



**DEPARTMENT  
of HEALTH  
and HUMAN  
SERVICES**

Administration for Community Living  
National Institute on Disability,  
Independent Living, and Rehabilitation  
Research (NIDILRR)

**REPORT TO CONGRESS**

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	2
Acronyms .....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Funding and Grants Management .....	4
Productivity and Accomplishments .....	4
Research Capacity-Building.....	6
Training and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act .....	6
Knowledge Translation .....	6
Ongoing Activities .....	6
Introduction .....	8
Grant Competitions – 2023 Year in Review .....	11
Grant Competition and Peer Review Process.....	11
Grant Competitions.....	11
Monitoring and Oversight.....	13
Funding Overview .....	15
Grantee Activities and Progress.....	18
Sampling of Key Accomplishments by Funded Researchers .....	19
ADA National Network.....	27
Research Fellowship Program (Mary E. Switzer Fellowship Program).....	29
Ongoing Activities .....	31

## Acronyms

<b>ACL</b>	Administration for Community Living
<b>ADA</b>	Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>APR</b>	Annual Performance Reporting System
<b>ARRT</b>	Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Project
<b>DRRP</b>	Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project
<b>FIP</b>	Field-Initiated Project
<b>FY</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>HBCU</b>	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
<b>HCBS</b>	Home- and Community-Based Services
<b>HHS</b>	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<b>ICDR</b>	Interagency Committee on Disability Research
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>KT</b>	Knowledge Translation
<b>MSI</b>	Minority-Serving Institution
<b>MSKTC</b>	Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center
<b>NIDILRR</b>	National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research
<b>PDF</b>	Portable Document Format
<b>PI</b>	Principal Investigator
<b>RERC</b>	Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center
<b>RRTC</b>	Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
<b>SBIR</b>	Small Business Innovation Research
<b>SCI</b>	Spinal Cord Injury
<b>TBI</b>	Traumatic Brain Injury
<b>TBIMS</b>	Traumatic Brain Injury Model Systems
<b>WIOA</b>	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

## Executive Summary

As the primary research enterprise within the Administration for Community Living, the mission of the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) is to generate new knowledge and to promote its effective use to improve the abilities of individuals with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community, as well as to expand society's capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. NIDILRR and ACL's other programs work together to achieve the overarching mission of ACL: to maximize the independence, well-being, and health of older adults and people with disabilities across the lifespan, and their families and caregivers. NIDILRR creates resources and interventions that support the work funded by ACL's other programs, and NIDILRR's research priorities are informed by the critical information about the needs of people with disabilities that these programs provide. As a result, the total impact of ACL's programs is greater than the sum of what each would achieve independently.

NIDILRR's discretionary grants fund research projects, as well as knowledge translation and capacity-building activities, to address a wide range of disabilities across all age groups and promote health and function, community living and participation, and employment.

### Funding and Grants Management

In fiscal year (FY) 2023, NIDILRR funded 271 grants totaling \$112,533,118. These grants enabled more than 1,500 discrete projects. The peer review process for NIDILRR grant competitions is highly rigorous, with 21% of applicants receiving new grant funding during FY 2023 (see Table 1). In addition, NIDILRR awarded \$6,452,019 in contracts to support NIDILRR operations in FY 2023.

### Productivity and Accomplishments

NIDILRR programs fund research toward the development of new knowledge and innovative technological devices, prototypes, measurement tools, interventions, and other informational products to enhance community living, health and function, and employment among people with disabilities. Grantees employ advanced methodologies to conduct research, including randomized controlled trials, longitudinal studies, and qualitative studies. These investments produce peer-reviewed publications, intervention protocols, software, databases, and a wide range of other outputs and outcomes. Following are selected examples of grantee accomplishments in FY 2023:

#### **Increasing Accessibility at the Wright Brothers Memorial (Grant # 90DPAD0005)**

The National Park Service at the Wright Brothers Memorial in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, worked with the NIDILRR-funded Southeast ADA Center and a group of people with disabilities to obtain advice and feedback on increasing accessibility at the memorial. As a result, they

created an accessibility guide for guests that describes the ways individuals with sight, hearing, and mobility impairments can enjoy the park. It will be available at the fee booth, visitor center, and online. Based on the gathered feedback, they also rearranged the Visitors Center and museum store making it easier to navigate with mobility aids, ordered assistive listening devices, and mapped each route up to the monument which is on a large hill. Additionally, they applied for a grant which would be used to create 3D tactile models of the monument. The National Park Service will continue to work with the Southeast ADA Center on ensuring accessibility, such as doors, parking lots, and sidewalks, at this memorial.

### **Microsoft Leverages NIDILRR Research on Teachable AI (Grant # 90REGE0008)**

Announced at the 25th International [ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility](#) in New York in October 2023, [Microsoft introduced 'Find My Things'](#)—a mobile object recognition app that helps users to locate their belongings. The app uses teachable artificial intelligence to enable blind and low vision users to customize the app to meet their specific needs. As acknowledged by Microsoft, this significant advancement directly builds upon research on teachable object recognizers for the blind from NIDILRR's Inclusive Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center and the National Science Foundation. As a testament to the ongoing evolution of AI for accessibility, this innovation redefines personalization for blind and low vision people. Each person, including those with disabilities, has unique needs and experiences with technology. This is increasingly important as AI becomes more integrated into assistive technologies. While expanding datasets and adjusting algorithms have their limits, the breakthrough of teachable machines is that they enable users—without AI expertise—to contribute data and fine-tune machine learning models to suit their individual requirements and environments. The Inclusive ICT RERC has provided compelling evidence that this approach is not only feasible but welcomed by people with disabilities. With industry leaders like Microsoft embracing these innovations, the Inclusive ICT RERC has seamlessly transitioned research from their labs to real-world impact.

### **Physical Wellness for Work Intervention Adopted by the American Occupational Therapy Association (Grant # 90RT5038)**

NIDILRR's Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery developed a workbook, [Physical Wellness for Work](#), that offers strategies to improve wellness habits that impact employment among people with mental health or substance use conditions. The workbook provides manageable activities to augment health and wellness with the goal of increasing energy and health for a more satisfying workday. This intervention was adopted by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), which represents more than 230,000 occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and occupational therapy students in the United States and beyond, to advance occupational

therapy practice, education, and research. The tool helps to promote AOTA's goal of holistic health for their workforce and provides occupational therapists with resources they can use with their clients.

## Research Capacity-Building

NIDILRR's research capacity-building efforts, including its Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects and the Switzer Fellowship Program, support development of a diverse cadre of disability and rehabilitation researchers. In addition, NIDILRR directs targeted resources to minority-serving institutions (MSIs), such as historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and tribal colleges and universities, to develop and implement programs to build disability and rehabilitation research capacity.

## Training and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act

ACL funds the ADA National Network, which delivers training and technical assistance and disseminates materials about rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA Participation Action Research Consortium complements the network's activities through research on factors influencing the community living of individuals with disabilities at state, regional, and community levels.

## Knowledge Translation

ACL is committed to ensuring that the products of its sponsored research and development promote the independent living, health and function, employment, and community living outcomes of individuals with disabilities. NIDILRR's Knowledge Translation Centers ensure that new knowledge and products gained through research and development are effectively communicated to stakeholders and used to improve the lives of individuals with disabilities.

## Ongoing Activities

In January 2024, ACL published NIDILRR's FY [2024–2028 Long-Range Plan](#). This document defines NIDILRR's programmatic vision and will frame NIDILRR's research agenda for the coming years.

The plan sets goals for bolstering the involvement of people with disabilities across the research enterprise. These goals include increasing the representation of researchers with disabilities within NIDILRR's funding mechanisms, increasing the number of disabled researchers of color and from other underrepresented backgrounds, and deepening the rehabilitation training field trajectory.

Strategic partnerships with other agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and across the federal government have been instrumental in advancing NIDILRR's mission. ACL will continue to enhance its existing partnerships and seek out new

collaborative opportunities within HHS and, more broadly, across the federal disability and rehabilitation research communities.

