

# Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) Guiding Principles for Success

## Overview

Members of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) met on February 25, 2015 to begin the strategic planning process outlined by recently enacted legislation. John Tschida, ICDR Chair, provided a presentation and led discussion on WIOA changes and the status of the National Institute on Disability Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) transition to HHS.

## ICDR Strategic Plan

The [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#), enacted in July 2014 added a requirement for the ICDR to develop a comprehensive government-wide strategic plan that includes.

- a description of measurable goals and objectives; existing resources each agency will devote to carrying out the plan; timetables for completing the projects outlined in the plan; and assignment of responsible individuals and agencies for carrying out the research activities;
- research priorities and recommendations;
- a description of how funds from each agency will be combined, as appropriate, for projects administered among Federal agencies, and how such funds will be administered;
- the development and ongoing maintenance of a searchable government wide inventory of disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research for trend and data analysis across Federal agencies;
- guiding principles, policies, and procedures, consistent with the best research practices available, for conducting and administering disability, independent living, and rehabilitation research across Federal agencies; and
- a summary of underemphasized and duplicative areas of research.

Facilitated work sessions followed this discussion. Greg Brittingham, Performance Management Group (PMG) at Virginia Commonwealth University led ICDR Executive Committee members through two primary topics for discussion:

1. Determining the guiding principles that ICDR should follow to be successful in their planning efforts and fulfilling their legislative mission and mandates, and
2. Defining the characteristics of a successful planning effort to help identify ways to measure progress.

PMG and New Editions Consulting staff documented all participant comments and analyzed the content to identify common themes. Please note that themes are not listed in any order of priority and are highly interdependent.

## Guiding Principles for Success

1. **Stay true to the ICDR mission.** The Committee should identify its unique niche in disability and independent living research and ensure that its efforts benefit its many stakeholders and partners. Initiatives should focus on the interagency nature of the ICDR and complement the work that agencies are already doing. Establishing a consistent, trusted brand would help achieve its mission.
2. **Clarify roles and expectations.** Clearly established expectations are needed for each agency partner to ensure buy-in and support. As the ICDR pursues its collective work it must consider and respect the diversity of agency missions, perspectives, priorities, and decisions. Agencies should be accountable for fulfilling their roles. Committee members should be clear on what decisions they are empowered to make and share that information with fellow members.
3. **Establish collaborative, lasting working relationships.** Committee members must trust their partners for mutual efforts to be most effective. Commitment to ICDR's mission is critical and membership can be encouraged and supported by actively soliciting diverse perspectives, positions, and opinions.
4. **Prioritize and focus on shared priorities and essential activities.** Identifying realistic and meaningful activities will help develop common ground among members, capitalize on existing capabilities, and leverage resources. This will assist in decision-making about what can be realistically accomplished with the time and resources available.
5. **Ensure communications and activities are transparent.** Communication should be open and regular among Committee members and across agencies. ICDR goals, strategies, and activities should be transparent with agency contributions openly recognized.
6. **Document positive impacts.** Success will be determined by measuring the positive impacts that disability research and collaboration have on the disability community. ICDR should pursue clearly defined goals that are compelling and meaningful to member agencies, demonstrate accountability, and share concrete outcomes.

## How Will We Know When We Are Successful?

1. ICDR will be widely recognized as the lead organization for facilitating and coordinating Federal interagency efforts on disability and independent living research. The Committee will promote disability research needed to fill identified gaps and articulate how non-disability research can benefit by considering people with disabilities in the general population.
2. Collaborative relationships will be formed that ensure the best use of Federal resources. Member agencies are informed by each other's portfolios, to help avoid unneeded duplication, and to build upon overlapping priorities to move big research ideas into reality. New stakeholders will join the effort to engage in collaborative initiatives.
3. The organizing framework for the ICDR will promote integrated leadership that supports shared ownership and continuity of participation. Committee activities and products will reflect the best ideas of the group.
4. A clear set of responsibilities, goals, and cross-agency priorities will help focus efforts and increase the quality of the Committee's work. Clearly articulated outcomes and deliverables will increase the public trust and strengthen member participation. Incorporating a broad range of stakeholder input will help ensure that research is relevant to the needs of people with disabilities and the organizations that provide services to them.
5. Clearly articulated initiatives and specific goals will lead to higher visibility for ICDR interagency disability and independent living research, demonstrate the possible, and ultimately improve outcomes for programs, policies, and people with disabilities.