

ICDR Overview

The Interagency Committee on Disability Research: Coordinating Federal Disability Research

Authorized by the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR) was established “to promote interagency disability research coordination and collaboration, and enhance communication and information sharing among federal agencies and stakeholders conducting rehabilitation research programs and activities.” The mission of the ICDR is to identify, assess, and coordinate all federal programs, activities, projects, and relevant plans with respect to research related to rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities. To fulfill this mission, the ICDR

- Gathers information from individuals with disabilities and their representatives;
- Recommends activities to be funded through grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, and other mechanisms;
- Promotes joint research;
- Seeks to prevent unnecessary duplication of research efforts; and
- Encourages a cohesive, strategic program of federal disability and rehabilitation research.

Utilizing the Spectrum of Disability Knowledge and Experience

The ICDR continuously secures input from a broad range of stakeholders with diverse interests and perspectives, thus utilizing the spectrum of knowledge and experience available from subject matter experts within the federal government and the non-federal community. Individuals serving in positions designated as an ICDR member by the President provide leadership and oversight for the committee. These individuals are referred to as ICDR statutory members. Through committee activities, the statutory members secure the input of other federal departments, offices, and agencies that are referred to as non-statutory members.

Supporting the Exchange of Information on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

As part of the strategy to achieve its mission, the ICDR conducts various activities to support committee members and other stakeholders in the exchange of information on disability and rehabilitation research programs, projects, plans, and activities. Activities include the following:

- Regular meetings of the statutory and non-statutory members;
- State-of-the-science conferences that invite the input of subject matter experts, individuals with disabilities and their representatives, and other stakeholders; and
- Development of new or updated Web technologies to support interagency coordination and collaboration.

ICDR Accomplishments

- Hosted various forums for information exchange, including meetings and summits such as state of the science conferences and coordination with the National Partnership for Action to End Health Disparities.
- Completed the *Government-Wide Long-Term Disability Research Strategic Plan*.

The ICDR addresses a broad range of topics, such as assistive technology and universal design; interagency research management; disability statistics and data issues; health, function, and medical rehabilitation; disability employment, health disparities, education, capability development; and community outreach and participation.

Benefits of Participation

- Access to input from federal and non-federal stakeholders to inform planning.
- Increased capacity to explore emerging research areas.
- Ready access to tools and information about disability and rehabilitation research programs, projects, and activities, as well as the opportunity to provide input to identify gaps and duplications in existing research.
- Active involvement in defining collaborative activities, access to support to identify partnership opportunities, and facilitation of activities that lead to co-funding or other types of interagency agreements.
- Opportunity to demonstrate support for cost-saving activities and development of collaborative goals.
- Ability to leverage resources to maximize research activities and outcomes.

The ICDR is comprised of such members as the President may designate, including the following (or their designees).

Statutory Members

- Director of the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research, Chair
- Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
- Secretary of Education
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs
- Director of the National Institutes of Health
- Director of the National Institute of Mental Health
- Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration
- Secretary of Transportation
- Assistant Secretary—Indian Affairs
- Director of the Indian Health Service
- Director of the National Science Foundation

The individuals in the positions listed above, also known as the ICDR statutory members, also serve as the ICDR Executive Committee (EC), which is the administrative body that promotes and brokers interagency disability and rehabilitation research collaboration and coordination.

The EC is supported by four subcommittees and a forum, which are described in the table below.

| Subcommittee Name | Subcommittee Mission and Purpose |
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| Assistive Technology/Technology Forum (AT/T Forum) | The AT/T forum identifies, assesses, and seeks to coordinate all federal programs and activities regarding the range of federal AT research, as well as research that incorporates the principles of universal design; identifies and makes efforts to address research gaps; identifies and establishes clear research priorities related to assistive technology research and research that incorporates the principles of universal design; promotes interagency collaboration and joint research activities; works to reduce unnecessary duplication of effort regarding these types of research within the federal government; and optimizes the productivity of subcommittee members |

