The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) is the federal government’s primary research agency on disability, independent living, and rehabilitation. It provides unique research and training from a disability perspective.

Congress established NIDILRR over 46 years ago through the Rehabilitation Act. NIDILRR’s mission 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, and to expand society’s capacity to provide full opportunities and accommodations for its citizens with disabilities.

NIDILRR achieves this mission by:

* Funding research, demonstration, training, technical assistance, and related activities 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;
* Promoting the transfer of, use, and adoption of rehabilitation technology for individuals with disabilities in a timely manner; and
* Ensuring the widespread distribution, in usable formats, of practical scientific and technological information.

NIDILRR plays a unique role in that its target population includes all disability types and all age groups. Whereas other federal research entities fund prevention, cure, and acute rehabilitation research, NIDILRR invests in rehabilitation research closely tied to longer-term outcomes, such as independence, community participation, health, and employment.

As Congress intended in the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) has been home to the NIDILRR. Its current funding level of $119 million supports over 300 active research grants across the country. These grants enabled more than 1,500 disability research projects to support health and function, community living, and employment outcomes. Some key NIDILRR funding mechanisms include:

* *Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)* conduct advanced research and training on various health, rehabilitation, employment, and community living topics.
* *Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)* enables small businesses to explore feasibility and develop or evaluate the commercialization of innovative technologies for people with disabilities.
* *Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)* conduct rehabilitation engineering research and development toward technological solutions to rehabilitation problems or environmental barriers.
* *Models Systems* generate longitudinal data, conduct clinical trials, and translate findings into real-world rehabilitation practices for individuals with spinal cord injuries, burn injuries, and traumatic brain injuries.
* *Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training (AART) and Switzer Fellowships* support postdoctoral training and capacity-building opportunities for the next generation of disability and rehabilitation researchers.

Maintaining a firm commitment to NIDILRR is essential to fulfilling the federal government’s commitment to people with disabilities. By promoting health, community living, and employment outcomes for people with disabilities, NIDILRR also advances research that contributes to cost savings for other government programs and supports private sector partnerships to enhance opportunities for citizens with disabilities and their families.

We urge you to provide sustained funding for NIDILRR of at least $119 million for FY 2026.