In addition, NIDILRR's director serves as the chair of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR), which is focused on the goals set forth in the government-wide disability and rehabilitation research [strategic plan](#).

# 2023 Report to Congress

## Introduction

The Administration for Community Living's (ACL's) National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) is committed to improving independent living and community participation among people with disabilities by funding research and development in the areas of community living and participation, health and function, and employment. This Annual Report to Congress will describe NIDILRR's activities and accomplishments during fiscal year (FY) 2023. It begins with a summary of the organization's historical foundation, provides a description of its funding process and fiscal allocations, and follows with descriptions of programmatic outcomes impacting the community. This report concludes by describing ongoing initiatives and directions within the organization.

NIDILRR was established by Congress to conduct research that would lead to improved health and function, employment, and community living outcomes for individuals with disabilities. First constituted as the National Institute on Handicapped Research by the Rehabilitation, Comprehensive Services, and Developmental Disabilities Amendments of 1978 (P.L. 95-602), amending the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the organization was originally housed in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and later in the Department of Education. The 1986 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act changed the agency's name to the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research. On July 22, 2014, the agency was renamed the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research and transferred from the Department of Education to ACL within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This change occurred with the passage of P.L. 113-128, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). NIDILRR personnel officially became ACL employees on February 8, 2015.

NIDILRR's mission is to generate new knowledge and promote its effective use to improve the abilities of individuals with disabilities to perform activities of their choice in the community as well as to expand society's capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for individuals with disabilities. To accomplish this mission, NIDILRR:

- supports research, development, training, technical assistance, and related activities to build new knowledge;
- promotes the transfer, use, and adoption of technology for individuals with disabilities to improve health and function, employment, and independent community living and participation outcomes;



- provides for research training to increase the number of qualified researchers, including researchers with disabilities and from minority backgrounds; and
- fosters widespread dissemination and use of scientific and technological information to advance policy, practice, and services that improve outcomes for people with disabilities.

NIDILRR programs address community living and participation, health and function, and employment outcomes of people with disabilities. Its investments in research, development, knowledge translation, and capacity-building activities are carried out through the following discretionary grant-funding mechanisms:

- **Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTC)** conduct advanced research and training on a wide variety of health, rehabilitation, employment, and community living topics.
- **Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERC)** conduct rehabilitation engineering research and development toward technological solutions to rehabilitation problems or environmental barriers.
- **Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRP)** conduct research, development, technical assistance, training, and utilization activities on health, rehabilitation, employment, and community living topics.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) National Network** projects conduct research and provide information, training, and technical assistance to ADA stakeholders.
- **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)** projects support small businesses' work to explore feasibility and develop or evaluate the commercialization potential of new technology products for people with disabilities.
- **Knowledge Translation (KT)** projects promote the use of research-based knowledge in NIDILRR's community of stakeholders.
- **Field-Initiated Projects (FIP)** conduct 3-year studies on topics proposed by applicants to address disability and rehabilitation issues in promising and innovative ways.
- **Model Systems** programs in spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury conduct research on rehabilitation and long-term outcomes of individuals with these conditions. Research in these programs includes collaborative, multisite research and collection and analysis of longitudinal data.

- **Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Projects (ARRT)** support the efforts of institutions of higher education to provide advanced interdisciplinary research training to postdoctoral fellows.
- **Research Fellowship Programs, or Mary E. Switzer Fellowships**, are awarded to qualified individuals to conduct 1-year independent research projects.
- **Section 21** projects focus on research capacity-building for minority-serving institutions (MSIs), including historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other institutions with significant racial and ethnic minority student populations. Section 21 of the Rehabilitation Act requires that 1% of NIDILRR appropriations be invested to address historically underserved populations.

## Grant Competitions – 2023 Year in Review

### Grant Competition and Peer Review Process

ACL’s NIDILRR sponsors disability and rehabilitation research and development in the outcome domains of community living and participation, health and function, and employment. Funding is provided to the research community through its funding mechanisms, with priorities within these mechanisms determined by the agency. NIDILRR utilizes a rigorous peer review process, as required by federal regulation, and internal and external program evaluation to ensure the quality of its sponsored research and development activities. Subject matter experts with the appropriate credentials and content knowledge evaluate the scientific, technical, and management aspects of proposals submitted in response to NIDILRR funding opportunity announcements. This process generates an average score across reviewers, reducing bias and facilitating the ranking of projects by scientific merit. Only the highest-ranking proposals are recommended for ACL funding.

### Grant Competitions

Table 1 describes NIDILRR’s FY 2023 grant competitions. The numbers of eligible applicants, review panels, reviewers, and awards made and the percentage of applicants receiving funding are shown. A large percentage of applications receive high peer review scores that indicate strong technical merit and significant need. ACL’s limited resources allow only a small percentage of these applicants to receive grants each year.

Table 1. NIDILRR Peer Review Process Overview, FY 2023

Grant Opportunity	# Eligible Applicants	# Panels	# Reviewers	# Awards Made	% Applicants Receiving Funding
<b>ARRT – Health &amp; Function</b>	11	1	5	1	9%
<b>ARRT – Community Living <sup>1</sup></b>	5	1	5	2	40%
<b>ARRT – Employment</b>	2	1	5	1	50%
<b>SBIR – Phase 1</b>	40	4	20	12	30%
<b>SBIR – Phase 2</b>	12	2	10	5	42%
<b>Switzer Research Fellowships</b>	40	4	16	10	25%
<b>Field Initiated Projects</b>	151	16	80	18	12%
<b>Field Initiated Projects – Minority Serving Institutions</b>	10	1	5	5	50%
<b>DRRP Students With 504 Plans</b>	9	1	5	1	11%
<b>DRRP Burn Model Systems Data Center</b>	1	1	5	1	100%

<b>Grant Opportunity</b>	<b># Eligible Applicants</b>	<b># Panels</b>	<b># Reviewers</b>	<b># Awards Made</b>	<b>% Applicants Receiving Funding</b>
<b>DRRP Research Methods in Virtual Environments</b>	6	1	5	1	17%
<b>DRRP KT for Tech Transfer</b>	2	1	5	1	50%
<b>DRRP SCI International Length of Stay</b>	4	1	5	1	25%
<b>DRRP TBI Model Systems Collaborative</b>	7	1	5	1	14%
<b>DRRP Translating Findings and Products Into Practice</b>	15	2	10	6	40%
<b>DRRP Scaling Up Competitive Integrated Employment Interventions</b>	8	1	5	1	13%
<b>DRRP Employment Following Long Covid Among People with Disabilities</b>	5	1	5	1	20%
<b>RERC Physical Access and Transportation</b>	4	1	5	1	25%
<b>RERC Strategies, Techniques, Interventions</b>	9	2	10	1	11%
<b>RERC Technology to Support Aging</b>	5	1	5	1	20%
<b>RERC Universal Access to Info &amp; Communication Technology</b>	3	1	5	1	33%
<b>RERC Prosthetics and Orthotics</b>	7	1	5	1	14%
<b>RRTC Community Living Among People With IDD</b>	2	1	5	1	50%
<b>RRTC Disability in Rural Communities</b>	3	1	5	1	33%
<b>RRTC on Disability Statistics and Demographics</b>	4	1	5	1	25%
<b>RRTC on Community Living Policy</b>	2	1	5	1	50%
<b>RRTC Employment Among People with Physical Disabilities</b>	5	1	5	1	20%

Grant Opportunity	# Eligible Applicants	# Panels	# Reviewers	# Awards Made	% Applicants Receiving Funding
RRTC Health and Function Among People with IDD	2	1	5	1	50%
RRTC Research Capacity Building Among Minority Serving Institutions	3	1	5	1	33%
RRTC Aging Among People With Serious Mental Illness	5	1	5	1	20%
RRTC Community Living Among People with Serious Mental Illness	1	1	5	1	100%
RRTC Community Living Among Transition Age Youth with Serious Mental Health Conditions from Disadvantaged Backgrounds	5	1	5	1	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>21%</b>

<sup>1</sup> The ARRT Community Living grant opportunity (described in the second row of this table) had two eligible applicants so the same panel of 5 reviewers was also used to review the ARRT Employment Grant Opportunity in the third row which only had one eligible applicant.

