



2023 DRRC Policy and Advocacy Priorities

I. ADVANCING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE SCIENTIFIC WORKFORCE AND THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

Continue to support efforts to ensure that diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility efforts at federal research agencies appropriately consider the needs of individuals, especially researchers, with disabilities.

- Work with the disability community to advance recommendations on disability inclusion from NIH Advisory Committee to the Director, Working Group on Diversity, Subgroup on Individuals with Disabilities (ACD Disability Subgroup).
 - Engage with Congressional leaders and other agency officials to build awareness of and support for ACD Disability Subgroup recommendations.
 - Advocate for resources to implement these recommendations in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 appropriations cycle.
 - Advocate for the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) to officially designate people with disabilities as a “health disparity population.”
- Work with the Chief Office for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD) to ensure that implementation of the new Strategic Plan includes support for researchers with disabilities.

II. COVID-19 DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH

Continue to advocate for enhanced disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, including data collection, Long COVID, and targeted research for key populations.

- Work with the 118th Congress and the Biden Administration to ensure that the federal response to the pandemic continues to include targeted research on the inequitable impact of COVID-19 and Long COVID on people with disabilities, especially as the public health emergency declaration expires.
- Ensure that the COVID-19 research agenda includes examination of the “ripple effects” on access to services, health, and independent function not directly resulting from COVID-19 infection.

- Ensure that federal data collection efforts (related to COVID-19 and beyond) include disability status as a mandated category in all collections of demographic data.
- Promote disability considerations as research agencies continue to carry out their strategic plans and efforts regarding COVID-19 research.
- Work with the Office of Long COVID Research and Practice and the NIH Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) Initiative to support federal research efforts into the impact of Long COVID on both people with preexisting disabilities and those with new long-term or permanent disability, as well as multidisciplinary rehabilitation for treatment of Long COVID symptoms and functional impairments.
- Support expanded research into the benefits and impact of telehealth expansion during the COVID-19 public health emergency specifically for individuals with disabilities.

III. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)

Advocate for expanded medical rehabilitation research at NIH.

- Meet with senior NIH leaders at Institutes and Centers conducting disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research and maintain a close working relationship with key NIH staff.
- Maintain a continued and strong relationship between the DRRC and the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR).
- Continue to engage with the Biden Administration to continue to raise the profile of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research at NIH.
- Participate in future public comment opportunities to weigh in on the direction of NIH-Wide and Institute-specific strategic planning processes.
- Monitor development and initial focuses of the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) and identify opportunities to support disability research within the agency's portfolio.

IV. NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH (NIDILRR)

Advocate in support of NIDILRR and its research mission.

- Advocate for increased funding for NIDILRR's operations in the FY 2024 appropriations cycle.
- Work with NIDILRR leadership to provide input and help develop the next NIDILRR Long-Range Plan (2024-2029)
- Meet with NIDILRR leadership and Administration for Community Living (ACL) officials to reaffirm commitment to disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research.

- Work to more closely involve NIDILRR in CMS activities, especially regarding the role that NIDILRR's data and disability expertise may play in improving the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

V. INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY RESEARCH (ICDR)

Advocate for an expanded recognition of the role of ICDR and enhanced collaboration and coordination on disability research across federal agencies.

- Continue to advocate with ACL and the leadership of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) to promote the implementation of the government-wide strategic plan on disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research and encourage commitment to the ICDR's mission.
- Advocate for federal government-wide efforts to expand self-declaration and self-identification for people with disabilities within the federal workforce and among those receiving federal funds.
- Advocate for dedicated funding for ICDR to carry out its mission in FY 2024.

VI. FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024 APPROPRIATIONS

Advocate for additional funding and applicable report language to support DRRC goals.

- Solicit membership for priority programs and prepare DRRC appropriations and report language recommendations.
- Advocate before congressional appropriations leadership to support DRRC budget requests (including consideration of a potential dedicated budget for ICDR).
- Meet with relevant agency and administration officials as appropriate regarding budget needs.
- Prepare charts summarizing President's budget proposals and House/Senate/Conference funding decisions and accompanying analyses.
- Support enactment of proposed funding increases for key disability and rehabilitation programs in the final FY 2024 conference agreement.

VII. OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES

Promote the coordination and enhancement of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research across the federal government.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 - Engage with the appropriate leaders at CDC to re-appoint a Chief Disability and Health Officer and re-establish the Disability and Health Working Group.

- Advocate before key officials and work in tandem with the research community to address next steps to restore CDC's view of disability and rehabilitation research.
- Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI)
 - Engage with PCORI to support further emphasis on disability and rehabilitation research within the Institute's portfolio.
- National Science Foundation (NSF)
 - Engage with the National Science Foundation (NSF) to support research portfolio on disability issues, including Convergence Accelerator Track on Enhancing Opportunities for People with Disabilities.
- White House
 - Support disability community representation and policy focus within the White House's scientific advisory staff, including the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST).