechanisms for caregiver and family involvement and peer support. This project builds upon previous research with a self-management pilot project for individuals with spinal bifida, implementing the mHealth supported self-management program in a community setting, and developing educational support for participants.
Innovation in Disability Empowerment and Service Delivery

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Project Number: 90DPGE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $499,960; FY 17 $496,919; FY 18 $497,153; FY 19 $492,835; FY 20 $481,355

Abstract: This project’s overall objective is to identify potential models of healthcare delivery for individuals with disabilities that are effective in improving health and the patient experience of care, while reducing cost. The project includes a systematic review of the research and health policy literature to identify innovative health service delivery models that offer long-term support services to people with disabilities and that are supported by evidence-based research, actionable policies, or both. Three rigorous research projects evaluate the impact of three different models of care on the Triple Aim: (1) a community-based care management program delivered by a non-profit organization through waiver funds, (2) the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) applied to younger individuals with disabilities between ages 55-64, and (3) a state-of-the-art mobile health platform that supports community-based service delivery. A development project with participatory action design refines the existing mobile health system to support the third research project. Evidence-based studies demonstrate that delivering services via non-profit organizations or through PACE models of care have the potential to positively impact outcomes for people with disabilities. The main barrier that has prevented these programs from being fully implemented outside of research has been lack of integration into a system that can support financial sustainability. To overcome these barriers, this project includes partnerships between an integrated delivery system and community-based programs, identifying promising aspects of delivery systems, and proposing plans for implementation.
A Multidisciplinary Approach to Translating New Knowledge into Practice to Promote Health and Well-Being after Spinal Cord Injury

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Project Number: 90DP0098
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $149,877; FY 17 $149,894; FY 18 $149,867; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project translates new scientific knowledge relating to health and function to reduce risk of secondary health conditions (SHCs) and other health complications after spinal cord injury (SCI) by developing automated individualized risk profiles for use by consumers with SCI and interdisciplinary healthcare providers. This addresses a key limitation in current knowledge translation practices and utilization tools which are typically general in nature, such as factsheets, videos, or other self-help information. This project uses data on over 5,000 participants related to risk and protective factors for SHCs and other health outcomes, previously gathered under the NIDILRR-funded Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on SHCs after SCI, to develop the automated individualized risk profiles, as well as factsheets for those who do not have Internet access. Stakeholders, including those with SCI, health professionals, and those who work with SCI registries, identify the conditions upon which to focus, the types of formats and appropriateness of the tools for different environments and end-users, and the usefulness of the tools. The project includes the following activities: (1) convene stakeholder groups to identify the most important areas of focus, (2) develop the automated tools, (3) reconvene stakeholder groups throughout the project to evaluate the tools, (4) disseminate the tools through stakeholder, institutional, and public health agencies, and (5) evaluate the utility of the tools within those settings. The project collaborates with several stakeholder organizations including the RTC on Independent Living at the University of Kansas, the South Carolina SCI Association, AccessAbility (local independent living center), Roper Hospital, the Minnesota Department of Health, and the South Carolina SCI Surveillance System.
Promoting Obesity Prevention Among Latinx Children with Developmental Disabilities and Families Through Engaged Research

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Project Number: 90DPHF0005
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $499,939; FY 20 $499,617; FY 21 $499,991; FY 22 $499,815; FY 23 $499,949

Abstract: This project addresses the research gap on children and adolescents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and obesity. Recent research has shown that obesity is a growing problem for all children in the United States according to reports. Children who are obese may be at higher risk of having chronic health conditions such as asthma, joint problems, heart disease risk factors, and type 2 diabetes, and for being obese as adults. Children and adolescents with IDD are more likely to be obese than their peers without disabilities. Additionally, there are racial and ethnic disparities within the Latinx community with children and adolescents experiencing higher rates of obesity than their white peers, and these disparities are likely to be heightened among children and adolescents with IDD. Project objectives include: (1) examining social determinants of health and health disparities among Latinx children and adolescents with IDD, (2) examining health, obesity, and health behaviors among children and adolescents with IDD and their maternal caregivers; and (3) developing and testing an intervention for Latinx children and adolescents with IDD and their families to promote healthy lifestyles. Products and dissemination activities are grounded in knowledge translation and contribute toward the application of findings about Latinx children and adolescents with IDD and health.
Burn Injury Model Systems  
Massachusetts

Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System

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Project Number: 90DPBU0001  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $363,000; FY 18 $363,000; FY 19 $363,000; FY 20 $363,000; FY 21 $363,000

Abstract: The overall goal of Boston-Harvard Burn Injury Model System (BHBIMS) is to provide a multidisciplinary, comprehensive system of care for burn survivors that fosters innovative burn injury rehabilitation research. The project includes multiple objectives: (1) provide model care, (2) facilitate the comprehensive longitudinal assessment of burn injury outcomes by contributing to the Burn Model System National Database, (3) carry out a high quality site-specific project to develop social recovery trajectories using the LIBRE Profile, (4) propose and participate in a collaborative module project, and (5) disseminate research findings for a variety of targeted populations developed through partnerships with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center and the burn survivor community.
North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System (NTBRMS)

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Project Number: 90DPBU0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $380,000; FY 18 $380,000; FY 19 $380,000; FY 20 $380,000; FY 21 $380,000

Abstract: The goals of the North Texas Burn Rehabilitation Model System (NTBRMS) are to (1) assess long-term outcomes of individuals with burn injury by enrolling participants into the Burn Model System National Database, (2) conduct one site-specific research project “Vitamin D Deficiency in Adults Following a Major Burn Injury,” and (3) participate in three module research projects. The goal of the Vitamin D project is to compare low dose versus high dose Vitamin D replacement and evaluate its effects on Vitamin D levels and burn-related symptoms such as fatigue, muscle weakness, pain, itch, and peripheral neuropathy. The site-specific intervention study provides information regarding the maintenance of Vitamin D levels following the supplementation and its impact on these burn-related secondary conditions. NTBRMS module projects build on the existing Burn Model System infrastructure and include: (1) Early predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury, examining early clinical hospital events to better understand the effects of early injury and in-hospital events on functional outcomes and risk factors for recovery; (2) Genetic predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury, investigating whether preexisting genetic factors influence physical and psychological recovery; and (3) LIBRE Profile Social Integration Outcomes, using the LIBRE Profile to determine the importance of post-traumatic growth, mental health, and burn-related clinical complications as predictors of social participation outcomes. Module project outcomes include identifying an effective bio-psycho-social model of predictors affecting burn recovery. Products include educational materials in various formats disseminated to both professional and layperson audiences such as burn survivors and their families.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Texas

Effects of Anabolic Steroids and Blockade of Chronic Catecholamine-Mediated Stress on Psychosocial, Growth, Scar, and Physiologic Outcomes After Massive Burn Injury

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Project Number: 90DPBU0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $375,000; FY 18 $375,000; FY 19 $375,000; FY 20 $375,000; FY 21 $375,000

Abstract: This Pediatric Burn Center conducts clinical research studies that aim to modulate the catabolic and hypermetabolic response to burn trauma and improve long-term outcomes in children with burn injuries. Research focuses on children with severe burns to assess the efficacy of propranolol, oxandrolone, or the combination of oxandrolone plus propranolol administered for one-year post-burn to reduce the hypermetabolic and catabolic response. Research looks at outcomes within the first years after burn injury, as well as long-term outcomes.
Abstract: The Northwest Regional Burn Model System (NWRBMS) (1) provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary services to individuals with burn injuries from the time of injury through recovery; (2) educates patients, families, care providers, and the public about the natural course of burn injury; and (3) creates and disseminates new knowledge about innovative evidence-based interventions that improve health and function, community living and participation, and employment after burn injury. NWRBMS includes a site-specific research project, a randomized controlled trial of Virtual-Environment Home Rehabilitation. This project addresses the feasibility and practicality of a self-directed, technology-driven home rehabilitation program and analyzes whether technology-driven home-based rehabilitation improves functional outcomes for individuals with burns in a real-world setting. The NWRBMS participates in four BMS collaborative modules. NWRBMS investigators lead two of these modules: (1) Early post-injury and in-hospital data predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury, and (2) genetic predictors of functional outcomes after burn injury. NWRBMS participates in two other modules led by other BMS centers: (1) Effects of anabolic steroids and blockade of chronic catecholamine mediated stress on quality of life and physical function after massive burn injury and (2) defining clinical predictors of social integration following burn injury.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Alabama

UAB Spinal Cord Injury Model System

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Project Number: 90SI5019
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $468,364; FY 17 $468,364; FY 18 $468,364; FY 19 $468,364; FY 20 $468,364

Abstract: Spinal Cord Injury Model System (UAB-SCIMS) provides comprehensive, multidisciplinary rehabilitation services to individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI) as a basis for conducting research that contributes to evidence-based rehabilitation interventions and clinical and practice guidelines. Activities of the UAB-SCIMS, both ongoing and during this cycle, reflect an active partnership within the components of UAB’s health system and between UAB and community organizations in Birmingham and across the state. Objectives of the UAB-SCIMS are: (1) Continue to be an effective participant in data collection activities for the National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center, enrolling a minimum of thirty newly-injured individuals annually with SCI and completing required follow-up examinations; (2) complete a controlled intervention trial of a home-based diet intervention to improve metabolic health, body composition, and quality of life; (3) participate in three collaborative research modules; (4) utilize the active involvement of persons with SCI in the design and execution of the proposed activities; and (5) disseminate project results via a variety of accessible formats and venues for both professionals and persons with SCI and their families, and in conjunction with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). Outcomes of this project include: (1) Availability of a cost-effective diet approach with demonstrated efficacy to improve health and well-being; (2) achievement of recruitment goals for three collaborative modules; (3) dissemination of new knowledge to professionals who work in the field of SCI, persons with SCI, and their families; and (4) maintenance and improvement of UAB’s SCI comprehensive care continuum. Project outputs include: A cookbook to improve health with demonstrated efficacy, and nutritional guidance disseminated via a variety of venues, a periodic newsletter, ongoing dissemination via a website, development of a variety of Fact Sheets, Question and Answer topics, Rehab Tip Sheets, peer reviewed publications, and national and international presentations.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2019 - Health and Function
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Southern California Spinal Cord Injury Model System at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center

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Project Number: 90SI5018
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $463,140; FY 17 $463,140; FY 18 $463,140; FY 19 $463,140; FY 20 $463,140

Abstract: The overarching goal of the Southern California Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SCIMS) at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center (RLANRC) is to generate new knowledge that fosters recovery of function, community re-integration, and wellness throughout the lifetime of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI). RLANRC is designated as the Patient-Centered Medical Home for SCI in Los Angeles County, providing services to a large underserved and minority population. The objectives of this SCIMS are achieved through four integrated categories of effort during the five years: (1) Comprehensive service delivery; (2) participation in the National SCI Database; (3) site-specific research; and (4) a collaborative research module. SCIMS partners include Emergency Medical Services, Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center, and Harbor/UCLA Medical Center, treating a majority of the region’s trauma victims. The site-specific research evaluates outcomes and sustainability of two programs for promotion of physical activity after SCI. The collaborative research module evaluates a sensor system for establishing effective pressure relief behaviors and reducing risk of pressure ulcer development among wheelchair users. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) Increased knowledge about incidence, causes, and outcomes of traumatic SCI; (2) evidence-based interventions and technologies that facilitate healthy behaviors in individuals with SCI; (3) increase in practical, effective, and scientifically-informed knowledge and strategies for enhancing health, function, and well-being after SCI. Project outputs include peer-reviewed publications, factsheets, presentations, training materials, and guidelines for promoting physical activity and technology for motivating healthy behaviors after SCI.
The Rocky Mountain Regional Spinal Injury System (RMRSIS)

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Project Number: 90SI5015
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $483,644; FY 17 $483,644; FY 18 $483,644; FY 19 $483,644; FY 20 $483,644

Abstract: The Rocky Mountain Regional Spinal Injury System (RMRSIS) conducts a program of site-specific research, leads and participates in collaborative module research, maintains the SCI Model Systems National Database, and advances an established SCI Model System of care and research. Project objectives include: (1) conducting a site-specific research project to add to the literature regarding the use of statins in preserving bone health and mitigating neuropathic pain for people with SCI, (2) leading a module research project to evaluate the use of complementary and alternative healthcare to treat pain following SCI, (3) contributing at least 60 new cases each year to the SCI Model Systems National Database and continuing its record of outstanding longitudinal follow-up data collection, and (4) maintaining a successful system of care. Outcomes include: (1) individuals with chronic SCI having low-cost options for managing bone health and reducing neuropathic pain, (2) a greater understanding of the use of complementary and integrative healthcare for people with SCI, and (3) improving an already world-renowned system of care meeting the lifetime needs of people with SCI. This project produces manuscripts in high-impact peer-reviewed journals, presents at national professional scientific meetings, and disseminates research results to consumers and other stakeholders through collaborations with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC).
South Florida Spinal Cord Injury Model System

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Project Number: 90SI5023
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $451,349; FY 17 $451,349; FY 18 $451,349; FY 19 $451,349; FY 20 $451,349

Abstract: The South Florida Spinal Cord Injury System (SFSCIS) serves a high volume of patients with spinal cord injury (SCI) providing comprehensive rehabilitation services specifically designed to meet their needs. The clinical components of the SFSCIS include in-patient rehabilitation at Jackson Memorial Rehabilitation Hospital, vocational services, community and job placement, and long-term community follow-up and health maintenance. Project research includes a site-specific study, as well as collaborative projects with other Model System centers. The goal is to improve outcomes in the preservation or restoration of function following SCI. Additionally, this project contributes to the National Spinal Cord Injury Database; utilizes culturally appropriate methods of education, training, and outreach throughout the care system; and includes a comprehensive evaluation program.
Southeastern Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SR-SCIMS)

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Project Number: 90SI5016
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $483,867; FY 17 $483,867; FY 18 $483,867; FY 19 $483,867; FY 20 $483,867

Abstract: The Spinal Cord Injury Model System (SCIMS) at Shepherd Center offers multi-disciplinary rehabilitation specifically designed to meet the needs of individuals with SCI across the continuum of care. SCIMS is conducting two site-specific research projects, and one collaborative module. Project 1 evaluates the effects of motor-training plus non-invasive brain stimulation with an anticipated outcome to improve walking ability. Project 2 gathers data about how individuals with SCI utilize hospital emergency departments with an anticipated outcome to improve understanding of the circumstances wherein these services are used. In the collaborative module SCIMS serves as the lead center to evaluate and characterize the experience of spasticity in everyday life with the goal to understand how spasticity impacts function and well-being in individuals with SCI. SCIMS projects and collaborative efforts produce substantive scientific results, and information for dissemination to clinical and consumer audiences.
Midwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System (MRSCIS)

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Project Number: 90SI5022
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $479,482; FY 17 $479,482; FY 18 $479,482; FY 19 $479,482; FY 20 $479,482

Abstract: The Midwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System (MRSCIS) provides comprehensive, multi-disciplinary medical and rehabilitation care to persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) from the site of injury to community reintegration. The objectives of the MRSCICS are to (1) provide a comprehensive continuum of care for persons with SCI, (2) contribute to assessment of long-term outcomes by enrolling 80 subjects per year into the national SCI database, (3) conduct one site-specific study, (4) disseminate research findings to various stakeholders in an effective and timely manner, (5) collaborate effectively with the Model System Knowledge Translation Center, and (6) involve individuals with disabilities in research and dissemination activities.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Massachusetts

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Project Number: 90SI5021
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $459,759; FY 17 $459,759; FY 18 $459,759; FY 19 $459,759; FY 20 $459,759

Abstract: The Spaulding Hospital New England Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center is a comprehensive network of care spanning from preventative programs and emergency services to outpatient care with a special focus on community reintegration and vocational rehabilitation. Clinical and investigative activities are directed to developing evidence-based rehabilitation interventions and clinical practice guidelines through spinal cord injury (SCI) research. The project develops and improves its multidisciplinary system of rehabilitation care designed specifically to meet the needs of individuals with SCI, contribute to the SCI Model Systems National Database and facilitate the longitudinal assessment of long term SCI outcomes, and contribute to improved long term SCI outcomes by conducting a site-specific research project and participating in a collaborative research project.
Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System

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Project Number: 90SI5026
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $459,759; FY 17 $459,759; FY 18 $459,759; FY 19 $459,759; FY 20 $459,759

Abstract: The Northern New Jersey Spinal Cord Injury System (NNJSCIS) provides a comprehensive continuum of state-of-the-art care for persons with spinal cord injury (SCI) and their families from the time of injury through rehabilitation and return to the community. Research and clinical activities at NNJSCIS include pharmacologic approaches to managing bladder dysfunction, a complication that adversely affects quality of life for many individuals living with SCI. The project also maintains active communication with the SCI consumer and research communities through web and social media, consumer and professional conferences, newsletters, professional publications, and scientific presentations. The NNJSCIS is a cooperative effort of Kessler Foundation, Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation and University Hospital-Newark.
Mount Sinai Spinal Cord Injury Model System

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Project Number: 90SI5017
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $456,375; FY 17 $456,375; FY 18 $456,375; FY 19 $456,375; FY 20 $456,375

Abstract: The goal of the Mount Sinai Spinal Cord Injury Model System (MSSCIMS) is to provide a comprehensive program of coordinated patient care, education, and research activities for individuals who have sustained spinal cord injury (SCI). Clinical activities are directed at promoting evidence-based practice, understanding the particular needs of the target population, and providing individualized lifetime care to persons with SCI. Research activities include collecting longitudinal data on complications, impairments, activities, participation, and quality of life; participation in three collaborative modules with other Model Systems; and conducting a site-specific project in collaboration with the VA Center of Excellence on the Medical Consequences of Spinal Cord Injury in the Bronx by implementation and evaluation of a protocol for improving therapy participation by preventing orthostatic hypotension.
Abstract: The Northeast Ohio Regional Spinal Cord Injury System (NORSCIS) at the MetroHealth Medical System/Case Western Reserve University (MHS) provides a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to the care of individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI). NORSCIS targets newly injured persons with traumatic SCI who come to the MHS for acute rehabilitation for inclusion in the National SCI Database (NSCID). This SCIMS project follows the new traumatic injuries along with the 495 persons already entered in the NSCID. NORSCIS utilizes intramural and collaborative research projects to test innovative approaches to treating SCI and to assess outcomes in health and function. NORSCIS includes two site-specific projects. Early Characterization of Upper Extremity (UE) Paralysis in Cervical SCI as a Means to Determine Patterns of Injury and Recovery, Informing Prognosis, and Guiding Time-Critical Interventions collects preliminary data demonstrating the power of unique UE muscle assessments, providing the groundwork for developing a patient-centered guide to UE treatment for the restoration of function for people with cervical SCI. Methods for Reduction of “Unavoidable” Pressure Ulcers in Persons with Acute SCI focuses on the redesign, fabrication, and testing of a new spine board that reduces excessive body-board pressures currently found on standard spine boards. In addition, NORSCIS includes a collaborative module project, Early Predictors of Rehabilitation Outcomes After Acute Traumatic SCI, to identify trauma data variables that predict rehabilitation outcomes of persons that survive traumatic SCI. NORSCIS continues to improve care delivery and services through a quality initiative that is based on the preferences of SCI consumers. This initiative matches a peer navigator to a newly injured patient while the patient is in the acute hospital and followed for 1-year post-rehabilitation discharge. NORSCIS collaborates with MHS SCI Consumer Group, the Northeast Ohio Chapter of the United Spinal Injury Association, and NIDILRR’s Model System Knowledge Translation Center to ensure the participation of persons with SCI in conducting SCIMS research and to enable the production of internet and electronic media to serve as a vehicle for dissemination of project outcomes to clinical and consumer audiences.
Ohio Regional SCI Model System (ORSCIMS)

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Project Number: 90SI5020
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $444,000; FY 17 $444,000; FY 18 $444,000; FY 19 $444,000; FY 20 $444,000

Abstract: The goal of this Regional Spinal Cord Injury Model System is to improve long-term quality of life for persons who have sustained a spinal cord injury (SCI). The objectives of this project are to (1) provide an exemplary and comprehensive system of care for individuals who have sustained an SCI; (2) contribute to the longitudinal study of outcomes following SCI; (3) identify biomarkers that predict patients who are at risk to develop infections; (4) conduct a collaborative project to evaluate an intervention to reduce substance misuse following an SCI; and (5) collaborate with the project’s Community and Scientific Advisory Boards to disseminate findings and develop products that can improve quality of life after an SCI. For objective 3, the project investigates whether sympathico-vagal instability identifies patients at risk for infections earlier than it is possible to obtain with routine blood samples.
Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems
Pennsylvania

Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley

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Principal Investigator: Ralph J. Marino, MD
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Project Number: 90SI5024
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $468,364; FY 17 $468,364; FY 18 $468,364; FY 19 $468,364; FY 20 $468,364

Abstract: The goal of the Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley (RSCICDV) is to provide and evaluate a comprehensive program of coordinated patient care, education, and research activities for individuals who have sustained a traumatic spinal cord injury (SCI). Clinical activities are directed at promoting evidence-based practice, understanding the specific needs of the target population, and providing individualized lifetime care to persons with SCI. Research activities are designed to generate longitudinal data on impairment, activities, participation, and quality of life as part of the national database. These activities include site-specific research and contribution to collaborative modules, including research in upper extremity neurological function, pressure ulcer prevention, spasticity after spinal cord injury, and risk determinants for cardiometabolic disease after spinal cord injury. Dissemination activities include development of educational resources and offerings for patients, healthcare providers, and researchers, including online materials and training workshops in the use of outcome measures.
University of Pittsburgh Model Center on Spinal Cord Injury

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Principal Investigator: Michael L. Boninger, MD 412/648-6979
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Project Number: 90SI5014
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $459,759; FY 17 $459,759; FY 18 $459,759; FY 19 $459,759; FY 20 $459,759

Abstract: The University of Pittsburgh Model Center on Spinal Cord Injury (UPMC-SCI) builds upon work from a previous cycle to develop web-based transfer and wheelchair maintenance training materials targeted at wheelchair users and evaluates the impact of each training in single-blind randomized controlled trials. During the previous funding cycle, UPMC-SCI developed successful in-person training programs for wheelchair users, demonstrating that transfer training is a potential mediator for preventing secondary upper limb injuries, and that a strong association exists between wheelchair maintenance and decreasing adverse events (such as injuries, missing work, etc.). UPMC-SCI also continues to investigate equity and disparities in assistive technology through its module project. In addition to collecting cross-sectional data, researchers prospectively collect longitudinal data on wheelchair repairs and subsequent adverse consequences. UPMC-SCI continues its heavy focus on knowledge translation so that this research can lead to changes in clinical care. UPMC-SCI participates in collaborative modules investigating trauma databases for early predictors of rehabilitation outcomes after SCI, residential instability in chronic SCI, and characterizing experiences in spasticity after SCI.
Texas Model Spinal Cord Injury System

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Principal Investigator: Heather B. Taylor, PhD 713/797-5908
Public Contact: Stacey Eckert 713/797-5972

Project Number: 90SI5027
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $468,364; FY 17 $468,364; FY 18 $468,364; FY 19 $468,364; FY 20 $468,364

Abstract: The Texas Model Spinal Cord Injury System (TMSCIS) center conducts innovative spinal cord injury (SCI) research to improve outcomes and advance rehabilitation methods, procedures, and technologies. TMSCIS provides a comprehensive system of care for persons with SCI extending from emergency medical services to intensive acute medical care; comprehensive inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation; psychosocial services; and long-term follow-up. This center also contributes to the National SCI Database. TMSCIS includes a site-specific project to conduct a clinical trial of a psychological health promotion intervention for women with SCI, delivered in the online virtual world of Second Life. This trial uses a community-based participatory research approach, partnering closely with a National Community Advisory Board of people with SCI. This innovative approach reduces barriers to participation, representing the first group intervention designed to address the psychological needs of women with SCI. This intervention is tested with a national sample of 192 women with SCI randomly assigned to either an intervention or a control group, with assessments at three-time points (pre-intervention, post-intervention, and six-month follow-up), to examine the immediate and longer-term efficacy of the intervention and mechanisms through which the intervention influences psychological health outcomes. The center also participates in multiple collaborative module projects on pain, predictors of acute care on outcomes, and exoskeleton use in SCI. TMSCIS develops knowledge translation materials in various accessible media, designed to reach consumers, clinicians, and researchers to inform health-related decision-making of persons with SCI and their medical service providers. TIRR-Memorial Hermann partners with Harris Health Systems, the University of Texas Health Science Center – Houston (UTHHealth), Baylor College of Medicine, and the University of Montana.
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Project Number: 90DPTB0015
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $465,000; FY 18 $465,000; FY 19 $465,000; FY 20 $465,000; FY 21 $465,000

Abstract: The University of Alabama at Birmingham Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (UAB-TBIMS) provides multidisciplinary, comprehensive rehabilitation services specifically designed for individuals with TBI. The goal of this project is to improve the lives of people with TBI and their family members by identifying trends in recovery and predictors of outcome while developing interventions to improve outcome. The objectives are: (1) Maintain enrollment and follow-up for the TBI National Database; (2) complete one in-house research project, aimed at improving the health and function, as well as the community participation, of persons with TBI by addressing barriers to healthy lifestyle behaviors; and (3) completion of an exploration and discovery module study focusing on return to driving after TBI, an essential component to independent living for many individuals. UAB-TBIMS products include an Internet-based program to promote healthy lifestyles after TBI, the Brain Waves newsletter published twice annually, with more than 10 years of issues archived on the project website; and dissemination of project results through professional meetings and journals, as well as distribution of information to stakeholders through the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
The Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury System (RMRBIS)

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www.craighospital.org/programs/research/
the-rocky-mountain-regional-brain-injury-system

Principal Investigator: Cynthia Harrison-Felix, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0007
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: The Rocky Mountain Regional Brain Injury System (RMRBIS) provides a comprehensive multidisciplinary specialty system of traumatic brain injury (TBI) care for Colorado and beyond, with research focusing on the health and function and community living and participation of individuals with moderate to severe TBI. Research activities include a site-specific randomized controlled trial of a group intervention to improve Self-Advocacy for Independent Life (SAIL) after TBI and help people get the services they need, a collaborative multi-center module to develop and evaluate crosswalks for aligning legacy domain measures to new measures in the longitudinal TBI Model Systems National Database. RMRBIS also participates in one or more modules lead by other TBI Model System centers, contributes to the TBIMS National Database by enrolling new individuals with TBI each year and continuing to follow more than 900 cases already enrolled, and disseminates findings to stakeholders through presentations and publications for consumer and professionals.
Indiana TBI Model System

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Principal Investigator: Flora M. Hammond, MD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $435,000; FY 18 $435,000; FY 19 $435,000; FY 20 $435,000; FY 21 $435,000

Abstract: This project aims to improve the lives of those affected by traumatic brain injury (TBI) through the following objectives: (1) to determine the breadth of post-TBI outcomes affected by alexithymia (poor emotional self-awareness) and to evaluate the effects of an alexithymia intervention on emotional self-awareness and related emotion regulation; (2) to provide high enrollment, quality data, and leadership to the TBI Model Systems; and (3) to produce knowledge about TBI rehabilitation. Alexithymia, a key component in impaired emotional control, is characterized by poor emotional awareness, difficulty describing and differentiating emotions, and problems acknowledging and associating physical sensations with emotions. This project includes a randomized controlled trial to assess the efficacy of an alexithymia intervention to teach people with TBI the fundamental awareness needed to regulate self-emotions. The project also includes a multi-site observational study to gain a greater understanding of the impact of alexithymia on variables beyond the intervention study.
Spaulding-Harvard Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

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spauldingrehab.org/research/programs-labs/traumatic-brain-injury

Principal Investigator: Joseph T. Giacino, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0011
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $441,500; FY 18 $441,500; FY 19 $441,500; FY 20 $441,500; FY 21 $441,500

Abstract: The overall goal of Spaulding-Harvard Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (SH-TBIMS) is to provide a multidisciplinary, comprehensive system of care for those with TBI that fosters innovative TBI rehabilitation research. Project objectives include: (1) providing model care, (2) facilitating comprehensive longitudinal assessment of TBI outcomes by contributing to the TBIMS National Database, (3) executing a high quality site-specific project to develop a recovery measure accessible to acute and post-acute clinicians and patient families for tracking TBI recovery among those with the most severe injuries, (4) proposing and participating in a collaborative module project, (5) disseminating research findings, and (6) involving persons with TBI and their families in all stages of research. Final products include a unique recovery metric that bridges acute and post-acute care and user-friendly dissemination products for a variety of target populations developed in partnership with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center and the TBI survivor and family community.
Southeastern Michigan Traumatic Brain Injury System

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Principal Investigator: Robin A. Hanks, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0006
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $446,000; FY 18 $446,000; FY 19 $446,000; FY 20 $446,000; FY 21 $446,000

Abstract: This project studies and provides services to people with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families from injury onset through long-term community integration. Research activities for this center include a site-specific study, a randomized controlled trial of a group intervention to improve resilience and social support in family members of those with TBI, which addresses the well-established problem of burden and social/emotional distress associated with caring for persons with TBI, and the potential adverse effects of family emotional distress on the outcomes of the person with the brain injury. A multi-center collaborative study examines the role of menopause in women with TBI. Women with TBI have been woefully understudied and the proposed module provides researchers with an opportunity to determine if the experience of menopause is different in women with brain injury versus those without. This project contributes to the National TBI Model Systems Database and disseminates research findings in the region and nationally through seminars, presentations at professional and consumer meetings, publishing in professional and consumer journals, and collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
Principal Investigator: Allen W. Brown, MD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0012
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $441,500; FY 18 $441,500; FY 19 $441,500; FY 20 $441,500; FY 21 $441,500

Abstract: This project tests a new way of delivering medical and social services to individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their families, addressing three chronic unmet needs: (1) ineffective connection to specialized medical and community resources in the transition from hospital to community-based care and beyond; (2) limited access to TBI experts; and (3) variable primary care provider (PCP) knowledge about the complex needs of individuals with TBI. The study integrates medical-rehabilitation expertise with the services of Resource Facilitation (RF) from the Minnesota Brain Injury Alliance. This intervention delivers direct clinical care remotely using telemedicine and other information and communication technology, connecting individuals with TBI, their families, and PCPs to TBIMS clinicians and to each other. The goals are to improve participation and quality of life for individuals with TBI, reduce caregiver burden and distress, and increase self-efficacy and mastery among PCPs caring for individuals with TBI and their families. The long-term goal is development of a replicable, sustainable, and cost-effective model of telemedicine care that integrates TBIMS Centers and Brain Injury Alliances/Associations nationwide to improve outcome following TBI.
Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System (NNJTBIS)

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Principal Investigator: Nancy D. Chiaravalloti, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $446,000; FY 18 $446,000; FY 19 $446,000; FY 20 $446,000; FY 21 $446,000

Abstract: The goal of the Northern New Jersey Traumatic Brain Injury System (NNJTBIS) is improving the overall quality of life of individuals with TBI. Project objectives include: (1) enrolling at least 35 participants per year into the national database, following participants 1, 2, and 5 years post-injury and beyond, and meeting or exceeding National Data and Statistical Center benchmarks; (2) conducting a site-specific, double-blind, placebo controlled randomized clinical trial of an evidence-based cognitive rehabilitation intervention for learning and memory deficits following TBI; and (3) collaborating or leading at least two modular studies, including a modular project examining the relationship between social cognition and social integration following TBI. Project results, as well as prevention and education materials, are disseminated through the project’s website, scientific and consumer publications, presentations, and other activities in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
New Jersey

Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems:
Improving Longitudinal Assessment and Tracking of
Activity Limitations in Individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury

