

FEDERAL DISABILITY INITIATIVES

A Supplement to the Government Wide Strategic Plan



INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON
DISABILITY RESEARCH

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Federal Disability Initiatives

The Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) is authorized by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to promote coordination and cooperation among federal departments and agencies conducting disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research programs including programs relating to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design. WIOA included a new requirement for the ICDR to develop a comprehensive government wide strategic plan for disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research. To prepare for the plan, the ICDR compiled a list of related interagency efforts.

[Table 1](#) presents broad research initiatives. Most of these have funded projects attached to them, with various coordinating agencies addressing different aspects of the initiative. Excluded are individual agency programs.

[Table 2](#) contains information on interagency groups that coordinate research on specific disability topics by surveying current research, identifying research needs, and making recommendations for future funding priorities. For tables 1 and 2, the ICDR used the organizing themes developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Research and Development. An expert panel examined the important themes of rehabilitation research to identify key rehabilitation research opportunities.¹

[Table 3](#) shows disability program and practice initiatives that may be of interest to the ICDR in its research planning.

This supplemental document contains a summary of federal disability-related initiatives to support Goal 1, Objective 1 of the *Government Wide Strategic Plan: FY 2017-2020*.

¹ Ommaya, A.K., Adams, K.M., Allman, R.M., et al. (2013). Opportunities in rehabilitation research. *Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development*, 50(6), vii–xxxii.
<http://www.rehab.research.va.gov/jour/2013/506/ommaya506.html>

Goal 1: Improve interagency coordination and collaboration in four thematic research areas -- transition, economics of disability, accessibility, and disparities.

Objective 1: Identify current and planned agency research activities related to thematic framework areas.

To establish the landscape of current and planned research activities related to the four thematic research areas (transition, cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and disparities), the ICDR will plan and conduct a data call to gather information from agencies and interagency disability-related groups (see supplemental document, Federal Disability Initiatives) supporting research, development, and demonstration projects. The purpose is to broadly characterize the federal portfolio and identify fruitful areas for coordination among agencies.

Strategies: Convene a working group to define the objectives, definition of terms, methods, and analyses of the data call with EC oversight. Implement the data call via contract support. Share and discuss the results with the ICDR membership, with an emphasis on identifying opportunities for interagency partnership and coordination.

Metrics: Publish and disseminate a comprehensive summary of federal agency research activities and priorities related to disability transition, cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and disparities by 2018.

Table 1. Federal Disability Research Initiatives

PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTION (MOLECULE, CELL, TISSUE, AND ORGANS)	PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FUNCTION	NEW TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACHES AFFECTING REHABILITATION	SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION; DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
<p>White House Neuroscience Initiative Update: http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP19/20150326/103218/HHRG-114-AP19-Wstate-HandelsmanJ-20150326.PDF This initiative encompasses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Plan to Address Alzheimer’s Disease Interagency Working Group on Neuroscience Executive Order on Improving Access to Mental Health Services for Veterans, Service Members, and Military Families • BRAIN (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies) Initiative • National Conversation on Mental Health • Neuroethics: Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues 	<p>National Research Action Plan http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/nrap_for_eo_on_mental_health_august_2013.pdf A coordinated effort by DOD, VA, HHS, and ED, created in response to the 2012 Executive Order calling for improved access to mental health services for veterans, service members, and military families. NRAP provides a comprehensive approach to accelerating research on traumatic brain injury and PTSD, as well as strategies for preventing suicide among veterans and active duty personnel.</p>	<p>National Robotics Initiative (NRI) https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2011/08/03/supporting-president-s-national-robotics-initiative This initiative focuses on developing robots that work with or beside people to extend or augment human capabilities. Five agencies: DoD, NSF, NIH, NASA, Department of Agriculture.</p> <p>Under this initiative, NIH supports the development of assistive robotic technology to achieve functional independence in humans. http://www.nih.gov/news/health/dec2014/nibib-08.htm http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-EB-14-008.html#sthash.O4zeMM5V.dpuf</p> <p>NSF program announcement: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2015/nsf15505/nsf15505.htm</p>	<p>Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative (ATTRI) http://www.its.dot.gov/research_archives/attri/index.htm</p> <p>A joint U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) initiative, co-led by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), with support from the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Joint Program Office (JPO) and other Federal partners. ATTRI conducts research to improve the mobility of travelers with disabilities through the use of ITS and other advanced technologies. ATTRI leads the research, development, and implementation of transformative technologies, solutions, applications, or systems for people of all abilities to effectively plan their personal and independent travel.</p>