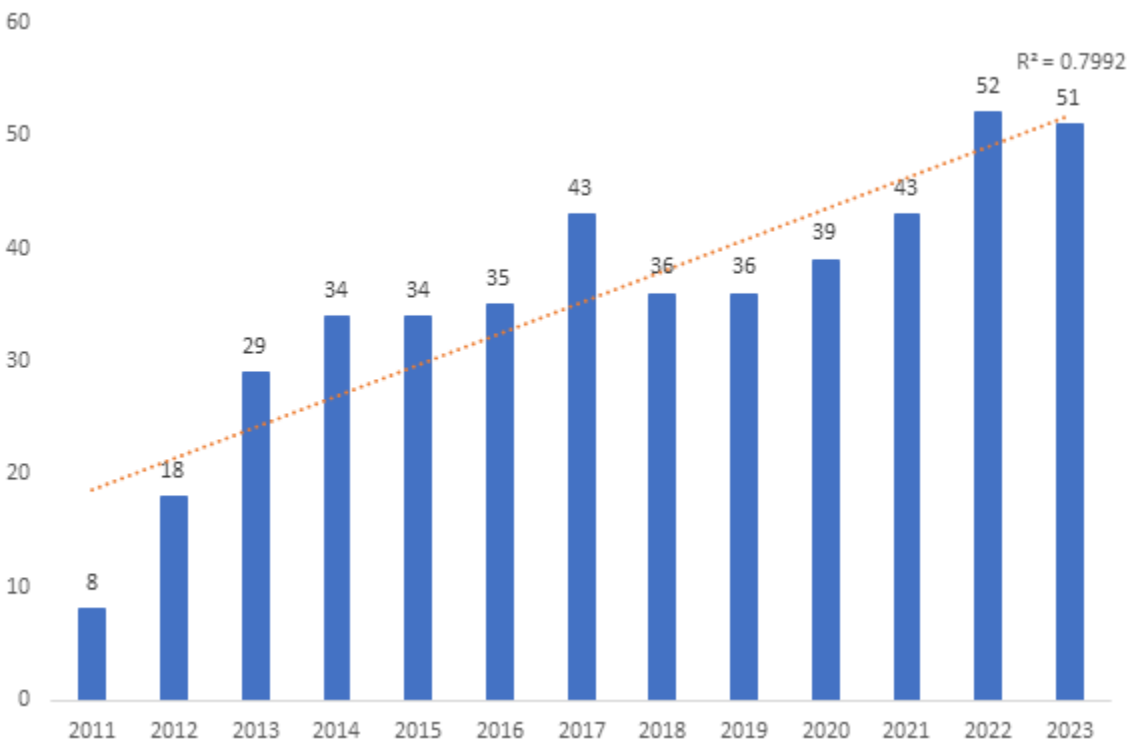
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. These figures do not include FY 2023 awards made from 2022 slates.

## Monitoring and Oversight

ACL’s NIDILRR uses its Annual Performance Reporting (APR) system, formative review mechanisms, and close monitoring of grant activities by ACL staff to provide rigorous oversight of its funded initiatives. NIDILRR’s APR is a web-based system that grantees use to provide data about goals and objectives, staffing, budget, research and development methods, progress, outputs, and accomplishments. Data are used to determine whether continuation funding should be provided to a grantee. For a new grantee, the first reporting period begins on the start date of the award and extends through May 31 of the following year. Subsequent reporting periods begin June 1 and end May 31. Grantees submit their progress reports annually by July 1.

As part of the APR process, NIDILRR asks grantees to voluntarily disclose the number of staff on the funded project who have a disability, as well as the disability status of the main principal investigator (PI). NIDILRR is committed to ensuring the research enterprise is inclusive of investigators and staff with disabilities. In FY23, 51 grants were led by a main PI who self-identified as disabled, representing 19.5% of currently active main PIs of NIDILRR grants. The number of grants with a main PI with a disability has generally trended upwards over the past ten years between 2011 (n=8) and 2023 (n=51), as represented in Exhibit 1 below.

Exhibit 1. Number of Grants for Which the Main PI Had a Disability by APR Year



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. *October 2023 NIDILRR APR Access Database and NARIC program directory website.*

Note: If a grant has more than one investigator or co-investigator, that is not captured in these analyses. If a main PI with a disability has more than one grant that they are also the main PI on, they are counted more than once in these numbers as it reflects the number of grants.

Formative evaluations of funded awards are used as supplemental oversight and technical assistance tools for grantees. Such reviews are conducted when program officers believe that a grantee could benefit from targeted technical assistance in addition to that available from the program officer. A panel of subject matter experts is chosen to provide the technical assistance and make recommendations for improvement if needed.

Staff, as experienced program administrators and researchers, are highly adept at maintaining ongoing, routine communication with and oversight of grantees to help inform their scientific programs and ensure they are meeting goals and objectives. Program officers use the HHS Grants Policy Administration Manual to provide consistent oversight across projects. Risk assessments are conducted to locate poorly performing grantees, with additional oversight and technical support provided as needed. Though rare, findings of ongoing poor performance can lead to a discontinuation of funding to a grantee.

## Funding Overview

The allocation of FY 2023 grant funds for the 11 funding mechanisms discussed above is shown in Tables 2 and 3. Table 3 includes the funding for only the NIDILRR-funded Model Systems grants for SCI, TBI and Burn. For each funding mechanism, the table includes the number of new and continuation awards. NIDILRR's overall grant allocations across all 11 funding mechanisms totaled \$112,533,118 for FY 2023. NIDILRR awarded \$6,452,019 in contracts and other support activities for FY 2023.

Table 2. NIDILRR Funding and Awards, FY 2023

<b>Funding Mechanism (NIDILRR-Funded Centers and Projects)</b>	<b>Award Type (NIDILRR- Funded Centers and Projects)</b>	<b>FY 2023 # of Awards</b>	<b>Grant Amount In Thousands of \$</b>
<b>RRTC</b>	Continuations	13	14,172
<b>RRTC</b>	New Awards	9	7,499
<b>RERC</b>	Continuations	11	10,172
<b>RERC</b>	New Awards	5	4,596
<b>DRRP</b>	Continuations	24	12,198
<b>DRRP</b>	New Awards	5	3,339
<b>ADA Network</b>	Continuations	12	12,424
<b>ADA Network</b>	New Awards	0	0
<b>SBIR</b>	Continuations	4	1,149
<b>SBIR</b>	New Awards	17	2,632
<b>KT</b>	Continuations	7	2,739
<b>KT</b>	New Awards	7	2,123
<b>FIP</b>	Continuations	55	6,984
<b>FIP</b>	New Awards	18	3,608
<b>ARRT</b>	Continuations	15	2,782

<b>Funding Mechanism (NIDILRR-Funded Centers and Projects)</b>	<b>Award Type (NIDILRR- Funded Centers and Projects)</b>	<b>FY 2023 # of Awards</b>	<b>Grant Amount In Thousands of \$</b>
<b>ARRT</b>	New Awards	4	799
<b>Switzer Fellowships</b>	New Awards (1-year grants)	10	750
<b>Section 21</b>	Continuations	5	1,195
<b>Section 21</b>	New Awards	7	1,745
<b>Total</b>		<b>228</b>	<b>90,915</b>

