



## **2025 DRRC Policy and Advocacy Priorities**

### **I. NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH (NIH)**

**Advocate for sustained funding of the world's leading biomedical research organization and continued focus on advancing scientific research. Advocate for expanded medical rehabilitation and disability research at NIH.**

- Engage and educate Congress on the importance of NIH scientific research.
- Advocate for establishing a Disability and Rehabilitation Research Institute in the event of a NIH-wide restructuring and/or a reauthorization.
- Engage Trump Administration to raise the profile of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research at NIH and other key research agencies.
- Continue advocacy work to promote NIH Strategic Plan for Disability Research, including working with NIH Division of Program Coordination, Planning, and Strategic Initiatives (DPCPSI) Disability Policy staff and monitoring implementation.
- Maintain a continued and strong relationship between the DRRC and the National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR).
- 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.
- Relationship building with new leadership at NIH.
- Participate in future public comment opportunities to weigh in on the direction of NIH-Wide and Institute-specific strategic planning processes.

### **II. ADVANCING DISABILITY INCLUSION IN THE SCIENTIFIC WORKFORCE AND THE RESEARCH ENTERPRISE**

**Protect longstanding goals of disability engagement and accessibility at federal research agencies and continue advocating for inclusion of individuals with disabilities, especially researchers with disabilities.**

- Engage with DPCPSI Disability Policy staff to improve disability research across NIH including development of a NIH-wide Disability Research Strategic Plan.
- Work with the disability community to advance additional recommendations on disability inclusion from NIH Advisory Committee to the Director, Working Group on Diversity, Subgroup on Individuals with Disabilities (ACD Disability Subgroup).
  - Continue to advocate for the establishment of a Disability Research Office if NIH restructuring does not move forward with establish an Institute.

- Engage with Congressional leaders and other agency officials to build awareness of and support for additional ACD Disability Subgroup recommendations.
  - Advocate for resources to implement these recommendations including additional research dollars to disparities in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and 2026 appropriations cycle.
  - Continue to monitor the proposed change in the NIH Mission Statement.
- Prioritize a meeting with new director of NIH to discuss the importance of disability and rehabilitation research and the additional recommendations from the ACD Disability Subgroup.

### **III. NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY, INDEPENDENT LIVING, AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH (NIDILRR)**

**Advocate in support of NIDILRR and its research mission and level of support.**

- Advocate for increased funding for NIDILRR's operations in the FY 2025 and FY 2026 appropriations cycle.
- Prioritize engagement with NIDILRR and ACL leadership to discuss the merits of reorganization in the context of NIH restructuring.
- Work with NIDILRR leadership to implement NIDILRR's Long-Range Plan (2024-2028).

### **IV. OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES**

**Promote the coordination and enhancement of disability and rehabilitation research and data collection across the federal government.**

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - Engage with the appropriate leaders at CDC including Chief Disability and Health Officer, Disability and Health Working Group, and National Center for Health Statistics.
  - Engage in discussion of disability data collection.
- U.S. Census Bureau
  - Continue relationship with agency, engage in discussion of disability data collection, and advocate for increased disability community and stakeholder involvement.
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
  - Engage with director of AHRQ to discuss disability inclusion in the annual National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report.

## **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 dedicated funding for ICDR to carry out its mission in FY 2025 and 2026.

## **VI. FISCAL YEAR 2025 and FY 2026 APPROPRIATIONS**

**Preserve existing funding and 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.
- Summarize President's budget proposals and funding decision House/Senate/Conference but due to budget constraints limit appropriations reporting to chart format.
- Support member appropriations requests of ACL and NIDILRR, e.g., Limb Loss Resource Center, TBI State Partnership Grant Program, TBI/SCI Model Systems, National Paralysis Resource Center.

## **VII. THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND COVID-19 DISABILITY AND REHABILITATION RESEARCH**

**Support public health policy that improves health for all individuals, particularly people with disabilities. Continue to advocate for enhanced disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research relating to COVID-19 and Long COVID.**

- Support public health research and policies that enhances the health and wellbeing of individuals with disabilities.
- Ensure that federal data collection efforts include disability status as a mandated category in all collections of demographic data.
- Monitor the work of the Office of Long COVID Research and Practice, the HHS Secretary's Advisory Committee on Long COVID, 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.