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<p>BRAIN Initiative (Brain Research through Advancing Innovative Neurotechnologies), launched April 2, 2013, is a large-scale effort to equip researchers with fundamental insights necessary for treating a wide variety of brain disorders like Alzheimer’s, schizophrenia, autism, epilepsy, and traumatic brain injury. Five federal agencies: NIH, NSF, FDA, DARPA, and Intelligence Advanced Research Projects Activity (IARPA). http://www.braininitiative.nih.gov/</p> <p>Planning for the NIH component of the BRAIN initiative is guided by the June 2014 long-term scientific plan, “BRAIN 2025: A Scientific Vision” that details seven high-priority research areas.</p> <p>NSF component of the BRAIN Initiative aims to generate an array of physical and conceptual tools needed to determine how healthy brains function over the lifespan of humans and other organisms; and to develop a workforce to create and implement these tools aimed at establishing a more comprehensive understanding of how thoughts, memories and actions emerge from the dynamic activities in the brain. www.nsf.gov/sbe/SBE_AC_Fall_2014_Accessible_Presentations/Understanding_the_Brain_NSF_Activities.pdf</p>	<p>NIMH Early Psychosis Prediction and Prevention Initiative (EP³) http://www.ccsme.org/userfiles/files/Heinssen-4_2_14-NIMH-OPP.pdf</p> <p>Accelerate research on detecting risk states for psychotic disorders, preventing the onset of psychosis in high-risk individuals, and improving clinical and functional outcomes among persons in the earliest stages of serious mental illnesses.</p> <p>HHS Initiative on Multiple Chronic Conditions http://www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/mcc/index.html</p> <p>Supports a large number of programs to prevent and manage multiple chronic conditions.</p>		

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<p>NIH Blueprint for Neuroscience Research is a cooperative effort among the 15 NIH Institutes, Centers and Offices that support neuroscience research.</p> <p>http://neuroscienceblueprint.nih.gov/ http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/NOT-NS-15-027.html</p>	<p>Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee http://iprcc.nih.gov/index.htm Established under the Affordable Care Act. Develop a summary of advances in pain care research supported or conducted by the Federal agencies relevant to the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of pain and diseases and disorders associated with pain. Identify critical gaps in basic and clinical research on the symptoms and causes of pain. Make recommendations to ensure that the activities of NIH and other Federal agencies are free of unnecessary duplication of effort. Make recommendations on how best to disseminate information on pain care. Make recommendations on how to expand partnerships between public entities and private entities to expand collaborative, cross-cutting research.</p>		

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	<p>The Federal Interagency Traumatic Brain Injury Research (FITBIR) informatics system was developed to share data across the entire TBI research field and to facilitate collaboration between laboratories, as well as interconnectivity with other informatics platforms. Sharing data, methodologies, and associated tools, rather than summaries or interpretations of this information, can accelerate research progress by allowing re-analysis of data, as well as re-aggregation, integration, and rigorous comparison with other data, tools, and methods. This community-wide sharing requires common data definitions and standards, as well as comprehensive and coherent informatics approaches.</p> <p>https://fitbir.nih.gov/</p>		

Table 2. Federal Disability Interagency Groups

PHYSIOLOGICAL FUNCTION (MOLECULE, CELL, TISSUE, AND ORGANS)	PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FUNCTION	NEW TECHNOLOGICAL APPROACHES AFFECTING REHABILITATION	SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY INTEGRATION; DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
<p>Interagency Working Group on Neuroscience Report: https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/NSTC/accelerating_neuroscience_research_-_feb_2014.pdf Coordinates activities in neuroscience research across the Federal government with a focus on the fundamental understanding of learning, brain development and plasticity, and brain health and recovery. Re-chartered in 2015.</p>	<p>Interagency Collaborative to Advance Research in Epilepsy www.ninds.nih.gov/research/epilepsyweb/researchers/ICARE/index.htm Annual meetings provide a forum for sharing information about ongoing and planned epilepsy research activities, highlighting advances and discussing needs and opportunities, and promoting increased collaboration toward common research goals.</p>		<p>Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility http://www.unitedweiride.gov/1_1745_ENG_HTML.htm Oversees activities and makes recommendations that: simplify customer access to transportation, reduce duplication of transportation services, streamline federal rules and regulations that may impede the coordinated delivery of services, and improve the efficiency of services using existing resources.</p>
<p>NIH National Advisory Board on Medical Rehabilitation Research (NABMRR) https://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/advisory/nabmrr/ The Director of NIH was mandated in P.L. 101-613 to establish the National Advisory Board on Medical Rehabilitation Research (NABMRR). The Board advises the directors of NIH, NICHD, and National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research (NCMRR) on matters and policies relating to the Center's programs. The Board comprises 12 members representing health and scientific disciplines related to medical rehabilitation and 6 members representing persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)/Trauma Brain Injury (TBI) Workgroup http://report.nih.gov/crs/View.aspx?Id=2479 A 2012 White House Executive Order called for an increase in the HHS, DOD, and VA research commitments and collaborations to address the problems of PTSD, TBI, and suicide. Section 5 of this Executive Order requested a National Research Action Plan to develop biomarkers, define the pathophysiology, and create new treatments for PTSD. HHS charged the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to lead this effort along with a parallel effort for TBI led by the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Stroke (NINDS), with both Institutes working closely with the VA and DOD.</p>		<p>Federal Partners in Transition Workgroup http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/feature-article/federal-partners-in-transition Formed in June 2005, the Federal Partners in Transition is a workgroup, led by senior federal officials, with representatives of several federal agencies, including Departments of Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, and the Social Security Administration, involved in transition of youth with disabilities from school into post-secondary education, work, and independent living. The 2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy</p>