Table 3. NIDILRR Model Systems Funding and Awards, FY 2023

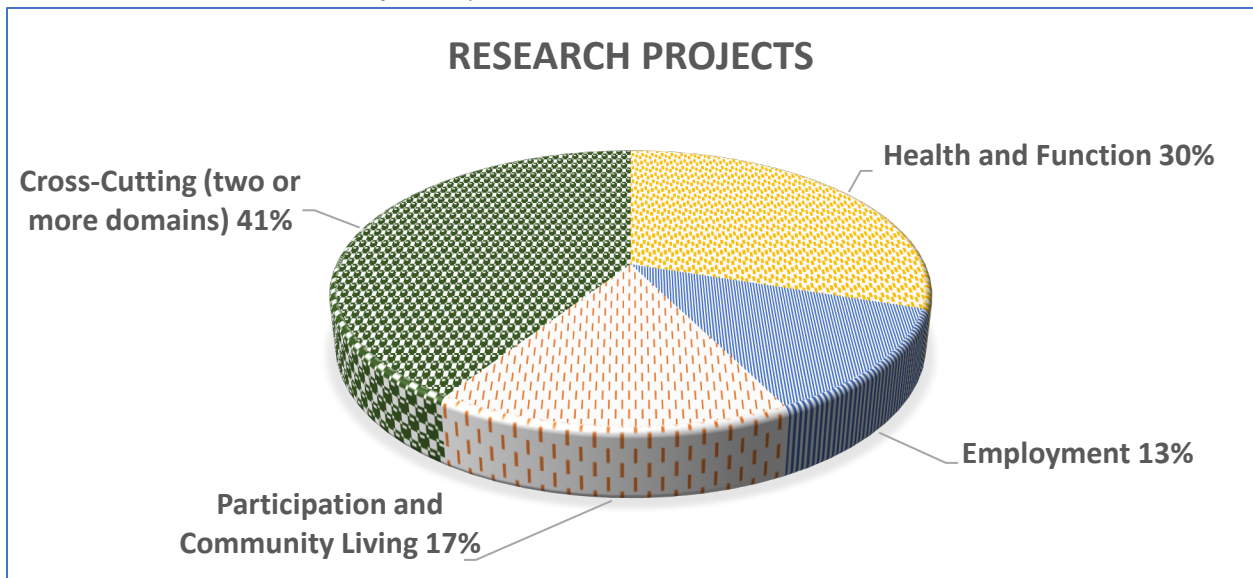
<b>Funding Mechanism (NIDILRR-Funded Centers and Projects)</b>	<b>Award Type (NIDILRR- Funded Centers and Projects)</b>	<b>FY 2023 # of Awards</b>	<b>Grant Amount In Thousands of \$</b>
<b>SCI</b>	Continuations	20	10,040
<b>SCI</b>	New Awards	0	568
<b>TBI</b>	Continuations	17	7,892
<b>TBI</b>	New Awards	1	900
<b>Burn</b>	Continuations	4	1,791
<b>Burn</b>	New Awards	1	424
<b>Total</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>21,617</b>

Note: The funding for new awards for SCI represents 19 SCI grant “supplements” that were processed for existing grants but are not considered continuation awards.

Exhibits 2 and 3 illustrate the distribution of funded research and development grant projects in FY 2023 across NIDILRR’s three domains: health and function, community living and participation, and employment. “Cross-cutting” is a composite category used in the APR to describe projects that reflect two or more domains. Roughly 55% of development projects and about 41% of research projects were described as cross-cutting. A “research project” is defined by NIDILRR as “an intensive systematic study, based on a clear hypothesis or research question that is directed toward producing new scientific knowledge about the subject or problem being studied.” A “development project” is defined as “the use of knowledge and understanding gained from research to create materials, devices, systems, or methods beneficial to the target population, including design and development of prototypes and processes.”

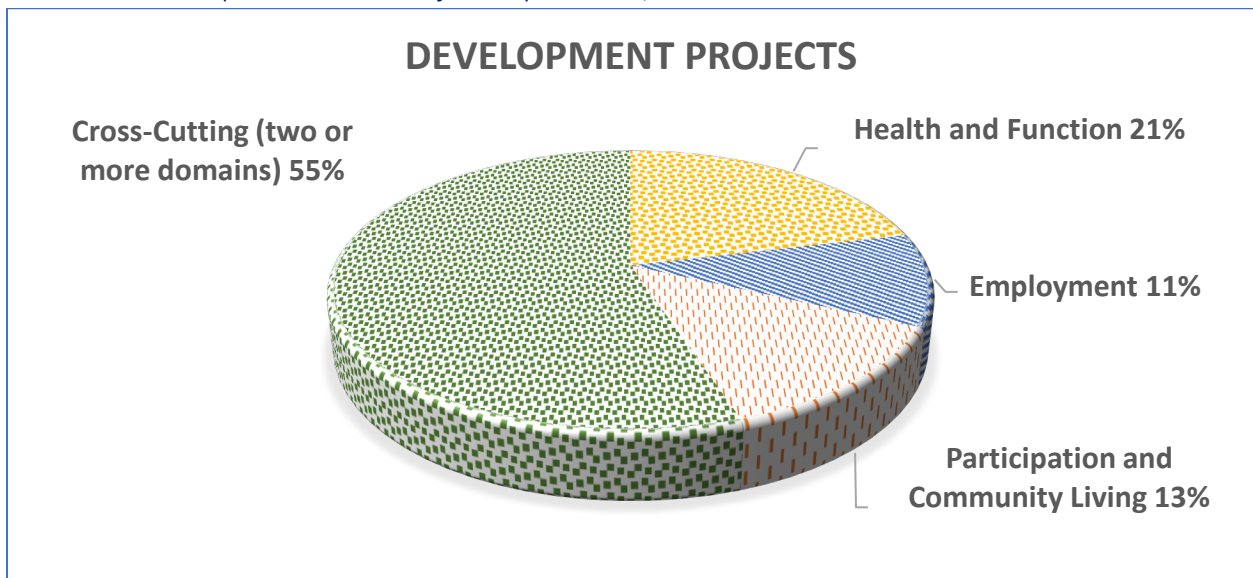


Exhibit 2. Research Grant Projects by Domain, FY 2023



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. *2023 Annual Performance Reports*. "Program Performance Report Table 9."

Exhibit 3. Development Grant Projects by Domain, FY 2023



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. *2023 Annual Performance Reports*. "Program Performance Report Table 11."

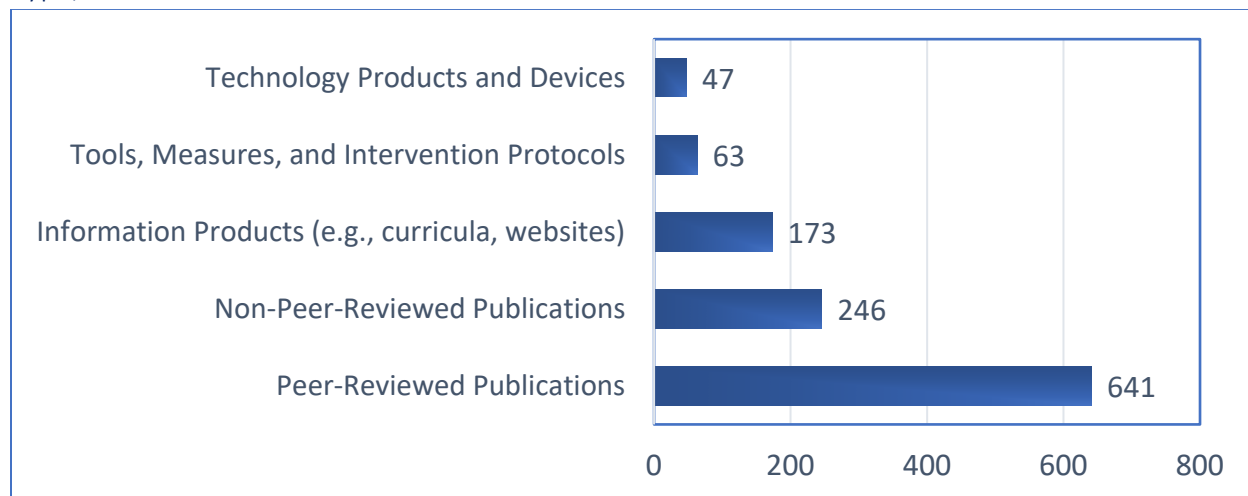
## Grantee Activities and Progress

ACL collects output data through the APR. Grantees are required to report each output from their funded activities in one of four categories: publications; tools, measures, and intervention protocols; technology products and devices; and informational products. The categories' outputs are as follows:

- **Publications** are documents directly funded by a grantee's current award. Publications include journal articles, periodicals, web journals, proceedings from meetings and symposia, books or book chapters, monographs, abstracts, technical or research reports, and reviews. Within this output category are peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications.
- **Tools, measures, and intervention protocols** include instruments or processes created to acquire quantitative or qualitative information, knowledge, or data on a specific disability or rehabilitation issue as well as research-based protocols for delivering interventions to specific target populations of people with disabilities.
- **Technology products and devices** are developed, modified, tested, or evaluated by the grantee. This category refers to any technology product or device developed under the award that the grantee disseminated or delivered to external audiences during the current reporting period.
- **Information products** refer to items such as training manuals/curricula, fact sheets, newsletters, audiovisual materials, marketing tools, educational aids, websites, presentations, and other forms of disseminated information.