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Principal Investigator: Yelena Goldin, PhD; Georgianna Dart, PhD; Brian Greenwald, MD; 732/906-2645 (Goldin)
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Project Number: 90DPTB0014
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $437,450; FY 18 $437,484; FY 19 $437,308; FY 20 $437,963; FY 21 $437,854

Abstract: This project provides a coordinated, multidisciplinary system of neurorehabilitation designed to meet the needs of individuals with TBI. Project activities include contributing to the TBI Model System National Database by enrolling 42 participants annually, conducting longitudinal follow-up, and filling knowledge gaps by providing novel information about activity limitations and patterns of recovery for individuals with TBI. Collaborative multi-center research and site-specific research focus on functional recovery patterns. The goal of the site-specific project is to improve assessment of outcomes across all post-acute settings by evaluating activity limitations and changes in functional activity domains throughout the course of recovery and rehabilitation. Objectives are to: (1) evaluate the sensitivity of Activity Measure for Post-Acute Care (AM-PAC) to longitudinal changes in activity limitations during acute rehabilitation and through the first year of recovery after TBI; (2) demonstrate treatment-induced changes in activity limitations after post-acute rehabilitation; (3) examine the relationship between AM-PAC scales and traditional discipline-specific measures; and (4) evaluate agreement between patients and proxy AM-PAC respondents.
New York Traumatic Brain Injury Model System at Mount Sinai
(NY-TBI-MS)

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Principal Investigator: Kristen Dams-O’Connor, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0009
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $438,000; FY 18 $438,000; FY 19 $438,000; FY 20 $438,000; FY 21 $438,000

Abstract: The New York Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (NY-TBIMS) provides comprehensive interdisciplinary services for individuals with TBI and conducts site-specific and collaborative research with the goal of improving health, functioning, community living, and participation of people with TBI. Project objectives are to: (1) enroll new participants into the TBIMS National Database and follow those already enrolled; (2) conduct a randomized controlled trial examining the efficacy of Online EmReg, an Internet-delivered group intervention to improve post-TBI emotional dysregulation; (3) conduct a multi-center module project to evaluate changes in cognitive functioning five to seven years after TBI and identify risk factors for cognitive decline; and (4) through a program of knowledge translation and dissemination, partner with our consumer stakeholders and organizational partners to ensure widespread dissemination of the results of project research. Products include an EmReg treatment manual for clinicians, consumer-oriented presentations and outreach activities, and professional publications and presentations.
Abstract: Over the course of the 5-year cycle, Rusk Rehabilitation aims to enroll 50 individuals with TBI per year into the TBIMS National Database. For the site-specific project, Rusk Rehabilitation and its numerous clinical, academic, and community partners provide evidence for characterizing TBI as a chronic condition and implement programs in order to improve Quality of Life (QoL) for those living with TBI for more than one year. The goal of the site-specific project is to demonstrate the numerous ways in which TBI affects QoL in individuals with TBI and their caregivers. The objectives are: (1) to determine the long-term medical and psychological issues associated with living with TBI; (2) to understand the facilitators and barriers to managing TBI while considering the diverse experiences of racial/ethnic and cultural backgrounds; and (3) to provide interventions and recommendations to impact the holistic experience of living with a TBI from individual action and community involvement to healthcare collection management. Anticipated outcomes include (1) collecting critical information regarding the multi-faceted issues surrounding long-term management of TBI; (2) improved understanding of the coping mechanisms employed by individuals, caregivers, and community members in various populations; and (3) increased community participation during this project by employing a community engaged research approach. As a result of the site-specific project, expected products include a toolkit to disseminate clinical care recommendations as well as culturally-tailored educational materials to individuals, community-based organizations and other relevant stakeholders.
The Ohio Regional TBI Model System

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Project Number: 90DPTB0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $463,000; FY 18 $463,000; FY 19 $463,000; FY 20 $463,000; FY 21 $463,000

Abstract: The goals of the Ohio Regional Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (ORTBIMS) are to:
(1) provide rehabilitation services in a comprehensive and coordinated system of care serving 3.9 million people in 47 Ohio counties; (2) conduct one local and one module research project, each supporting development of an evidence-based approach to proactively managing TBI as a chronic health condition; (3) continue significant contributions to the TBI Model System National Database by recruiting 250 new participants and following the 1,150 enrolled in previous years; (4) disseminate timely and appropriate information for clinical practice, research, and policy to consumers, advocates, practicing professionals, and students in professional training programs; (5) collaborate with other researchers in disability, rehabilitation, and public health through TBI Model Systems Special Interest Groups, engagement with the National Association of State Head Injury Administrators and input to national organizations representing consumers; and (6) provide a management structure that enhances implementation of the project goals.
The Moss Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

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Principal Investigator: Amanda Rabinowitz, PhD
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Project Number: 90DPTB0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: This project conducts new research, disseminates new knowledge to clinicians, researchers, and persons affected by TBI, and provides state-of-the-art clinical care to persons with traumatic brain injury (TBI) in greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. The goal of this project is to create and disseminate new knowledge to improve health, function, and quality of life for people with TBI. Objectives are to: (1) study the effects of an innovative eight-week treatment program to reduce depression and anxiety after TBI; (2) determine the optimal time to repair skull defects caused by emergency surgery to relieve pressure on the brain; and (3) conduct education and training to enhance knowledge of people with brain injury, their families, and professionals. Project outputs include a regional conference for people with TBI and their families; protocols for treating depression, anxiety, anger, and memory disorders after TBI; videotaped training materials for community support providers; and educational materials including professional publications and presentations reporting research results.
Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
Texas

North Texas Traumatic Brain Injury Model System

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current-research/tbi-model-system

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Project Number: 90DPTB0013
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the health and function of individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and their care partners through evidence-based clinical care and innovative research. The objectives are to: (1) provide comprehensive clinical care and rehabilitation to individuals with TBI; (2) assess the long-term outcomes of individuals with TBI; (3) test the efficacy of an evidence-based weight-loss intervention for individuals post TBI (site-specific project); (4) assess the feasibility and efficacy of problem-solving training to reduce the care burden of care partners of individuals with TBI (module project); and (5) develop resources and disseminate findings to stakeholders. Products include usable and replicable interventions for individuals with TBI and their care partners, scientific papers and presentations of intervention study results, stakeholder and student workshops, educational resources on TBI for individuals and care partners, and plain language factsheets disseminated locally and through the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.
**Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems**  
**Texas**

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**Texas TBI Model System of TIRR**

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traumatic-brain-injury-model-system

**Principal Investigator:** Mark Sherer, PhD; Angelle Sander, PhD  
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**Project Number:** 90DPTB0016  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017  
**Length:** 60 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Leslie J. Caplan, PhD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $463,000; FY 18 $463,000; FY 19 $463,000; FY 20 $463,000; FY 21 $463,000

**Abstract:** The Texas TBI Model System of TIRR, in collaboration with other funded centers and consumers (persons with TBI, caregivers, and rehabilitation professionals) conducts rigorous research that improves the health and function, community integration, and employment of persons with TBI, as well as providing effective, accessible dissemination. The goal of the center is to improve chronic health management in persons with TBI. To accomplish this goal, the center is: (1) Conducting a randomized controlled trial of a low cost, mood tracking app plus action recommendations to improve mental health, quality of life, and participation; (2) participating in four collaborative projects and leading a module project to characterize health literacy in persons with TBI and its relationship to health outcomes; (3) contributing at least 35 persons with TBI annually to the TBIMS National Database and collecting follow-up data on previously enrolled participants at 1, 2, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years post-injury; and (4) conducting a comprehensive program of dissemination to consumers and professionals. As a result of these activities, people with TBI and caregivers experience improved understanding of management of long-term health effects after TBI, and rehabilitation professionals use new information to guide treatment of emotional distress and presentation of health information to consumers. Products include fact-sheets on using a mood tracker mobile app to reduce emotional distress after TBI and on application of health management strategies to minimize poor health outcomes, multimedia presentations to improve health literacy for persons with TBI and making health information accessible for persons with TBI, as well as scientific publications and presentations at professional meetings.
**Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems**
Virginia

**Virginia Commonwealth University**
**Traumatic Brain Injury Model System**

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**Project Number:** 90DPTB0005
**Start Date:** September 20, 2017
**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Amanda Reichard, PhD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $452,000; FY 18 $452,000; FY 19 $452,000; FY 20 $452,000; FY 21 $452,000

**Abstract:** This project utilizes rigorous scientific methods to examine a two-arm, randomized controlled trial comparing the benefits of a basic resilience-building intervention with an expanded, patient-centered, resilience intervention following traumatic brain injury. Outcome measures focus on resilience, emotional distress, adjustment, and stress management. The sustainability of treatment benefits is investigated. In addition to the site-specific trial, the Virginia Commonwealth University Traumatic Brain Injury Model System (VCU TBIMS) collects data for the National Database and participates in collaborative module projects. VCU is the lead in a 6-center, longitudinal study of caregiver resilience. VCU is also a participant in a module titled, “Return to Driving After Moderate-Severe TBI: Who, When, Where, and How Safe?” VCU TBIMS Researchers maintain a highly active dissemination program in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center. As in the past, VCU’s dissemination efforts include a high volume of peer-reviewed publications and consumer-oriented outreach. In partnership with Brain Injury Services and the National Resource Center for TBI, the VCU TBIMS on an annual basis hosts a national TBI rehabilitation conference in Williamsburg, VA. The conference was first held in 1977 and remains the longest running TBI rehabilitation conference in the world. The conference planning committee continues to include research and researchers from TBIMS sites in organizing upcoming conferences.
University of Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Model System
(UWTBIMS)

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Project Number: 90DPTB0008
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $459,000; FY 18 $459,000; FY 19 $459,000; FY 20 $459,000; FY 21 $459,000

Abstract: The goal of the University of Washington Traumatic Brain Injury Model System is to improve the lives of individuals with traumatic brain injury (TBI). Project activities include: (1) providing a multidisciplinary system of rehabilitation within a full continuum of medical care; (2) contributing to the TBIMS national database with follow-up of more than 1,000 currently-enrolled subjects; (3) conducting a site-specific study of collaborative care versus usual care to reduce the interference of pain, including headache, after TBI; (4) participating in module studies, including the examination of physical activity in the first year after TBI and its relationship to significant functional outcomes; and (5) delivering evidence-based, patient-centered information through a website, newsletter, and partnership with the Model System Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC). Outcomes include (1) meeting or exceeding benchmarks for enrollment and follow-up on all studies, (2) successful implementation and collaboration on module projects, (3) improving consumer awareness and education on TBI-related topics, including partnering with the Brain Injury Alliance of Washington and MSKTC, and (4) disseminating research findings to other professional and consumer audiences.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Alabama

Kids Low Vision and Reading Study (KLoVR)

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Project Number: 90IFRE0024
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000; FY 21 $200,000

Abstract: Research has shown that, on average, children with low vision (LV-impaired sight not correctable with glasses) do not read as well as their peers without low vision. The goal of this project is to determine which factor or factors are most predictive of reading difficulties in children with LV so that problems can be identified early, and treatment strategies can be developed. Project objectives are: (1) to determine the role of executive function on reading in LV, (2) to understand the role of automaticity, and (3) to determine the visual span in children with LV. This study examines the role of these factors in children who are learning to read with impaired sight. Study outcomes include a greater understanding of which factors are most predictive of reading difficulties in children with LV allowing for better early allocation of resources where they are needed, and ultimately improving community living and participation for individuals with LV. Dissemination products include papers in peer-reviewed journals, and conference presentations.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
California

The Disability, Rehabilitation, Engineering Access for Minorities (DREAM) Project

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Project Number: 90IFST0001
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $199,999; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to focus the field of spinal cord injury (SCI) research on reducing risk for cardiometabolic diseases. The objective is to provide individuals with traumatic SCI with greater access to exercise. A traumatic SCI is a devastating event with lifelong consequences. Life expectancy after SCI has improved to nearly normal lifespan. However, stroke, cardiopulmonary events, and diabetes are main causes of mortality and morbidity after SCI, due in large part to sedentary behavior. This project has three complementary, multidisciplinary aims: (1) test the efficiency of exercise to improve fitness and reduce disease risk using both new and gold standard biomarkers; (2) innovate a DREAM app that tracks muscle activity and provides feedback to encourage achievement of goals outside of rehabilitation; and (3) assess the impact of exercise intervention on social participation and quality of life. Outcomes for this project include: Relationships between reduced disease risk and improved fitness assessed as a function of exercise; a mobile app using upper limb muscle activity to provide feedback to individuals with disabilities engaged in exercise both in and out of the rehabilitation setting; and documenting how these interventions facilitate attainment of self-determined goals, increased social participation, and quality of life. Achieving these aims results in new exercise guidelines that improve health, and technology-based solutions to provide greater accessibility outside of the rehabilitation setting.
Development of a Urinary Symptom Measurement Instrument

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Project Number: 90IF0121
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,989; FY 17 $199,995; FY 18 $199,990; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: Urinary tract infection (UTI) is the most common bacterial infection worldwide. Neurogenic bladder, a central nervous system problem causing a lack of bladder control often due to spinal cord injury (SCI) and multiple sclerosis (MS), puts people at high risk for UTIs. Diagnosis of UTI is largely dependent on symptoms being present, however not all urinary symptoms are due to an infection. It is unknown which symptoms are more likely to lead to infection, versus those that do not. The result is that most urinary symptoms are treated as if they represent an infection – with antibiotics – which may be overtreatment, leading to side effects and antibiotic resistance. This project advances the understanding of and ability to identify and follow urinary symptoms that may or may not be related to UTI. The goal of this project is to create the first Urinary Symptom Questionnaire (USQ-NBV) specifically targeting people with neurogenic bladder due to SCI and MS who void without using a urinary catheter. The objectives are: (1) to develop and validate the USQ-NBV; (2) to pilot test the predictive validity of the USQ-NBV; and (3) to determine which urinary symptoms are related to UTI. The resulting instrument offers a tool for patients, clinicians, and researchers to track urinary symptoms while generating more specific data guiding diagnostic guidelines for the target population. The project team includes MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, United Spinal Association, and consumer experts.
GoCC4All: Using Pervasive Technology to Provide Access to TV to the Deaf-Blind Community

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Project Number: 90IFDV0004
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,461; FY 18 $199,892; FY 19 $199,776
Abstract: The goal of the project is to enhance community living and participation for individuals who are deaf-blind by bringing them access to TV information that is widely available to any other citizen. The project develops and tests GoCC4All, a product that uses pervasive technologies to bring television programming, including regular television programming as well as national and local emergency information provided through this media, to users who are deaf-blind through their mobile devices and braille displays. The objectives of the project are to develop a functional product, confirm proof of adoption of the technology among the deaf-blind community, and add to knowledge about technologies that serve the deaf-blind community.
Personalized Medicine for Pressure Ulcer Prevention: Clinical Measures of Buttocks Deformation

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Project Number: 90IF0120
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,985; FY 17 $199,897; FY 18 $199,858; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The Rehabilitation Engineering and Applied Research Laboratory (REAR Lab) identifies the clinical characteristics that are related to biomechanical pressure ulcer (PrU) risk. These are the clinical measurements needed to bring wheelchair seating and PrU prevention into the era of personalized medicine. The goal of this study is to reduce the incidence of sitting-acquired PrUs by providing quantitative information about biomechanical risk that supports personalized interventions. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to: (1) identify differences in seated buttocks tissue deformation that are associated with differences in PrU risk, and (2) to identify clinically measurable, biomechanical risk factors that contribute to seated tissue deformation and to an individual’s level of PrU risk. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) Clinicians benefiting from new information relating clinical measurements to their clients’ individual PrU risk. (2) Wheelchair users benefiting from a more personalized PrU risk assessment and more informed and personalized interventions. This should result in fewer PrUs and increased comfort and satisfaction with wheelchair cushions and seating systems. (3) An improved understanding of the mechanisms of PrU development and the buttocks’ response to loading may also lead to improved cushion design and evaluation. The expected products are: (1) 3D MRI scans and deformation descriptions of seated buttocks of 36 individuals with different levels of PrU risk. (2) Measurements of clinical characteristics of individuals with different levels of risk. (3) Statistical analyses relating the clinical measurements to buttocks tissue deformation and PrU risk.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Georgia

Environmental Barriers and Facilitators to Assisted Toilet Transfers by People Aging with Disability and their Spousal Caregivers

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Project Number: 90IFRE0005
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,925; FY 18 $199,991; FY 19 $199,380
Abstract: This project identifies environmental factors that create barriers and facilitators to caregiver assisted transfers for individuals aging with disability to inform the development of design criteria for dyadic-centered AT/EM toilet transfer interventions. Specific aims are to: (1) describe the overall effectiveness of existing AT/EM toilet transfer interventions for individuals aging with disability and their caregivers by evaluating transfer performance of caregiving dyads using their own AT/EM interventions; (2) observe and delineate categorical differences in unmet needs for environmental supports for care recipient/caregiver dyads with different functional abilities; (3) identify the salient factors of the AT/EM that either act as barriers or facilitators to successful transfer performance based on the different needs and abilities of care recipients and their caregivers; (4) develop design criteria for the subsequent development of effective AT/EM solutions for assisted transfers by individuals aging with disabilities and their spousal caregivers; and (5) develop and execute a knowledge translation plan to disseminate study findings to appropriate stakeholders.
Comparing Transition Support Interventions for Family Caregivers of ABI Patients

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Project Number: 90IFRE0026
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000; FY 21 $200,000

Abstract: The goal of this research project is to compare the effectiveness of two interventions that offer support to caregivers of patients with acquired brain injury (ABI) during the transition home from inpatient rehabilitation. An ABI occurs when there is damage to the brain caused by trauma (accident, fall, sports-related blow to the head, or act of violence) or from stroke, brain tumors, brain hypoxia, or encephalitis. ABI can impact basic activities of daily living, communications, cognitive functioning (e.g., memory, concentration, executive functioning), and personality. ABI can also result in mood changes and depression. Caring for persons with ABI can be stressful and demanding. Caregivers cope with their loved ones’ memory loss, behavioral and personality changes, chronic care needs and the high costs of care. Caregivers are at increased risk of anxiety, frustration, depression, and burden. The problem of caregiver distress and lack of preparation for caregiving is widely acknowledged. Evidence points to the long-term adverse impact of caregiver stress/burden on both patient and caregiver. Yet health systems serving ABI patients struggle to find effective strategies to support family caregivers before and after the transition home. This project examines two interventions, Building Better Caregivers (BBC) and Problem-Solving Training (PST), and measures their impact on (1) caregiver stress/burden and depression, (2) caregiver self-efficacy in their ability to manage their loved-one’s care needs, and (3) healthcare utilization (i.e., hospitalization, emergency room, and doctor office visits) by patients and caregivers in the first six months after discharge from the rehabilitation hospital. Both interventions include education and support to help family members better manage their loved one’s care needs and manage the stress and rigors of caregiving.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Maryland

**Efficacy of an Interactive Web-Based Home Therapy Program in the Recovery of Arm and Hand Following Stroke: A Randomized Trial**

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**Project Number:** 90IFRE0011
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017
**Length:** 36 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Theresa San Agustin, MD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $199,999; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000

**Abstract:** This project investigates the efficacy and feasibility of using a free, easy-to-use, interactive web-based upper extremity stroke rehabilitation program on individuals with stroke who have recently been discharged from outpatient rehabilitation. The goal is to compare the home use of the web-based stroke rehabilitation program with that of written exercises in a randomized trial. The objectives are to assess (1) motor function immediately before and 6 weeks after intervention and after 20 weeks’ follow-up in order to support the efficacy of using this web-based intervention; (2) behavioral changes in motivation and self-efficacy at the same timepoints to understand the relationship between behavioral and motor function changes; (3) perceptions of patients and caregivers of the web-based program to understand feasibility and barriers to home use; and (4) perceptions of therapists to understand feasibility and barriers to clinic use.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Maryland

Health Insurance Literacy Academy

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Project Number: 90IFDV0010
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000; FY 21 $200,000

Abstract: The Health Insurance Literacy Academy (HILA) project develops and implements a health insurance literacy training academy for Centers for Independent Living (CIL) staff so that they may, in turn, empower people with disabilities to make knowledgeable and confident private and public health insurance choices. Project activities include: (1) identify of topics and learning objectives for the HILA training curriculum by project partners, CIL staff, and health insurance and health policy experts; (2) develop and draft the HILA training curriculum in coordination with project partners; and (3) develop a technology translation plan to ensure CIL staff and other disability advocates maintain ongoing access to the health insurance literacy training in order to better serve their clients. The resulting HILA curriculum and CIL and disability advocate training provide people with disabilities with the information to make informed decisions regarding their private and public health insurance coverage leading to improved health outcomes, and facilitates inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency. The HILA Project is a partnership with the American Association on Health & Disability (AAHD), the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU), the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living (CHRIL), including the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), and the Association for Programs in Rural Independent Living (APRIL).
Targeting Sedentary Behavior Reduction in Adults with Cerebral Palsy Using a Real-Time Behavioral Intervention

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Project Number: 90IF0102
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $200,000; FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 No-cost extension through 1/27/2020

Abstract: This project aims to determine the extent of cardiometabolic risk in adults with cerebral palsy (CP), and to reduce sedentary behavior using a novel strategy that will lead to sustainable behavior modification and improved health outcomes. The project comprises three objectives: (1) Compare total sedentary behavior and cardiometabolic risk profiles between adults with CP and matched adult controls; (2) determine the effectiveness of a novel, context-aware wearable monitoring and smartphone-based intervention (iReducSB) to reduce total sedentary behavior, increase fragmentation of sedentary behavior, and lead to sustainable improvement of behavior change in adults with CP; and (3) determine the effects of reducing total sedentary behavior and increasing fragmentation of sedentary behavior on clinically relevant serum markers of cardiometabolic risk.
The Effect of Gentamicin Intravesical Instillations on Decreasing Urinary Tract Infections in Patients with Neurogenic Bladder After SCI: A Clinical Trial

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Principal Investigator: Denise G. Tate, PhD
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Project Number: 90IFRE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000
Abstract: This project conducts a randomized clinical trial to test the efficacy of intravesical gentamicin instillations to reduce the incidence of urinary tract infections (UTIs) in persons with spinal cord injury (SCI), improve bladder and bowel health, and assess the effectiveness of this intervention in promoting quality of life (QOL) and community participation. The goal of this project is to produce new scientific information about treating frequent UTIs in persons SCI. The objectives are: (1) to assess the efficacy of gentamicin in reducing UTIs in those with recurrent infections (at least 3 within the past 12 months) as well as other related bladder and bowel complications such as incontinence; and (2) to examine the effect of this treatment on people’s lives by assessing its impact on community participation and QOL.
Treating Cognitive Deficits in Traumatic Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): A Randomized Clinical Trial

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kesslerfoundation.org/research/studies/treating-cognitive-deficits-traumatic-spinal-cord-injury-sci-randomized-clinical

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Project Number: 90IF0113
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,994; FY 17 $199,637; FY 18 $199,706; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this study is to identify treatments for cognitive deficits experienced by people with spinal cord injuries (SCI). Multiple studies in the SCI population have documented cognitive deficits that adversely impact daily life and benefit from rehabilitation. Published studies note cognitive deficits in persons with SCI in learning and memory (LM) and processing speed (PS), further demonstrated in pilot data collected in previous studies conducted by these researchers. Given that these cognitive deficits have a critical impact on functional outcome after SCI, it is imperative to identify effective treatment for these deficits in an effort to improve everyday functioning and overall quality of life of impacted individuals. The objectives of this study are to: (1) apply a treatment protocol for PS and LM impairments, well-validated in other neurological populations, to individuals with SCI with objectively observable deficits in these areas and document efficacy on standard neuropsychological testing; (2) assess the effectiveness of the interventions in persons with SCI utilizing global measures of everyday life; and (3) evaluate the long-term benefit of treatment. Outcome is measured across two domains. First, researchers administer objective measures of cognitive functioning through a neuropsychological assessment. Second, researchers evaluate treatment efficacy in regard to functioning in everyday life, through an assessment of global functioning. These outcomes are assessed immediately following treatment and six months later. In this way, the project not only identifies the immediate treatment effect, but also the maintenance of treatment effects over time. The expected products are two highly structured, manualized treatment protocols with demonstrated efficacy in treating cognition in persons with SCI.
Improving Quality of Personal Care Assistance Services for People with SCI Through Online Education

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ImprovingQualityofPersonalCareAssistanceServicesforPeoplewithSCIthroughOnlineEducation

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Project Number: 90IF0115
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $198,884; FY 17 $198,893; FY 18 $197,947; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the quality of personal care assistance (PCA) services for people with spinal cord injury (SCI) through online education. This project identifies educational needs and develops an online course to help new PCAs - who are typically unfamiliar with the special needs of people with SCI - understand the unique effects of SCI, the types of care needs that people with SCI have, and how the assistance that PCAs provide helps those with SCI live healthy, productive lives in the community. The course is designed to “jump-start” the training process by providing a foundation of knowledge about SCI thus making subsequent hands-on training in bathing, feeding, transfers, etc. more effective and efficient. The web-based curriculum includes a certification process. Discussion guides, worksheets, and a resource list facilitate the application and adaptation of the training to the care of specific individuals with SCI. The course also addresses how to improve communication between people with spinal cord injury and their PCAs.
The Effectiveness and Underlying Mechanism of a Mindful Attention Program for Traumatic Brain Injury: A Randomized Clinical Trial

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Kesslerfoundation.org/research/studies/effectiveness-and-underlying-mechanism-psychological-and-emotional-well-being
Kesslerfoundation.org/about-us/foundation-staff/didier-allexandre-phd

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Project Number: 90IFRE0016
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,969; FY 19 $199,978; FY 20 $199,931

Abstract: This project evaluated the effectiveness and underlying mechanism of a modified Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) group intervention for individuals with severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). Individuals with TBI can experience long-term cognitive challenges in attention and memory, as well as depression, anxiety, and emotional dysregulation. Previous pilot investigations have found encouraging results in cognitive measures and clinically meaningful improvements in everyday life function. Mindfulness training is a process of developing a non-reactive focused attention to all present moment experiences, and mindfulness-based training can provide an ideal intervention to address those symptoms and the special needs of the TBI population. For this study, individuals with moderate to severe post-acute TBI with impaired attention receive either the 8-week MBSR intervention or an 8-week psychoeducational and well-being program as an active control intervention. Outcomes are assessed pre- and post-intervention, as well as six-months follow-up, to determine whether MBSR shows greater improvement in neurocognitive measures of attention as well as behavioral measures directly related to attention, including metacognition and social monitoring, while exploring its impact on everyday function and quality of life. Researchers also use neuroimaging to investigate the neural mechanisms of improvement by measuring both functional and structural connectivity associated with attentional regulation.
Adolescents with Lupus: The Impact of Patient/Provider Discordance, Depression, Cognition, and Language on Quality of Life

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Project Number: 90IFST0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000
Abstract: This project addresses the knowledge gap in the research and care of adolescents with lupus, an autoimmune disease that impacts all areas of patients’ lives, often resulting in significant disabilities and poor quality of life. When lupus is diagnosed in childhood, in non-white racial/ethnic groups, and/or in patients from lower SES backgrounds, the potential for disability and mortality is even greater. The goal of this study is to evaluate discordance in the relationship between adolescent patient/provider global assessment of disease activity using a longitudinal mixed method design (i.e., surveys and semi-structured interviews). The objectives are to: (1) examine the level of discordance between patient and provider’s perceptions of disease activity; (2) explore factors related to the level of discordance between patient and provider including depression, primary language, cognitive functioning, health related quality of life, pain, regimen compliance, and lab values; (3) identify the types of disabilities that adolescents with lupus exhibit; and (4) understand patients’ and providers’ perceptions of types of disability in adolescents with lupus. The project results in methods a provider can use to identify depression, cognitive dysfunction, language barriers, disability, and poor physical/social functioning in adolescents with lupus, as well as other chronic diseases.
Dynamic Supported Mobility for Infants and Toddlers with Cerebral Palsy

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Project Number: 90IF0076 (Formerly H133G140166)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $200,000; FY 15 $200,000; FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/30/2020)

Abstract: The objective of this project is to determine if dynamic supported mobility (DSM) using novel technology leads to greater improvement in motor function than conventional (CONV) physical therapy in infants and toddlers with cerebral palsy (CP). Participants receiving DSM training are given dynamic weight support and therapy focuses on child-directed motor play and exploration in a physically challenging environment designed to encourage motor variability and error experience with minimal assistance or correction from the therapist. CONV therapy involves therapist-directed activities with a focus on the repeated practice of typical movement patterns with assistance and correction from the therapist. The primary outcome measure is gross motor function. Motor outcomes are compared to published percentile scores to determine if the trajectory of predicted motor development has been altered. Secondary outcomes include improvements in physical activity at home, postural control, engagement in daily life, and parent satisfaction and cognition.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
South Carolina

Aging and Spinal Cord Injury: A 45-Year Longitudinal Study

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Project Number: 90IF0112
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,247; FY 17 $199,835; FY 18 $199,841; FY 19 (No-cost-extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: Many individuals now live to aging milestones after the onset of spinal cord injury (SCI). Recent longitudinal research suggests a dramatic increase in physician visits and hospitalizations among those reaching 40+ years post-injury, with some declines in life satisfaction and future expectations. The goal of this project is to better understand these changes to support individuals as that face aging-related challenges. This project conducts a 45-year follow-up, the 9th data collection in the SCI Longitudinal Aging Study. This study was initiated in 1973 using a revolving panel longitudinal design with regular follow-ups every four to five years and intermittent addition of new participant cohorts. As of 2013, a total of 768 participants had participated on 3-8 occasions, 50 of whom had been in the study since inception and 54 added in 1984. During this phase, the project assesses outcomes from a projected 538 participants of the 768 who participated in the 40-year follow-up. Researchers identify the natural course of health, participation, need for medical services, life satisfaction, and self-reported problems using an expanded version of the Life Situation Questionnaire. Specific measures have been added related to aging, with more detail and diversity than included in more basic large-scale data sets. Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses are performed. This research identifies factors related to unfavorable changes over time by contrasting participants with stable outcomes against those whose outcomes have declined. Two stakeholder panels meet annually throughout the project, assisting with dissemination and knowledge translation, interpretation of findings, recommendations for policy, and development of guidelines for healthy aging after SCI.
Number, Primary, and Secondary Diagnoses, and Costs of Inpatient Hospitalizations in a Population-Based Cohort of People with Spinal Cord Injury

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Project Number: 90IF0119
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,664; FY 17 $199,893; FY 18 $199,455; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: Spinal cord injury (SCI) leads to an elevated risk of costly hospitalizations, yet there is limited understanding of the factors leading to hospitalization, the costs, or the consequences for participation and quality of life. Most research is limited to the first year, self-report data, and clinical rather than population-based participants. The purpose of this project is threefold: (1) identify the number of hospitalizations, primary and secondary diagnoses, and costs among a population-based cohort with SCI; (2) identify psychological, socioenvironmental, and behavioral factors associated with each hospitalization parameter; and (3) identify the relationship of hospitalization to participation and quality of life. This project uses administrative cost data to identify hospitalizations, primary and secondary diagnoses, and costs for all years after SCI onset for individuals identified through the South Carolina SCI Surveillance System Registry from 2000-2014 (3,850 individuals). Uniform billing administrative data is linked to self-report data from a subset of 1,069 participants who participated in a longitudinal study of the first 5 years after SCI onset to identify the predictors of hospitalization. The first set of linked analyses uses the theoretical risk and prevention model. A second set of analyses applies the ICF model from the World Health Organization to investigate relationships with quality of life. A consumer advisory panel meets twice annually throughout the project to help guide the direction of the analyses, interpretation, and recommendations for policy change. They also assist in dissemination and knowledge translation, including the development of self-help parameters to reduce the likelihood of hospitalization.
Number, Primary, and Secondary Diagnoses, and Costs of Emergency Department Visits in a Population-based Cohort of People with Spinal Cord Injury

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Project Number: 90IFRE0028
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,801; FY 20 $199,959; FY 21 $199,918

Abstract: Spinal cord injury (SCI) leads to an elevated risk of costly hospitalizations, yet there is limited understanding of the predictors, the costs, or the consequences of emergency department (ED) visits and related hospitalizations for participation and quality of life. Most research is limited to the first year, self-report data, and clinical rather than population-based participants. The purpose of this project is threefold: (1) identify the number of ED visits and related hospitalizations, primary and secondary diagnoses, and costs among a population-based cohort with SCI; (2) identify psychological, socioenvironmental, and behavioral factors associated with ED visits, their causes and related hospitalization; and (3) identify the relationship of ED visits to participation and quality of life. In partnership with the state of South Carolina and community stakeholders, this project links self-report longitudinal data from a population-based cohort with SCI with uniform billing administrative data of ED visits, causes, costs, and hospitalizations. The first set of linked analyses uses the theoretical risk and prevention model. A second set of analyses applies the ICF model from the World Health Organization to investigate relationships with quality of life. A consumer advisory panel meets twice annually throughout the project to help guide the direction of the analyses, interpretation, and recommendations for policy change. They also assist in dissemination and knowledge translation, including the development of self-help parameters to reduce the likelihood of ED visits and hospitalizations.
Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in Spinal Cord Injury (SCI): A Randomized Controlled Trial

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Principal Investigator: Mark B. Powers, PhD
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Project Number: 90IFRE0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,712; FY 18 $199,269; FY 19 $199,492

Abstract: This project uses a randomized controlled trail to evaluate the efficacy of Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms among individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI). The National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center estimates 282,000 people in the US live with spinal cord injury (SCI), with approximately 17,000 new cases occurring each year. While there has been tremendous progress in the medical and rehabilitative management of people who have sustained SCI, there has been less innovation to support mental health among SCI patients. Estimates suggest that PTSD affects up to 60% of those with SCI compared to only 7% of the general US population. The most researched and effective treatment for PTSD is PE, where participants receive 12 sessions of therapy over 6 weeks. PE has been tested within survivors of combat, sexual assault, non-sexual assault, traumatic injury, and disasters, but has not been tested specifically within the SCI community. For this study, participants with SCI receive either PE or treatment as usual and researchers compare improvement in PTSD symptom as well as rates of pain reduction and improvements in sleep, depression, and quality of life.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Texas

Building an Evidence-Base for Weight Loss Strategies
Among Those with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

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Principal Investigator: Katherine Froehlich-Grobe, PhD
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Project Number: 90IFRE0022
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,999; FY 19 $198,288; FY 20 $197,771

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates the effectiveness and usability of an evidence-based multi-component weight loss intervention to improve the health and function of people with spinal cord injury (SCI) by addressing the unique issues they may face when adopting lifestyle changes that promote weight loss. The fundamental components of weight loss such as eating a balanced diet and/or increasing physical activity may be more challenging for individuals with SCI to adopt compared to the general population. A community-based participatory research approach is used to systematically develop the multi-component weight loss intervention, gather preliminary evidence and usability data, guide further adaptations of the intervention, and inform specific weight loss strategies. This project evaluates the effectiveness and usability of prepackaged/portion-controlled meals, self-monitoring, and intervention adaptations to achieve weight loss over a 13-week period.
Efficacy of an Evidence-Based Healthy Lifestyle Intervention for People Following CVA

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Project Number: 90IFRE0021
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $198,868; FY 19 $199,637; FY 20 $197,151

Abstract: This project improves the health and function of people who have experienced a cerebrovascular accident (CVA) by demonstrating the efficacy of a weight loss intervention that promotes healthy physical activity and eating behaviors. Living a healthy life may be a challenge post-CVA due to the increased risk for secondary and chronic conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, or heart disease. There is a need to identify evidence-based approaches to promote the health and function of people post-CVA. This project modifies an existing evidence-based weight loss intervention for the general population to meet the unique needs of people post-CVA, assesses the feasibility of delivery, and tests the efficacy of the modified intervention. Participants include individuals living within the community post-CVA who are overweight or obese. Outcomes include: (1) a comprehensive weight loss intervention tailored to meet the needs of people post-CVA, (2) evidence of the efficacy of intervention strategies for weight loss after CVA, and (3) a weight loss intervention that can be scaled for use within the community. Products include a usable and meaningful intervention for weight loss that is free and publicly available, a leadership guide so that individuals can deliver the intervention in different settings, and scientific papers and presentations of study results.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
Indiana

NGAGE: A Neurological Guidance, Assessment, Goals, and Engagement System for People with Parkinson’s and Other Degenerative Neurological Diseases

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Project Number: 90BISB0014
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 24 months

NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $287,500; FY 20 $287,500

Abstract: This project demonstrates the technical merit, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of a Neurological Guidance, Assessment, Goals and Engagement (NGAGE) system for people with Parkinson’s and other degenerative neurological diseases. People with Parkinson’s disease and other similar degenerative neurological diseases may be able maintain their levels of function with proper ongoing exercise programs geared towards their individualized needs. The NGAGE system supports individuals with Parkinson’s to increase their engagement in the maintenance of their disease. Specific Phase II objectives include: (1) expand NGAGE features and functions, (2) perform extended usability evaluations of the system in the homes of people with Parkinson’s, and (3) complete and prepare the system for transition into commercialization. Potential commercial markets include: (1) physical therapy or exercise training organizations in need of cost-effective options to reduce staff costs and support people with Parkinson’s at home or in their clinic, (2) people with Parkinson’s looking to improve their quality of life, (3) research facilities who are seeking standardized assessment tools and web-based reporting, and (4) providers seeking to restore the engagement of their patients from failed experiences.
Disability Demographics

Valid and reliable disability demographics and statistics are helpful for framing issues, understanding program’s effectiveness, and monitoring progress in the disability field. NIDILRR continues to work with other Federal agencies to meet its statutory mandate to collaborate in producing demographic and statistical data that describe the population of individuals with disabilities. Projects funded in this area generate and disseminate new and current information that can be used by individuals with disabilities, service providers, policy makers, and others working to identify disparities in employment, community living and participation, and health and function.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs) .................................................................3
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC)

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Project Number: 90RT5022 (Formerly H133B130015)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $874,998; FY 14 $875,000; FY 15 $874,999; FY 16 $874,998; FY 17 $874,998; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The objective of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) is to narrow and actively bridge the divide between the producers and end users of disability statistics. In pursuit of this objective, the RRTC conducts 12 research and 15 knowledge translation projects that build upon the work of past StatsRRTC projects. Several of the research projects focus on the collection of disability statistics and narrow the divide by (a) developing recommendations and tools that improve the identification of the population with disabilities and measurement of services, and (b) conducting experiments to test alternative survey methods. Project activities include (a) analyzing existing data to assess progress towards national goals and address information needs about critical programs; (b) providing access to timely and relevant disability statistics through national and state-level Annual Reports on Disability that track key indicators and an Annual Disability Statistics Compendium that allows end users to access even more statistics; (c) providing technical assistance to key stakeholders to produce customized statistical analyses and compilations; (d) developing and maintaining a State/Local Statistics which allows users to create customized reports; (e) providing information and referral services, and technical consultation on collection methods and data analysis; and (f) increasing the capacity of end users to effectively utilize disability statistics through the Annual Report and Compendium Rollout event, online training courses for vocational rehabilitation evaluators, and the Center’s State-of-the-Science conference.
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
New Hampshire

Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC)

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Project Number: 90RTGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $874,999; FY 19 $874,999; FY 20 $874,999; FY 21 $874,999; FY 22 $874,999

Abstract: The objective of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics (StatsRRTC) is to actively narrow and bridge the divide between the producers and end users of disability statistics, thereby supporting better data collection and more relevant statistics to positively inform programs that serve people with disabilities and, ultimately, to improve conditions for people with disabilities and their families. In pursuit of this overall objective, the StatsRRTC conducts comprehensive and integrated research and knowledge translation activities that build upon and upgrade the work conducted under previous grants. The Center’s research projects narrow the divide by: generating new survey items and recommendations for improving the collection, relevance, and interpretation of disability data and statistics; developing techniques to improve the estimation of state/local statistics; and conducting deeper analyses of key demographics, outcomes, and programs. Dissemination projects actively bridge the divide by improving timely access to disability statistics by: continuing to expand the Annual Disability Statistics Compendium, its Supplement, and State Reports; refocusing the Annual Report on statistical analyses to gauge progress towards national goals; developing a new series of infographics on the intersection of disability and other demographics; and upgrading the web-enabled platform used to produce the Compendium to improve its customizability and user-friendliness. The Center also creates a new Compendium of Survey Methods to address the needs of producers. Training projects narrow the divide by bringing producers and end users together through: continued expansion of the Annual Roll-Out Event/Webcast and a State-of-the-Science conference. The training projects also increase the capacity of future disability researchers to analyze data via a new online independent study curriculum and opportunities for summer fellowships and possibly post-doctoral fellowships. Finally, technical
assistance (TA) projects actively bridge the divide by increasing the capacity of end users to access and effectively utilize disability statistics by providing: information and referral TA, follow-up TA to answer questions about the Center’s activities, and customized statistical analyses for key stakeholders.
Technology for Access and Function

With NIDILRR’s research priorities, technology spans the goals of sustaining health and function, employment, and community living and participation and contributes to successful outcomes for persons with disabilities in all of these areas. At the individual level, the primary focus is on assistive technology devices that enhance the physical, sensory, and cognitive abilities of people with disabilities and assist them in participating and functioning more independently in the home, at work, in recreational settings, and at cultural and community events. At the systems level, the emphasis is on applying technology research and development in ways that enhance community integration, independence, productivity, competitiveness, and equal opportunity by mitigating or eliminating barriers found in large social systems such as public transportation, telecommunications, IT, and the built environment.

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Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Alabama

RERC on Exercise and Recreational Technologies for People with Disabilities

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Project Number: 90REGE0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $925,000; FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000

Abstract: This Center conducts a set of research and development projects that span across the socio-ecological model from community to clinic to address a multilevel set of barriers to participation in healthful exercise and recreation among adults with physical disabilities. Six areas of research and development include: (1) a precision-based decision support tool to improve quality of exercise and recreation recommendations and outcomes; (2) advancement of a wheelchair accessible active video gaming controller to expand game play among users with physical disabilities; (3) final development of an exercise device that allows single-to-multiple limb loading in engaging virtual exercise environments; (4) a crowdsourcing platform for building accessible community-based exercise and recreation resources; (5) an eHealth tele-exercise platform for increasing exercise among adults with spinal cord injury; and (6) a mixed-methods study examining barriers and facilitators associated with adoption of universal design of fitness equipment standards by manufacturers and fitness facility managers. Training initiatives involve undergraduate and graduate level training in exercise/recreational technologies targeting engineering, exercise science, and rehabilitation science students. Dissemination includes presentations at engineering and rehabilitation conferences, publications in high-impact peer-reviewed journals, press releases, websites, and faculty presentations. Anticipated outcomes include a set of hardware and software products that improve the health, function, and quality of life among people with physical disabilities. A secondary outcome is to ensure that dissemination of these products and tools reach an array of stakeholders, including people with disabilities, caregivers, rehabilitation and exercise science researchers, and rehabilitation and exercise professionals, who can use them in their respective communities and professions.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
California

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center:
Develop and Evaluate Rehabilitation Technology and Methods for
Individuals with Low Vision, Blindness, and Multiple Disabilities

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Project Number: 90RE5024
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $925,000; FY 17 $925,000; FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000

Abstract: The goal of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC): Develop and Evaluate Rehabilitation Technology and Methods for Individuals with Low Vision, Blindness, and Multiple Disabilities is to impact numerous current barriers to opportunity faced by individuals who are blind, have low vision, and have multiple disabilities. This RERC addresses specifically: (1) emerging and underserved subpopulations, such as children born as premature infants with cortical visual impairment (CVI), returning veterans, and individuals with visual impairments due to brain injury, and individuals with combined vision and hearing disabilities; (2) access to graphical information by people who are blind or who have severe visual disabilities; (3) improvements in indoor and outdoor navigation; and (4) access by this population to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and careers. The RERC’s activities to address these issues include: (1) research to lay the groundwork for more informed decisions on rehabilitation materials and strategies for children with CVI and veterans with traumatic brain injury, as well as improved communication for individuals with dual sensory loss; (2) the development of new tools for accessing graphics such as a Tactile Graphics Helper and sonification cues for computer screen readers; (3) development of new tools for accessing devices and appliances with digital displays; (4) development of guidelines for teachers in the use of 3-D printing technology for the benefit of STEM students; (5) development of tools and techniques to enhance access to the Maker Movement by consumers who are blind; and (6) the implementation of a sustainable open source, crowd-sourced video description system for web-based video.
RERC on Improving the Accessibility, Usability, and Performance of Technology for Individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH-RERC)

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Project Number: 90RE5020 (Formerly H133E140056)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $950,000; FY 15 $950,000; FY 16 $950,000; FY 17 $950,000; FY 18 $950,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This RERC’s mission is to provide consumers who are hard of hearing or Deaf, as well as their families and clinicians, with the knowledge and tools necessary: (1) to take control of their communication and hearing technologies, adapt those technologies to their needs in real-world environments, and achieve greater autonomy in their technology use; and (2) to derive full benefit of the shift from special-purpose devices to increasingly powerful and interconnected consumer electronics. The RERC aims to narrow the gaps between the potential for new technologies to improve the lives of individuals who are hard of hearing or Deaf and their ability to exploit this potential. The center carries out three research and three development and training projects: R1 investigates how a previously successful face-to-face, clinical program of aural rehabilitation for cochlear implant users can be transferred to a telerehabilitation model, in which services are delivered in the home to previously underserved populations with limited access to clinical facilities using the interactive platform for telehealth and collaborative applications developed by the RERC on Telerehabilitation. R2 investigates how consumers with hearing loss can customize their own cochlear implant mapping using a consumer-driven system to control the programming of the device and personally explore a range of programming parameters to determine if this type of user-driven customization can maximize device benefit. R3 investigates new clinical tools to address a critical gap in fitting hearing devices to very young, prelingual children with hearing loss. D1 develops a framework for a consumer-centric, technology-focused train-the-trainer program, which develops skilled consumer trainers to provide improved quantity and quality of technology training to other consumers. D2 develops field tools, implemented through the integration of hearing devices and smartphones, for monitoring listeners’ perceptions, environmental context information, and hearing device configuration during real-world listening situations, so that factors that interfere with the ability...
of consumers to use or benefit from hearing devices can be identified. D3 develops interactive learning environments where consumers can explore virtual, yet realistic, listening situations, learn how to optimize the use of their hearing technology, and then transfer the knowledge and skills they have acquired to similar situations encountered in the real-world.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
District of Columbia

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on
Patient-Centered, Home-Based Technologies to Assess and
Treat Motor Impairment in Individuals with Neurologic Injury

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Project Number: 90REGE0004
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,934; FY 19 $924,993; FY 20 $924,886; FY 21 $924,904; FY 22 $924,876

Abstract:
This rehabilitation engineering research center (RERC-DC) promotes rehabilitation engineering-based devices, strategies, techniques, and interventions that can facilitate activity and mobility following neurologic injuries, specifically home-based technologies for treating motor impairments. Over the last decade, with the help of innovative devices, technologies, and protocols, rehabilitation has evolved from compensation for impairment to goals of recovery through neurorehabilitation. The ultimate goal is improved integration of impaired limbs into functional activities in the home and community. However, treatment and assessments are done predominantly in the clinic by therapists. Home-based technologies can have a large impact by providing tools to augment clinic-based delivery with assessments that are more valid and treatments that are less expensive, more convenient, and potentially more effective. The need to travel to the clinic to receive treatment from a therapist severely limits access for many patients and may blunt the effectiveness of some interventions. To bridge this gap, this RERC focuses research (R) and development (D) efforts on home-based technologies to treat motor impairments. D1 develops wearable upper extremity exoskeletons that can be integrated into activities of daily living for individuals with stroke. D2 develops an ankle-based robotic platform combined with video games for home-based rehabilitation of children with cerebral palsy. There are no clinically-accepted, objective methods of assessing spontaneous use of impaired limbs in the home and community. R1 tracks sensorimotor development and predicts future outcomes in infants at risk for motor delay using home-based video and specially designed toys that provide novel sensory feedback. R2 studies machine learning algorithms and wrist worn accelerometry for objectively measuring the amount of functional arm use in persons with stroke. R3 investigates factors that affect the everyday choices made by persons with stroke to either use an impaired upper extremity or compensate with the opposite limb. This is critical to understand, as even mild stroke-related impairment, when measured in the clinic, can result in very little
spontaneous functional use at home. Rehabilitation technologies are often rejected by consumers. D3 explores the patient and caregiver perspective on these home-based technologies and develop guidelines and best practices for how to translate all these technologies into the home.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
District of Columbia

RERC on Technology for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

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Project Number: 90REGE0013
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000; FY 23 $925,000

Abstract: The goal of this Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) is to facilitate a shift in the role of technology and address the accessibility and usability of technology for consumers who are Deaf or hard of hearing, their family, and friends. Project objectives include: (1) a shift from clinic to consumer-centric health care models, (2) integration of data-driven approaches into practice, (3) integration of hearing technology into an interconnected mainstream ecosystem, and (4) access built into mainstream products. The project research results in (1) improved fit of hearing devices to both children and adults, (2) improved decision-making on intervention strategies for children with hearing loss, (3) evidence of effective rehabilitation strategies and cognitive function in older adults with cochlear implants, (4) improved integration of hearing technology and mainstream products with greatly improved usability, (5) accessible and usable voice assistants for people who are unable to speak clearly, (6) policy and technical standards that incorporate RERC findings, and (7) increased opportunities and training for people with hearing loss in the field. Dissemination efforts comprise materials on successful intervention strategies for children and older adults, accessibility of voice assistants, an industry-consumer portal on designing accessible products, a toolkit for integrating hearing devices into the Internet of Things, and a system to improve evaluation and fitting of hearing devices. This project is a collaboration of Gallaudet University, the University of Colorado-Boulder, the University of Iowa, the University of Minnesota, the American Institutes for Research, the Hearing Loss Association of America, and other key Deaf and hard of hearing stakeholders.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Wireless Inclusive Technologies

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Project Number: 90RE5025
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $924,994; FY 17 $924,967; FY 18 $924,986; FY 19 $924,949; FY 20 $924,966

Abstract: Project goals include: (1) creating and promoting inclusive wireless technologies that improve the ability of individuals with disabilities to independently perform activities of their choice now, and in a fully-engaged and all-inclusive future; and (2) working with industry, government, and disability stakeholders to raise awareness and champion adoption of accessible solutions for wirelessly connected technologies. Outcomes include: (1) consumers with disabilities directly contributing to the development of wireless devices and services, (2) increasing in social connectedness of individuals with disabilities (including those with intellectual and development disabilities) across varied environments, (3) incorporating universal design elements to guide cultural and social design of current and future wirelessly-connected devices and sensors, and (4) adopting regulatory policies that increase accessible emergency alerts over multiple platforms. Results include consumers with disabilities in product development; the adoption of inclusive wireless products in wearables, apps, auditory devices; publications; knowledge translation; technology transfer; and outreach to stakeholders. The Wireless RERC is a collaboration of the Georgia Institute of Technology in partnership with the Shepherd Center, Georgia State University, the University of Texas, Arlington, and other stakeholders.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Georgia

RERC on Technologies to Support Aging-in-Place for People with Long-Term Disabilities (TechSAge RERC II)

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Project Number: 90REGE0006
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,997; FY 19 $924,950; FY 20 $924,991; FY 21 $924,962; FY 22 $924,985

Abstract: RERC TechSAge aims to advance knowledge and accelerate the development, modification, and testing of technology-based interventions and strategies for use in the home and community to promote aging-in-place and reduce secondary conditions among people with long-term disabilities. Based at Georgia Tech and the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, the RERC conducts research and development projects as well as training and dissemination efforts that are responsive to the RERC priorities to support successful aging-in-place with disability. Research projects include: R1. Needs Assessment and Technology Use for People Aging-in-Place with Long-Term Mobility and Sensory Disabilities provides a need-based scientific foundation that is necessary for effective technology design to support aging-in-place with long-term disability. R2. Voice-Activated Digital Home Assistants to Support Health & Independence of People Aging in Place with Long-Term Mobility Disabilities examines the efficacy of a suite of voice-activated digital assistant applications (i.e., for Amazon Alexa) being developed in the D4 project. R3. Telewellness Technologies: researchers are utilizing videoconferencing to translate an in-person evidence-based Tai Chi intervention to an online, social experience for people aging with long-term mobility disabilities. Development Projects include: D1.1 SmartBathroom, a state-of-the-art laboratory that is utilized to develop transfer algorithms that will automatically adjust a motorized toilet system to meet a user’s needs and functional abilities at any point in time. D1.2 Augmented and Virtual Reality Tools to Enhance Acceptance and Adoption of Connected Home Technology, develops a series of tools that enable consumers to experience, through virtual sight and sound, how different smart home technologies would work in their own homes and guide system installers on how to match technologies to meet user needs. D2. Monitoring and Managing Falls as a Secondary Condition Among Long-Term Disability:...
Wheelchair Users, a multi-component customizable fall-detection system that accurately detects falls among long-term wheelchair users and notify caregivers to enable quick response and reduce the amount of time an individual spends lying on the ground. D3. Silver Skill-IT, mobile and voice applications to support successful aging-in-place by people aging with long-term disabilities, including Steady Wheels, an individualized falls risk assessment, management, and prevention app; MS Assistant, a health management app to support people aging with multiple sclerosis; and Gait Speed App and tools designed to measure walking speed over a short distance. D4. Voice-Activated Digital Home Assistants, develops a suite of voice-activated digital assistant applications and an instructional protocol with various modules for different activities and tasks to enable control of the environment, encourage physical activity, facilitate social communication, and provide healthcare reminders. Additional apps and digital assistant skills are developed as part of the App & Skills Factory, wherein promising concepts identified in the TechSAge Design Competition also receive additional support for development.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Georgia

LiveWell RERC - Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Community Living, Health, and Function

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Principal Investigator: Michael L. Jones, PhD; Frank DeRuyter, PhD; 404/350-7595 (Jones); 919/684-6271 (DeRuyter)
Public Contact: John Morris, PhD 404/367-1348

Project Number: 90RE5028
Start Date: February 15, 2019
Length: 19 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,954; FY 19 $924,899

Abstract: The primary goals of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center for Community Living, Health, and Function (LiveWell RERC) are to: (1) promote ICT access to existing and emerging technologies for all people regardless of ability, and (2) develop and validate ICT applications to improve the capacity for independent living and community participation. To accomplish these goals this project includes three research and three development projects. Each project examines important aspects of ICT access. Discovery of User Needs and Preferences for Information and Communication Technologies identifies and confirms users’ needs and access issues related to ICT use and establishes priorities for potential ICT development independent of technology platforms or form factors. Factors Affecting Acceptance of ICT – People with Disabilities and Caregivers discovers and reports on barriers and opportunities to accessibility and use of wearable, home monitoring and automation technology. Improving Safety and Activity Independence in the Home/Community following TBI is designed to improve safety, increase activity and participation, lessen family burden, and improve life quality through use of self-report measurement paired with technology-based environmental feedback that informs on ability, realistic “next step” goals, treatment, and progress. Development activities include: (1) Technology/Policy Watch and Emerging Issues for ICT Access, to identify mainstream scientific and technology developments that can impact ICT access, policies, guidelines, and standards; (2) Tech Factory – Meeting User Needs by Developing ICT & Software, is comprised of two complementary efforts to respond rapidly to new mainstream ICT development that can be leveraged to meet the needs of people with disabilities; and (3) Use of Behavioral Informatics to Support Safety and Activity Independence in the Home and Community, builds a virtual coach to complement or replaces...
the hands-on support and assistance provided by a life coach or family member. Finally, training and dissemination activities promote the adoption of new knowledge into practice. This includes student capacity building, as well as consumer and industry engagement to develop and maintain tools and channels for communicating information on accessible ICT produced by the LiveWell RERC. The LiveWell RERC is a partnership between Duke University, the Shepherd Center, and Northeastern University. Additional collaborators include the AGE-WELL National Center of Excellence and University of Toronto in Canada; The Center on Knowledge Translation for Technology Transfer (KT4TT); Side by Side Brain Injury Clubhouse; and commercial partners ilumivu, Samsung, and Verizon.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on
Timing Investigation Dosage Implementation (TIDI)

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Principal Investigator: W. Zev Rymer, MD, PhD 312/239-3919
Public Contact: Linda Lovell, Grants Manager 312/238-6197

Project Number: 90RE5013 (Formerly H133E130019)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $924,937; FY 14 $924,906; FY 15 $924,805; FY 16 $924,726; FY 17 $924,719; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/31/2020)

Abstract: The Shirley Ryan AbilityLab together with its partners, Northwestern University (NU), Emory University, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Colorado at Boulder, and Ekso Bionics design and implement a program of research and development centered on establishing a rational basis for quantifying the appropriate time distribution for use of robotic and computer-based interventions in rehabilitation therapy. The center also investigates how therapists interact with robotic devices when delivering therapy. Seven areas of research and development include: D1-R1 mixed-reality therapy for restoration of arm function in stroke survivors, D2-R2 development of computer-based algorithms for restoration of speech after stroke, D3-R3 effect of stretching of ankle muscles on locomotion in stroke survivors, and D4 how to train people with a spinal cord injury to use a robotic exoskeleton. Training for the center includes an advanced Education and Training project for undergraduate engineers dedicated to the design of simple devices for rehabilitation as part of NU’s highly successful initiative in engineering design education. Dissemination includes presentations at engineering and rehabilitation conferences, publications in high-impact peer reviewed journals, press releases, websites, and faculty presentations.
Collaborative Machines Enhancing Therapies (COMET)

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Principal Investigator: Jim Patton, PhD; David J. Reinkensmeyer, PhD; 949/824-5218
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Project Number: 90REGE0005
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,952; FY 19 $924,971; FY 20 $924,902; FY 21 $924,972; FY 22 $924,944

Abstract: This project establishes a new Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center, Collaborative Machines Enhancing Therapies (COMET), focusing on advancing technologies that work in partnership with patients and clinicians to enhance gait and dexterity outcomes for individuals with stroke and spinal cord injury (SCI) and other people with disabilities in a real-life rehabilitation setting. This project aims to produce technological innovations that improve therapeutic outcomes, advance the state of knowledge regarding technology-enabled therapy techniques and interventions, and educate and share this new knowledge with practitioners. Project outcomes include increasing clinician knowledge and improving practices, as well as utilizing new knowledge to determine the effectiveness and clinical uptake of rehabilitation therapy technologies. Products include new therapy technologies, commercial translation with Center partners, new methods of study, scientific publications, and educational materials. This multi-institutional collaboration includes partnerships with the University of California at Irvine, University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, North Carolina State University, Delft University of Technology, Harvard University, and several commercial, clinical, and consumer stakeholders.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Illinois

Technologies to Evaluate and Advance Mobility and Manipulation (TEAMM) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center

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Principal Investigator: Todd Kuiken, MD, PhD 312/238-1315
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Project Number: 90REGE0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,999; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000

Abstract: This RERC develops technologies to evaluate and advance mobility and manipulation for people with movement disabilities. The Center has six objectives: (1) to perform home trials of a manual standing wheelchair (developed under a previous RERC grant) and finalize the design to FDA standards; (2) modify a smart, wearable airbag system with custom smartphone application to sense falls in stroke survivors, and evaluate whether use of this system can mitigate fall injuries and improve walking confidence; (3) optimize and evaluate a robotic trainer for children with cerebral palsy; (4) develop and evaluate a low-cost prosthetic arm system targeted for individuals with amputation in both low-income countries and the US; and (5) evaluate a novel prosthetic leg with powered and passive modes (also developed under a previous RERC grant) in elderly users. In addition to research, evaluation, and developmental activities, this project implements comprehensive training programs to train the next generation of scientists and clinicians; and disseminates results to consumers, the public, and other relevant stakeholders. Outcomes include advanced production-ready prototypes of all devices that are clinically and commercially viable, production of peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings, and training materials for fitting powered prosthetic legs; and a low-cost prosthetic arm system using a simple, low-cost fabrication method.
Sensor Technology Applied to Rehabilitation in Stroke - STARS

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Project Number: 90REGE0010
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $924,810; FY 20 $924,957; FY 21 $924,846; FY 22 $924,780; FY 23 $924,910

Abstract: The primary goal of the Sensor Technologies Applied to Rehabilitation in Stroke or STARS Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) is to enhance the capacity of clinicians to provide evidence-based, individualize, and precise therapy, and to measure impairment by developing and testing a range of sensors suitable for clinical use, understanding that these clinicians play a pivotal role in implementing routine rehabilitation care. Measures of function currently used to evaluate progress in rehabilitation are insufficiently precise and do not allow physicians and therapists to characterize and understand the sources of impairment that lead to loss of function. This RERC designs, develops, and tests sensors suitable for measure of impairment in stroke survivors, and conducts studies to determine the feasibility of implementing these devices in routine practice. The RERC brings together a multidisciplinary team of engineers, scientists, clinicians, and consumers to conduct the following program of research and development: (1) Evaluate Use of Small Exoskeletons on the Hands and Fingers of Stroke Survivors to Quantify Finger Extension Forces and Proprioception; (2) Development of a Sensor Glove for Precise Quantification of Spasticity in Stroke Survivors; (3) Low Cost Instrumentation and Computational Rating of ARAT Using an Adapted Semi-Automated Rehabilitation System; (4) Wearable Sensors to Measure Gait Impairments and Function in Individuals with Stroke; and (5) Pilot Implementation Study on Clinical Sensor Adoption and Effectiveness of Sensors. The RERC also conducts a program of advanced education and training for junior faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and graduate and undergraduate students. The SRALab Academy provides on-site and web-based training for professionals and consumers. Dissemination includes presentations at engineering and rehabilitation conferences, and publications in high-impact peer reviewed journals to contribute new scientific, engineering, and clinical knowledge. Partners in this project include the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab (SRAlab), Northwestern University, University of California at Irvine, and Virginia Tech.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Maryland

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on
Universal Interface and Information Technology Access

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Project Number: 90RE5027
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $925,000; FY 17 $925,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/30/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This RERC is focused on accessibility of information and communication technologies, for persons across disability types and socio-economic levels. Accessibility issues addressed by this RERC stem from the interaction of four trends in information technology: (1) technology is increasingly required for all aspects of life (education, employment, health, safety, transportation, community participation, home management); (2) accessibility solutions do not exist for many groups – especially people with non-“mainstream” disabilities; (3) solutions that exist are often unaffordable; and (4) the number of different technology platforms, operating systems, and technology types that an individual must be able to use is increasing faster than assistive technology (AT) vendors can address. The RERC builds on and coordinates with the ongoing work of an international consortium (“Raising the Floor”) engaged in development of an underlying inclusive infrastructure that can greatly simplify accessibility and reduce costs for users and developers. This Global Public Inclusive Infrastructure (GPII) is designed to make assistive technologies and other access solutions available for many more users, much more efficiently and cost-effectively. (Both the consortium and the GPII concept were originated in the predecessor RERC.) The RERC’s research and development activities include: (1) Continuing development of the GPII concept – evolving it to address the changing technology landscape and the growing understanding of its role based on discussions with accessibility and mainstream stakeholders; (2) Moving the GPII from concept, papers, and laboratory prototypes, through to field implementations to test the efficacy and viability of the concept with real-world conditions, users, and limitations/realities; specifically: (a) Development and testing of a package for deploying and applying the GPII in public libraries of all sizes, with a focus on providing libraries with cost-effective ways of serving users with a wider range of abilities – including those with cognitive, memory, and digital-literacy related barriers such as elders and first-time users; (b) Development and testing of a decision support tool based on the GPII Unified Listing, that provides users and clinicians with a new capability for tracking and selecting ever-changing
solutions for users – including not only comprehensive information on assistive technologies, but also not-previously-available information on the access features that are built into mainstream technologies; (3) Facilitating and promoting access built directly into mainstream ICT products through technology transfer programs and research support for industry standards groups and governmental agencies working on accessibility standards.
Inclusive Information and Communications Technology RERC

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Public Contact: Kate Vanderheiden 301/405-2043; Fax: 301/314-9145

Project Number: 90REGE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000

Abstract: This RERC addresses access to inclusive information and communication technologies (ICT) for people with disabilities. ICTs are an integral part of life, impacting education, employment, health, transportation, and social communication; however, as ICTs continue to evolve (e.g., digital technologies) access for individuals with disabilities may become prohibitive. This project takes a two-part approach to addressing ICT accessibility issues by (1) ensuring that existing solutions are known, effective, findable, more affordable, and available on every computer or digital technology platform; and (2) exploring the emerging next-next-generation interface technologies for which there are no effective accessibility guidelines or standards, and problem-solving in advance of these technologies. Project activities include: (1) extending data science methods to include people with disabilities (who may be considered outliers to the developer community) so that data-driven technologies will work for them; (2) identifying interface strategies that work for people with severe and progressive cognitive disabilities (e.g., dementia); (3) creating new tools to easily discover which techniques and aids a person with a particular disability and/or disabilities needs in order to use ICTs, as well as have real-time solution-driven responses on any ICT a person with a disability utilizes; (4) developing a new approach to accessibility that works for next-next-generation interfaces including speech, text, eye-gaze, gesture, virtual reality, AI agents, emotion, and virtual direct-brain interfaces; and (5) ensuring existing proven solutions are within reach and available to those who most need them.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Michigan

Technology Increasing Knowledge: Technology Optimizing Choice (TIKTOC) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC)

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Project Number: 90RE5012 (Formerly H133E130014)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $923,442; FY 14 $924,560; FY 15 $924,502; FY 16 $920,402; FY 17 $922,220; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates innovative rehabilitation strategies, techniques, and interventions to enhance health, participation, and employment outcomes among adolescents and young adults with physical, cognitive, and neurodevelopmental disabilities. Center projects include two research studies and four development projects. The research projects include R1: An exploratory study to identify the primary cognitive and motivational variables that impact self-management ability and behaviors among adolescents and young adults with neurodevelopmental disabilities; and R2: A randomized clinical trial of a serious game developed to enhance self-management ability among adolescents and young adults with spinal cord dysfunction. The four development projects supported by the Center include: D1: The development of an effective system of data collection, analysis, and display tools to assist healthcare teams support individuals with disabilities to prioritize, address, measure, and track success in achieving personally optimal levels of health and participation; D2: The development of a dynamic scheduling system based on state-of-the-art artificial intelligence (AI) techniques that augments human cognition to support the management of health and participation of young adults with disabilities; D3: The development of a suite of data driven, context-aware and tailorable problem solving tools that leverage mobile and cloud-based technology to aid adolescents and young adults with physical disabilities manage their health in partnership with their care team; and D4: The development of evidence-based strategies, including interactive technology support, for adolescents and young adults with executive dysfunction and neurodevelopmental disabilities to improve self-care strategies, including medication management, medication adherence and side effect assessment. The TIKTOC RERC is an interdisciplinary collaboration of researchers, scientists and clinicians from the School of Medicine, the College of Engineering, the College of Pharmacy, and the School of Information within the University of Michigan.

