

# NIDRR Funding Opportunities and Procedures

---



A. Cate Miller, Ph.D., Research Sciences Division  
National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)  
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS)  
U.S. Department of Education

# Overview



- ▶ Understanding NIDRR's mandate, mission and values
- ▶ NIDRR's application and review process
- ▶ NIDRR grant mechanisms
- ▶ Where to go for further information

# Organization Details



- ▶ Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) includes:
  - ▶ Rehabilitative Services Administrative (RSA)
  - ▶ Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
  - ▶ National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitative Research (NIDRR)
- ▶ Legislative authority
  - ▶ Title II, *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, as amended

# NIDRR's Mission



- ▶ 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.

# Scope of NIDRR Mandate



## ▶ *Cross-disability Work*

- ▶ Physical and mobility impairments;
- ▶ Sensory impairments; and
- ▶ Cognitive impairments and psychiatric disability.

## ▶ *Cross Life-span Work*

- ▶ Children and youths;
- ▶ Working-age adults; and
- ▶ Individuals “aging with” lifelong and early-onset disabilities, and those “aging into” disability in mid- to later life.

# NIDRR's Research Domains



- ▶ Focus on outcomes in five major domains:
  - ▶ Employment;
  - ▶ Participation and community living;
  - ▶ Health and function;
  - ▶ Technology for access and function; and
  - ▶ Disability demographics.

# NIDRR's Outcome Arenas



- ▶ Research and Development
  - ▶ Discoveries
  - ▶ Theories, measures and methods
  - ▶ Interventions, products, devices and environmental adaptations
- ▶ Capacity-building
- ▶ Knowledge translation (KT)

# NIDRR Strategic Goals and Objectives: Research



- ▶ Contribute evidence-based theories, information and analyses to increase understanding and enhance knowledge of disability and rehabilitation.
- ▶ Provide new and improved measures and methods to strengthen the scientific basis of disability and rehabilitation.
- ▶ Develop new and improved interventions, programs, products, devices and environmental adaptations to guide decision making, change practice and enhance access, function and participation.

# NIDRR Strategic Goals and Objectives: Capacity Building



- ▶ Promote productive partnerships with other federal agencies and nonfederal organizations to strengthen the research infrastructure, support clinical trials and increase KT effectiveness.
- ▶ Encourage multidisciplinary applications.
- ▶ Enhance opportunities for cross-disciplinary and advanced research training in disability and rehabilitation-related fields.

# NIDRR Strategic Goals and Objectives: Knowledge Translation



- ▶ Promote external review of the quality of NIDRR-funded research and related activities.
- ▶ Develop tools and methods to facilitate effective accumulation, translation, dissemination and transfer of disability and rehabilitation research findings.

# NIDRR Research Process



- ▶ The majority of funds go to agency-initiated research; however, the specific focus of the research and methodological approach is usually left up to the investigators.
- ▶ NIDRR's focus is on applied research; NIDRR does not fund basic research; however, NIDRR does fund clinical research in medical rehabilitation.

# NIDRR Research Process *(continued)*



- ▶ NIDRR is moving toward electronic submissions.
- ▶ Following application due date, NIDRR's peer review process typically takes between 3 and 6 months.
- ▶ NIDRR provides support to institutions, except in the case of the Switzer Fellowship Program in which support is provided to the individual.

# NIDRR Research Process *(continued)*

---

- ▶ The number of applications varies by competition. Large center grants have fewer applicants compared to field-initiated competition.
- ▶ For most competitions, panels are formed specifically for the individual competition.
- ▶ NIDRR panels emphasize research expertise but also include consumer and practitioner experts.
- ▶ At NIDRR, project staff have the responsibility of organizing review panels, using support contractors to handle logistics.