Exhibit 4 compares the number of outputs produced by grantees within each category type in FY 2023. Additional detail has been provided for the category of publications, with peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed publications being reported separately.

Exhibit 4. Total Outputs Produced by All Grantees Across All Program Mechanisms, by Product Type, FY 2023



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research. *2023 Annual Performance Reports*. “Program Performance Report Tables 18–22.”

Data obtained through the 2023 APR show that NIDILRR awarded 271 grants during FY 2023, totaling \$112,533,118, which supported 1,515 unique projects across all program mechanisms. This total included 12 active Section 21 grants, which support projects focused on research capacity-building for minority serving institutions, including historically Black colleges and universities and other institutions with significant racial and ethnic minority student populations. The full portfolio of projects reflects the breadth of disability and rehabilitation research within the agency’s outcome domains of community living and participation, health and function, and employment. The knowledge and products that are generated by ACL-sponsored research and development grants have a wide variety of important impacts in the field.

The summaries that follow provide examples of the outcomes and impacts that resulted from NIDILRR program investments. Additional information concerning these projects is available through the National Rehabilitation Information Center website (<http://www.naric.com/>).

### Sampling of Key Accomplishments by Funded Researchers

ACL-funded researchers conduct myriad coordinated, integrated, and advanced programs of research, training, and information dissemination in content areas that are primarily specified by NIDILRR. Areas of focus include the improvement of rehabilitation methodology and service delivery systems; the improvement of health and functioning; and the promotion of employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. ACL-funded training and capacity-building RRTCs provide training—

including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training—to build capacity for disability and rehabilitation research. They also serve as centers of national excellence in rehabilitation research. Awards are normally made for a 5-year period.

The following are examples of accomplishments reported by grantees in FY 2023:

**Advancing Assistive Technology Tech Transfer through A New Multilevel Training Program (Grant # 90DPKT0002)**

The Initiative to Mobilize Partnerships for successful Assistive teChnology Transfer (IMPACT) Center at the University of Pittsburgh made its first training (BootCamp) [publicly available as a Massive Open Online Course \(MOOC\)](#) to prepare AT innovators to move down the technology transfer pathway and meet AT users’ needs. Participants in the IMPACT Center’s trainings receive mentorship and coaching from industry experts in technology transfer and commercialization, and learn and apply strategies such as customer discovery, lead-user design, user-centered design, participatory action design, and monitoring satisfaction, abandonment, and socioeconomic impact of technologies to measure use and adoption. As of October 15, 2023, the MOOC has 997 learners from six continents. To date, 32 teams have participated in the trainings. During FY 2023, ten teams from different BootCamp cohorts advanced to the second training (StartUP) and five teams to the third training (Accelerate), where they completed comprehensive market analysis, exit strategy identification, and more to advance their technology transfer. Some of the teams’ successes during 2023 included receiving SBIR Phase II funding, FDA Technology ‘Safer Technology Designation,’ creating a start-up, and generating revenue.

**Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery (NEW-R) Adopted by Oregon Coffee Creek Correctional Facility (Grant # 90RT5012)**

The RRTC on Psychiatric Disability and Co-Occurring Medical Conditions at University of Illinois at Chicago developed a weight management program, Nutrition and Exercise for Wellness and Recovery (NEW-R), which helps people with mental illnesses enhance their knowledge and skills for healthier eating, physical activity, and weight management. The training was adopted by the Oregon Coffee Creek Correctional Facility, a custody facility that houses up to 1,685 female offenders. A description of the program was included in Oregon Coffee Creek Correctional Facility’s [February newsletter](#) (see page 6). The availability of NEW-R teacher and participant manuals, online training, and podcast has enabled this correctional facility to offer an evidence-based program designed to enhance physical activity, better nutrition, and weight management.

**Grantee Receives the National Medal of Technology & Innovation for Groundbreaking Work to Improve Wheelchair Technology and Mobility Devices (Grant # 90REGE0022)**

On October 24, 2023, President Joe Biden [bestowed medals to key innovators who have advanced the field of science and technology](#) in the United States. NIDILRR grantee Dr. Rory Cooper, the principal investigator of the RERC on Physical Access and Transportation for People with Disabilities, received the [National Medal of Technology and Innovation](#). This award is given to individuals or groups who have made significant contributions to the nation's "competitiveness, standard of living, and quality of life through technological innovation." Dr. Cooper is the founding director and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) senior research career scientist of the Human Engineering Research Laboratories, a VA Rehabilitation Research and Development Center of Excellence in partnership with the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Cooper received his medal for his groundbreaking contributions to innovations in wheelchair technology and mobility devices. He was recognized for how his work has improved the lives of so many of his fellow veterans and wheelchair users. VA Secretary Denis McDonough expressed that they are "honored to have a great public servant like him working at VA and serving our nation's heroes."

#### **Identifying Barriers to ADA Information for Spanish-Speaking Communities and Strategies to Improve Outreach (Grant # 90DPAD0004)**

In 2023, two NIDILRR grantees, the ADA Knowledge Translation Center (ADAKTC) and the Americans with Disabilities Act National Network (ADANN) partnered to examine the diverse needs of Spanish-speaking communities. The project's goal was to plan to reduce barriers to language access and identify and develop interventions, products, and resources for Spanish-speaking communities. The ADAKTC and the ADANN interviewed organizations, community members, parents, and people with disabilities and found that Spanish-speaking communities faced language barriers, including a lack of information in Spanish, bicultural staff, or interpretation services. The interviews also showed that Spanish-speaking communities faced a lack of awareness of available resources and programs, in addition to stigma and lack of education about disability, technology, discrimination, low literacy, and survival mode. From this project, the ADAKTC identified several strategies to improve outreach, including in-person training, partnering with local organizations, culturally accessible and relevant information, using social media, and valuing representations and understanding of the community. Ultimately, this project filled important knowledge gaps in effective methods to reach Spanish-speaking people with disabilities and their families to help ADA information be better delivered to this underserved community. Strategies identified through this project will be used to make improvements to delivering ADA information to Spanish-speaking communities across the ADANN.

#### **Increasing Accessibility at the Wright Brothers Memorial (Grant # 90DPAD0005)**

The National Park Service at the Wright Brothers Memorial in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, worked with the Southeast ADA Center, a NIDILRR grantee, and a group of people with

disabilities to obtain advice and feedback on increasing accessibility at the memorial. As a result, they created an accessibility guide for guests that describes the ways individuals with sight, hearing, and mobility impairments can enjoy the park. It will be available at the fee booth, visitor center, and online. Based on the gathered feedback, they also rearranged the Visitors Center and museum store making it easier to navigate with mobility aids, ordered assistive listening devices, and mapped each route up to the monument which is on a large hill. Additionally, they applied for a grant which would be used to create 3D tactile models of the monument. The National Park Service will continue to work with the Southeast ADA Center on ensuring accessibility, such as doors, parking lots, and sidewalks, at this memorial.