NIDILRR Program Directory FY 2019 - Technology for Access and Function 5-22
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wearable Robots for Independent Living

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Project Number: 90RE5021
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman

Abstract: This project conducts research and development activities focused on wearable robots for independent mobility and manipulation. This RERC is a joint effort of the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) and the Kessler Research Foundation comprising three research and two comprehensive development projects, plus a portfolio of training activities. Two of the research projects employ three commercially available, lower extremity exoskeletons: One explores the potential of simultaneous spinal cord stimulation to improve exoskeleton use by individuals with spinal cord injury; the second studies the possible improvement in gait after stroke caused by using exoskeletons early in the rehabilitation process. The third project studies the benefit of home-based robotic rehabilitation of the upper extremities in persons who have had a stroke, employing the new upper extremity exoskeleton being developed by the NJIT. One development project explores the application of robotic admittance control as means of allowing users of a lower extremity exoskeleton to have complete control over the movement of their legs. The users make walking-like movements with their hands (or fingers) which are sensed and used to control the movement of the exoskeleton legs. Haptic feedback of the leg movement, conveyed to the hands, provides essential feedback to the user. The project also explores the ability of additional powered degrees of freedom to allow a combination of autonomous and user-initiated balance. The second development project extends the NJIT-developed upper extremity orthosis to meet the needs of children with muscular dystrophy and people of all ages with incomplete tetraplegia due to SCI. Admittance control is used as it offers a superior way to counterbalance gravity and the mass of objects to be lifted, thus letting the exoskeleton respond reliably and accurately to limited residual muscle forces. Training activities include a new continuing education (2-3 day) course for clinicians and physicians on wearable robotic applications and a new graduate course for engineering students on the design of wearable robots. Material from the RERC is included in the Kessler Post-Doctoral and Rehabilitation Residency curricula as well as to NJIT’s existing graduate courses on biorobotics, neuromuscular engineering, and neurorehabilitation. Additional training includes a new graduate certificate to be given after the completion of four graduate courses, as well as the infusion of wearable robot experience into master’s theses, undergraduate capstone design projects, and mentoring of pre-college students.
RERC on Universal Design and the Built Environment

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Project Number: 90RE5022
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $924,992; FY 16 $924,993; FY 17 $924,996; FY 18 $924,998; FY 19 $924,995

Abstract: The RERC on Universal Design and the Built Environment uses a Knowledge-To-Action Model to advance accessibility and universal design (UD) in the four domains of the built environment: (1) housing, (2) commercial and public buildings, (3) community infrastructure, and (4) transportation. The RERC activities address key needs for knowledge and demonstrate the value of evidence-based practice through improved building regulations and adoption of voluntary UD standards. Strategically important research, development, training, and dissemination activities integrate accessibility and UD principles with the generally accepted models, methods, and metrics in the building and product development industries. Short, intermediate, and long-term outcomes improve physical access, health, and social participation for people with disabilities while also being beneficial for the broader population of users of the built environment. Project R1 conducts evaluations of buildings and facilities in which UD features have been incorporated to assess their effectiveness in practice, strengthen the business case for UD, and provide evidence to support increased adoption of UD. Project R2 conducts human factors research on prevention of slips and falls, use of wayfinding apps, and cost-effective methods to evaluate UD products during the design process. Project DV1 develops software tools to improve the implementation of accessibility and UD standards, including an interface for UD certification. Project DV2 engages nine industry partners to create exemplar UD products and environments. Training activities increase knowledge and capacity about accessibility and UD for a wide range of stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities and their advocates. The RERC offers continuing education for design professionals and service providers through conferences, online modules, and collaborations with partners already serving these audiences. Interdisciplinary graduate education opportunities build the expertise of
the next generation of researchers and practitioners. To reach a broad audience, dissemination activities include a wide array of print and electronic media, all accessible from a web portal. Outreach includes participation in international, national, and local networks and events.
The Center for Enhancing Neurocognitive Health, Abilities, Networks, & Community Engagement (ENHANCE)

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Project Number: 90REGE0012
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $924,999; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $924,999; FY 22 $925,000; FY 23 $924,998

Abstract: The goal of this multi-site Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC), Enhancing Neurocognitive Health, Abilities, Networks, & Community Engagement (ENHANCE), is to support the ability of older adults with cognitive disabilities to live independently in the community. Cognitive disabilities, which negatively impact an individual’s ability to perform everyday community activities, disproportionately affect older adults. Technology applications hold promise in terms of enhancing community living for older adults with a cognitive disability. However, few technology solutions have been directed towards this population. The objectives of this RERC are to: (1) understand the challenges older adults with cognitive disabilities encounter with living activities, how these vary according to type of disability, and needed areas of, and preferences for, support; (2) identify, develop, and evaluate potential technology solutions; (3) disseminate findings to multiple stakeholders; and (4) advance new knowledge in the aging, cognitive disability, and technology space. The target population is adults aged 60+ with mild cognitive impairment, cognitive impairments due to stroke, and cognitive impairments due to traumatic brain injury. The project includes two research projects and two development projects. Research Project 1 involves a large-scale longitudinal needs assessment project. Research Project 2 involves developing and evaluating an adaptive intelligent software system that supports memory, everyday skills, and social engagement. Development Project 1 focuses on an instructional support aid for community mobility, and Development Project 2 focuses on a cognitive aid to support prospective memory activities such as remembering medication schedules. This program also involves training and dissemination activities. Outcomes include a database on challenges encountered by aging adults with a cognitive disability; needed areas of support; and the usability, acceptability and potential efficacy of technology solutions.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC):
From Cloud to Smartphone – Accessible and Empowering ICT

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Project Number: 90RE5018 (Formerly H133E140039)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $949,413; FY 15 $949,361; FY 16 $947,365; FY 17 $949,360; FY 18 $949,301; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this RERC is to mitigate accessibility barriers to information and communication technology (ICT) for persons with disabilities (PwDs) with functional and device limitations, provide affordable access to ICT for underserved populations, and develop innovative ICT to improve health and function, social participation, and employment among PwDs. The theme of “From Cloud to Smartphone: Empowering and Accessible ICT” guides the Center’s research and development activities which address cognitive and vocational rehabilitation, communication technology assessment and training, tele-rehabilitation infrastructure, and prevention and management of secondary conditions through six projects: (1) Cloud Accessibility WebAnywhere, (2) Accessible TeleWellness, (3) Accessible Mobile Vocational Coaching, (4) Speech and Language Teletherapy to Rural Underserved Areas, (5) Adaptive Accessible mHealth Transcoding, (5) Longitudinal Accessibility of Web 2.0, and (6) Privacy and Security for PwDs. Center collaborators include the University of Pittsburgh School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, the Computer Sciences Human-Computer Interaction Institute at Carnegie-Mellon University, and Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at the DePaul School of Hearing and Speech.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Improving Health and Function Through Use of Performance Standards in Wheelchair Selection

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Project Number: 90REGE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $924,732; FY 18 $924,633; FY 19 $924,551; FY 20 $924,978; FY 21 $924,916

Abstract: This center investigates performance-based selection as a rehabilitation strategy that uses results from standards testing to inform the process of selecting appropriate wheelchair products for people with mobility disabilities, matching appropriate and quality products to meet user needs. The center develops, evaluates, and implements performance standards for cushion tissue integrity management, cushion durability, wheelchair durability, and wheelchair propulsion efficiency. These performance standards establish test methods and requirements for devices. The goal of the RERC is to improve wheelchair services through an evidence-based approach using a performance-based product selection strategy. The specific objectives are to: (1) Develop and validate a test method for seat cushion load-bearing performance; (2) improve a test method for seat cushion performance stability with use; (3) develop and validate a test method for wheelchair rolling resistance; (4) develop and validate a test method for wheelchair caster durability; (5) research and disseminate product performance using these methods; and (6) research clinical relevance by evaluating equivalency of product performance and relating standards outcomes to clinical and real-world outcomes.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

RERC on Physical Access and Transportation

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Principal Investigator: Aaron Steinfeld, PhD; Jordana Maisel, PhD; 716/829-5902 (Maisel)
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Project Number: 90REGE0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,377; FY 19 $924,176; FY 20 $924,327; FY 21 $924,470; FY 22 $924,278

Abstract: The RERC on Physical Access and Transportation empowers consumers, manufacturers, and service providers to design, utilize, and evaluate accessible informational services, transportation equipment, and physical environments. Project activities build upon previous work to leverage emerging information technologies and address the need for customer-driven solutions that can be rapidly implemented and adapted to a wide range of transportation systems. Project outcomes include: (1) enabling technology and universal designs that support independent and efficient multi-modal travel in everyday life, including for employment and social participation; and (2) providing greater professional capacity in the domain of accessible transportation. Research and development activities provide new tools, research findings, guidelines, and products that advance the accessibility of transportation and the first/last mile (the distance between home and the nearest transportation pick-up and drop-off spot). These include: (1) research findings from a deployed, mobile transit information test bed application; (2) knowledge on how emerging transit service delivery models and automated vehicles can address first/last mile challenges; (3) new software for personalized transit information and daily travel planning; and (4) standards and regulations, reference designs, and vehicle interior concepts ready for commercialization by the autonomous vehicle industry. These products are developed with ongoing and extensive input from disability stakeholders, vehicle manufacturers, service providers, and transit agencies.
Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
Pennsylvania

Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (The RERC on AAC)

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Principal Investigator: Janice C. Light, PhD
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Project Number: 90RE5017 (Formerly H133E140026)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $948,188; FY 15 $949,461; FY 16 $949,224; FY 17 $949,976; FY 18 $949,600; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project conducts rigorous evidence-based research for designing effective augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) technologies and interventions, develops and evaluates innovative AAC engineering solutions driven by consumer needs, and provides comprehensive training and dissemination to ensure that all individuals, including those with severe disabilities, have access to effective AAC to enhance the communication of individuals with complex communication needs (CCN). The Center’s research and development activities (R & D) are organized around three themes: (1) improving access to technologies for individuals with CCN who have severe motor impairments by investigating and developing new access techniques (e.g., brain control interfaces and multimodal access); (2) developing language support technologies to enhance communication for those with significant language/cognitive limitations (e.g., technologies that facilitate the transition to literacy, provide contextually relevant smart prediction, and support video visual scene displays to enhance participation in school, work, and community routines); and (3) improving the AAC human-computer interface to reduce cognitive processing demands and enhance communication. Additionally, the Center brings together a team of rehabilitation engineers and scientists to deliver targeted training and dissemination to build greater capacity and maximize the effective translation of R & D for real-world use.
Scale-up of an Innovative, Evidence-Based Movement-2-Music (M2M) Intervention for Adults with Physical/Mobility Disability

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Project Number: 90DPGE0005
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $925,000; FY 19 $925,000; FY 20 $925,000; FY 21 $925,000; FY 22 $925,000

Abstract: This project examines the feasibility, efficacy, and effectiveness of an innovative, evidence-based intervention (Movement-2-Music, M2M©) for people with physical/mobility disabilities. The project conducts three studies. Study 1 is a randomized controlled efficacy trial examining the effects of a 12-week M2M© intervention in adults with physical/mobility disabilities on three functional levels: Level I – sitting exercise only, Level II – sitting and standing exercise (with or without support while standing), and Level III – sitting or standing exercise with emphasis on right/left side (for participants with hemiparesis). Study 2 is a 12-week randomized implementation trial testing the delivery methods of the M2M© intervention on study participants in two different settings: a community-based health and recreation center and a home-based telehealth (i.e., tele-exercise) platform. The final study (Study 3) is a type 1 hybrid effectiveness-implementation random control trial comparing the effectiveness of two delivery methods of M2M©. Primary outcomes include improved physical and psychosocial health for individuals with physical/mobility disabilities. Training includes the development of a certificate in disability content and M2M© with the American College of Sports Medicine. Research findings including M2M© content are to be distributed nationally through the National Center on Health, Physical Activity, and Disability.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
District of Columbia

Twenty-First Century Captioning Technology Metrics and Usability

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Project Number: 90DPCP0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $475,000; FY 19 $475,000; FY 20 $475,000; FY 21 $475,000; FY 22 $475,000

Abstract: This project examines access to video (broadcast or streaming) and its effects on societal participation (e.g., entertainment, news, political process, etc.), and develops a modern evidence-based approach to address the caption quality and caption user interface/user experience needs of viewers who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Project objectives are to: (1) develop caption quality metrics that are widely accepted, practical, technology neutral, and maximize access to video by people who are Deaf or hard of hearing; and (2) investigate factors in the presentation/display of captions on the screen to optimize their usability for and the experience of Deaf and hard of hearing viewers. Project outcomes include: (1) changes to caption quality policies, (2) changes to caption user interface guidelines, and (3) the adoption of clear standards that both human and ASR-based captioning processes should meet. Project outputs include programs, technologies, and guidelines for assessing captions; a video library for evaluating captioning methods; evidence-based reports that link caption quality metrics with subjective and objective viewer metrics; and evidence-based reports that describe the impact of caption display/presentation on the viewers. This project is a collaboration of Gallaudet University, the Rochester Institute of Technology, and Apptek in consultation with consumer and industry stakeholders.
 Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
 Massachusetts

CARE Study: Community Access Through Remote Eyesight

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Project Number: 90DPGE0012
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $444,341; FY 20 $444,443; FY 21 $440,515
Abstract: Community Access Through Remote Eyesight (CARE) Study is a randomized clinical trial evaluating the efficacy of a novel mobile technology, Aira, to improve quality of life in older adults with low vision by expanding community access and providing assistance with activities of daily living. Aira provides real-time remote personal assistance through a sighted Aira agent providing direct feedback to assist with visual tasks. This study seeks to understand the potential of this technology to improve daily activities, community participation, independence and self-sufficiency in this group by examining a technological approach, which has not yet undergone rigorous investigation in a diverse population of older adults with visual impairment. Project objectives are to evaluate Aira in a wide range of visual disability, categorized into three groups: (1) mild to moderate visual acuity loss, (2) severe to profound visual acuity loss, and (3) legal blindness secondary to visual field loss. Participants are randomized to either 6-month intervention group with ‘restricted’ access (current open access areas plus 30 minutes/month anywhere), or ‘unrestricted’ access (700 minutes). Outcome measures include assessment of changes at three- and six-months post-intervention for: visual ability, health state (including depression), self-efficacy, loneliness, life space, distances travelled from the home, and types of services obtained. This project is conducted at two sites: New England College of Optometry and the University of California Los Angeles.
Lightweight and Affordable Soft Knee Exoskeletons to Enhance Independent Living for Broad Lower-Limb Disability Populations

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**Project Number:** 90DPGE0011
**Start Date:** September 30, 2019
**Length:** 36 months
**NIDILRR Officer:** Brian Bard
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 19 $1,331,544

**Abstract:** This project develops soft wearable exoskeletons and assistive control algorithms to monitor, augment, and compensate for the loss of gait function of people with lower limb disabilities to promote independent living. In contrast to conventional exoskeletons that are typically heavy, bulky, expensive, limited in clinic-settings, and primarily suitable for paraplegic individuals with little to no remnant voluntary movement, this soft exoskeleton is lightweight, compact, and affordable to enhance mobility assistance in community settings for people without or residual movement. Project objectives are to: (1) optimize lightweight and affordable exoskeletons as personal mobility assistance devices; (2) evaluate robust gait detection algorithms for real-world activities of daily living of older adults with lower limb impairments; (3) develop assistive control strategies for walking, stair ascending/descending, and sit-to-stand assistance, and a mobile app based software interface; and (4) assess safety and suitability for clinical use. The project includes video-based training materials for stakeholders developed in collaboration with the National Center for Aging and Disability and Independent Living Research Utilization at TIRR Memorial Hermann.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Self-Management Assistance Through Technology (SMART) -
Virtual Coaches for Wheelchair Users

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Principal Investigator: Dan Ding, PhD
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Project Number: 90DP0056 (Formerly H133A130025)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $473,772; FY 14 $474,735; FY 15 $474,724; FY 16 $474,590; FY 17 $474,685; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project aims to improve health and functional outcomes of wheelchair users by increasing their knowledge of appropriate wheelchair use and their role in the wheelchair service delivery process and providing supportive technologies to assist them in leading a healthy lifestyle through the development and testing of two virtual coaches. The Wheelchair/Seating Usage Coach is a suite of interactive mobile apps and portable sensing devices that teach safe and effective use of a wheelchair (e.g., wheelchair fit, propulsion techniques, wheelchair maintenance, and use of seat functions), and assists wheelchair users in navigating the service delivery process. The Lifestyle Coach is a suite of interactive mobile apps and portable sensing devices that assist wheelchair users to self-monitor and manage their weight and physical activity. The United Spinal Association and peer support groups in the Pittsburgh area and other regions assist in the development and testing of these virtual coaches. The project expects to commercialize the portable sensing devices and disseminate the mobile apps through app stores, partner organizations, professionals pursuing continuing education credits, professional conferences, and social media. The coaching tools can be incorporated into a community-based program that teaches self-management skills applied to wheelchair use and healthy lifestyle for wheelchair users.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)  
Pennsylvania

DRRP on Robotics and Automation for Inclusive Transportation

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Project Number: 90DPGE0003  
Start Date: September 30, 2017  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $499,896; FY 18 $499,986; FY 19 $499,910; FY 20 $499,902; FY 21 $499,876

Abstract: This project researches and develops seamless transportation assistance from cloud-based autonomy and shared robots located in and around transportation hubs. The goal of this project is to enable more independent travel within the community by people with disabilities through universal design, coordinated research, and precursor projects already underway. The objectives are to: (1) identify methods for acquiring and applying knowledge about traveler routines to support seamless changes in travel, (2) determine appropriate intervention methods for preemptively addressing barriers along a traveler’s trip, (3) develop scalable methods for rich map information during user and robot navigation, and (4) develop cloud-based autonomy and shared hub robots that can provide assistance during daily travel. Through these objectives, the project aims to improve effective and seamless travel within the community; generate new knowledge on when and how to provide assistance to travelers with disabilities; develop new, reusable, open source travel assistance technologies; and expand capacity through new technology and training of new experts in the field.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Autonomy, Safety, and Social Integration via Smart Technologies (ASSIST)

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Project Number: 90DPGE0010  
Start Date: September 30, 2019  
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $1,333,027

Abstract: The goal of this project is to develop and evaluate an evidence-based model for delivering mainstream smart-home technologies as assistive technology (AT) to support independent living and community integration of people with physical disabilities who are at risk of institutionalization. Project objectives include: (1) developing a comprehensive technology intervention ASSIST (Autonomy, Safety, and Social Integration via Smart Technologies), and refining this intervention through repeated trials with a small cohort of participants who are eligible for Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waiver programs due to a physical disability; (2) evaluating ASSIST in a prospective six-month pilot study using a single-group pre/post mixed-method design standard for a matched usual care cohort by age, gender, and level of care needed; and (3) evaluating the financial impact of ASSIST through cost-tracking and analysis of intervention data, and formal/informal care data. Outcomes include a comprehensive technology-based intervention with emphasis on smart home technologies to support people with physical disabilities who are at risk of institutionalization to live more independently, be more connected within their communities, and have great choice and self-determination over their lives. The expected product includes a service delivery model for mainstream smart home technologies as AT, the intervention manual for ASSIST, training materials for professionals and users/families, and a document describing the unmet needs and barriers encountered.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Virginia

Assistive Wearables to Support Self-Regulation for Neurodiverse Postsecondary Students

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Project Number: 90DPGE0009
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $712,774

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates an assistive smartwatch application that supports the self-regulation of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in independent living. The goal of this project is to improve the self-regulation skills for neurodiverse individuals following a postsecondary inclusive special education program. The objectives are: (1) to formally characterize the assistance process and elicit requirements for implementing the application; (2) to design, develop, and test an interactive application for smartwatches according to individual’s needs for self-regulation; and (3) to assess the impact of the assistive technology on self-regulation skills of neurodiverse individuals following the postsecondary education program. The technology proposed offers direct support to neurodiverse individuals and their assistants. The smartwatch application serves as a tool to facilitate the intervention process with a less obtrusive approach. The ultimate goal of the project is to allow neurodiverse individuals to acquire or to improve their self-regulation skills and allow assistants to also gain a better understanding of the interventions. Other special education programs can reuse and refine the application to conduct future interventions. In addition to scientific articles describing the research findings, the products and publications of this project include documentation, specification, code and training materials about the application, as well as design guidelines and implications for assistive smartwatches for self-regulation of young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
Artificial Intelligence Assisted Inclusive Diabetes Telecoaching Self-Management Program

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Principal Investigator: Mohanraj Thirumalai, PhD
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Project Number: 90IFDV0013
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,998; FY 20 $199,910; FY 21 $199,820

Abstract: The University of Alabama at Birmingham in partnership with the Lakeshore Foundation develops and pilot tests the feasibility of an accessible and inclusive artificial intelligence (AI) assisted telecoaching platform for people with disabilities and type 2 diabetes (T2DM) with the goal of creating an online diabetes self-management program that is accessible, inclusive, scalable, and sustainable. Project objectives are to: (1) develop an AI-assisted, individualized, family-focused, lifestyle modification telehealth intervention (Artificial Intelligence for Diabetes Management - AI4DM) for T2DM participants with disabilities using a participatory design approach; and (2) evaluate the feasibility (i.e., process, resource, management, and scientific feasibility), acceptability, and preliminary efficacy of AI4DM in adults with T2DM and permanently-impaired mobility. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) a robust telecoaching platform for T2DM participants; (2) establishing preliminary efficacy of the intervention (program, content, and technology); (3) instituting a technology transfer plan to begin offering this program beyond the research setting; (4) identifying areas needing further refinement and research; and (5) developing a sustainability plan to support the project in the future. Products include a complete inclusive T2DM management program including a library of videos; a telecoaching platform to deliver the program featuring separate mobile health apps for participants and caregivers, Amazon Alexa, food recommender system (like Netflix), and context-aware physical activity suggestions; a coaching manual; and various publications.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
California

Comparative Effectiveness of Off-the-Shelf (OTS) Versus Custom-Made Ankle-Foot Orthosis in Individuals with Stroke

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Project Number: 90IFRE0017
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: This project compares the effectiveness of two commonly used ankle-foot orthoses (AFOs) types: (1) prefabricated, off-the-shelf (OTS) semi-rigid polypropylene, and (2) a custom-made polypropylene articulating AFO with a dorsiflexion stop and dorsiflexion spring assistance (DS/DA) for individuals with intermediary deficits in walking function post-stroke. AFOs are frequently prescribed for patients with hemiplegia to enhance walking function. Project objectives are to: (1) identify the biomechanical mechanisms underlying improvements in walking in an OTS and custom-made AFO; (2) compare the effects of OTS and custom-made DS/DA AFOs on self-reported measures of satisfaction and daily stepping activity with the AFO; (3) determine if effectiveness of the OTS and custom-made DS/DA is dependent upon clinical measures of muscle strength, range of motion, and sensation and/or spasticity; (4) determine the threshold levels of clinical and functional measures necessary to benefit from the semi-rigid OTS AFO; and (5) determine the rate of abandonment with OTS and custom-made DS/DA AFOs. Outcomes include: (1) criteria for prescribing the most appropriate AFO for the middle functioning group of persons after stroke, (2) threshold levels of clinical and functional measures that indicate whether an OTS semi-rigid or custom-made DS/DA AFO is most appropriate, (3) rate of abandonment of prescribed AFOs, and (4) a cost-effective AFO prescription for persons with hemiplegia from stroke using an evidence-based patient-centered decision-making guideline. Dissemination products include peer-reviewed publications, presentations, training materials, guidelines for optimal AFO prescription, and a mobile application.
ALIGN v.2.0: Identification and Quantification of Real-Time Barriers to Community Mobility

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Project Number: 90IF0123
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $199,940; FY 17 $199,963; FY 18 $199,962; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project builds upon the Application for Locational Intelligence and Geospatial Navigation (ALIGN) prototype developed and pilot tested as part of the RERC on Technologies for Successful Aging with Disability. This project: (1) identifies and validates key real-time factors (i.e., pedestrian volumes and timing of traffic of signals); (2) refines the database structure and data acquisition processes; (3) applies a weighting system to real-world factors to generate route mobility scores; (4) develops an enhanced routing algorithm; (5) develops the backend capability to collect actual use data to inform continual refinement; (6) refines and tests usability of the interface; (7) demonstrates feasibility through real-world utility testing; and (8) develops a management, marketing, and distribution strategy. Project outcomes include a proof-of-concept prototype ALIGN v.2.0 with routing algorithms that enable the application to be customized with location-specific data enhancing the mobility of people with mobility disabilities for any geographic area.
**Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)**  
Illinois

**Improving Electronic Written Communication in Persons with Aphasia: A Clinical Trial**

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www.sralab.org/clinical-trials/improving-electronic-written-communication-aphasia  
clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03773419

**Principal Investigator:** Leora R. Cherney, PhD  
**Public Contact:** 312/238-1117  

**Project Number:** 90IFRE0007  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017  
**Length:** 36 months  

**NIDILRR Officer:** Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $199,783; FY 18 $199,646; FY 19 $199,494  

**Abstract:** The goal of this project is to evaluate the extent to which a novel treatment (T-WRITE) improves written language function and the use of text messaging for people with aphasia, who often have difficulty with writing and may struggle to use electronic communication that connects people to one another. The specific objective of this randomized clinical trial is to compare T-WRITE to ORLA+WTG, a similar treatment that targets written expression using handwriting, and to evaluate whether there are subsequent positive effects on the participant’s social connectedness and ultimately health-related quality of life. T-WRITE involves choral reading and repeated writing of sentences via texting. Participants work intensively and independently at home on a laptop computer. A virtual therapist directs the participant to practice copying and independently writing phrases and short sentences using the typing feature on a cellular phone.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Illinois

Timing of Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS) Combined with Speech and Language Therapy (SLT):
An Intervention Development Study for Aphasia

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www.sralab.org/clinical-trials/effect-offline-vs-online-tdcs-language-recovery-post-stroke-aphasia
clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03773406

Principal Investigator: Leora R. Cherney, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-1117

Project Number: 90IFRE0020
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $199,613; FY 19 $199,821; FY 20 $199,872

Abstract: This study focuses on the timing and use of transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) in speech and language therapy for people with aphasia and/or communication disabilities. There is little research on the precise application of tDCS therapy, a noninvasive, safe, low-cost form of brain stimulation. This project systematically investigates whether it is optimal for tDCS to be administered before, after, or simultaneously with speech and language therapy. Individuals with chronic aphasia are randomized to one of four groups in which the tDCS or a sham tDCS is combined with speech and language therapy in a different sequence, with treatment lasting three weeks. The speech and language therapy is a scripted training and delivered via computer, and the tDCS provides cathodal stimulation to the lesioned left side of the brain. Language and communication skills are evaluated pre-treatment, immediately post-treatment, and at two and six weeks after the end of treatment to assess maintenance effects. Additionally, EEG measures of brain activity are taken on some of the treatment days. Determining the optimum timing of tDCS relative to speech and language therapy is an essential step in standardizing the use of tDCS as an adjuvant in aphasia therapy. Results may have important implications for the costs, delivery, and outcome of rehabilitation services to individuals with aphasia, including optimizing language recovery and enhancing their quality of life.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Michigan

Real World Testing of a Brain-Computer Interface to Operate a Commercial Augmentative and Alternative Communication System

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clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT04026581

Principal Investigator: Jane Huggins, PhD; Katya Hill, PhD
Public Contact: 734/936-7177

Project Number: 90IFDV0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,994; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $199,998

Abstract: For the most vulnerable individuals who cannot otherwise access augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, access through brain-computer interfaces (BCIs) offers the opportunity to obtain AAC’s vital quality-of-life benefits. However, little evidence exists on the features, clinical services, and resources needed to effectively deliver an AAC-BCI. The University of Michigan has partnered with the University of Pittsburgh, the Prentke Romich Company (PRC), and the ICAN Talk Clinic, as well as patients and caregivers, to meet this need. The objectives are to: (1) test an AAC-BCI prototype that advances the effectiveness of current BCI communication, (2) improve the procedures and tools for comprehensive assessment to provide clinical evidence to support AAC-BCI funding, and (3) improve in-home training and treatment necessary for successful daily communication using an AAC-BCI. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) greater AAC access options for stakeholders (individuals, families, and practitioners); (2) improved tools for practitioners to compare access methods and recommend an AAC-BCI; (3) improved AAC-BCI in-home training resources for stakeholders; (4) improved clinical evidence for practitioners to support treatment decisions; and (5) available outcome data to advocate for billing codes and funding of AAC-BCI. The expected products are an AAC-BCI prototype incorporating a commercial high-efficiency AAC device, dry electrode technology, assessment protocols, in-home training materials, and a language sample repository for data sharing.
Effect of Guidance Surfaces on Travelers with Vision and Mobility Impairments

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**Principal Investigator:** Robert Wall Emerson, PhD

**Public Contact:** 239/387-3072

**Project Number:** 90IF0127

**Start Date:** September 30, 2016

**Length:** 36 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Joseph A. DePhillips

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 16 $587,055; FY 17 (This project was fully funded in the first year); FY 18 (This project was fully funded in the first year); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/30/2020)

**Abstract:** This project focuses on international standards for materials and installation of tactile guidance surfaces for crosswalks with the goal of improved safety and guidance for pedestrians with visual disabilities. The project includes a review of international standards and use of surfaces for guiding people who are blind to crosswalks and helping them align and collects data on the most promising materials and installation methods. With increasingly complicated modern intersections, people who are blind have more trouble finding crosswalks, aligning to cross, and crossing a street in a straight line. In the US, there is no standard for material or installation for tactile guidance surfaces to help people who are blind to locate a crosswalk or align correctly. International standards and pilot data suggest some surface treatments that might improve safety without creating barriers for people with mobility impairments.