# NIDRR Research Process *(continued)*



- ▶ There is no triage process—all grants sent to the panel are reviewed and discussed.
- ▶ NIDRR conducts site visits on awards that exceed \$500,000.
- ▶ NIDRR funding levels include indirect costs.
- ▶ Some competitions occur every year.
- ▶ Other competitions occur on an as-needed basis, usually at the end of three- to five-year grant cycles.

# Key Review Elements for NIDRR Grants



- ▶ Grant applications should address these questions:
  - ▶ What is the importance of the problem in terms of improving lives of individuals with disabilities?
  - ▶ What is the appropriateness and quality of the proposed research approach?
  - ▶ Is there an evaluation plan that specifies planned outputs and outcomes and provides information on how a proposed project will reach its targets?

# NIDRR Grant Mechanisms



- ▶ Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training
- ▶ Fellowships
- ▶ Field-Initiated Projects (Research and Development)
- ▶ Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers
- ▶ Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers
- ▶ Model Systems
- ▶ Disability Rehabilitation Research Projects
- ▶ Dissemination and Utilization Grants
- ▶ Small Business Innovative Research Grants
- ▶ *ADA* Technical Assistance Centers

# NIDRR Grant Mechanisms *(continued)*

- ▶ Advanced Rehabilitation Research Projects
  - ▶ \$200,000 per year
  - ▶ Five-year awards
  - ▶ Advanced rehabilitation research training at post-doctoral level
  - ▶ Awards made to educational institutions only
  - ▶ Must be interdisciplinary
  - ▶ Annual announcements
- ▶ Switzer Fellowship Program
  - ▶ Two levels: merit and distinguished
  - ▶ Annual announcements

# NIDRR Grant Mechanisms (*continued*)



- ▶ Field-Initiated Projects
  - ▶ \$200,000 per year
  - ▶ Three-year awards
  - ▶ May be research or development
  - ▶ Applications reviewed by standing panels
  - ▶ Annual announcements

# NIDRR Grant Mechanisms *(continued)*



- ▶ Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
  - ▶ Average \$850,000 per year
  - ▶ Five-year awards
  - ▶ Advanced programs of research
  - ▶ Focus on new knowledge
  - ▶ Affiliation with institutions of higher education
  - ▶ Research training, dissemination and technical assistance required
  - ▶ Announcements, as needed

# NIDRR Grant Mechanisms *(continued)*

- ▶ Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects (DRRPs)
  - ▶ \$300,000–\$950,000
  - ▶ May be up to five years of funding
  - ▶ Projects that emphasize research, demonstration, dissemination, technical assistance and innovation
  
- ▶ Model Systems:
  - ▶ Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
  - ▶ Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)
  - ▶ Burn

# NIDRR Grant Mechanisms *(continued)*



- ▶ Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers (RERCs)
  - ▶ Average \$900,000 per year
  - ▶ Five-year awards (29 current centers)
  - ▶ Advanced research of an engineering or technical nature
  - ▶ Affiliation with institutions of higher education
  - ▶ Emphasis is on technology transfer
  - ▶ Announcements, as needed

# Where to Go for Further Information



- ▶ Web site: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html>
  - ▶ Click on “Grants and Funding;” then:
    - ▶ For information on discretionary grant competitions for new awards for the year, click on “Grants Forecasts for NIDRR.”
    - ▶ For access to grant program announcements in the *Federal Register*, including “proposed” and “final” regulations and priorities, click on “Grant Application Announcements.”

# Where to Go for Further Information



- ▶ NIDRR home page:

[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/index.html)

- ▶ National Center for the Dissemination of Disability Research home page:

[www.ncddr.org](http://www.ncddr.org)

- ▶ National Rehabilitation Information Center home page:

[www.naric.com](http://www.naric.com)

# Further Information



- ▶ A. Cate Miller, Ph.D., Rehabilitation Program Specialist,  
Research Sciences Division

202-245-7449

[cate.miller@ed.gov](mailto:cate.miller@ed.gov)

- ▶ NIDRR main telephone number:

202-245-7640