### **International Consortium of Research on Parents & Parenting with Disabilities (Grant # 90DPCP0012)**

The Parents Empowering Parents: National Research Center for Parents with Disabilities (PEP Center) at Brandeis University conducts research and provides training and technical assistance to improve the lives of parents with disabilities and their families, particularly racial and ethnic minority parents. The PEP Center created and is supporting the [International Consortium of Research on Parents & Parenting with Disabilities](#). This group is composed of leading international researchers on parenting with diverse disabilities from Chile, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, Israel, South Africa, the United States, and Canada. The Consortium supports disability research through a cross-cultural exchange of ideas and best practices and hosts annual webinars on critical topics related to disability and parenting for the global community. In August 2023, the Consortium hosted a presentation entitled: "Parents and Parenting with Disabilities: Perspectives from Chile" and held its third meeting in September 2023.

### **Microsoft Leverages NIDILRR Research on Teachable AI (Grant # 90REGE0008)**

Announced at the 25th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility in New York in October 2023, [Microsoft introduced 'Find My Things'](#)—a mobile app that enables blind and low vision individuals to teach AI for locating their belongings. As acknowledged by Microsoft, this significant advancement directly builds upon research from the Inclusive Information and Communications Technology (ICT) RERC at the University of Maryland, College Park and the National Science Foundation on teachable object recognizers for the blind. As a testament to the ongoing evolution of AI for accessibility, this innovation redefines personalization for blind and low vision people. Each person, including those with disabilities, has unique needs and experiences with technology. This is increasingly important as AI becomes more integrated into assistive technologies. While expanding datasets and adjusting algorithms have their limits, the breakthrough of teachable machines is that they enable users—without AI expertise—to contribute data and fine-tune machine learning models to suit their individual requirements and environments. The Inclusive ICT RERC has provided compelling evidence that this approach is not only feasible but welcomed by people with

disabilities. With industry leaders like Microsoft embracing these innovations, the Inclusive ICT RERC has seamlessly transitioned research from their labs to real-world impact.

**Morphic and Assistive Technology on Demand (AToD) Increase Digital Equity for People with Disabilities (Grant # 90REGE0008)**

NIDILRR’s Inclusive Information and Communications Technology RERC at the University of Maryland, College Park, in collaboration with the nonprofit Raising the Floor, is working to increase the adoption of two free and open-source tools to make computers easier to use for those who need accessibility features or assistive technology: Morphic and AT on Demand. [Morphic](#) allows users to have 1-click access to accessibility features that come standard with a computers operating system through the MorphicBar. As of 2023, Morphic has been installed on over 10,000 computers on college campuses and libraries across the country, and this grantee is working at expanding adopting of Morphic, including to several rural and tribal areas. [AT on Demand](#), which works on any computer that has Morphic installed, allows users who need assistive technology to access their AT on any computer they use. AT on Demand installs and configures users’ AT, regardless of whether the AT is already installed or if the device is set to prevent user installation of software, and disappears when this is complete. AT on Demand became available for universities, libraries, and other organizations to test in late 2022 and was released for general use in 2023. Both Morphic and AT on Demand are completely free, easy to use with 1-click, and customizable to each person’s needs creating a more equitable and improved digital experiences for users with disabilities.

**New York City Mayor Recognizes Northeast ADA Center’s Contributions to Accessibility Enhancements for NYC Construction Code (Grant # 90DPAD0003)**

An access specialist with the Northeast ADA Center’s Access Specialist, who provides accessibility training for architects, code officials, and other stakeholders, served as a member of the New York City (NYC) Construction Code Accessibility Committee that provided input on accessibility enhancements to Chapter 11 of the International Building Code to be adopted by NYC Council. This effort took place over several years. During FY 2023, NYC Mayor Eric Adams underscored the importance of this work for the local community. He signed a citation stating: “As a contributor toward this effort, you can take pride in this work, knowing that you have made NYC a safer and more accessible and resilient place to live, work, and visit.”

**Peer Academic Supports for Success (PASS) Intervention for College Students with Mental Health Conditions (Grant # 90RTEM0005)**

NIDILRR’s [Learning & Working During the Transition to Adulthood RRTC](#) developed and tested the feasibility of the Peer Academic Supports for Success (PASS) intervention for college students with serious mental health conditions. The PASS academic peer coaching model aims



to improve academic persistence, performance, and retention in 18-24-year-old freshmen and sophomores with serious mental health conditions. PASS Coaches (juniors and seniors) teach and coach curricula that target academic success for two semesters. A [recent clinical trial](#) found that the PASS intervention significantly improves time management, resilience, self-efficacy, and self-determination of college students with serious mental health conditions. In 2023, the principal investigator Dr. Maryann Davis was interviewed by the *Telegram & Gazette* for an [article about a new Center of Well-Being](#) that was opened at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. In the interview, Dr. Davis spoke about the clinical trial on the efficacy of peer intervention programs focused on undergraduate and graduate students.

### **Physical Wellness for Work Intervention Adopted by the American Occupational Therapy Association (Grant # 90RT5038)**

The RRTC on Integrated Health Care and Self-Directed Recovery developed a workbook, [Physical Wellness for Work](#), that offers strategies to improve wellness habits that impact employment among people with mental health or substance use conditions. The workbook provides manageable activities to augment health and wellness with the goal of increasing energy and health for a more satisfying workday. This intervention was adopted by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) which represents more than 230,000 occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, and occupational therapy students in the United States and beyond, to advance occupational therapy practice, education, and research. The tool helps to promote AOTA's goal of holistic health for their workforce and provides occupational therapists with resources they can use with their clients.

### **Policy Brief on Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Policy and Practice Helps Inform Proposed Regulations (Grant # 90RTCP0004)**

A [policy brief](#) from the Community Living Policy Center at Brandeis University was used to inform the proposed Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) regulations, ["Medicaid Program: Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services \(CMS-2442-P\)."](#) The brief discusses Medicaid HCBS structure, the shifting landscape of payment and service delivery, and implications for HCBS quality measurement and use. It also provides information on a HCBS quality framework that was developed with stakeholder input and describes several frequently used survey tools, existing quality measures, and measure development. At the conclusion of the brief, the grantee provides actionable recommendations, including establishment of stakeholder input mechanisms, enhanced federal guidance on a core set of measures, improved data collection and stratification to address equity, multiple mechanisms to assess quality, and increased federal investment in HCBS quality infrastructure.



### **ProGAIT Mobile App Adopted as Instructional Tool at the University of Washington ([Grant # 90DPHF0004](#))**

[The App Factory](#), a NIDILRR Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project grantee, conducts an annual call for proposals to fund innovative mobile app development projects led by external experts in the field of clinical rehabilitation, assistive technology, and independent living. Each year, the App Factory funds between 3 to 5 projects, using a pay-for-performance model by which awardees are paid for completing each of several mutually agreed development and testing milestones. The ProGAIT mobile application was one of four mobile applications funded in 2023.

ProGAIT, developed by Orthocare Innovations, LLC, is the latest generation of technology for optimizing Prosthesis Dynamic Alignment. Prosthetics can connect to the ProGAIT app to visualize dynamic balance and loading of lower limb prostheses. The app uses AI assistance for correcting gait deviations through guided prosthesis alignment.

Because of ProGAIT's unique interface with robust controls for lower limb prosthesis alignment, it has been adopted as an instructional tool by the Master's Program in Prosthetics and Orthotics at the University of Washington.

### **Rehabilitation Measures Database Reaches Users in Over 200 Countries ([Grant # 90SIMS0015](#))**

Clinicians, students, and researchers seeking reliable, valid instruments to assess patient outcomes during rehabilitation benefit from the Shirley Ryan AbilityLab's [Rehabilitation Measures Database](#), which provides evidence-based summaries that include concise descriptions of each instrument's psychometric properties, instructions for administering and scoring, a representative bibliography with citations, and information for accessing the instrument. Summaries of 537 instruments are available for a wide variety of disabling medical conditions including stroke, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, multiple sclerosis, vestibular disorders, and many others. Between May 1, 2022, and April 30, 2023, the Rehabilitation Measures Database had 4,577,611 page views from 1,588,348 users across 225 countries.