	<p>Diabetes Mellitus Interagency Coordinating Committee https://www.niddk.nih.gov/about-niddk/advisory-coordinating-committees/diabetes-mellitus-interagency-coordinating-committee/Pages/background.aspx Established to coordinate research in NIH and all Federal programs related to diabetes mellitus and its complications.</p>		<p>President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities. http://www.acl.gov/programs/aidd/Programs/PCPID/ In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson established The President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities (PCPID), formerly The President’s Committee on Mental Retardation, to ensure the right of a “decent, dignified place in society” for people with intellectual disabilities. Since that time, PCPID has served as a federal advisory committee to the President and the Secretary of Health and Human Services on matters relating to persons with intellectual disabilities.</p> <p>The Promoting the Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) program is an interagency collaboration of the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, and the Social Security Administration. Under this grant program, state agencies have partnered to develop and implement six model demonstration projects (MDPs) that provide coordinated services and supports to youth with disabilities receiving supplemental security income (SSI) benefits and to their families in order to improve the education and career outcomes, six model demonstration projects have been</p>
	<p>Down Syndrome Consortium http://downsyndrome.nih.gov/Pages/default.aspx Meets two to three times each year to discuss research findings and progress toward achieving research, management, infrastructure, and other goals set out by NIH after consultation with national organizations and agencies interested in Down syndrome. <i>Down Syndrome Directions: NIH Research Plan on Down Syndrome 2014</i> https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pages/pubs_details.aspx?pubs_id=5865</p>		
	<p>Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee https://iacc.hhs.gov/ The Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC) is a Federal advisory committee that coordinates federal efforts concerning autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Through its inclusion of both Federal and public members, the IACC helps to ensure that a wide range of ideas and perspectives are represented and discussed in a public forum. The IACC Strategic Plan for Autism Spectrum Disorder provides information about priority areas for research and services activities to guide the efforts of federal agencies and partner private organizations.</p>		

	<p>Muscular Dystrophy Coordinating Committee http://www.ninds.nih.gov/find_people/groups/mdcc/index.htm Coordinates activities across NIH and with other Federal health programs and activities relevant to the various forms of muscular dystrophy.</p>		<p>established serving a total of eleven states. http://www.promisetacenter.org/</p>
	<p>Deafness and Other Communication Disorders Interagency Coordinating Committee http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/about/groups/pages/icc.aspx Facilitates information sharing on efforts of federal agencies in deafness and other communication disorders, specifically the seven scientific areas of human communication, and to foster collaboration among federal agencies.</p>		

Table 3. Disability Program and Practice Initiatives

Initiative	Description
Curb Cuts to the Middle Class Initiative http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/interagency/curb_cuts.cfm	A federal cross-agency effort working to increase equal employment opportunities and financial independence for individuals with disabilities, with a particular emphasis on individuals with significant disabilities. The Curb Cuts Initiative is a cross-agency initiative designed to coordinate and leverage resources across the federal government. In its pilot year, the Curb Cuts Initiative is focusing on supporting effective implementation of the affirmative action and nondiscrimination obligations of federal contractors under the updated Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act regulations.
Healthy People 2020 http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/About-Healthy-People	A 10-year agenda for improving the Nation’s health. Healthy People 2020 strives to: Identify nationwide health improvement priorities. Increase public awareness and understanding of the determinants of health, disease, and disability and the opportunities for progress. Provide measurable objectives and goals that are applicable at the national, State, and local levels. Engage multiple sectors to take actions to strengthen policies and improve practices that are driven by the best available evidence and knowledge. Identify critical research, evaluation, and data collection needs.
Disability Employment Initiative https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/dei.htm	To improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. ODEP jointly funds and administers the DEI with DOL’s Employment and Training Administration.
Employment First http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/EmploymentFirst.htm	Employment First is a national movement promoting integrated, community-based employment as the first choice for people with significant disabilities. ODEP supports an Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program and an <i>Employment First</i> Community of Practice.
Public Health Action Plan to Integrate Mental Health Promotion and Mental Illness Prevention with Chronic Disease Prevention, 2011–2015 http://www.mhrb.org/dbfiles/docs/Brochure/11_2_20990_Sturgis_MHMIActionPlan_FINAL-Web_tag508.pdf	Although there are other national public mental health objectives, such as Healthy People 2020, the purpose of the CDC action plan is to focus on mental health promotion and mental illness prevention as it relates to chronic disease prevention. Strategy 2 calls for supporting research into determinants and protective factors of MH, antecedents and risk factors for MI, and their relationships to chronic diseases.
Fair Housing Accessibility FIRST http://www.fairhousingfirst.org/	Sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) designed to promote compliance with the Fair Housing Act design and construction requirements.
DOL-SSA Disability Program Navigator Initiative http://www.doleta.gov/disability/new_dpn_grants.cfm	Promotes comprehensive services and work incentive information for SSA beneficiaries and other people with disabilities, through the One Stop system.
LEAD Initiative (Leadership for the Employment of Americans with Disabilities) http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/initiatives/lead/index.cfm	The goal for this initiative is to significantly increase the population of individuals with severe disabilities employed by the federal government.