This project collects data with people with mobility and visual impairments to determine what materials and installation pose the least problem for them. The project then assesses the best materials and installation from this phase with people who are blind to see which offers the best information for finding crosswalks and aligning to cross a street. The project team combines expertise from a research university, experienced professionals in the field of blindness and mobility, and a nationally recognized civil engineering firm. In addition to data from people with mobility and visual impairments, project outputs include a guidance document that can be used by cities and municipalities to standardize their approach to using tactile guidance surfaces for people who are blind.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
New Jersey

Development of a Virtual Reality Spatial Retraining Therapy to Improve Neglect in Stroke Survivors

Kessler Foundation
Stroke Rehabilitation Research
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kesslerfoundation.org/research/studies/development-virtual-reality-spatial-retraining-therapy-improve-neglect-stroke

Principal Investigator: Peii Chen, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3574

Project Number: 90IFDV0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000
Abstract: This project develops the Virtual Reality Spatial Retraining Therapy (VR-SRT) System to address spatial neglect (SN) in people who have experienced a stroke. SN is the most common spatial deficit after stroke and a major hidden disability after brain injury. The project uses agile software development and user-centered design to deliver a VR-SRT System that is affordable and accessible in various healthcare settings, from clinics and hospitals to patients’ homes. Project objectives are to: (1) design and develop exemplar treatment tasks that target bottom-up and top-down treatment approaches for SN; (2) extend and enhance the features of the exemplar treatment tasks, thereby maximizing therapy engagement and user satisfaction; (3) expand the software to optimize treatment control and management for therapists and to amplify data extraction capabilities for researchers; and (4) evaluate the latest prototype and finalize the VR-SRT System by establishing preliminary feasibility and efficacy.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
New Jersey

Patient-Specific In-Shoe Orthoses for Knee OA
Prescribed Using Weight Bearing MRI

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kesslerfoundation.org/researchcenter/hpel/index.php

Principal Investigator: Peter Barrance, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3550

Project Number: 90IF0077 (Formerly H133G140183)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $199,878; FY 15 $199,983; FY 16 $199,994; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project refines the process for prescribing in-shoe footwear modifications, leveraging upon the weight-bearing MRI technology developed under a previous NIDILRR field-initiated project Improved Weight Bearing Evaluation of Knee Osteoarthritis. This project consists of two phases: (1) investigation of the immediate effect of incremental lateral in-shoe wedging on both static and dynamic descriptors of lower extremity biomechanics, as assessed using weight bearing MRI and gait analysis; and (2) a short term interventional trial in which the clinical effect of patient-specific in-shoe wedging is compared against the performance of a neutral (un-wedged) orthotic. Functional mobility tests and questionnaire reporting are utilized to evaluate the clinical effect on osteoarthritis-related pain and disability.
Audio-Tactile Web Accessibility with Haptic Gloves

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Principal Investigator: Yevgen Borodin, PhD
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Project Number: 90IF0117
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $200,000; FY 17 $200,000; FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project conducts research aimed at improving the utility of web access for people who are blind or have low-vision. The goal of this project is to better understand how the effectiveness of non-visual web browsing may be improved with tactile interfaces in general and haptic gloves in particular. Project objectives include: (1) designing audio-tactile interfaces for general browsing, text entry and editing, and dynamic interaction with web interfaces; and (2) developing a haptic glove with finger tracking and tactile feedback, and input functionalities enabling research activities. Outcomes include: (1) to design and implement software for novel haptic interfaces for web browsing, (2) to understand tactile behaviors and strategies employed by people who are blind and those with low-vision, (3) to provide insight into how dynamic haptic feedback can be used to improve computer interaction, (4) to provide diverse educational outcomes for university students and people affected by vision loss, (5) to create FeelX – a working audio-tactile system capable of providing haptic feedback, and (6) to enhance the web browsing productivity of people who are blind or have low-vision leading to improved access to education and employability. This project is a partnership between the Web Accessibility Lab at Stony Brook University and Lighthouse-Guild.
Gaining Real-Life Skills Over the Web (GROW)

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Public Contact: 513/636-3370

Project Number: 90IFDV0003
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,320; FY 18 $199,486; FY 19 $198,794
Abstract: This project develops and evaluates an online learning environment of web-based intervention modules designed to promote family and child coping and adjustment (GROW: Gaining Real-life Skills Over the Web) based on a comprehensive needs assessment of children aged 0 to 14 years old, who experienced a traumatic brain injury (TBI) between the ages of 0 to 4 years, and their families. The incidence of TBI peaks between the ages 0 to 4 years, yet there are no evidenced-based interventions to facilitate neurocognitive development and socio-emotional functioning of children injured during this critical development period. To address the unmet need of caregivers of infants and toddlers with TBI, the project uses a three-phase, three-year development process to generate proof of concept and initial proof of product. Phase 1 involves a comprehensive needs assessment that includes quantitative assessment of family and child needs, qualitative assessment through focus groups and interviews of families, feedback from family and professional advisory boards, and consultation with professionals implementing interventions with similar populations (e.g., families of children with very low birth weight). During Phase 2, the project develops the content and manual for the intervention modules, designs the online learning environment, and conducts intensive, iterative usability testing. Phase 3 involves a pilot of the GROW program with 20 families to evaluate its usability, acceptability, and qualitative and quantitative impact on stakeholder identified outcomes.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Tennessee

Toe Joint Articulation in Passive and Powered Prostheses for Enhancement of Walking and Long-Term Health

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Project Number: 90IFRE0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $199,100; FY 18 $199,298; FY 19 $199,949

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the design of prosthetic feet to restore biological toe function in a way that aids individuals with limb loss as they navigate various slopes, uneven terrain, and daily obstacles. The project includes a systematic empirical study of toe joint stiffness in both passive and powered prosthetic feet to generate new data that characterize the functional role of the toes during various locomotor activities. This research advances the fundamental understanding of foot function during legged locomotion and has the potential to spur transformative prosthetic advances that improve the mobility of lower limb prosthetic users while reducing device costs.
Field Initiated Projects (FIPs)
Wisconsin

Image Categorization Expert System to Facilitate Creation of Accessible Education Materials

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Public Contact: 608/890-2455

Project Number: 90IF0114
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 36 months
NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $197,179; FY 17 $199,632; FY 18 $199,298; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to enhance the process of producing accessible descriptions for textbook images for students with print disabilities. Graphical representations of information are widely used in education for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. These graphics pose a particular challenge for users who have print disabilities, defined as persons who cannot effectively read print because of visual, physical, perceptual, developmental, cognitive, or learning impairments. Creating accessible instructional materials for students with print disabilities is essential to promote better educational, and consequently, better employment outcomes for this population in an increasingly technologically-oriented world. This project develops a set of open source software tools to improve current workflows in the authoring of image descriptions for scanned textbooks. The project evaluates the effectiveness of the developed tools both in terms of the efficiency of image description volunteers, and the accuracy and perceived quality of the produced descriptions.
Community Participation Through Personalized Accessibility Information: The Access Ratings NextGen App

The Board of Regents of UW System for the
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Principal Investigator: Roger O. Smith, PhD
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Project Number: 90IFDV0006
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 36 months

NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $200,000; FY 19 $200,000; FY 20 $200,000

Abstract: While the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) has substantially improved community accessibility there are many community buildings that remain inaccessible or only partially accessible to people with disabilities (PwDs). This project develops and evaluates the Access Ratings for Buildings NextGen (ARB-NextGen) application across three stakeholder groups (PwDs, proprietors of buildings, and rehabilitation professionals); and substantially advances tools for measuring, labeling, and informing PwDs about accessing the built environment. Research and development activities include: (1) working with focus groups, community agencies, and rehabilitation professional programs to advance the ARB-NextGen application suite; (2) populating a building barriers database; and (3) evaluating development processes and outcomes with stakeholder groups. The project produces four products: (1) AccessTools, a mobile application suite to quantify building accessibility; (2) AccessPlace, a consumer rating and integrated report platform for personalized accessibility information; (3) Access Ratings Training System; and (4) the ARB research database. Outcomes include increasing the quality of life of PwDs by predicting barriers they may encounter, improving the tools used by expert assessors to evaluate public buildings, and creating a research database on built environment accessibility.
A Brain Computer Interface (BCI) Jobs Platform for Individuals with Severe Movement Disorders

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Principal Investigator: Walid Soussou, PhD; Theresa Vaughn; 858/412-1820; 858/373-0231
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Project Number: 90BISA0023
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $99,971

Abstract: This project produces an easy-to-use and non-invasive Brain-Computer Interface (BCI) designed specifically for individuals with severe motor disorders to provide them access to an online microwork platform. The recent flourishing of cloud-based microwork employment presents a unique opportunity for people with severe disabilities to work from home; however, alternative computer access solutions are critically needed to enable accessibility to these jobs. The goal of this Phase I is to produce a proof of concept BCI-Job and demonstrate that it could be viably used and adopted by people with disabilities. This BCI-Job interface may later be expanded with additional input modalities such as eye-tracking. The BCI-Job platform may additionally aid employers in meeting ADA employment requirements by providing reasonable work opportunities to disabled employees.
Clinical Evaluation of a Hidden and Noninvasive Balance Aid for Vestibular Impairment

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Project Number: 90BISA0026
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $100,000

Abstract: This project explores the use of a new balancing technology to make up for the lost sense of balance for patients with vestibular impairment. The goal of this project is to demonstrate the safety and efficacy of EquiCue™ intraoral balance aid through clinical studies. Phase I objectives are (1) to demonstrate use of alternative sensory feedback for patients with chronic vestibular loss to maintain postural control in clinical balance tests; (2) to assess the clinical value of the device in improving gait stability during various walking conditions in clinic; (3) to evaluate dizziness levels of these patients throughout training, testing, and gait exercises; and (4) to explore its potential in improving activity of daily living and refine user experience through follow-up in-home evaluation. Project outcomes include: (1) better postural control using EquiCue™ intraoral balance aid; (2) improvement in gait stability during walking through stabilization of the head and self-perception of head motion; (3) relief of dizziness by using a stable gravito-inertial reference to realign senses and restore an internal map of the surroundings; and (4) improved quality of life in daily living for those patients. The clinical data will provide insight into a pivotal study for regulatory approval of the device, eventually paving the way for commercialization of the technology for patients with vestibular impairment.
My Skills Coach, A Mobile and Cloud-Based Tool to Help Individuals with an Intellectual Disability with Co-Occurring Behavioral Health Issues

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Principal Investigator: Stephen M. Sutter 317/777-0356
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Project Number: 90BISA0024
Start Date: September 01, 2019
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Amanda Reichard, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $100,000

Abstract: This project demonstrates the technical merit, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of combining commercially available tablets and programmable avatars with cloud computing to create My Skills Coach. Approximately 50 percent of the adults with an intellectual disability (ID) experience co-occurring behavioral health (BH) issues and demonstrate challenging behaviors. My Skills Coach assists individuals with ID/BH to practice self-directed behavioral co-regulation in typical activities in a day program or residential setting. This co-regulation coaching is delivered via an interactive avatar, using developed protocols. Specific Phase I objectives include: (1) determine end user requirements, (2) develop a proof-of-concept prototype of the system, and (3) evaluate the utility of the prototype with actual individuals and direct support professionals (DSPs) who support them. The result is a cost-effective option with built-in natural support mechanisms to promote independence, enhance self-esteem, and create opportunities for self-regulation using a respectful, non-invasive approaches for consumers with ID/BH in multi-person living or community settings.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I  
Kentucky

**3D Printed Cochlear Electrode Arrays**

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**Principal Investigator:** Angelique-Candace Johnson, PhD  
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**Project Number:** 90BISA0021  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2019  
**Length:** 6 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Timothy Beatty  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 19 $100,000  

**Abstract:** For individuals who are Deaf or hard of hearing, electrode arrays implanted in the cochlea may offer more benefits than conventional hearing aids. This project designs and validates a disruptive printing process for cochlear electrode arrays to increase the degree to which these arrays can be customized and to enhance their performance. During this phase, researchers determine the feasibility of printing customizable high performing arrays that meet the requirements of surgical compatibility, biocompatibility, and durability necessary for FDA approval and use in a commercial cochlear implant. The result is a proof-of-concept for a 3D printed electrode array.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I  
Massachusetts

High-Energy, Light-Weight Battery to  
Power Next Generation Wearable Assist Prosthetics

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Principal Investigator: Badawi Dweik, PhD  
Public Contact: 781/529-0520

Project Number: 90BISA0022  
Start Date: September 30, 2019  
Length: 6 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $99,923

Abstract: This project develops high-energy, light weight, cost-efficient battery packs containing a lithium sulfur (Li-S) battery with substantially higher specific energy and low cost to support the new generation of powered mobility prosthetic devices. The power supply is one of the biggest problems facing engineers and designers of powered mobility devices. Range anxiety, or the fear that a device will run out of power away from a charging station, is a serious concern among powered prosthetic users as current devices rely on bulky battery packs and do not provide enough energy for a full day of operation. This phase 1 project focuses on modifying the battery cathode which is anticipated to provide high specific energy and to retain its high energy density for more than 365 cycles. During this first phase, researchers assemble lab-scale battery cells with the novel cathode material and evaluate their performance over the demanding operational conditions for power prosthetics. Towards the end of Phase-I, the fabrication process is scaled to assemble pouch cells that will be tested to determine the energy and size parameters of Li-S battery cells. The successful development of the proposed cathode material will allow lightweight battery packs to last 12 hours with less than 1/2 of the weight of the current Li-ion battery packs (that last less than 6 hours). The output is small, light, and low cost batteries which do not burden the user with unnecessary bulk, yet are capable of powering the prosthetic for an entire day of activity.
Adaptive Robotic Assistance to Maximize Patient Engagement with the Barrett Upper-Extremity Robotic Trainer

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Principal Investigator: Amy Blank, PhD
Public Contact: 617/252-9000

Project Number: 90BISA0028
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $100,000

Abstract: In stroke rehabilitation, patient engagement in physical therapy is critical for improving functional outcomes. Robot-assisted rehabilitation provides an opportunity to provide repeatable, high-intensity therapy tailored to the needs of the patient, while also decreasing the load on the therapist. The primary goal of this project is to provide more effective therapy by engaging the patient as much as possible in executing intentional movements using real-time adaptive robotic assistance, guided by the ability of the patient and the goals specified by the therapist. The project uses the Barrett Upper-Extremity Robotic Trainer (Burt), a robotic assistant system that provides selectable levels of assistance and an engaging patient interface to enhance physical therapy. During Phase I, researchers build on the Burt system, leveraging the measurement and assistance capabilities of the system to provide just enough assistance that the patient is able to achieve therapist-defined movement goals with as much of their own volitional movement as possible, and allowing the therapist to specify movement goals and track patient progress through a versatile and intuitive user interface. The results of Phase I include (1) the ability to measure patient contributions to movement without explicit force sensing, (2) adaptive robotic assistance algorithms applicable to generic 3D motions specified by a therapist, and (3) a Burt therapy activity incorporating these features.
New High Density Magnetic Braille Actuators:  
The Path to a Consumer Full-Page Digital Braille Display

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www.polymerbraille.com

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Public Contact: 480/540-1324

Project Number: 90BISA0029  
Start Date: September 30, 2019  
Length: 6 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $99,998

Abstract: This Phase I project develops a low-cost Braille/tactile display based on magnetic Braille cell actuator technology. This actuator technology utilizes a novel actuation and latching mechanism, which enables the fabrication of a very compact, low power consumption, high performance Braille cell at significantly reduced cost to existing Braille cell technologies. The focus of Phase I is a rigorous, systematic study of this actuation mechanism, resulting in a small scale, two-inch square, multi-cell prototype which can be tested by Braille readers. This research will inform future phases to fabricate larger-scale displays that overcome many of the limitations of existing Braille displays. Larger displays could provide better access to digital text, particularly material from the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which require multiple lines of equations and operations, graphics, complex tables, and charts.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I
Oregon

TRACK (Tools for Reading to Acquire Content Knowledge):
An Intelligent Application for Middle and High School Students with Neurodevelopmental Disorders

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Principal Investigator: Catrin Rode, PhD
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Project Number: 90BISA0017
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $99,994; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/31/2020)

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates an intelligent web-based application, Tools for Reading to Acquire Content Knowledge (TRACK) for middle and high school students with neurocognitive deficits such as individuals with learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, traumatic brain injury, or autism spectrum disorder. Applying a participatory action research approach, investigators engage recognized content experts, collaborate with the Center on Brain Injury Research and Training (CBIRT), and engage stakeholders such as students, teachers, and parents to address issues with cognitive processing (e.g., memory, executive functioning, focus, reading comprehension) that interfere with learning and retaining educational content and often result in poorer academic outcomes and transition rates into post-secondary education and thereby affecting overall live outcomes. TRACK uses evidence-based learning strategies, natural language processing technology, and the highly customizable user interface and user experience design, integrating them into one easy to use, cost-effective application that students can use any time they learn from informational text with any curriculum across grade levels, subjects, and users with various level of cognitive impairment. With this innovative approach, this project aims to enhance long term workforce participation and community living through educational retention for students with neurocognitive deficits.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase I  
Pennsylvania

ASTA: An Accessible and Sustainable Transit Application to Advance Independent Travel

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www.azavea.com

Principal Investigator: Robert Cheetham  
Public Contact: Stephanie Wall 215/701-7711

Project Number: 90BISA0025  
Start Date: September 30, 2019  
Length: 6 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $100,000

Abstract: Transportation plays a critical role in enabling independence, including access to education, employment, social activities, health care, shopping, and other day-to-day needs. Yet in many communities around the world, urban and regional transportation systems remain difficult to navigate or even inaccessible to people with disabilities. The goal of this project is to combine multiple existing tools into a single, comprehensive transportation platform in which accessibility is a central, organizing principle that works in tandem with sustainable, long-term planning. During Phase I, researchers develop an open source geography of accessibility using new data gathering tools and informal standards for annotating map features relevant to accessibility and sustainable development. These may include but not be limited to factors such as crosswalks, traffic speed, crime risk, smooth and continuous sidewalks, lighting, scenery, slope, and the availability of curb ramps or accessible transit options.
Smart Ankle-Foot Orthosis (SMART AFO) for Improved Stroke Outcomes

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Project Number: 90BISA0027
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 6 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $99,757

Abstract: This project develops a novel, wireless, smart ankle-foot orthosis (SMART AFO) system aimed to improve walking in individuals affected by stroke who use custom AFOs. Project objectives include: (1) Integrating adjustable ankle joint hardware, electronics, and Bluetooth communications into a diagnostic AFO for patient evaluation; (2) developing and implementing a software application to interface with the instrumented AFO for data collection; and (3) performing bench testing of the instrumented AFO system to validate sensors, measure the mechanical properties, and confirm device safety and robustness. This SMART AFO enables clinicians to make better-informed decisions on AFO adjustments which have been shown to be important for maximizing safety and efficiency of walking post-stroke.
Improving Rehabilitation and Reducing Re-Occurrence of Diabetic Foot Ulcers by Shifting Plantar Pressure with Exo-Tendon and Exo-Skeletal Footwear Systems

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Project Number: 90BISB0011
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 24 months

NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $298,294; FY 19 $276,700

Abstract: This Phase II project brings novel exoskeleton footwear towards commercialization which reduces plantar loading, accelerates and improves rehabilitation after diabetic foot ulcer, and minimizes its reoccurrence to help people resume activities of daily living, maintain full employment and function, and prevent amputation. Project objectives include: (1) optimizing the performance of off-loading/pro-pulsive exoskeleton footwear based on in-depth human factors analysis; (2) biomechanical performance testing of the refined footwear in both non-diabetic, healthy volunteers and diabetic patients; and (3) evaluating and validating deployed prototypes in the patients’ home environment. Outcomes focus on human factors in (1) establishing new qualitative metrics that illuminate factors which influence patients long-term adherence with assistive and prophylactic footwear based on in-depth in-home patient interviews, (2) biomechanical performance testing results, (3) in-home evaluation results to better understand and maximize adoption and long-term adherence by the end user, and (4) optimized design specifications for exoskeletons/products to benefit patients, researchers, orthotics and prosthetics companies, and footwear companies.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
Indiana

**WhenWear Advisor: A Cloud-Based Tool to Help Supervisors Increase Employment Options for Workers with Intellectual Disabilities**

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**Project Number:** 90BISB0009
**Start Date:** September 30, 2018
**Length:** 24 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Brian Bard

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 18 $287,500; FY 19 $287,498

**Abstract:** This Phase II project builds upon previous research to demonstrate the technical merit, feasibility, and cost-effectiveness of combining commercially-available mobile devices and neural networks with cloud computing to further develop the WhenWear Advisor system to assist employees with intellectual disabilities (ID) to independently and successfully accomplish vocational tasks when provided with the proper automated prompts. Project objectives include: (1) completing the WhenWear Advisor system, (2) expanding features and functions, (3) performing extended usability evaluation of the system in a range of settings, and (4) preparing the system for a smooth transition into commercialization. The expected product is an intelligent cloud-based service that assists the supervisor in the creation of high-quality instructional prompts, enabling workers with ID perform at higher levels and obtain higher salaries in community integrated employment.
T3 Platform: The Next Generation Tactile Tablet

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Project Number: 90BISB0012
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $274,522; FY 20 $274,470

Abstract: This project introduces T3, a system for creating, distributing, and consuming touch-responsive, audio-embedded tactile graphic maps, games, puzzles, and interactive lessons. Based on the successful but outdated Talking Tactile Tablet (TTT) paradigm, this new approach solves several shortcomings of earlier products, and seeks to reach new markets beyond the original target of students who are blind or visually impaired. The T3 Platform allows users to drop a tactile overlay sheet onto a large Android tablet computer fitted with a plastic T3 Frame, then explore tactile figures and Braille with both hands, tapping and swiping to trigger spoken descriptions and explanations of content. Phase II research addresses issues with overlay sheet identification eliminating the requirement that the user finds and presses five different locations each time a new overlay is put in place and allows the application to query the cloud server for data on the currently-mounted sheet in an automatic process that is transparent to the user. The result is a smoother, faster sheet change sequence, and no more sheet mis-identifications that were the biggest source of frustration for users of the TTT. T3 adds on the option to use voice commands, providing a more efficient user experience that allows users to maintain contact with both hands on the Braille or tactile content on which they are focused in lieu of finding and pressing tactile buttons to control the system.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
Minnesota

Improving Hearing Aid Satisfaction Through Remote Feedback and Settings Adjustments

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Project Number: 90BISB0006
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 24 months

NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty

NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $259,594; FY 18 $314,395; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project develops a system that improves communication between a patient and their audiologist, simplify the fitting and tuning process by allowing patients to remotely record their hearing aid (HA) experience via a smartphone application. Currently, only 28.5 percent of individuals who could benefit from a HA actually wears one. The goal of this project is to improve patient satisfaction with their HA, with the aim to increase and prolong continued use. The objectives are: (1) Develop a smartphone application and wireless interface to low-level HA functionality; (2) develop a cloud-based back-end system with a web-based audiologist interface; and (3) evaluate system with end users through a human trial.
Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR), Phase II
North Carolina

Indoor Navigation Aid for Individuals with Visual Impairments in Unfamiliar Spaces

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Project Number: 90BISB0005
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Joseph A. DePhillips
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $275,599; FY 18 $299,288; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/30/2020)

Abstract: This project develops a technology solution to address the indoor navigation needs experienced by people with visual disabilities. This technology has several advantages over other wayfinding approaches such as GPS, in that it requires no infrastructure in indoor spaces, nor does it require maps to be created prior to navigation. Thus, it is applicable to any unfamiliar indoor or outdoor space. The Phase II project includes building upon the Phase I proof-of-concept device to develop an improved, miniaturized hardware device; implementing a fully-functional smartphone app; iteratively conducting periodic pilot studies as the technology progresses; and finally conducting in-clinic and take-home studies in which potential end users use the device in their everyday lives. The project proves the functionality and user-acceptance of this product for improved indoor navigation, giving insights into the degree to which it enhances quality of life of users with visual disabilities.
The Bimodal Ankle for Mobility and Stability of Prosthesis Users

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Principal Investigator: Matthew Wernke, PhD
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Project Number: 90BISB0010
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $295,633; FY 19 $279,302

Abstract: This Phase II project further develops and evaluates a prototype of the Bimodal Ankle Prosthesis (BAP) with the goal of improving balance and balance confidence of persons with lower-extremity amputations by developing a prosthetic ankle that has biomimetic modes for walking and standing. BAP provides flexibility for walking mobility and rigidity for standing stability. The objectives are to: (1) Develop (design and fabricate) a complete prototype incorporating a hydraulic actuator developed in Phase I that allows movement for walking and restricts movement for standing, (2) perform engineering verification of the BAP, and (3) perform controlled laboratory and field-use of the BAP with users of lower-extremity prosthesis. Anticipated outcomes include: (1) a BAP prototype that passes international standards, (2) clinical evidence supporting the effectiveness of the BAP features, and (3) commercialization by The Ohio Willow Wood Company.
Physiologically Compatible Hemodialysis Through Advanced Dialysate Regeneration

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Project Number: 90BISB0002
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 24 months

NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $322,222; FY 17 $252,492; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 11/29/2019)

Abstract: This project develops an advanced, portable hemodialysis regeneration system that significantly enhances the quality of life of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) patients. ESRD impairs physiological systems and functions, and is associated with disability, high morbidity, and mortality. Hemodialysis is prescribed for the majority of individuals in the final stages of renal failure. Minimizing the loss of nutrients and improving dialysis delivery (length, frequency, and location) enables individuals with ESRD to feel better, have more energy, work more, and engage in activities in their communities. Project investigators use surface chemistry and material science techniques to develop an advanced dialysate regeneration system able to remove a broad spectrum of uremic toxins while minimizing the loss of nutrients such as amino acids, vitamins, and essential ions. Technical objectives include: (1) performing scale-up production of the components of the advanced dialysate regeneration system (DRS-2); (2) designing and constructing the prototype module (cartridge) to house the DRS-2; (3) proving the safety and efficacy of the DRS-2 in vitro; (4) performing overall efficacy and quality tests of the DRS-2 using spent dialysate; and (5) evaluating and summarizing Phase II processes and results.
Take on Training with Attainment: A Video Training App to Foster Independence at Work for Individuals with Intellectual Disability

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Project Number: 90BISB0013
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 24 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $250,528; FY 20 $324,430
Abstract: This project researches and develops a mobile application (app), Take on Training, to provide direct services workers (DSWs), including job coaches, with on-demand instruction by way of short vignettes to promote the maximum level of independence for people with disabilities at work. Objectives for this Phase II project are to produce a commercially available, mobile, cross-platform app for job coaches with a complementary app for workers with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) accompanied by a national network of job coach expertise. This project conducts a single subject protocol with an early beta version of the app in Year One, and a longitudinal-repeated measure randomized control design protocol with multiple subjects using a full beta version of the app in Year Two. The Take on Training app is anticipated to impact more than 50,000 job coaches and workers with IDD, optimizing the maximum level of independent employment for individuals with disabilities.
Knowledge Translation

For NIDILRR, knowledge translation (KT) encompasses the multidimensional, active process of ensuring that new knowledge gained through the course of research ultimately improves the lives of people with disabilities and furthers their participation in society. KT involves not only knowledge validation, dissemination, and utilization but also the transfer of technology, particularly products and devices, from the research and development setting to the commercial marketplace as well as other settings to make possible widespread utilization of the products or devices. NIDILRR funds a number of KT projects focusing on different content areas, not only to assist NIDILRR grantees in their knowledge translation efforts through technical assistance, training, and other activities, but also to generate new knowledge and understanding of KT in the context of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation.

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Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC)

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www.facebook.com/pages/Burn-Injury-Model-Systems/155712024448908
twitter.com/burn_ms
www.youtube.com/user/MSKTCtv

Principal Investigator: Steven Garfinkel, PhD; N. Lynn Gerber, MD 919/918-2306 (Garfinkel); 703/993-1940 (Gerber)
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Project Number: 90DP0082
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $791,998; FY 17 $791,950; FY 18 $791,950; FY 19 $791,950; FY 20 $791,950

Abstract: The Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) advances a knowledge translation (KT) paradigm among Model System grantees to ensure that spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury (Burn) research is relevant and accessible to people with disabilities and their families; researchers; practitioners, and clinicians; and policy makers and advocates. The goals of this project are to enhance understanding of SCI, TBI, and Burn rehabilitation research; increase awareness and use of SCI, TBI, and Burn Model Systems research findings by appropriate stakeholders; centralize SCI, TBI, and Burn Model Systems resources for effective and uniform provision of training, technical assistance, and dissemination; and increase capacity of Model System grantees to engage in KT activities. MSKTC designs and implements KT activities to accomplish the following objectives: conduct research on effective KT methods to increase awareness and use of Model Systems research; develop research-based, user-friendly products grounded in KT science; conduct KT training and technical assistance activities to increase KT capacities of Model System grantees; disseminate MSKTC resources to all potential stakeholders; and implement utilization activities to promote stakeholders’ awareness and use of Model Systems research for informed decision making. The overarching outcome of MSKTC is to improve the lives and services for people with SCI, TBI, and Burn. MSKTC generates research-based information resources for all stakeholders and makes them available on the MSKTC website. This project is a partnership of the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Inova Health System, George Mason University, University of Alabama at Birmingham, and American Association of People with Disabilities.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Kansas

The Online and Applied System for Intervention Skills (OASIS) - Scaling-up!