### **RERC on Wireless Technologies Director and Strategies & Operations Lead Selected to Serve on the Federal Communications Commission's Disability Advisory Committee ([Grant # 90REGE0016](#))**

NIDILRR's RERC on Wireless Technologies Director, Dan Ding, and Strategies & Operations Lead, Lindsey Morris, were selected as members of the [Federal Communications Commission's \(FCC\) Disability Advisory Committee \(DAC\)](#). They attended the annual in-person DAC meeting in September at the FCC's headquarters in Washington, D.C. The DAC provides advice and recommendations to the Commission on a wide array of disability issues. It also offers a means

for stakeholders with interests in accessibility issues to exchange ideas, facilitates the participation of consumers with disabilities in proceedings before the Commission, and assists the Commission in educating the greater disability community and covered entities on disability-related matters. By serving on the DAC, this RERC is supporting the FCC's efforts to enhance accessibility in modern communication, video programming, and emergency communication for people with disabilities across the nation.

### **Scaling Up Precision Navigation for All (Grant # 90IFDV0025)**

This project developed the GoodMaps app, an accessible first-of-its-kind navigation application, which allows users to pick the parameters that address their individual travel or mobility needs. The simple application is designed to run on both iOS and Android smartphones and be accessible to everyone based on inclusive design. The goal of this project was to develop the GoodMaps app to use state-of-the-art positioning technology to provide navigation assistance both indoors and outdoors, create appropriate routes based on the user's specific needs, and require minimal effort. During a three-year funding period, GoodMaps successfully developed their app and mapping capabilities to allow access and independence across environments for users with differing disabilities, including blindness and low vision. Scalable demonstrations were successfully tested at Walmart sites in [Mexico](#) and the United Kingdom, rail stations in the United Kingdom (including [Birmingham New Street rail station](#) and [Liverpool Lime Street](#)), [Portland International Airport](#), the Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in Washington, DC, and elsewhere. GoodMaps will continue to expand operations beyond this NIDILRR-funded project through public and private partnerships within the United States and abroad.

### **Southwest ADA Center Collaborates with Statewide Assistive Technology Act Program to Develop Training Resource on Accessible Educational Materials (Grant # 90DPAD0010)**

The Southwest ADA Center collaborated with Oklahoma ABLE Tech, the statewide Assistive Technology Act Program, to develop the [Accessible Educational Materials Technical Assistance Document](#). This resource document was reviewed by the Oklahoma Department of Education and developed to assist educational entities in Oklahoma in understanding best practices for providing accessible education materials, including accessible technology and assistive technology devices and services. The document will serve as a training resource for Oklahoma ABLE Tech and be used by educational entities to guide changes to their policies and procedures for providing accessible educational materials.

### **TBI Resource Bundle for American Indians Widely Recognized and Implemented at Tribal Department of Health (Grant # 90DPKT0008)**

The [Traumatic Brain Injury \(TBI\) Resource Bundle for American Indians](#) has published several information products during FY 2023. These materials were reviewed by TBI experts to ensure

rigor, and reviewed by American Indians with TBI and their family members to ensure cultural relevance. The grantee worked with partners to customize the published infographics for Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board and the Band of Ojibwe in Minnesota. The [Concussion Recovery Infographic](#) was illustrated by an American Indian artist. This infographic provides information on concussion, symptoms of concussion, strategies to manage concussion, and how to seek help. This infographic is the recipient of the 2023 Hermes Creative Awards Honorable Mention, honoring the messengers and creators of traditional and emerging media. The [Seizure After Traumatic Brain Injury](#) infocomic follows Seneca and his care team as he experiences seizures during rehabilitation from TBI and learns how to stay healthy and safe as he transitions back to the community. In fall 2023, this infocomic received a [Bronze Digital Health Award](#) from the Digital Health Association. This award honors the best in digital health resources developed for consumers and health professionals. The tribal department of health uses this TBI bundle of resources to provide better education for American Indians with TBI.

**Worldwide Reach of Award-winning, Trusted Source of Consumer Information in Burn Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, and Traumatic Brain Injury (Grant # 90DPKT0009)**

The Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC) is a national center funded to provide technical assistance on knowledge translation to NIDILRR's Model System grantees and to translate health information into easy-to-understand language and formats for patients with spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), and burn injury (Burn) and their families and caregivers. In collaboration with the SCI, TBI, and Burn Model Systems Centers, MSKTC produces research-based consumer factsheets, educational videos, narrated slides, infocomics, and other products in English, Spanish, and other languages. In a FY 2023 survey, almost 100% of consumers who have used the resources reported that MSKTC resources are excellent/good, relevant, easy to understand and navigate, and useful in learning more about living successfully with those injuries. Within the FY 2023 period, the MSKTC website had over 2.4 million views from over 230 countries in six continents with 500K users accessing the SCI page, 800K users accessing the TBI page, and 600K users accessing the Burn page. Over 1 million individuals scrolled for information on the pages and downloaded or clicked on resources. MSKTC and the Model System Centers have widely distributed printed resources at conferences and health systems. MSKTC has received 13 awards to date, with 4 awards in FY 2023: Digital Health's Silver Award for the Exercise After Burn Injury Infocomic and Silver Award for Pregnancy and Women with SCI factsheet, and the updated [www.msktc.org](http://www.msktc.org) website won both the Digital Health Merit Award and Hermes Creative Award.

## ADA National Network

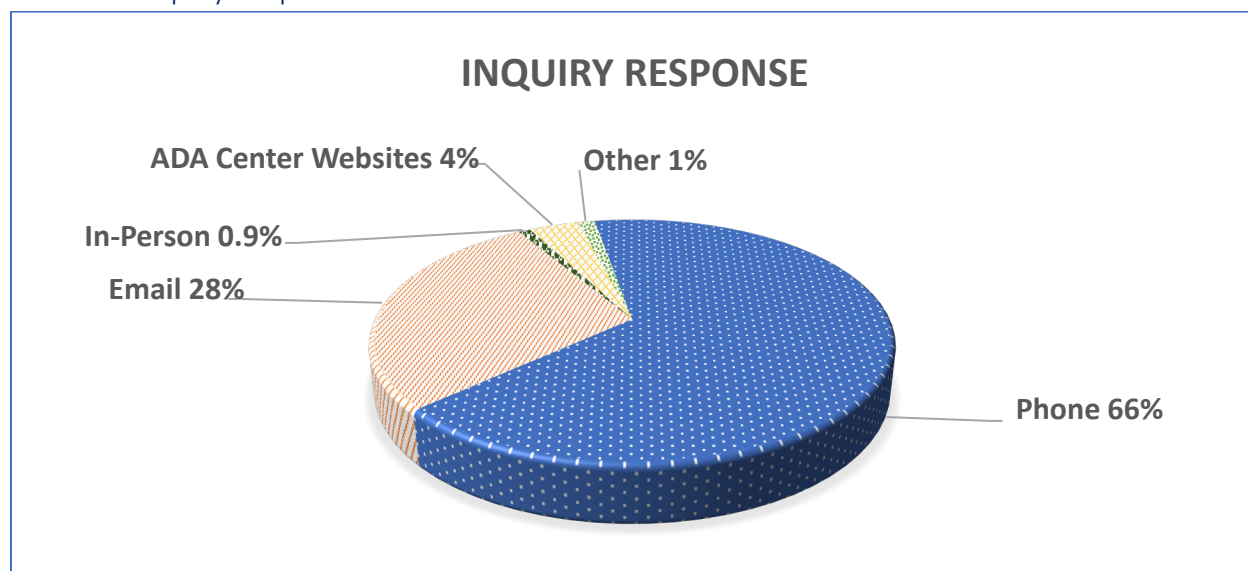
One of ACL's largest investments is in the ADA National Network, which consists of 10 regional centers that provide information, training, and technical assistance to individuals, businesses, and agencies with rights and responsibilities under the ADA. The network also includes research

and KT components, which are carried out by two network grantees: the [ADA National Network Collaborative Research Project](#) and the [ADA National Network KT Center](#), respectively.