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| | through resource sharing and other cost-saving activities. |
| Interagency Subcommittee on Disability Statistics (ISDS) | The ISDS provides a forum for statisticians, economists, and individuals interested in disability statistics, terminology and definition concerns, and data collection. The ISDS meets and discusses important disability research and statistics issues, and it focuses on the following: identifying best practices for data collection and surveys regarding the interests of individuals with disabilities, developing methods to improve disability data, and promoting collaboration to enhance the usefulness of federal surveys as tools for estimating the size and describing the characteristics of the population of Americans with disabilities. The ISDS conducts outreach activities to invite disability researchers from universities and non-federal organizations to share information about relevant research activities and promote private-public collaborations. |
| Interagency Subcommittee on Employment (ISE) | The ISE provides a mechanism and forum for information sharing and dissemination between federal agencies to facilitate and promote a cohesive, strategic federal program of employment research that can help further opportunities and economic security for people with disabilities, identify research gaps and synergies, and alleviate unnecessary duplication of research efforts. The ISE conducts a public forum for people with disabilities and their representatives, researchers, and other stakeholders; provides leadership for the development of the federal employment research agenda and related programs; provides opportunities for public and private entities to meet with the ICDR and share information; provides support and resources that will enhance interagency information sharing, increase federal research partnerships, and enable the ICDR membership to engage in research capacity building activities; promotes increased awareness regarding research and knowledge gaps; promotes interagency cooperation to support, maintain, and enhance employment-related data systems; creates greater awareness of individual members' missions and thereby explores opportunities for joint research funding activities. |
| Interagency Subcommittee on Health Disparities (ISHD) | The ISHD is charged to coordinate programs, projects, activities, and plans for such with respect to the conduct of health disparities research and the needs of individuals with disabilities. The ISHD works to provide government-wide input for the development of federal health disparities research agendas and related activities, ensure attention to the interest of individuals with disabilities across the federal health disparities agenda, and promote a cohesive federal program of health disparities research that adequately addresses the concerns of individuals with disabilities. The ISHD provides disability expertise to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other federal entities and maintains the ICDR's long-standing partnership with HHS and its partners to address the federal agenda on health disparities, secure the input of non-federal stakeholders, and promote interagency |

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| | coordination and collaboration. |
| Interagency Subcommittee on Medical Rehabilitation (ISMR) | The ISMR defines medical rehabilitation research as “the field of study that encompasses basic and applied aspects of the health sciences, social sciences and engineering related to restoring and/or maintaining a person’s health and functional capacity and improving that person’s interactions with the surrounding environments.” The ISMR works to promote a coordinated research agenda by examining key issues and critical research gaps. It routinely collaborates with federal entities and with its public and private partners to survey and compile information about medical rehabilitation research activities; identify gaps in existing research and future directions for research and related activities; identify potential joint funding and research partnership opportunities; conduct state of the science conferences and meetings; and disseminate information and establish strategies to communicate with a wider audience to further promote knowledge translation for medical rehabilitation research findings. |

Executive Committee and Subcommittee Member Roles and Responsibilities: At a Glance

- EC and subcommittee members and designees represent their parent agency at all relevant meetings and events. With approval from their parent agency, members conduct briefings about the ICDR within their parent agency when requested.
- EC and subcommittee members share the following additional roles and responsibilities:
 - As authorized agency spokesperson, share their agency’s vision and pertinent information about research priorities, goals, plans, programs, and activities. This information may be disseminated to other ICDR members, federal partners, and stakeholders.
 - Participate in ICDR deliberations and engage in decision-making activities.
 - Facilitate information sharing between the ICDR and the parent agency. Report back to agency directors about ICDR deliberations and help secure agency input to inform disability research agendas, related activities, and the ICDR agenda.
 - Help the ICDR identify research gaps, develop goals and strategic plans, and identify funding recommendations.
 - Work with ICDR and authorized agency officials to establish interagency collaborative activities and research partnerships between the ICDR and the parent agency.
 - Help track ICDR outcomes and report on the status of activities recommended or supported by the ICDR and implemented by the parent agency.
 - Provide input to inform the ICDR *Annual Report to the President and Congress*.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings and Events

The EC meets four times per year for approximately 3 hours per meeting; subcommittees meet monthly, bimonthly, or as scheduled, for approximately 2 hours per meeting. To ensure maximum participation, all meetings have a teleconference option, and other reasonable accommodations are made when necessary. ICDR members assist in special events and meeting planning, and they are encouraged to participate as presenters or moderators at ICDR-sponsored meetings, conferences, and forums.

For More Information

For more information, or to access reports and resources, please visit our Web site at www.icdr.us or contact Dr. Constance Pledger, Executive Director of the ICDR, at (202) 245-7480.