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Project Number: 90DPKT0003
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $199,996; FY 20 $199,997; FY 21 $199,997; FY 22 $199,995; FY 23 $199,997

Abstract: This project follows standard implementation guidelines to scale-up Online and Applied Systems Intervention Skills (OASIS) to the broader community. OASIS is a program that uses a Research-to-Practice Outreach Training model to teach parents of children with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD) how to implement empirically-based interventions with their children. During this project, previous NIDILRR-funded OASIS service providers learn how to train others (train-the-trainer) to effectively use the OASIS model to teach parents to improve the child’s level of independence and overall well-being within the community.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Massachusetts

TEST - Translating Evidence to Support Transitions:
Improving Outcomes of Youth in Transition with Psychiatric Disabilities
by Use and Adoption of Best Practice Transition Planning

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Project Number: 90DP0080
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $149,707; FY 16 $149,248; FY 17 $149,789; FY 18 $149,936; FY 19 $149,877

Abstract: The goal of this project is to increase use and adoption of best practices in planning the transition of high school students to postsecondary employment and/or school enrollment; specifically, students with emotional behavioral disturbance (EBD) receiving special education services. This includes transition planning with the ultimate goal to improve postsecondary outcomes for this population through knowledge translation, testing, and dissemination of NIDILRR-funded research findings. The project develops materials, procedures, and guides for implementing three research-informed best practices in high school transition planning: (1) written goals for a concentration of career and technical coursework during high school, (2) student-led transition planning efforts, and (3) representation of adult-serving disability agencies and colleges on transition teams. The TEST project is guided by the National Implementation Research Network Stage-Based Implementation Framework and has five project objectives that correspond to this framework: (1) Developing research-informed materials and procedures for use by transition planning teams that are tailored to youth with EBD in close coordination with end-users and a stakeholder team; (2) pilot-testing resulting TEST procedures and materials in one school district with an implementation stakeholder team, finalizing TEST procedures and materials; (3) providing TEST implementation support and technical assistance to transition teams in two states and developing a TEST implementation guide; (4) presenting TEST best practices and the implementation guide at a national capacity building institute for high school special education transition planning
teams; and (5) widely disseminating TEST materials. Project outcomes include the development of guides and curricula for practicing and implementing best practices in transition planning for students with EBD and the wide-scale adoption and use of TEST practices, improving employment and education outcomes for students with EBD. This project is led by the University of Massachusetts Medical School’s Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research (formerly the Transitions Research and Training Center) and the Implementation Science and Practice Advances (iSPARC) Research Center. This project also benefits from assemblage of prominent organizations and individuals with expertise in adoption and use of best practices for transition support for students with disabilities, knowledge translation, research on transition, and local transition efforts.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Montana

Rural Community Living Development Peer Mentoring: A Strategy for Knowledge Translation

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Project Number: 90DPKT0005
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $188,900; FY 20 $198,572; FY 21 $199,839; FY 22 $194,676; FY 23 $199,817

Abstract: This project implements the Rural Community Living Development (RCLD) mentoring program to address the needs of people with disabilities in unserved and underserved rural communities. Project objectives include: (1) training center for independent living (CIL) staff to use RCLD processes with community stakeholders to identify community assets and areas of improvement for people with disabilities; (2) implementing RCLD processes with CIL staff and identify contextually appropriate NIDILRR-funded products for rural application; (3) collaborating with partners across all phases of the project to develop mentoring as a strategy for sustainable knowledge translation; (4) evaluating the RCLD process using participatory evaluation strategies (e.g., Photovoice) to understand how successfully adopted products in rural places are used by communities; and (5) disseminating a variety of products and strategies, including rural appropriate NIDILRR-funded products, RCLD and peer mentoring program strategies, the RCLD training model, products for supporting stakeholders’ communication of their needs and impacts. Outcomes include: (1) increased rural stakeholder adoption of NIDILRR-funded findings and products; (2) increased CIL capacity to reach consumers in their underserved and unserved rural areas; (3) increased awareness of rural disability needs in the NIDILRR research community (4) increased disability awareness and collaboration in RCLD communities; and (5) adoption of RCLD mentoring program strategies. Project products and dissemination include ready-to-use NIDILRR products, RCLD peer mentoring training model, peer reviewed publications, project reports, consumer and service-provider oriented materials, and presentations. This project partners with the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) and the Research and Training Center on Place-Based Solutions for Rural Community Participation, Health, and Employment (RTC:Rural).
Translating Transfer Training and Wheelchair Maintenance into Practice

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Project Number: 90DP0078
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000

Abstract: This project focuses on the knowledge translation of transfer training and wheelchair maintenance into practice in order to improve transfers and wheelchair maintenance leading to decreased pain and increased independence for individuals with mobility disabilities. The multi-institution, consumer-focused team: (1) Develops and continually refines high-quality training products to translate wheelchair transfer and maintenance research to wheelchair users, their support systems, and clinicians; (2) integrates stakeholder feedback throughout all stages of material development; (3) creates self-assessment versions of the transfer assessment instrument and wheelchair maintenance training questionnaire as educational tools to enable wheelchair users to track progress and identify areas requiring further training; (4) disseminates and promotes utilization of materials to wheelchair users and their support systems including clinicians providing their care, nationally, and internationally; and (5) evaluates utilization of materials through focus groups, social media, satisfaction surveys, self-assessments, and population changes in reported pain and wheelchair breakdown. The University of Pittsburgh Model Center on Spinal Cord Injury is partnering with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and is joined by the United Spinal Association and the Spina Bifida Association to bring connections to the target audience and enable stakeholder participation.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Pennsylvania

Initiative to Mobilize Partnerships for successful Assistive teChnology Transfer (IMPACT)

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Project Number: 90DPKT0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $924,266; FY 19 $924,202; FY 20 $919,779; FY 21 $924,915; FY 22 $920,109

Abstract: This project addresses the barriers, facilities, and factors associated with assistive technologies (ATs), and successful AT technology transfer (ATTT). ATs are needed by an estimated one billion individuals worldwide to participate fully in society and live active, independent lives; without them, individuals are often excluded from society, do not have access to basic opportunities such as education and jobs, and are at a higher risk of being poor and unhealthy. There is a need and marketing opportunity to address a poorly defined and fragmented markets, lack of clear regulations, and informal service provision channels that lead to barriers to successful ATTT. This project develops tools and approaches to streamline and improve the efficiency of ATTT for people with disabilities in the US and worldwide. Specifically, this project conducts research and development projects to comprehensively understand barriers and facilitators to successful ATTT, track the activities regarding the ATTT success rate of NIDILRR-funded projects, and raise awareness and increase capacity of NIDILRR grantees to perform successful ATTT.
Translating mHealth Technology to a Community Service Organization Providing Long Term Services and Supports

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Project Number: 90DPKT0004
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $198,927; FY 20 $199,838; FY 21 $198,710; FY 22 $197,488; FY 23 $197,721

Abstract: This project builds on previous research and development of the mobile health (mHealth) system, Interactive Mobile Health and Rehabilitation System (iMHere 2.0), to provide support delivery of long-term services and supports (LTSS) to individuals with disabilities in the community with the goal of utilizing knowledge translation methods to create a new service delivery model in partnership with a community-based organization that provides LTSS. Research participants include relevant stakeholders involved in the implementation of the mHealth systems such as consumers, family caregivers, health services workers, care coordinators, and case managers. Objectives of this project are to: (1) evaluate the feasibility of implementation of the iMHere 2.0 system in a new community-based service delivery model, and (2) understand the barriers to and facilitators of implementing the system in that model. Outcome measures include effective implementation (i.e., reach, acceptability, adoption, costs, and feasibility), barriers, facilitators, and the various stakeholders who may potentially benefit from the mHealth system. Project activities include the delivery and deployment of technology products in similar, real-world settings, as well as publications, and consumer-friendly materials.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Texas

Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research

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www.facebook.com/kter.org
twitter.com/kter_center
www.youtube.com/channel/UCFgDds4rZwo5TkTvdvtjh2Q

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Project Number: 90DP0077
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $500,000; FY 16 $500,000; FY 17 $500,000; FY 18 $500,000; FY 19 $500,000

Abstract: The Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research has as its purpose: (1) to identify findings related to improving employment outcomes among individuals with disabilities that NIDILRR-funded researchers and other entities have produced, with a focus on the high-needs populations of adults with autism, and transition-aged youth and young adults with disabilities; (2) to determine what needs for research-based information are most pressing for stakeholders, such as individuals with disabilities and their families, vocational rehabilitation practitioners, the business community, and policymakers; and (3) to investigate and test knowledge translation strategies that can increase these stakeholders’ appropriate use of identified research findings that meet their reported needs. To address those purposes, this project (1) reviews NIDILRR-funded and other findings to identify how to meet stakeholders’ pressing information needs related to improving employment outcomes for specific populations of individuals with disabilities with especially high needs; (2) conducts research studies to test ways of helping target audiences to access and use the research-based practices identified (i.e., testing knowledge translation strategies); (3) develops research-based informational resources related to stakeholders’ informational needs and to NIDILRR researchers’ capacity to plan and implement KT activities and measure their outcomes; (4) widely disseminates project findings; (5) provides technical assistance to researchers to support their utilization of project resources regarding the incorporation of effective knowledge translation strategies into their research, development, and dissemination activities; (6) promotes collaboration among NIDILRR-funded researchers working in the employment field, and between these researchers and their stakeholder audiences that can benefit from use of their research findings.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Texas

AIR’s Center on Knowledge Translation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research

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Project Number: 90DPKT0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $750,000; FY 18 $750,000; FY 19 $750,000; FY 20 $750,000; FY 21 $750,000

Abstract: This project promotes the use of high-quality disability, independent living, and rehabilitation (DILR) research that is relevant to intended audiences’ needs by serving as the main knowledge translation (KT) resource for other NIDILRR grantees, including NIDILRR grantees that serve as KT centers. Project goals are to: (1) add new knowledge in the area of KT, (2) support the KT endeavors of NIDILRR grantees, and (3) promote the use of NIDILRR-funded work that is relevant to the needs of intended audiences including other researchers, people with disabilities, their families, consumer organizations, policymakers, and other NIDILRR audiences. The objectives are to: (1) facilitate use of DILR research, (2) build NIDILRR grantees’ KT capacity, and (3) integrate DILR perspectives into systematic reviews and research synthesis (SR/RS). Outcomes include increased use of DILR research to inform decision making by individuals with disabilities, their family members, as well as a broad array of other stakeholders, increased use of KT practices among NIDILRR grantees, and integration of DILR research perspectives into domestic and international bodies that produce systematic reviews. Center products include trainings, technical assistance, and tools to support grantees’ KT practices and on conducting SR/RS using appropriate standards, guidelines, and methods; a responsive website with many related resources, including a Database of KT Strategies, Registry of Systematic Reviews, and Info Briefs synthesizing KT and SR/RS literature; annual KT conferences and workshops on policymaker outreach and social media; KT Casebooks and conference panels to showcase grantees’ KT practices; and direct involvement with the new Campbell Collaboration Disability Coordinating Group.
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
Washington

Translating Evidence About Traumatic Brain Injury to Practice
Within Washington State Department of Corrections

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Project Number: 90DP0079
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000

Abstract: This project focuses on translating evidence about traumatic brain injury (TBI) into practice within the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC). The goal is to improve interactions with offenders with TBI by helping front line staff understand what TBI is; how offenders might be affected by TBI; what they could do that would help in day-to-day management of problems faced by offenders with TBI (e.g., memory, communication, mood, impulsivity); how TBI might affect engagement in treatment programs; how TBI affects compliance with DOC rules and regulations; and how TBI might affect transition from corrections to community living. The goal is to affect change at two levels in the DOC by increasing awareness and knowledge about TBI system-wide and developing and piloting intensive knowledge translation (KT) activities with front line staff who work with specific target populations (e.g., veterans, women, or individuals with disabilities) in order to translate knowledge into practice. These activities can then be generalized to other correctional facilities within the DOC. In order to achieve these goals, the project identifies and prioritizes research-based products on TBI from current and completed NIDILRR-funded projects that are most relevant for the DOC. Factsheets and evidence-based materials developed by previous NIDILRR-funded grants serve as starting points for integrating research-based evidence into practices within corrections. The project assesses the current level of TBI knowledge and programming within the DOC to identify knowledge gaps and potential barriers and facilitators to the use and adoption of NIDILRR-sponsored TBI evidence in DOC. Finally, the project develops and implements a comprehensive KT plan, including system-wide strategies and an intensive pilot intervention, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of knowledge translation strategies and overall processes, and providing a summary of findings for recommendations of informed practice within DOC and the broader criminal justice community.
Burn Injury Model Systems
Washington

National Data and Statistical Center for the Burn Model Systems

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Project Number: 90DPGE0004
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $350,000; FY 19 $350,000; FY 20 $350,000; FY 21 $350,000; FY 22 $350,000

Abstract: The purpose of the National Data and Statistical Center for the Burn Model Systems (BMS-NDSC) is to (a) maintain and enhance a longitudinal database following individuals with burn injury, (b) provide access to BMS data, (c) promote inclusion of participants from minority backgrounds in BMS data collection efforts, (d) provide statistical support to NIDILRR Burn Model Systems Centers (BMS Centers), (e) conduct research utilizing the BMS National Database (NDB) while supporting burn injury research conducted by both researchers in the BMS Centers and external to the BMS Centers, (f) provide administrative support for BMS activities, and (g) provide training and technical assistance to BMS Centers. The BMS-NDSC introduces various products to increase the utility and visibility of the BMS NDB, including: (1) an interactive web-based data dictionary, (2) data visualizations, (3) interactive features for online surveys, (4) publicly available annual reports, and (5) database summaries. The primary outcome across all five years of the project is the development of significant research evidence about the effects of burn injury on the lives of burn survivors through the maintenance and enhancement of a robust, high quality, longitudinal database, and through training and technical assistance to those who use it.
National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center

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Project Number: 90DP0083
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $662,500; FY 17 $662,500; FY 18 $662,500; FY 19 $662,500; FY 20 $662,500

Abstract: National Spinal Cord Injury Statistical Center (NSCISC) provides resources and services that support the Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems (SCIMS) Program and Database, with the goals of ensuring high-quality data in the Database and promoting rigorous SCIMS research and collaboration. Project activities are conducted with several target groups in mind: individuals with spinal cord injury (SCI), SCIMS Centers, and individuals who intend to access/use the Database for SCI information or research. The objectives include: (1) maintenance of the SCIMS Database through a secure web-based data management system; (2) assurance that high-quality data is collected from participants of all races/ethnicities through standard operating procedures, certification of Data Collectors, data quality monitoring, SCIMS Center site visits, cultural diversity needs assessment, training, and technical assistance; (3) improved accessibility and utilization of the SCIMS Database through implementation of a comprehensive public access plan, as well as through collaborative research, internship, award, workshops, information resources, and individual consultation and technical assistance; and (4) continuity of the SCIMS Database through subcontracts and centralized data collection for continued collection of follow-up data from defunded Centers. Outcomes for this center include improved representativeness of Database participants to the SCI population at large, increased quantity and quality of Database research and collaboration, established standards on culturally appropriate SCI research, and advanced knowledge in SCI outcomes. Products from this center include a web-based system that provides a secure environment and user-friendly features for data management and reporting; website-provided informational tools for searching SCI statistics and resources for researchers; annual statistics reports and consumer-friendly infographics; as well as research presentations and publications.
Principal Investigator: Cynthia Harrison-Felix, PhD  
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Project Number: 90DP0084  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $662,500; FY 17 $662,500; FY 18 $662,500; FY 19 $662,500; FY 20 $662,500

Abstract: The Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems (TBIMS) National Data and Statistical Center (NDSC) at Craig Hospital maintains the TBIMS National Database (NDB) increasing the rigor and efficiency of scientific efforts to longitudinally assess the experience of individuals with TBI. The center creates a sustainable data preservation program; provides ready access to TBIMS data and expertise in advanced analytics for TBIMS data collectors, researchers, and NDB users; and enhances the TBIMS support infrastructure by ensuring data security, validity, and storage. The NDSC is organized into functional groups: (1) a data core focusing on state-of-the-art data management technology, improved data quality, and culturally competent research; (2) a statistical/methodological core focusing on training and consultation to improve the rigor of longitudinal research; and (3) a collaborative core focusing on joint research with federal and non-federal partners to maximize NDB use. Project goals include: (1) improving data quality metrics, (2) closing the racial/ethnic gap in NDB recruitment and retention, (3) maintaining exceptional customer satisfaction in regular surveys, (4) increasing use of the NDB by TBIMS and outside researchers, (5) increasing the number and methodological rigor of peer reviewed articles using the NDB, and (6) successfully completing modules and collaborative studies using NDSC data management services. The NDSC products include a customizable data capture that works on any device using any browser, a certification process for Form II interviewing, advanced statistical training, and a public use version of the NDB that can be queried.
Principle Investigator: Mark Harniss, PhD; Kurt Johnson, PhD
Public Contact: 206/685-0289 (Harniss); 206/543-3677 (Johnson); Fax: 206/543-4779

Project Number: 90DP0086
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $850,000; FY 17 $850,000; FY 18 $850,000; FY 19 $850,000; FY 20 $850,000

Abstract: The goal of the Americans with Disabilities Act National Network Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKTC) is to facilitate coordination, organization, and collaboration among the ADA National Network (ADANN) grantees and to generate new knowledge about optimal methods to enhance stakeholder’s use of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities under the ADA. To achieve this goal, the ADAKTC is optimizing the efficiency and impact of the ADANN’s outreach, training, technical assistance, information dissemination, and capacity building activities by (1) maintaining and further developing the ADANN’s document portal, (2) enhancing our system for sharing training and technical assistance materials, (3) continuing the joint development of products with the ADANN, and (4) supporting the annual meetings of the ADANN. We are increasing the awareness and use of ADA-related research findings and ADA-related information with appropriate ADA stakeholder groups by (1) conducting research on knowledge translation, (2) using findings from our systematic review of the ADA to develop and disseminate research briefs, (3) enhancing our knowledge translation efforts to reach broader audiences, and (4) organizing an ADA research conference in Year 5. Finally, we are improving understanding of ADA stakeholders’ need for and receipt of ADANN services over time by (1) maintaining and increasing the quality and efficiency of the Outcome Measurement System (OMS); (2) increasing data quality, monitoring those improvements, and providing training and technical assistance on use of the database; (3) conducting a needs analysis of the OMS data to identify emerging issues related to stakeholders rights and responsibilities under the ADA; (4) producing an annual report based on OMS data; and (5) extending and enhancing the measurement of ADA implementation outcomes.
NIDILRR Contracts
Maryland

National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC)

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Landover, MD 20785
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www.naric.com
www.facebook.com/NationalRehabilitationInformationCenter
twitter.com/naricinfo
www.facebook.com/NARICenEspanol
twitter.com/naricenespanol
www.pinterest.com/naricinfo
naricspotlight.wordpress.com
www.youtube.com/channel/UCuFQ2MKi4ArIGCNsyBZXXkYg

Principal Investigator: Mark X. Odum 800/346-2742, ext. 1112
Public Contact: Information Specialists 800/346-2742 (V), 301/459-5900 (V); Fax: 301/459-4263

Project Number: GS-06F-0726Z
Start Date: September 28, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $1,583,388; FY 16 $1,948,101; FY 17 $1,868,203; FY 18 $1,922,781; FY 19 $1,977,360
Abstract: The National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC) maintains a research library of more than 65,000 documents and responds to a wide range of information requests, providing facts and referral, database searches, and document delivery. Through telephone and online information referral, NARIC disseminates information gathered from NIDILRR-funded projects, other federal programs, and from journals, periodicals, newsletters, and multimedia. NARIC maintains REHABDATA, a bibliographic database on rehabilitation and disability issues, both in-house and online. Users are served in English and Spanish by telephone, mail, electronic communications, or in person. Current tasks include expanding the collection with international research, including data originally collected by the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE); acquisition of digital media; maintaining and expanding a digital archive of original research documents; and knowledge translation activities in support of NIDILRR’s mission including citation analysis, long term project tracking, and promotion of NIDILRR-sponsored research. NARIC also prepares and publishes the annual NIDILRR Program Directory, available in database format from NARIC’s web site, and several regular publications highlighting NIDILRR research.
Abstract: AbleData provides objective information on assistive technology and rehabilitation equipment available from domestic and international sources to consumers, organizations, professionals, and caregivers within the United States. This project maintains and expands the AbleData database of assistive technology, develops information and referral services that are responsive to the special technology product needs of consumers and professionals, and provides data to major dissemination points to ensure wide distribution and availability of the information to all who need it. The AbleData database contains information on more than 48,000 commercially produced and custom-made assistive devices. All of the project’s resources are available free of charge on its website. Requests for information are answered via telephone, mail, electronic communications, or in person.
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) opens more opportunities for persons with disabilities. It also places certain responsibilities on employers, transit and communication systems, state and local governments, and public accommodations. NIDILRR has funded a network of grantees to provide information, training, and technical assistance to individuals and entities who have rights and responsibilities under the ADA, as well as to conduct ADA-related research. The current program includes ten regional centers, one collaborative research center, and one ADA knowledge translation center.
Abstract: The New England ADA Regional Center meets the increasingly complex challenges of providing outreach, training, technical assistance, information dissemination, and capacity building of the ADA core services. Project activities include an extensive training and information agenda with products designed for ease of use and maximum impact and tailored to meet the needs and preferences of people with rights and responsibilities under the ADA. Services include information and training for individual, business, and government needs at the local, regional, and national levels. To address ADA knowledge and implementation gaps, the Center has established new research partnerships and two research priorities: (1) to collaborate with statisticians to generate nuanced state-level data of emerging and projected reasons for disability, and (2) a randomized digital survey of regional municipalities to assess barriers to non-compliance in collaboration with the MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning. This research seeks to identify the emerging and projected profile of people with rights under the ADA at the state level, understand the factors that impede municipalities from implementing the ADA, and identify an intervention or an innovative approach that can facilitate implementation of the ADA at the municipal level. Center outputs include state-wide data sets that tell the story of disability today and in the coming years, a set of new digital and interactive information tools including the Title II Action Guide, and distance learning web courses, as well as information tools developed in response to the municipal survey. To increase capacity building among priority audiences, two new initiatives focus attention on accessibility for an aging population and those with behavioral health and substance use issues. New England is home to the three US states with the oldest average populations – Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Under the ADA, the rights of aging populations everywhere are covered by the broad protections of the American Disabilities Act, as are those in recovery from substance use. Those rights are not widely
understood among the public, nor in some cases among public officials or businesses. A mission of the New England ADA Regional Center is, through every action, to refresh an understanding of the ADA in New England for the 21st century as a tool for more inclusive society. This center serves Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut.
Abstract: The goal of the Northeast ADA Regional Center is to educate and empower the diverse range of ADA stakeholders throughout the region to increase their knowledge of the ADA, to make better decisions regarding disability inclusiveness, and to implement the ADA in their own lives, workplaces, businesses, and communities. The center provides high-quality services that are relevant and responsive to the needs of individuals and organizations who have rights and responsibilities under the ADA. While this project serves all ADA stakeholders, the project focuses on three groups identified as high need: (1) healthcare professionals, (2) small employers including state and local government’s Title I functions, and (3) facility access professionals. Outcomes include: Improved ADA stakeholders’ understanding of their rights and responsibilities under the ADA; identification of barriers to ADA compliance and development of innovative approaches to address these barriers; continuous improvement of the understanding of ADA stakeholders’ needs for and use of Center services; systematic enhancement of efficiency and effectiveness of Center services; and increasing the implementation of the ADA across the diverse stakeholders throughout the region. To ensure achievement of these outcomes, the Center engages in an array of activities in three core areas: (1) Stakeholder engagement activities through ADA services, (2) measurement and tracking, and (3) research. The Center’s research project, which focuses on implementation of the ADA in small local businesses, cuts across all the supporting objectives, and builds upon and shapes activities in the other two core areas. This intervention research is designed to identify barriers and carriers to ADA implementation, and test innovative approaches for eliminating these barriers within small business organizations. These activities have been designed to ensure direct engagement with ADA stakeholders through different modalities and at different levels of intensity. These activities
include outreach, information dissemination, technical assistance, training, and capacity building. The Center’s measurement and tracking activities include evaluation, needs assessment, and collaboration with local, regional, and national partners. This center serves New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.
ADA National Network
Region III - DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, and WV

Mid-Atlantic ADA National Network Regional Center - Region III

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www.linkedin.com/showcase/mid-atlantic-ada-center

Principal Investigator: Laura Owens, PhD 301/424-2002
Public Contact: Karen Goss, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in DC, DE, MD, PA, VA, and WV); 301/217-0124 (V/TTY); Fax: 301/217-0754

Project Number: 90DP0089
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,112,165; FY 17 $1,112,165; FY 18 $1,112,165; FY 19 $1,112,165; FY 20 $1,112,165

Abstract: The Mid-Atlantic ADA Regional Center identifies and disseminates the effective practices of individuals and entities which promote improved integration of individuals with disabilities into all areas of community life. The center has three areas of focus: Training, technical assistance, and information dissemination on all titles of the ADA, with a sharpened focus on educating individuals with disabilities about their rights; capacity building and outreach through local networks; and research in areas where barriers still occur for individuals with disabilities. The Mid-Atlantic ADA Center implements an operational plan of specific objectives and tasks associated with each of the following major project goals: (1) Improve the understanding and interpretation of the rights and responsibilities under the ADA for both individuals and entities, by expanding existing Mid-Atlantic ADA Center Networks, the hospitality initiative, and relationships with individuals with disabilities, the aging population, and organizations that represent these stakeholders; (2) identify barriers to compliance with the ADA and develop innovative strategies to eliminate such barriers through research activities focusing on the needs of state and local governments and individuals with disabilities; (3) identify emerging issues and develop innovative strategies to address ADA compliance issues experienced by individuals with disabilities who are aging and youth with disabilities by strengthening the working relationships with Centers for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, Area Agencies on Aging, and Aging and Disability Resource Centers; and (4) enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the ADA Network Services by building the capacity of the Mid-Atlantic ADA Networks to serve Region III through training, technical assistance, and information dissemination. Specific and detailed training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities to pursue these goals are augmented by carefully designed activities to study and validate best practices and poli-
cies through a comprehensive quantitative/qualitative research design as well as by direct cooperation with the ADA Knowledge Translation (KT) Center, other Regional ADA Centers, and other NIDILRR-funded research centers to identify areas of research need and to participate in mutual research projects. This center serves Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.
ADA National Network
Region IV - AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN

Southeast ADA National Network Regional Center - Region IV

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www.youtube.com/user/DBTACSoutheastADA
www.pinterest.com/southeastada
www.linkedin.com/groups/4999343

Principal Investigator: Peter D. Blanck, PhD, JD 315/443-9703
Public Contact: Barry Whaley, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in AL, FL, GA, KY, MS, NC, SC, and TN); 404/541-9001 (V/TTY); Fax: 404/541-9002

Project Number: 90DP0090
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,246,000; FY 17 $1,246,000; FY 18 $1,246,000; FY 19 $1,246,000; FY 20 $1,246,000

Abstract: The goals of the Southeast ADA Regional Center are to (1) promote voluntary compliance, effective implementation, and transcendence of the ADA; (2) increase ADA understanding and awareness; (3) encourage meaningful partnerships among government, business, and disability communities to facilitate effective ADA implementation; and (4) conduct leading-edge research to reduce and eliminate barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency, so as to increase civic and social participation of Americans with disabilities. Project objectives include: (1) expanding the Center’s provision of technical assistance, training, and dissemination of ADA information; (2) identifying structural, program, and technological barriers to ADA compliance by using the Center’s innovative participatory action research (PAR) model to increase access to financial institutions and related services; (3) using new data collection to identify and respond to stakeholder’s needs for services and supports from the Center and the ADA National Network; and (4) enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of ADA Network Services by building on regional and national leadership, collaboration, and record of success. The Center’s core outcomes and deliverables include: (1) Expansion of training initiatives: furthering growth of ADA Trainer Network-Southeast in collaboration with partners, development of a new web course on all ADA Titles for access to financial institutions, ADA Live!, Tax Access with community non-profit partners, continued improvement of online courses, and a webinar series; (2) development and expansion of ADA materials: targeted outreach and development of materials to meet the diverse needs of multicultural groups, including individuals who speak Spanish and the aging community, continuation of ADA
Anniversary Tool Kit, legal briefs and alerts current with ADA developments, enhancement of project’s accessible website and social media outreach; (3) continued provision of highest quality technical assistance: advice through the toll-free number, email, social media, and website forms; development of new website portals for stakeholders; (4) implementation of PAR research model: evaluate and increase access to financial institutions; develop a Quality Indicators Financial Inclusion Tool (QI-FIT) to be widely shared at regional and national levels; and (5) improved access to services of the ADA National Network: enhanced collaboration with regional ADA Centers, ADA Knowledge Translation Center, NIDILRR, and Administration on Community Living to increase outreach to all targeted stakeholders and rigorously evaluate effectiveness of services. The Center is a project of the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University (SU) in partnership with various organizations including: Affiliate Leadership Network of 8 state affiliates and their network of 52 local affiliates; training partnership with Southeast Center Director’s Association that includes majority of Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in the Southeast; Aging and Disability Advisory Group; Multi-Cultural Outreach Collaboration with Morehouse College and Spelman College, Bluegrass ADA Employment Consortium; Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE); Best Buddies Jobs, and Financial Research Advisory Group. This center serves Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.
ADA National Network
Region V - IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI

Great Lakes ADA National Network Regional Center - Region V

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www.accessibletech.org; www.adacaselaw.org;
www.accessibilityonline.org/adaconferences.aspx
www.adahospitality.org; www.adagreatlakes.org/ProgramsAndServices/Trainings/OnlineLearning;
www.qiat-ps.org; www.punch-in.org; www.ada-legal.org;
www.facebook.com/ADAGreatLakes; twitter.com/adagreatlakes;
www.youtube.com/channel/UC3gjOZKuHfD31cdLrX8zQlw
www.linkedin.com/company/great-lakes-ada-center

Principal Investigator: Robin A. Jones, Project Director 312/996-1059
Public Contact: 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in IL, IN, MI, MN, OH, and WI); 312/413-1407 (V/TTY); Fax: 312/413-1856

Project Number: 90DP0091
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,246,000; FY 17 $1,246,000; FY 18 $1,246,000; FY 19 $1,246,000; FY 20 $1,246,000

Abstract: The Great Lakes ADA Regional Center promotes awareness and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Project goals and objectives center on the provision of high quality, timely, and accurate technical assistance, training, and material dissemination to identified target audiences. The Great Lakes ADA Regional Center provides responsive and proactive services utilizing a comprehensive service delivery model. The technical assistance, training, and information needs of the individuals and their families, employers, business, government, educational entities, design professionals, and employment programs serving veterans with disabilities are part of an ongoing needs assessment, and programs and activities are tailored accordingly. Project activities and goals include: (1) operation of a toll-free number and use of current and emerging technologies for information and referral; (2) enhancement of the Center’s existing regional network of individuals and organizations who can provide on-site consultation, technical assistance, and training as needed; (3) conducting and sponsoring training events and activities at the local, state, and regional level focused on raising awareness of the ADA; (4) development and dissemination of technical assistance and training products and tools that are evidence based; (5) identification and dissemination of best practices related to the recruitment, hiring, and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities by employers and employment training programs; (6) promotion of the acquisition and utilization of accessible information technology by employers,
business, government, and educational institutions; and (7) utilization of existing and emerging technology to promote the exchange of information including websites, listservs, e-newsletters, mobile applications, social media, multi-faceted distance learning strategies and techniques, self-paced learning, and web-based assessment tools. Through partnerships and collaboration at the local, state, regional, and national level, the Center maximizes resources ensuring that a high quality and quantity of activity occurs. This center serves Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.
Southwest ADA National Network Regional Center - Region VI

TIRR Memorial Hermann
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www.facebook.com/swdbtac.ilru
twitter.com/southwestada
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Principal Investigator: Lex Frieden, LLD; Vinh Nguyen; 713/520-0232, ext. 124 (Frieden); 713/797-7121 (Nguyen)

Public Contact: Vinh Nguyen, Project Director 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in AR, LA, NM, OK, and TX); 713/520-0232 (V); 713/520-5136 (TTY); Fax: 713/520-5785