Knowledge translation efforts in the ADA National Network are led by the ADA KT Center. This center has three primary goals: increase efficiency and impact by serving as a central resource to support the development, coordination, and deployment of ADA information, training, technical assistance, and capacity-building activities across the ADA National Network; increase awareness and use of ADA research findings to inform practice; and improve understanding of stakeholders' needs for and receipt of ADA services.

ADA National Network grantees are highly responsive to the community, providing advice, information, technical assistance, and training through multiple modalities. In FY 2023, the centers received 15,625 technical assistance inquiries from the public. Exhibit 5 presents the modalities used to provide technical assistance in response to these questions.

Exhibit 5. Inquiry Response



The 10 ADA National Network Centers conducted 1,354 training activities, including customized training presentations, training courses, and conferences, reaching 74,811 individuals during the 2023 APR reporting period (June 1, 2022, through May 31, 2023). Audiences included service providers, individuals with disabilities and their families, business groups, state and local government agencies, architects and design professionals, and other professional groups.

In addition to training and technical assistance, the ADA National Network and its regional centers produce numerous products to aid in disseminating information to the public, employers, and individuals with disabilities about their rights and responsibilities. Table 4 shows the types and number of times a product was disseminated.

Table 4. Product Dissemination

Type	Number Disseminated
<b>Journal Articles</b>	12,050
<b>Project Publications</b>	371,191
<b>Video and Audio Tapes</b>	78,115
<b>Books or Book Chapters</b>	830
<b>Bulletins, Newsletters, or Fact Sheets</b>	1,300,689
<b>Research Reports and Conference Proceedings</b>	573
<b>Webinars, Web Series, or Social Media Posts</b>	1,491,344

During FY 2023, the ADA National Network implemented a Spanish Language Outreach (SLO) Project to develop a greater understanding of the language barriers to ADA resource materials and training for Spanish-language speakers. This five-year initiative will ultimately result in the development of targeted products, resources, and knowledge intervention strategies to better support information dissemination, training, and technical assistance for Spanish language communities. In 2023, the ADA National Network completed the first phase of this national initiative using a participatory process across all ten regions and establishing connections with new outreach partners in Spanish-speaking communities. As a result of initial outreach and research activities, the ADA National Network has developed recommendations that provide valuable insight into specific strategies that can improve the delivery of ADA information to Spanish-speaking consumers.

### Research Fellowship Program (Mary E. Switzer Fellowship Program)

The Mary E. Switzer Fellowship Program seeks to increase capacity in rehabilitation research by giving qualified individual researchers, including individuals with disabilities, the opportunity to develop new ideas and further their research expertise. Awards go directly to individuals, not their institutions, enabling fellows to pursue independent research and training activities. Distinguished fellows are seasoned in their careers, must hold a doctorate or comparable academic status, and have had seven or more years of experience relevant to rehabilitation research. Merit fellowships are given to persons with rehabilitation research experience who do not meet the qualifications for distinguished fellowships, usually because they are in earlier stages of their careers. Fellows work for one year on an independent research project of their design. Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to apply for each of these fellowships.

Ten Switzer Fellowships were awarded in fall 2023, with a total of 14 fellows submitting annual or final performance reports in 2022. Current Switzer Fellows (with fellowships awarded in 2023, plus older grants that are in an extension period) are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Current Switzer Fellows and Project Titles

Name	Project Title
<b>Mara Bianca Nery-Hurwit (2023)</b>	Healthcare Provider Implicit Bias Training to Improve the Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare of Women with Disability
<b>Ashley Murphy (2023)</b>	Mixed-Methods Examination of the Experiences of Black and Latinx Parents of Autistic Children Working with Their Child's Therapists During the Early Intervention-to-Special Education Transition
<b>Stephanie Danielle Agtarap (2023)</b>	Evaluating Readiness of Caregivers Following a Loved One's Discharge Home from Inpatient Rehabilitation: Validating the PATH-25 for the Moderate-Severe TBI Population
<b>Woolim Hong (2023)</b>	Towards Improved Coordination and Personalization in Lower-Limb Prostheses: Auto-Tuning Embedded Gait-Phase-Based Impedance Control
<b>Veronica I. Umeasiegbu (2023)</b>	Investigating Gaps in Self-management, Secondary Conditions, and Quality of Life among Aging Blacks with Spinal Cord Injury
<b>Seth Robert Donahue (2023)</b>	Personalized Biofeedback and Prosthetic Intervention for Locomotor Rehabilitation of Persons with Lower Limb Amputation
<b>Ayse Torres (2023)</b>	Augmented Reality Enhanced Supported Employment for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
<b>Tiago da Silva Jesus (2023)</b>	Rural-Urban Disparities in Post-Acute Therapy Utilization: Identifying Hot Spots of Low Utilization Among Fee-for-Service Medicare Beneficiaries Toward Informing Policy and Public Health Interventions
<b>Mohammad Habibur Rahman (2023)</b>	Investigate Novel Home Based Telerehabilitation Systems Integrated with Rehabilitation Robots to Rehabilitate Stroke Survivors with Upper Limb Dysfunctions
<b>Jessica Edelstein (2023)</b>	Evaluating the Relationships Between Hospital-based Rehabilitation Service Delivery Factors and Community Discharge, Change in Function, and Readmission Risk for Older Adults Hospitalized for Stroke
<b>Hao Su (Extension)</b>	Biomechanical Benefits of Lightweight Wearable Robots for Community-Based Mobility Assistance of Children With Crouch Gait From Cerebral Palsy
<b>Michelle S Ballan (Extension)</b>	Advancing Evidence-Informed Responses to Intimate Partner Violence Among Women With Disabilities
<b>Emre Umucu (Extension)</b>	Evaluating an Online Character Strengths Intervention to Improve Well-Being and Adjustment to College in Veterans With Disabilities in Higher Education

Name	Project Title
<b>Ayse G Zengul (Extension)</b>	Personalized Nutrition Recommendation Expert System (PNRES) for People With Physical Disabilities
<b>Hannah G Ginn (Extension)</b>	Securing Intimate Citizenship: The Effect of Capacity to Sexual Consent Policies and Practices on the Right of Women With Intellectual Disability to Sexual Relationships
<b>Hussaini Zandam (Extension)</b>	Racial and Ethnic Healthcare Disparities Associated With Multiple Chronic Conditions Among People With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the United States
<b>Nazanin Heydarian (Extension)</b>	Characterizing Diabetes Education and Self-Management Practices of Blind Adults
<b>Vera Kaelin (Extension)</b>	Artificial Intelligence to Customize Participation-Focused Interventions in Pediatric Re/habilitation

## Ongoing Activities

The accomplishments presented are a small sample of the accomplishments realized as a result of the research and development sponsored by ACL. The accomplishments were chosen to emphasize NIDILRR programs’ broad impact on individuals with disabilities, the families and care communities that support them, and society as a whole. Moving forward, NIDILRR will continue to sponsor rigorous research that is relevant to the needs and experiences of individuals with developmental, cognitive, sensory, psychiatric, and physical disabilities.

ACL published NIDILRR’s FYs [2024–2028 Long-Range Plan](#) in January 2024. The long-range plan describes NIDILRR’s programmatic framework, priorities, and research agenda for FYs 2024–2028. Through its portfolio of research and related activities, NIDILRR will generate new knowledge, develop new products and interventions, and promote their adoption to shape policy, practice, and behaviors. It is NIDILRR’s aim that these efforts will help reduce and eliminate long-standing disparities between people with and without disabilities.

Strategic partnerships with other agencies in HHS and across the federal government have been instrumental in advancing ACL’s and NIDILRR’s missions. ACL will build on its historical collaborations to identify best practices, conduct cosponsored research, and address shared goals. NIDILRR’s director will continue to serve as the chair of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research, a federal partnership charged to promote a cohesive, strategic federal program of disability, rehabilitation, and independent living research; broker partnerships; and facilitate coordination and collaboration among federal departments and agencies conducting such research.