Project Number: 90DP0092
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,111,021; FY 17 $1,112,002; FY 18 $1,111,275; FY 19 $1,111,601; FY 20 $1,111,445

Abstract: The goal of the Southwest ADA Regional Center (SWADA) is to maximize the full inclusion and integration of individuals with disabilities so they can fully participate in their communities through the ADA. SWADA serves federal Region VI and conducts activities to address barriers for people with disabilities in employment, access to state and local government programs and services, and access to places of public accommodations. SWADA provides several services to benefit individuals and entities with rights and responsibilities under the ADA (ADA stakeholders): high impact training with experienced, qualified, and well-trained trainers; dissemination of information about the ADA utilizing methods ranging from print mail to the latest popular social media tools and networking websites to reach the broadest audiences; timely, relevant, accurate technical assistance that responds to the needs of the requesting individuals and entities; innovative research into access barriers experienced by people with disabilities and improving the capacity of entities to serve them; and collaboration with affiliates and the ADA Network Services to efficiently deliver these services nationwide. SWADA improves the knowledge of stakeholders on their rights and responsibilities under the ADA and improves the capacity of service providers to provide ADA trainings, technical assistance, and dissemination to their consumers. ADA stakeholders utilize the knowledge and capacity to address barriers and improve access for people with disabilities. SWADA Center products include: Training modules for businesses, health care providers, and corrections; trainings to various targeted entities; webinars on emerging legal and disability issues; publications; protocol for referring cancer survivors to vocational rehabilitation or ADA National Network services; and best practices for removing barriers to service animal users. This center serves Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
Great Plains ADA National Network Regional Center - Region VII

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www.adasymposium.org
www.adacoordinator.org
www.facebook.com/GreatPlainsADA
www.facebook.com/user/ADASymposium
www.youtube.com/user/GreatPlainsADACenter
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Principal Investigator: Chuck Graham, Co-Project Director; Julie Brinkhoff, Co-Project Director; 573/882-3600
Public Contact: 800/949-4232 (V/TTY, in IA, KS, MO, and NE); 573/882-3600 (V/TTY); Fax: 573/884-4925

Project Number: 90DP0093
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,000,000; FY 17 $1,000,000; FY 18 $1,000,000; FY 19 $1,000,000; FY 20 $1,000,000

Abstract: The Great Plains ADA Regional Center continues to expand services as the ADA National Network Regional Center for federal Region VII, serving Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, and Nebraska. The mission of the Center is to ensure the full opportunity for participation of persons with disabilities and their families in all facets of American life by providing professional-quality services to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) stakeholders. Target populations include all entities and individuals with disability-related issues that have rights and responsibilities under the ADA. The Great Plains ADA Regional Center: (1) implements a sustained program of outreach, training, technical assistance, information dissemination, and capacity building (collectively ADA Network Services); (2) provides information to ADA stakeholders on both longstanding ADA requirements as well as the ADA Amendments Act, the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design, and subsequent judicial/regulatory changes; (3) identifies best practices through collaborative initiatives addressing emerging critical issues such as Olmstead implementation, emergency preparedness, and the professionalization of ADA Coordinators; (4) sponsors the National ADA Symposium, which offers a comprehensive matrix of training opportunities presented by nationally recognized authorities and experts in their fields; and (5) partners with the ADA Network Knowledge Translation Center and other ADA Regional Centers to develop, provide, and distribute ADA training and technical assistance materials and other informational products and services. Through a collaborative structure of partnerships with local, regional, and national organizations, the Center provides core service delivery of ADA knowledge to the stakeholders of Region VII.
ADA National Network
Region VIII - CO, MT, ND, SD, UT, and WY

Rocky Mountain ADA National Network Regional Center - Region VIII

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www.facebook.com/RMADACenter
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www.youtube.com/channel/UCcTayMz3J1BmjxIIPBVDsRQ
www.rockymountainada.org/news/blog
www.instagram.com/rockymountainadalyssigns
www.pinterest.com/rockymountainadacenter
www.linkedin.com/company/rocky-mountain-ada-center

Principal Investigator: Dana Barton, Project Director 719/433-7644
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Fax: 719/444-0269

Project Number: 90DP0094
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $1,000,000; FY 17 $1,000,000; FY 18 $1,000,000; FY 19 $1,000,000; FY 20 $1,000,000

Abstract: The Rocky Mountain ADA Regional Center provides information, guidance, and training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) tailored to meet the needs of individuals and organizations in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The Center presents a comprehensive program of training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities designed to move toward full implementation of the ADA throughout the region. The Center continues its program of technical assistance based on the concept of mass customization to address the specific needs of stakeholders across the region. The training program takes advantage of technology and customized curricula to ensure maximum impact of training activities. Dissemination efforts provide tailored materials that offer actionable information for the specific needs of stakeholders. The Center also has an extensive plan of evaluation and ongoing regional needs assessment research to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the ADA Network services.
**Principal Investigator:** Erica C. Jones, MPH, Project Director  
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**Project Number:** 90DP0081  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2016  
**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Shelley Reeves  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 16 $1,246,000; FY 17 $1,246,000; FY 18 $1,246,000; FY 19 $1,246,000; FY 20 $1,246,000

**Abstract:** The Pacific ADA Regional Center implements an integrated, multi-dimensional initiative that facilitates enhanced awareness, understanding, compliance, and implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in all states and territories within the region. The program places special emphasis on collaborations by expanding the existing Pacific Region ADA Network of affiliate and local community organizations to maximize meeting the grassroots-level needs of ADA stakeholders (such as employers, businesses, state and local governments, and individuals with disabilities), as well as the development of resources in the emerging areas of accessible information technology and emergency preparedness. Pacific ADA Center goals include: (1) improving understanding regarding rights and responsibilities and implementation of the ADA, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and corresponding regulations for Title I from the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the regulations for Title II and III of the ADA published by the US Department of Justice in 2010, as well as emerging compliance issues in information technologies and emergency preparedness, and continuing developments in ADA case law, policy, and implementation through comprehensive training, dissemination, and technical assistance activities to individuals with rights and responsibilities under the ADA; (2) improving understanding of ADA stakeholders’ needs for, and receipt of, Region IX services over time through data entry and analysis of Center activities in conjunction with the ADA National Network made up of the ADA Knowledge Translation (KT) Center and other ADA Regional Centers; and (3) enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of ADA information dissemination, awareness, and referral activities by establishing effective, coordinated, local, regional, and national resource networks, including by partnering with the ADA KT Center and other regional ADA Centers to develop, implement, and evaluate materials, products, trainings, and services that are useful to ADA stakeholders. The Pacific ADA Center conducts a comprehensive evaluation that monitors the quality, scope, and effectiveness of
all Center programs and activities, including a quantitative evaluation program that tracks programmatic outputs related to Center services, and a qualitative evaluation program designed to assess the impacts and outcomes of its work. This center serves Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, and the protectorates in the Pacific Basin.
Abstract: The Northwest ADA Regional Center (NWADA) provides a sustained program of outreach, training, technical assistance, capacity building, information dissemination, and research services and activities. The goals and objectives of this project are: (1) to improve understanding by ADA stakeholders of their rights and responsibilities under the ADA, including addressing established ADA requirements and more recent legislative and regulatory changes, as well as emerging areas of focus; (2) to identify barriers to compliance with the ADA, and to develop and implement innovative approaches for eliminating these barriers; (3) to improve understanding of the ADA stakeholders’ need for and receipt of ADA Network services over time, including services which address emerging issues related to compliance with ADA requirements; and (4) to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of ADA Network Services and delivery. Project research focuses on understanding and addressing health care access issues while engaging a broad representation of recipient and provider health care groups across the states served by the NWADA. This center serves Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.
Americans with Disabilities Act
Participation Action Research Consortium (ADA PARC):
Advancing Participation Equity for People with Disabilities

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Project Number: 90DPAD0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $500,000; FY 18 $500,000; FY 19 $500,000; FY 20 $500,000; FY 21 $500,000

Abstract: The ADA Participation Action Research Consortium (ADA PARC) builds and expands upon previous collaborative research which explored how to measure, and document participation disparities experienced by people with disabilities. This iteration of the ADA PARC includes expansion of ADA National Network participation from seven to ten regional ADA centers, as well as the ADA Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKT). Activities include creation of an immediate access platform where stakeholders can query participation disparities across thousands of cities such as access to least restrictive community living with supports (CL); levels of community participation and civic engagement and access to resources to participate in communities (CP); and economic, work, and financial equity and resource access. The system generates GIS visual maps, accessible tables, and scorecards to show disparities across levels (national, state, city, community), including comparisons of people with and without disabilities, retroactive trends, and future need projections. The system also links users to ADA and ADA KT Center knowledge translation resources that highlight promising practices, case studies, and information resources to strategize participation disparities. ADA PARC datasets include addition of newly available indicators of civic engagement and financial equity and robust participation disparity/opportunity scorecards and reports across states and cities. ADA PARC activities also include participatory action community town halls to share findings and more effectively target disparities action planning. The consortium also models rigorous disparities analyses with existing and newly identified datasets, examining disparities at community levels in resources and funding related to accessible and affordable housing, transportation, and financial and economic equity.
Capacity Building for Rehabilitation Research and Training

In addition to supporting research and development, NIDILRR also aims to provide for the training of the next generation of researchers in the disability field. NIDILRR support funding programs to build researchers’ capacity to conduct research and development activities that make positive contributions to the lives of individuals with disabilities across the domains of employment, community living and participation, and health and function. Activities funded in this area include Research Fellowship Program and Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program where emerging talent and leadership are developed and fostered. These activities include opportunities for individuals with disabilities as well as individuals from minority backgrounds.

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Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Oklahoma

Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities

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Project Number: 90RTST0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $875,000; FY 19 $875,000; FY 20 $875,000; FY 21 $875,000; FY 22 $875,000

Abstract: This project engages minority entities (MEs)/minority-serving institutions (MSIs) to generate new knowledge leading to improved outcomes for persons with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations and enhanced research capacity and infrastructure at MEs and MSIs. The RRTC works with various MSIs (i.e., historically Black colleges and universities [HBCUs], Hispanic serving institutions, Tribal colleges/universities and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions) to enhance their faculty scholars’ and students’ research skills and address research infrastructure challenges such as library research resources, office of sponsored program and Institutional Review Board operations, invisible research center findings, and seed monies to jump-start research. Scientific panels mentor pre-doctoral, doctoral, post-doctoral, faculty, and research center Fellows, and visiting investigators in the development of research projects to be submitted to professional journals, and, where appropriate, a research grant proposal to be submitted to NIDILRR for funding consideration. The RRTC conducts eight major studies and numerous capacity-building activities informed by Citizen Scientists of Color with Disabilities and guided by National Advisory Panel Members that address the following themes: (1) field-testing and testing an emerging (i.e., Peer Multiple Mentor Model [PMMM]) and promising (i.e., Peer-to-Peer Mentor Research Team Model [PMRTM]) RCB approach, respectively; (2) exploring impacts of opioid use disorder on employment prospects among people with disabilities from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds; (3) field-testing an emerging State Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (SVRA) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Co-Service Partnership Model; (4) pilot-testing an emerging American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Program (AIVRP) and Veterans Affairs (VA) Co-Service Partnership Model; (5) exploring barriers that prevent HBCU-based science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) research scientists and faculty members, and small African American-owned technology firm engineers from participating optimally in the federally assistive technology research and development enterprise; (6) examining factors that challenge federally-sponsored MSI-based research centers in producing highly visible research findings that
advance the disability/rehabilitation and health science and literature; (7) evaluating an emerging Early Intervention Disability, Rehabilitation, and Health Research Careers Pathway Model (EIRCPM) that mentors MSI-based pre-doctoral and doctoral Fellows; and (8) longitudinally testing an Institutional Research Capacity-Building and Infrastructure Model (IRCBIM) across five different MSIs. A State-of-the-Science Conference is planned during the third year of the grant cycle on the research topics identified.
Exploring Cross-State Movement Experiences of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and Their Families

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Project Number: 90SFGE0017
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $80,000

Abstract: This project explores the cross-state movement experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities (ID), using and adapting the Moves in Context model to a new population. Moves in Context is a new conceptual model attentive to the ways in which both personal resources/positionality and social structure/ideology influence individual cross-state move trajectories for you use Medicaid home and community-based services (HCBS). The project also explores the role and experiences of family members of adults with ID, recognizing the high rates of co-residence among adults with ID. The project includes interviews with adults with ID and family members of Medicaid HCBS consumers with ID. Knowledge generated from this project will be used to: (1) describe how adults with intellectual disabilities (including those who use Medicaid HCBS) and their family members desire, plan, and pursue cross-state mobility; (2) investigate how variation in Medicaid HCBS policy across states (i.e., interstate variation) influences and impacts these experiences; and (3) develop and disseminate information toolkits to help Medicaid HCBS users and their family members plan and pursue cross-state moves.
Understanding and Addressing the Vocational Barriers and Needs of Black Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions

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Project Number: 90SFGE0009
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $80,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to improve the short- and long-term vocational outcomes of African American young adults with serious mental health conditions (SMHC) through increased understanding of their experiences of barriers and facilitators to obtaining and holding jobs and achieving career goals, and more specifically of the vocational services that have served White Americans with greater efficacy. Research demonstrates that racial disparities exist in the delivery and outcomes of vocational services for African American young adults with disabilities. Additionally, the views, perspectives and priorities of African American young adults with SMHC clients’ have not been systematically explored, and our understanding of what they experience in seeking employment and career growth is limited. To address these disparities, researchers conduct a multi-staged mixed method study of the vocational experiences, needs, and preferences of African American young adults with SMHC. The study consists of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with African American young adults with SMHC, most in vocational programs but some not currently. Researchers explore the particular impact of receiving Social Security income on vocational services engagement and outcomes. After the interviews, researchers hold two focus groups with providers of vocational services to review the interview findings and identify areas in which services can be developed to meet the needs of African American young adults with SMHC.
Development of a Pneumatic Power Assist Wheelchair (PneuPAW)

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**Project Number:** 90SF0019

**Start Date:** September 30, 2016

**Length:** 12 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Thomas Corfman

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 16 $80,000; FY 17 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2018); FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 3/31/2020)

**Abstract:** The goal of this project is to develop a novel pneumatically powered pushrim activated power assist wheelchair (PneuPAW) and investigate its compliance with ANSI/RESNA wheelchair standards, and usability via focus group study. Independent mobility is critically important for many aspects of life. Whether performing activities of daily living, attending school, or sustaining a vocation, mobility limitations can have a significant negative impact on the ability to succeed and quality of life. The wheelchair is one of, if not the most, common and effective assistive device available for people with significant mobility impairments. Pushrim-activated power-assist wheelchairs (PAPAWs) are alternatives to manual and electric powered wheelchairs for individuals with spinal cord injury or dysfunction who are at risk for complications such as upper limb injury and fatigue when using a manual wheelchair. The PneuPAW in production is expected to cost less than the current commercial devices (e.g., e-Motion and Xtender) due to the simplified design without batteries and electronics. The PneuPAW has a market advantage over current PAPAWs due to its lighter weight, improved versatility, and equivalent or better performance. The new technology could stimulate innovation and results in lighter weight, more reliable, and environmentally-friendly power assist wheelchairs. The outcomes of this research offer a helpful and medically necessary alternative that can prevent upper limb disorders common to long-term manual wheelchair propulsion and promote or maintain health and improve mobility. PneuPAW requires less effort to propel, especially in environments such as inclines, uneven terrain, and carpeted surfaces as compared to manual wheelchairs. When compared to standard power wheelchairs, PneuPAW is lighter and easier to transport which could make it possible for individual with disabilities go to work since lack of transportation is reported as one of the barriers for employment of people with disabilities. By demonstrating feasibility and utility of PneuPAW, this project may result in an entirely new type of drive system for wheelchair technology that has weight and usability advantages over electric systems.
Memory and Learning Phenotypes as a Biomarker of Long-Term Outcomes in TBI

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Project Number: 90SFGE0012
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $80,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 7/1/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to demonstrate the relationship between an individual’s memory and learning profile, or phenotype, and the appropriateness and success of a given intervention for individuals with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury (TBI). This research addresses a critical gap in the literature concerning the question of why some individuals with moderate to severe TBI respond well to a given treatment while others do not, and what factors contribute to long-term psycho-social outcome and societal reintegration. This lack of knowledge represents a significant challenge for clinicians making decisions about the appropriateness of a given treatment for a specific patient and for making a timely and accurate prognosis. This lack of knowledge also impedes the work of clinical researchers who strive to develop new therapies and must determine candidate eligibility for clinical trial research. An individual’s memory and learning phenotype may be a critical factor in determining the appropriateness and success of a given intervention, may be the key to understanding mechanisms of change in rehabilitation, and may be linked to a range of real-world abilities critical for societal reintegration. Project objectives are to: (1) identify characteristics of memory and learning phenotypes in TBI, (2) identify the structural neural correlates of the phenotype, and (3) determine the relationship between memory and learning phenotypes and psychosocial reintegration.
Targeting the Gut Microbiome to Improve Insulin Resistance in SCI

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Project Number: 90SFGE0018
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $70,000

Abstract: This project investigates whether insulin resistance is associated with gut dysbiosis in individuals with long-standing spinal cord injury (SCI) and explores the relationship between serum microbial metabolites and the gut microbiome composition in individuals with SCI. The escalating prevalence of metabolic disorders in individuals with long-standing SCI highlights the urgent need for discovering potential contributors to metabolic impairment. Accumulating evidence in individuals without disabilities who are obese and insulin-resistant suggests a potential causal impact of the gut microbiome composition, specifically gut dysbiosis, on host insulin resistance mediated by circulating microbial metabolites. SCI induces a state of gut dysbiosis that closely resembles that observed in individuals with obesity and insulin resistance. In this study, researchers enroll 60 individuals with SCI and evaluate the relationship between the gut microbiome, metabolomics, and insulin resistance cross-sectionally. This study is the first step in identifying potential gut microbial targets involved in the development of insulin resistance in individuals with SCI. Data from this work offers a scientific foundation for the development of dietary and/or drug interventions that target the gut microbiome to ameliorate the insulin resistance epidemic in the SCI population.
Determining the Optimal Brain Site for tDCS in Persons with Aphasia

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Project Number: 90SFGE0014
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $70,000

Abstract: This project investigates the use of transcranial direct current stimulation (tDCS) for people with aphasia, an acquired disturbance of language that typically results from damage to the left-hemisphere language areas of the brain. People with aphasia need treatment that results in better language outcomes. Although speech-language therapy has demonstrated efficacy in treating persons with aphasia, long-term effectiveness has not been established. Thus, there is a critical need for novel treatments that can enhance speech and language therapy outcomes for persons with aphasia. The highly “plastic” nature of the brain makes it ideal for cortical stimulation since cortical stimulation can directly boost underlying plasticity to supplement the rehabilitation process from speech-language therapy. tDCS is the method of cortical stimulation that has the most potential for clinical use in view of its non-invasive application, portability, ease of administration, and relatively low cost. This study investigates whether it is optimum for HD-tDCS (focal tDCS) to be administered to the left angular gyrus, the left motor cortex, and the right cerebellum. This study combines tDCS with a treatment that focuses on connected sentences and assesses the impact of tDCS on daily-life communication. Determining the optimum site for tDCS stimulation is an essential step in standardizing the use of tDCS as an adjuvant in aphasia therapy. Results will have important implications for improving community living and participation for the persons with aphasia.
Social Communication and Participation of Adolescents with Motor Speech Disability

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Project Number: 90SFGE0007
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $70,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The goal of this project is to further the understanding of the social communication and social participation experiences of adolescent speakers with dysarthria. Successful social communication and participation are critical to healthy development, well-being, and positive quality-of-life. Effective social interactions are particularly critical during adolescence, a period when peer relations take a central role. Dysarthria is a neuromotor disorder of speech execution that is characterized by reduced speech clarity and naturalness that can interfere with communication. Though studies conducted with adults with dysarthria have demonstrated interference with social participation, the impacts of dysarthria on the unique social experiences of adolescence are unclear. Two studies address social communication and participation needs across different levels of disability. First, adolescents with dysarthria participate in semi-structured interviews to establish their social participation experiences and the role of speech production abilities in their social communicative exchanges. The second study uses acoustic analysis to compare the abilities of adolescent speakers with and without dysarthria to modify their speech and speaking styles across contexts. Understanding the speech limitations and social participation experiences of adolescents with dysarthria provide the foundation for the development of novel contextually-based interventions and person-report outcome measures to enhance the social participation of adolescents with dysarthria.
Biofeedback Gait Retraining for Stiff Knee Gait Correction: Multi-Joint Adaptation in Children with Cerebral Palsy

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Project Number: 90SFGE0016
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Brian Bard
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $70,000

Abstract: This project builds on research to develop a visual kinematic biofeedback system which is designed to help children with hemiplegic cerebral palsy (CP) correct a pattern of reduced knee extension in terminal swing and early stance. CP attributed to non-progressive disturbances in the brain occurring early in development, is the most common cause of motor disability in childhood. Among gait deviations that limit motor performance and development in children with CP, stiff knee gait (SKG) is one that can be difficult to correct even after surgery or pharmacologic management of spasticity and contracture. Real-time biofeedback training has shown potential in motivating participants to correct gait deficits by matching their movement patterns with targets. The visual kinematic biofeedback system provides real-time feedback on the knee angle pattern or hip angle pattern when children walk on a treadmill. This study tests ten children with CP who have SKG and examines their short-term adaptations of two types of kinematic feedback training: (1) sequential switched feedback training on the knee and hip, and (2) feedback on training on the knee alone. This project addresses the question of whether a training design with feedback on both the knee and hip joints would reduce this tendency to generate unintended changes in hip joint motion, and in doing so also improve convergence to the intended knee joint pattern. The results from this study inform the extent to which multi-joint adaptation should be considered in feedback training design according to the relative phase of the adjacent joints related to a specific gait deficit pattern. Understanding multi-joint adaptations can help physicians and therapists to establish appropriate goals and effective protocols for gait retraining on pediatrics with specific motor deficits.
Pre-Implementation of the “Home-Based Self-Management and Cognitive Training Changes Lives” (HOBSCOTCH) Program to Improve Quality of Life for Patients with Refractory Epilepsy

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Project Number: 90SFGE0010  
Start Date: September 30, 2018  
Length: 12 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $70,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 6/30/2020)

Abstract: Home-Based Self-Management and Cognitive Training Changes Lives” (HOBSCOTCH) program, a behavioral intervention that adds to the treatment alternatives for patients with refractory epilepsy (PWRE). Despite the debilitating consequences of refractory seizures, the medical treatment model provided to PWREs only targets seizure freedom via a series of ineffectual trials of medication and surgical therapies for years. As a result, PWRE face growing barriers to independent living, driving, education and employment. HOBSCOTCH is an inclusive, eight-week intervention delivered mostly over the phone. HOBSCOTCH combines psychoeducation, memory skills training, and problem-solving therapy to helps patients improve the self-management of their chronic symptoms. The objectives of this study are two-fold: first, the project evaluates the feasibility of implementing HOBSCOTCH in a large, urban comprehensive epilepsy center and synthesizes the findings in an “implementation manual” for the intervention. This tangible output facilitates future dissemination of HOBSCOTCH to other clinical settings. Second, the project assesses whether the HOBSCOTCH treatment leads to improvements in quality of life and self-management skills for PWRE that are maintained three months after study completion.
Fellowships (Merit)
New York

Measuring Posttraumatic Growth in Caregiving Family of Acquired Brain Injury Survivors: A New Scale

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Project Number: 90SFGE0013
Start Date: September 20, 2019
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kenneth D. Wood, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $70,000

Abstract: This project develops and evaluates a new rehabilitation outcome measure, the Posttraumatic Growth Scale in Caregiving Families of Persons with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI). This self-administered clinical and research tool is intended to fill a gap in the assessment of family caregivers of adults with ABI by measuring the psychosocial and behavioral functioning of the caregivers. Caregivers’ emotional and family functioning have been found to impact greatly on social participation after post-acute rehabilitation for persons with ABI. Literature has focused primarily on the burden of caregiving and how it is often accompanied by high levels of stress for both individuals with ABI and their family members. However, the caregiver ability to respond positively to their new dual role of being both a family member and caregiver has been associated with improved social participation for the patient and quality of life in both the patient and the caregiver. Developing an instrument that measures the caregivers’ positive responses to the impact of a brain injury on the ABI survivor and the family unit can enable clinicians to track the psychological effects of the brain injury on the caregiving family over time and identify ways to helpfully intervene. The development of this instrument is based on previous work that resulted in the creation of an instrument that measures personal growth in caregiving partners of persons with multiple sclerosis. The ultimate goals of this research are to better quantify and understand the experiences of family caregivers of persons with ABI, promote and guide the care provided by the family caregivers, and thereby increase the social participation of the individuals with ABI. Following the establishment of this instrument, a subsequent goal is to promote its use as an assessment tool in future longitudinal rehabilitation outcome studies and in different settings for both rehabilitation services and community support programs.
Fellowships (Merit)
North Carolina

Using GIS and GPS Techniques to Understand Meaningful Participation for Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Project Number: 90SFGE0008
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 12 months

NIDILRR Officer: William V. Schutz, PhD, MSW, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $70,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to use innovative Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS) measures to systematically assess the community participation of adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and investigate critical environmental and personal factors associated with participation. The primary goal of this project is to advance the understanding of where and how adults with ASD spend their time, how they interact with their community, and what resources or supports promote community participation. Participants use GPS trackers to capture time away from home, distance traveled, and locations visited for seven days. GIS technology integrates GPS travel data to create maps of activity locations and assess environmental accessibility related to service use and participation by creating maps of available community features (ex. transportation networks, community centers) around one’s home. Follow-up qualitative interviews assess the importance of community activities and feelings of belonging and social connectedness from the individual’s perspective, which is missing from the current literature. Researchers combine these results with adult outcome survey data to examine the role of person factors such as skill level (ex. communication, vocational, social, and daily living skills), living situation (independently, with family, group home), and employment status (full time, part-time, unemployed) on community participation. Community participation outcomes are analyzed in relation to both GIS community accessibility measures and person factors, collected through survey data. Study findings will be used to make recommendations for both community-based and person-based interventions seeking to improve participation and integration and guide the development of more meaningful assessment measures of participation for this population in the future.
Electrophysiological Correlates of Emotional Reactivity in Chronic Traumatic Brain Injury

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Project Number: 90SFGE0015
Start Date: September 30, 2019
Length: 12 months
NIDILRR Officer: A. Cate Miller, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $70,000

Abstract: This study aims to: Determine the cortical neurophysiological correlates of emotional reactivity in individuals with mild-to-severe traumatic brain injury (msTBI) in order to uncover its neurobiological mechanisms and to identify an objective marker of reduced emotional reactivity; determine the association between neural cortical markers of emotional reactivity and state and trait emotional experience in individuals with msTBI; and determine the association between neural cortical markers of emotional reactivity and overall psychosocial deficits following msTBI. A deeper knowledge on the mechanisms leading to disorders of emotional processing post msTBI has the potential to guide future research on the development of ad-hoc pharmacological treatment, as well as to isolate target regions whose functionality can be increased using lifestyle interventions (e.g., exercise, nutrition) and neuro-modulation. In addition, findings from this project will allow researchers to develop diagnostic and prognostic tools for early screening and identification of such deficits.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
California

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in Neuromuscular and Neurodevelopmental Disorders

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Project Number: 90AR5030
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Theresa San Agustin, MD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training at UC Davis (ARRT) provides core research methodology training, advanced research training, research experience, mentorship, and career development support for clinicians, allied health professionals, and post-doctoral students committed to developing productive careers in rehabilitation research. The aim of the ARRT is to produce rigorously-trained, extramurally-competitive, and scientifically-productive independent investigators or physician-scientists who improve the health outcomes, participation, and quality of life of individuals with disabilities. Over the course of five years, this ARRT trains 10 postdoctoral or physician trainees in a two-year comprehensive program to develop specialized and multidisciplinary research skills. The focus of the research training is a mentored period of hypothesis-driven clinical research in areas related to the rehabilitation of individuals with neuromuscular diseases or neurodevelopmental disorders. The training provides core research competency in the following areas: (1) rehabilitation concepts and research methodology, (2) clinical epidemiology and study design, (3) methods in clinical research, (4) strategies for writing grants and publications, (5) health informatics, (6) medical statistics, and (7) responsible conduct of research. Advanced coursework and clinical training in neuromuscular diseases and neurodevelopmental disorders completes the didactic coursework. Each trainee is required to develop his/her own research project and grant proposal, author a scientific publication, and present findings at professional meetings and conferences. Rigorous and periodic assessment of the individual trainee’s progress, as well as a periodic evaluation of the training program, ensure the development of successful research training providing a research foundation that cultivates continual mentorship and provides multidisciplinary research opportunities for trainees to engage in productive careers that benefit the lives of individuals with neuromuscular and neurodevelopmental disorders.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Connecticut

Yale Post-Doctoral Research Training Program to Advance Competitive Integrated Employment for People with Psychiatric Disabilities

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Project Number: 90AREM0002
Start Date: September 01, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Kirstin Painter, PhD, LCSW
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $149,737; FY 20 $149,916; FY 21 $149,147; FY 22 $147,217; FY 23 $138,029

Abstract: This center provides postdoctoral training in recovery-oriented research to advance competitive integrated employment among persons with psychiatric disabilities. The program provides training and mentoring to researchers from a variety of fields and includes those with lived experience of psychiatric and other disabilities. Participating researchers learn how to design, conduct, and disseminate rigorous, innovative, scientifically meritorious, and influential research on effective strategies for successfully employing persons with psychiatric disabilities in competitive integrated work settings. To achieve these goals, the program addresses the following objectives: (1) developing an advisory board; (2) involving persons with psychiatric and other disabilities; (3) conducting ongoing evaluations of activities; (4) recruiting qualified applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds from across the country; and (5) developing, implementing, and evaluating a comprehensive plan for training and mentoring selected postdoctoral fellows. During their two-year training period, each fellow develops and completes an original, outstanding research project that will help establish their research careers while advancing the field of psychiatric rehabilitation. As a result, this program prepares three aspiring investigators, especially including persons with lived experience of psychiatric and other disabilities, to become highly qualified, productive, and influential recovery-oriented researchers dedicated to advancing competitive integrated employment among persons with psychiatric disabilities.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Florida

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Project (ARRT)
University of Florida
Building 212, Room 2107A
Gainesville, FL 32611
wmann@phhp.ufl.edu

Principal Investigator: William C. Mann, PhD
Public Contact: 352/273-6817

Project Number: 90AR5017 (Formerly H133P130009)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $150,000; FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project partners with the Veterans Health Administration to train postdoctoral fellows in conducting high-quality, multidisciplinary disability policy research in the area of community living and participation for veterans with disabilities. This project collaborates with a two-site Center of Innovation for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (CINDRR) to bring opportunities to the project fellows through immediate experience in ongoing disability policy-related projects focused on veterans with disabilities. Through the training program, the project (1) increases capacity in the field by providing postdoctoral training in disability policy research to six postdoctoral fellows, including at least one fellow from a minority or underserved population; (2) conducts disability policy research, which results in fellow participation in 10 collaborative research projects, 10 conference presentations, 10 research grant proposals, and 10 peer-reviewed publications; and (3) advances each postdoctoral fellow to the next stage in their research career through career development support. Dissemination activities include a Disability and Rehabilitation Policy Seminar, planned and implemented by fellows, which provides practical experience in establishing a network for research dissemination.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Northwestern University Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) Program

Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
Center for Rehabilitation Outcomes Research (CROR)
355 East Erie Street, Suite 14S
Chicago, IL 60611-2654
aheinemann@sralab.org

Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/238-4572

Project Number: 90AR5019 (Formerly H133P130013)
Start Date: October 01, 2013
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Hugh Berry, EdD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 13 $150,000; FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2019); FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project provides an integrated, interdisciplinary, collaborative training program for early-career scholars focusing on rehabilitation-related health services research. Health services faculty work closely with fellows to provide a rigorous and relevant interdisciplinary curriculum, integrating faculty and programs from diverse departments and centers into a unified health services research training program. Through this program, six post-doctoral fellows develop new skills to enhance their previous training in order to pursue a research career in rehabilitation-related health services research. The program includes carefully matched mentors, didactic course work, original research, grant writing, and scientific publishing over a two-year period.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Advanced Training in Translational and Engaged-Scholarship to Improve Community Living and Participation of People with Disabilities

The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois
Department of Disability and Human Development
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ysuarez@uic.edu

Principal Investigator: Yolanda Suarez-Balcazar, PhD 312/413-0117
Public Contact: 312/413-1467; Fax: 312/996-6942

Project Number: 90AR5023
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Thomas Corfman
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $148,245; FY 16 $148,438; FY 17 $149,550; FY 18 $149,852; FY 19 $149,426

Abstract: This project provides an interdisciplinary postdoctoral training program that actively engages scholars in research designed to improve the community living and participation outcomes for persons with disabilities. The advanced-training program focuses on sub-populations of people with disabilities who are most likely to encounter the greatest number of barriers in community life: minorities, persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, persons with severe physical disabilities, and older adults with impairments. Moreover, the training program prepares scholars to conduct research that has real world impact (i.e., guiding and changing services, programs, organizations, and policies that influence the lives of persons with disabilities). As such, it emphasizes: (a) translational scholarship that uses empirical knowledge to develop, refine, and test optimal community participation assessment instruments, services, and environmental strategies to support these outcomes; and (b) engaged-scholarship whose premise is that knowledge is generated by researchers, practitioners, and individuals with disabilities and other stakeholders collaborating not only to generate theory and research but also to advance practice. Trainees complete an intensive advanced training program designed to assure acquisition of key skills critical to successful research careers. The training program includes: didactic preparation, close mentoring by researchers, immersion in ongoing research, and field placement in programs or organizations that serve the target populations. The project supports trainees to develop capacity to enter productive research careers that directly improve services, programs, policies, and societal attitudes toward people with disabilities.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Rehabilitation Sciences for Engineers and Basic Scientists:
An Advanced Training Program

Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
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Chicago, IL 60611
sgard@northwestern.edu
www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/pmr/research/training-grants.html

Principal Investigator: Steven A. Gard, PhD
Public Contact: 312/503-5700; Fax: 312/503-5760

Project Number: 90AR5031
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this advanced rehabilitation research training (ARRT) project is to increase the number of postdoctoral engineers/scientists trained to perform research aimed at solving problems of persons with disabilities. This project trains six to eight scientists/engineers in three areas of expertise: Neurologic disorders, musculoskeletal injuries, and prosthetics and orthotics. Targeted technical, scientific, and clinical training are conducted through intensive clinical and scientific instruction and experience provided by the primary, secondary, and/or clinical mentors with relevant clinical/scientific expertise. Postdoctoral trainees are recruited using regional/national advertising in publications, web-advertising, and email list-servers with a strong effort focused on recruiting minority scientists, engineers, and/or individuals with disabilities to participate in the ARRTs training program.
Northwestern University Policy Research Fellowship

Northwestern University
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aheinemann@sralab.org
www.feinberg.northwestern.edu/sites/cehs/fellowships/
postdoctoral-fellowship/index.html

**Principal Investigator:** Allen W. Heinemann, PhD; Megan McHugh, PhD; Kathleen Pike, PhD; Harold Pincus, MD

**Public Contact:** 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/503-5656

**Project Number:** 90ARPO0001

**Start Date:** September 30, 2017

**Length:** 60 months

**NIDILRR Officer:** Sarah Ruiz, PhD

**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000

**Abstract:** This project to trains disability policy researchers to specifically address the critical policy issues facing the increasing numbers of persons with disabilities and older adults aging with and into disability. Four individuals participate in a two-year fellowship, focusing their career on policy issues pertaining to disability, independent living, or rehabilitation. The primary goals of this program are to recruit and train highly qualified trainees in advanced policy research methods, focused on disability, independent living, or rehabilitation policy; provide trainees with an immersive, residential experience in the application of disability policy research; provide trainees with robust mentorship for a disability policy research project; and continuously monitor and improve the effectiveness of the fellowship program. The objectives for each post-doctoral trainee are to develop competency and independence in disability relevant policy research methods; develop effective presentation and dissemination skills for key policy audiences; advance knowledge in a disability-related policy area by designing and executing a policy research project; and be prepared to become a positive change agent in disability policy, helping to shape a healthy and productive future for Americans with disabilities and chronic health conditions.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Illinois

Advanced Rehabilitation Research and Training (ARRT) Program:
Northwestern University Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training

Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine
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Principal Investigator: Allen W. Heinemann, PhD
Public Contact: 312/238-2802; Fax: 312/238-4572

Project Number: 90ARHF0003
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000

Abstract: This project provides an integrated, interdisciplinary, collaborative training program to five post-doctoral fellows focusing on skill development for research careers in rehabilitation-related health services research. Mentors work closely with fellows to provide a rigorous and relevant interdisciplinary curriculum, integrating faculty and programs from diverse departments and centers into a unified health services research training program focusing on the effectiveness, measurement, organization, provision, and financing of health care services for populations with functional limitations. During this program, five post-doctoral fellows develop new skills through didactic course work, original research, grant writing, and scientific publishing over a two-year period with the goal of a research career in rehabilitation-related health services research.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Maryland

University of Maryland Advanced Neuromotor Rehabilitation Research Training (UMANRRT)

University of Maryland, Baltimore  
School of Medicine  
100 Penn Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201-1508  
jabarro@som.umaryland.edu

Principal Investigator: Li-Qun Zhang, PhD 410/706-2145  
Public Contact: Janice Abarro 410/706-0856

Project Number: 90AR5028  
Start Date: September 30, 2016  
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The University of Maryland Advanced Neuromotor Rehabilitation Training (UMANRRT) program trains post-doctoral fellows in interdisciplinary rehabilitation research with a primary focus on neuromuscular disorders including Parkinson’s disease and stroke. The UMANRRT program targets doctorally prepared professionals with backgrounds in bioengineering, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and the movement sciences. The overall goal of the UMANRRT program is training post-doctoral fellows to further develop and refine the skills needed to conduct high-quality, independent, interdisciplinary, funded research in the rehabilitation of clinical populations with neuromotor disorders. Specific project objectives include: (1) recruiting and selecting highly qualified candidates to become UMANRRT post-doctoral fellows; (2) providing a scientifically-based, multidisciplinary training program that includes collaboration among affiliated institutions; (3) providing mentoring and collaborative opportunities with established researchers at University of Maryland at Baltimore and affiliated institutions; (4) providing fellows with interdisciplinary neuromotor rehabilitation research leadership experience by involving them in research projects where at least one is led by the fellow; (5) providing opportunities for participation in presentations, publications, and grant development; and (6) providing opportunities to develop teaching and mentoring skills for transitioning to a junior faculty role.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Massachusetts

Advanced Research Training Program in
Psychiatric Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Research

The Trustees of Boston University
Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation
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Principal Investigator: Zlatka Russinova, PhD; E. Sally Rogers, ScD
Public Contact: 617/353-3549; Fax: 617/353-7700

Project Number: 90AREM0001
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Leslie J. Caplan, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $149,848; FY 19 $149,966; FY 20 $149,811; FY 21 $149,814; FY 22 $149,745

Abstract: This advanced rehabilitation research training project (ARRT) recruits and trains four post-doctoral fellows through a two-year training program in the area of psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and employment of persons with psychiatric disabilities. The training program is implemented in two consecutive cycles with two full-time fellows in residence. The program is designed to provide state-of-the-art didactic experience, intensive research practicum, and opportunities for collegial collaboration relevant to psychiatric vocational rehabilitation and employment research. Throughout the program, the fellows are mentored, actively and intensely, by accomplished scholars, through a variety of modalities which allow them to acquire competencies in independent research study design and methodology, grant and professional writing, and conference presentations with the goal to expand current practices in the field and improve the lives of persons with psychiatric disabilities.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Massachusetts

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program on  
Health and Functioning of People with Disabilities

Brandeis University  
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Waltham, MA 02453-2728  
mmitra@brandeis.edu  
lurie.brandeis.edu/research/postdoc%20.html

Principal Investigator: Monika Mitra, PhD 781/736-3807  
Public Contact: 781/736-2693

Project Number: 90AR5024  
Start Date: September 30, 2015  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $149,998; FY 16 $149,996; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $149,999; FY 19 $149,999

Abstract: This project trains six postdoctoral fellows, recruited from racial, ethnic, and/or disability minority backgrounds, who are interested in research careers. The overarching focus of this program is racial, ethnic, and disability-based health disparities among children and adults with disabilities. Each postdoctoral fellow receives training driven by an individual development plan, modeled on that created by the National Science Foundation. Project participants conduct a self-assessment, and, with the guidance of a primary mentor from Brandeis University and two secondary mentors from institutions in greater Boston, develop an individual development plan. They then embark on a training and professional development program that includes: (1) biweekly meetings with the primary mentor; (2) applied research experience on a funded research project of the primary mentor; (3) support and guidance from quarterly meetings with two secondary mentors; (4) coursework in advanced research methods, health services research, and disability from any of the 11 Boston Consortium universities (including Boston University, MIT, Boston College, Tufts, and Brandeis University); (5) participation in a biweekly postdoc seminar addressing fellows’ professional development; (6) mentored research on independent projects of the fellows’ choosing; and (7) advice, guidance, and community learning activities from the disability community represented by a Community Advisory Board. Through the course of this program, postdoctoral fellows’ author or coauthor six papers for peer-reviewed journal articles; attend at least four national scientific conferences; develop and submit one extramural grant proposal as principal investigator; and present their research findings in the disability community four times. Project mentors are drawn from the fields of disability studies, education, medicine, occupational therapy, public health, social policy, social work, and sociology. The project is overseen by a Community Advisory Board of individuals involved in the disability field in different ways, including self-advocates, clinicians, nonprofit executives, and community leaders.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Michigan

The University of Michigan Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program in Community Living and Participation

University of Michigan
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
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Ann Arbor, MI 48108
dgtate@umich.edu
medicine.umich.edu/dept/pmr/education-training/fellowships

Principal Investigator: Susan Murphy, ScD, OTR; Denise G. Tate, PhD
Public Contact: 734/963-5600; Fax: 734/936-7048

Project Number: 90AR5020 (Formerly H133P140005)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension 3/29/2020)

Abstract: The ARRTP-CP trains six postdoctoral fellows and up to five physician resident trainees to advance the rehabilitation field in community living and participation, promoted by embracing community-based research approaches. This training program is guided by the principles of competency-based education and assessment to develop individualized training plans and the achievement of core competencies. The overall objectives of the ARRTP-CP are to: (1) provide research training in community living and participation in persons with disabilities; (2) orient training toward advancement of rehabilitation science by promoting community-based research that enables the development of sound disability policy; (3) prepare researchers to conduct studies in community-based settings, including home, school, and other environments; (4) foster advanced research skills that result in successful research proposals addressing issues relevant to persons with disabilities; and (5) build productive partnerships and collaborations that lead to successful careers to address the critical shortage of qualified rehabilitation scientists. Training in research methods focuses on diverse community-based research approaches designed to capture community living and environmental, social, and situational contextual factors. A core curriculum complements hands-on experience, and includes academic courses, seminars, and workshops to train fellows in qualitative methods (i.e. community-based participatory research - CBPR) supported by quantitative ones. Opportunities to complete a CBPR project, attend presentations and lectures at partner institutions and national conferences, and engage in networking round out the training program. This program is a collaborative effort among academic researchers at the University of Michigan’s School of Public Health, Institute of Social Research, and the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and their partners at community-based organizations.
The University of Michigan Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Program in Community Living and Participation

Principal Investigator: Susan Murphy, ScD, OTR; Anna Kratz, PhD; 734/936-2123
Public Contact: 734/963-5600; Fax: 734/936-7048

Project Number: 90ARCP0003
Start Date: September 01, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Timothy Beatty
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $149,812; FY 20 $149,967; FY 21 $149,950; FY 22 $149,870; FY 23 $149,948

Abstract: The goal of this program is to prepare six postdoctoral fellows to advance the rehabilitation field in community living and participation, promoted by embracing community-based approaches. The training program’s overall objectives are to: (1) provide competency-based, person-centered, community-engaged research training in community living and participation in persons with disabilities; (2) provide instruction in state-of-the-art measurement and assessment methods to generate new understanding that promotes community living and participation; (3) prepare rehabilitation researchers to conduct research in real-world community-based settings, including home, school, and other environments; (4) foster professional development to prepare fellows for independent rehabilitation research careers; and (5) build productive multi-disciplinary collaborations that lead to successful careers to address the critical shortage of qualified rehabilitation scientists. Training in methods focus on diverse community-based research approaches designed to capture community living and environmental, social, and situational contextual factors. Core didactic training complements hands-on immersive research and community engagement experiences; and includes courses, seminars, and workshops to train fellows in both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Additional opportunities include independent research projects, attendance at national conferences, and networking and career development activities. This program is a collaborative effort among academic researchers at the University of Michigan (UM), the Community Engagement Program at the Michigan Institute for Clinical Health Research (MICHR), the School of Public Health, and their partners at community-based organizations.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Minnesota

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (ARRT) on Community Living and Participation

The Regents of the University of Minnesota
204 Pattee Hall
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Minneapolis, MN 55455-0223
hewit005@umn.edu
ici.umn.edu/projects/view/215

Principal Investigator: Amy K. Hewitt, PhD
Public Contact: 612/625-1098; Fax: 612/625-6619

Project Number: 90ARCP0002
Start Date: September 30, 2018
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of the Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training on Community Living and Participation (ARRT/CLP) program is to provide post-doctoral fellows with research training and experience as well as knowledge translation opportunities focused on community living and participation of persons with disabilities. ARRT/CLP provides post-doctoral participants (approximately 5-7 fellows) an opportunity to join an interdisciplinary team by matching participants with faculty mentors with shared topical and methods interests to guide their learning experience. Training opportunities include seminars, coursework, and direct hands-on training relevant to career development including, but not limited to, observational and survey research methods and programs, and the latest approaches to primary and secondary data analysis, policy analysis, program evaluation, and measurement development. Participants are supported in authoring research focused grants, peer-reviewed journal articles, and translational materials targeted to non-technical audiences, and in identifying research to policy and practice opportunities.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in Rehabilitation Neuroscience and Engineering

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Kessler Foundation
185 South Orange Avenue
Newark, NJ 07103
gyue@kesslerfoundation.org

Principal Investigator: Guang Yue, PhD
Public Contact: 973/324-3539

Project Number: 90ARHF0002
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $147,060; FY 18 $147,458; FY 19 $147,451; FY 20 $147,437; FY 21 $147,758

Abstract: This project trains doctoral-level researchers committed to advancing the field of rehabilitation that improves overall health and function of individuals with neuromuscular and musculoskeletal diseases and injuries, specifically in the domains of sensorimotor neuroscience, rehabilitation robotics and engineering, and neuroimaging. The program is designed to be multidisciplinary and solicits and enrolls postdoctoral fellows from rehabilitation-related fields. These fellows receive research training that facilitates their pursuit of a career in rehabilitation research. Fellows complete a minimum of one independent research project, participate on a minimum of two ongoing collaborative research projects, present results to professional and consumer groups, submit findings for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and participate in writing extramural grant proposals, including their own grant applications.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
New York

Rusk Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training
Postdoctoral Fellowship

New York University School of Medicine
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
Rusk Rehabilitation
240 East 38th Street
ACC 17-73
New York, NY 10016
joseph.rath@nyulangone.org
med.nyu.edu/rusk/research/psychology-postdoctoral-fellowship-rehabilitation-research

Principal Investigator: Joseph F. Rath, PhD
Public Contact: 212/263-6183

Project Number: 90ARHF0001
Start Date: September 30, 2017
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Dawn Carlson, PhD, MPH
NIDILRR Funding: FY 17 $145,089; FY 18 $147,970; FY 19 $149,891; FY 20 $149,925; FY 21 $149,841

Abstract: This project trains psychology postdoctoral fellows in skills necessary to become independent investigators in clinical rehabilitation research. Doctoral-level professionals from appropriate fields of study in psychology (e.g., rehabilitation, clinical, counseling, and health psychology and neuropsychology) receive training through mentored independent research projects (IRPs) and ongoing multidisciplinary collaborative research projects. In addition to expanding their research expertise, fellows increase their knowledge of participatory action research (PAR) through collaborations with consumer disability advocacy groups, PAR-focused seminars, and/or partnership with a consumer whose disability is the focus of the fellow’s IRP. By completion of training, fellows are expected to complete a minimum of one IRP, participate on a minimum of one ongoing collaborative research project, present research results to professional and consumer groups and/or submit findings for publication in peer-reviewed journals, and participate in writing extramural grant proposals, including their own grant applications.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
North Carolina

Combined Human and Rehabilitative Machine System (CHARMS)

North Carolina State University
Joint Department of Biomedical Engineering
4402C Engineer Building III
Raleigh, NC 27695
dgkamper@ncsu.edu

Principal Investigator: Derek Kamper, PhD
Public Contact: 919/515-4411

Project Number: 90ARHF0004
Start Date: September 01, 2019
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000; FY 23 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training program is to develop postdoctoral fellows positioned to lead the creation of human-machine systems for rehabilitation. From smartphones to cars, the relationship between humans and technology is becoming increasingly integrated. The interactions have become symbiotic, in which the device adapts to the user, while the user also adapts to the device, in order to maximize performance. For many, the device seems a natural extension of themselves. Unfortunately, this level of utility and acceptance has not been achieved with rehabilitation technology, much of which sits underutilized or even abandoned. Recent advances in computing, sensor technology, and actuators hold promise for the development of smart rehabilitative devices that can respond to the needs of the user even as the user learns to optimally manipulate the device. Program fellows receive individualized, monitored mentoring in the three critical thrust areas of mechanics, control, and perception in the context of human-device interaction, building the skills and experience to be future leaders in rehabilitation.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Project at the Langston University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (LU-RRTC) on Research and Capacity Building for Minority Entities

Langston University
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Studies; LU-RRTC
6700 North Martin Luther King Avenue
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
clmoore@langston.edu
www.langston.edu/capacitybuilding-rrtc

Principal Investigator: Corey L. Moore, RhD
Public Contact: 405/530-7530; Fax: 405/962-1638

Project Number: 90AR5029
Start Date: September 30, 2016
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves
NIDILRR Funding: FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this program is to improve the capacity of minority-serving institutions (MSI) to develop and support disability and rehabilitation training pipeline infrastructure that can facilitate the development of talent and produce qualified investigators of color who can lead and participate in research and development aimed at improving the employment status of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations. To this end, the ARRT objectives are to: (1) implement a recruitment strategy to attract four to six well-qualified MSI-based fellows, including individuals with disabilities, interested in pursuing research careers in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities for advanced research training; (2) provide fellows with a multidisciplinary training program that includes didactic research coursework and classroom instruction offered through alternative technological platforms (including online) that increases their knowledge of scientific research methodologies, multicultural research best-practices, and solutions-focused translational approaches suitable to the field of rehabilitation; (3) implement mentoring through an interface between fellows and a peer-to-peer multiple mentor approach that consists of a primary mentor and a scientific mentorship panel comprised of context experts, multicultural specialists, methodologists, and a statistician from the LU-RRTC, Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston (an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (an historically Black college/university or HBCU), South Carolina State University (HBCU), and Jackson State University (HBCU); (4) increase fellows’ scientific writing abilities by having them collaborate with researchers on grant writing and preparation of independent research findings for submission to peer-reviewed journals; (5) improve fellows’ presentation abilities to both professionals and consumers; (6) provide fellows with interdisciplinary research experiences; and (7) involve fellows in consumer-related experiences by providing opportunities to deliver clinical employment support interventions and/or participate in structured community-based settings with organizations representing individuals with disabilities such as Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City Public School District-Department of Special Education.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)  
Oklahoma

Solutions-Focused Translational Research to Improve Employment Outcomes and Experiences Among Individuals with Disabilities from Traditionally Underserved Racial and Ethnic Populations

Langston University  
Department of Rehabilitation Counseling and Disability Studies  
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Oklahoma City, OK 73111  
clmoore@langston.edu

Principal Investigator: Corey L. Moore, RhD  
Public Contact: 405/530-7530; Fax: 405/962-1638

Project Number: 90ARST0001  
Start Date: September 30, 2018  
Length: 60 months  
NIDILRR Officer: Shelley Reeves  
NIDILRR Funding: FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000; FY 20 $150,000; FY 21 $150,000; FY 22 $150,000

Abstract: The goal of this program is to improve the capacity of minority-serving institutions (MSI) to develop and support disability and rehabilitation training pipeline infrastructure that can facilitate the development of talent and produce qualified investigators of color who can lead and participate in research and development aimed at improving the employment status of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved racial and ethnic populations. To this end, the project’s objectives are to: (1) implement a recruitment strategy to attract four to six well-qualified MSI-based fellows for advanced research training, including individuals with disabilities, interested in pursuing research careers in the rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; (2) provide fellows with a multidisciplinary training program that includes didactic research coursework and classroom instruction offered through alternative technological platforms (including online) that increases their knowledge of scientific research methodologies, multicultural research best-practices, and solutions-focused translational approaches suitable to the field of rehabilitation; (3) implement mentoring through an interface between fellows and a peer-to-peer multiple mentor approach that consists of a primary mentor and a scientific mentorship panel comprised of context experts, multicultural specialists, methodologists, and a statistician from the LU-RRTC, Institute on Community Inclusion at the University of Massachusetts Boston (an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution), North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (an historically Black college/university or HBCU), South Carolina State University (HBCU), Jackson State University (HBCU); and the Kessler Foundation; (4) increase fellows’ scientific writing abilities by having them collaborate with researchers on grant writing and preparation of independent research findings for submission to peer-reviewed journals; (5) improve fellows’ presentation abilities to both professionals and consumers; (6) provide fellows with interdisciplinary research experiences; and (7) involve fellows in consumer-related experiences by providing opportunities to deliver clinical employment support interventions and/or participate in structured community-based settings with organizations representing individuals with disabilities such as Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services, Goodwill Industries of Central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma City Public School District-Department of Special Education.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Pennsylvania

ARRT - Career Advancement for Engineers in the Science of Rehabilitation

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and the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology
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www.herl.pitt.edu/education/postdocs

Principal Investigator: Dan Ding, PhD
Public Contact: 412/822-3684; Fax: 412/822-3699

Project Number: 90AR5021 (Formerly H133P140012)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $149,991; FY 15 $149,993; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $149,966; FY 18 $149,997; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: Career Advancement for Engineers in the Science of Rehabilitation (CAESOR) provides integrated engineering and clinical training for up to seven postdoctoral fellows, fostering a deep understanding of human function and needs, enabling them to design innovative rehabilitation devices, tools, and techniques to help people with disabilities and older adults live more satisfying and productive lives. CAESOR utilizes a rehabilitation research team consisting of a focused cadre of mentors with interdisciplinary expertise in engineering, clinical, and psychosocial disciplines to provide the trainees with a balanced exposure to research, clinical, and academic approaches to rehabilitation and disability issues. The program is specifically designed to give the postdoctoral trainees the skills needed to become independent researchers in rehabilitation engineering. The comprehensive training activities are designed to facilitate the development of skills and competencies in six key areas including technical, person-centered (clinical and psychosocial), research, communication, innovation, and leadership skills. The training program consists of five components, with each component addressing one or more of the six key skills: (1) immersion in a mentored rehabilitation research experience by matching postdoctoral trainees with highly successful research mentors; (2) complementary didactics including core and individualized components that teach and enhance the critical skills necessary for a successful research career (such as grant writing, ethics, and issues in human subject research), and topics that are not usually covered in traditional engineering curricula (such as medical and social aspects of disability, research methods, and statistical analysis); (3) involvement in mentored clinical experience to gain clinical insights into and better understanding of the clinical decision-making process; (4) structured professional development and networking activities; and (5) participation in a community practicum to understand the real user needs and contextual constraints of technology. The capstone experience for the postdoctoral trainees is the submission of an extramural research proposal.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Virginia

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects

Virginia Commonwealth University
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation
Box 980542
Richmond, VA 23298-0542
jeffrey.kreutzer@vcuhealth.org
pmr.vcu.edu/education-and-training/fellowships/
advanced-rehabilitation-research

Principal Investigator: Jeffrey S. Kreutzer, PhD
Public Contact: Nancy H. Hsu, PsyD 804/828-0231; Fax: 804/828-2378

Project Number: 90AR5025
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months
NIDILRR Officer: Pimjai Sudsawad, ScD
NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 $150,000

Abstract: This project implements a highly effective advanced rehabilitation research training program (ARRT) for individuals with advanced degrees, committed to a career in rehabilitation research, with a focus on neurobehavioral recovery and intervention. Training and research activities address brain injury and other neurological disorders including Parkinson’s, stroke, and brain tumors. The program trains a diverse group of fellows, including persons with disabilities. Individualized research training plans emphasizing scientific rigor guide fellows’ choices of training activities. Multidisciplinary mentors, didactic experiences, and collaborative and independent research activities provide the foundation for the VCU ARRT program. Mentors include scientists from the fields of rehabilitation medicine, neuropsychology, neurosurgery, and vocational rehabilitation. Core courses on ethics, biostatistics, research design, and grant writing are complemented by graduate courses, seminars, grand rounds, and conferences. All fellows complete and submit a grant application during the second year of their fellowship. The ultimate goal of the VCU ARRT is to benefit rehabilitation practice and outcomes by increasing the number of highly skilled clinical research professionals.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)
Washington

Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in Rehabilitation Research Policy (UW-ARRT-RP)

University of Washington
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine
1959 Northeast Pacific Street
Seattle, WA 98195
imolton@u.washington.edu
rehab.washington.edu/education/fellowship/uwaart/default.asp

Principal Investigator: Ivan Molton, PhD
Public Contact: 206/543-3602

Project Number: 90AR5026
Start Date: September 30, 2015
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Sarah Ruiz, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 15 $79,103; FY 16 $148,677; FY 17 $148,935; FY 18 $149,203; FY 19 $81,242

Abstract: This project implements a five-year Advanced Rehabilitation Research Policy Fellowship (UW-ARRT-RP) for postdoctoral rehabilitation professionals. Through a collaborative partnership between the University of Washington and the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program, administered by Columbia University, the primary goal is to increase the number of successful independent rehabilitation policy researchers who are prepared to conduct investigations related to healthcare policy in individuals with disabilities across the lifespan, with an emphasis on older adults. The program provides advanced training for four postdoctoral trainees in two phases. The first year immerses fellows in a mentored rehabilitation research experience at UW, matching trainees with researchers in disability and rehabilitation. All trainees complete an individualized research development plan, as well as formal coursework in policy research. In year 2, fellows move into the policy intensive portion of the program, by participating in the residential track of the Health and Aging Policy Fellows Program in Washington, DC, working inside the Federal policymaking and policy-related research process as legislative assistants in Congress, or as professional staff members in executive-branch agencies or policy organizations. Both years of training include core and individualized didactics and coursework, as well as workshops and integrated mentorship. Fellows also complete a mentored policy research project, culminating in a presentation of findings at the end of Year 2. The UW-ARRT-RP also conducts ongoing formal evaluation of all aspects of the program.
**Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRTs)**
**Washington**

**Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living Fellowship (CHRIL-F)**

Washington State University  
Department of Health Policy and Administration  
PO Box 1495  
Spokane, WA 99210-0001  
jjkennedy@wsu.edu  
www.chril.org/chrilf

**Principal Investigator:** James J. Kennedy, PhD  
**Public Contact:** 509/368-6971

**Project Number:** 90ARCP0001  
**Start Date:** September 30, 2017  
**Length:** 60 months  
**NIDILRR Officer:** Sarah Ruiz, PhD  
**NIDILRR Funding:** FY 17 $149,896; FY 18 $149,788; FY 19 $149,896; FY 20 $149,788; FY 21 $149,896

**Abstract:** The objective of the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living Fellowship (CHRIL-F) is to provide a highly personalized 18-month research training experience to three scholars with disabilities who hold doctorates or similar advanced degrees and are personally committed to understanding and improving health policies and services for all Americans with disabilities. The CHRIL-F complements and extends the work of the Collaborative on Health Reform and Independent Living (CHRIL), a multisite Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project funded by NIDILRR. The fellowship program involves rigorous coursework and supervised research. Each CHRIL-F participant is expected to work with CHRIL investigators on secondary analyses of health survey data and may also opt to work with other select health scientists at the WSU Spokane campus. Fellows are required to enroll in at least two graduate courses in health policy and/or health services research methods. Fellows also participate in one or more WSU-sponsored workshops on grant writing. By the end of their first 12 months, CHRIL-F participants must prepare at least one research grant proposal, one conference abstract, two journal manuscripts, an academic curriculum vitae, and an individualized plan of research. During the last part of their training period, fellows may choose to spend three to six months at one or more CHRIL affiliate sites, including: Washington, DC (American Association on Health and Disability); Lawrence, KS (Institute for Health and Disability Policy Studies); or Houston, TX (Independent Living Research Utilization) to work on CHRIL research or knowledge translation projects.
Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training in Pediatric Mobility for Physicians and Engineers

Marquette University
Orthopaedic and Rehabilitation Engineering Center
735 North 17th Street
PO Box 1881
Milwaukee, WI 53201-1881
derborah.epps@marquette.edu
carrie.vandenwymelenberg@marquette.edu
www.tech4pod.org/4researchers/training-activities/t1
tech4podredesign.blogspot.com

Principal Investigator: Gerald F. Harris, PhD 414/288-1586
Public Contact: 414/288-5591; Fax: 414/288-0713

Project Number: 90AR5022 (Formerly H133P140023)
Start Date: October 01, 2014
Length: 60 months

NIDILRR Officer: Stephen Bauer, PhD

NIDILRR Funding: FY 14 $150,000; FY 15 $150,000; FY 16 $150,000; FY 17 $150,000; FY 18 $150,000; FY 19 (No-cost extension through 9/29/2020)

Abstract: This project offers advanced education and training in rehabilitation research to selected engineers and physician researchers in four areas that support opportunities for career-oriented contributions to the field of pediatric mobility: (1) musculoskeletal biomechanics and biomaterials, (2) assistive devices and robotics, (3) foot and ankle mobility, and (4) functional assessment/outcomes measurement. A team of two senior mentors and a physician/surgeon with qualifications specific to each of these research areas support candidates entering the program to enhance their current skills and offer additional, high-level training and experience. The postdoctoral trainees experience a program designed to provide a unique set of capabilities to succeed as a rehabilitation researcher. The program includes three essential elements: didactics, mentored research areas, and collegial and collaborative activities. Fellowship research requirements include the successful submission of an intramural proposal, pilot study completion and refinement, multiple journal article submissions, and submission of extramural proposals. The fellowship experience also includes an ‘away’ rotation at one of several research support laboratories including: the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (CA); the University of California, Berkeley Department of Materials Science and Engineering (CA); the Hospital for Special Surgery Motion Analysis Laboratory (NY); the Thomas Jefferson University School of Health Professions (PA); and the Northwestern University Biodynamics Laboratory (IL). The fellowship also provides an international clinical rotation through videoconference with colleagues in the Motion Analysis Laboratory at ITESM, Chihuahua, Mexico. Optional off-site rotations are also available through facilities in Cali, Columbia and Manila, Philippines.
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