

DRIVING CHANGE CHANGING LIVES

ANNUAL REPORT FY2018

Rural Institute

For Inclusive Communities



RESEARCH **Exploring Rural Disability**



The **Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities (RTC:Rural)** helps people with disabilities participate in their rural communities. RTC:Rural conducts research and provides training and technical assistance in the areas of health, employment, and independent living. We collaborate with individuals with disabilities, family members, and service providers to uncover personal and environmental factors that influence disability and quality of life. Together, we identify research priorities, understand findings, and develop best practices for applying research in rural communities.

Recent Research and Development activities at RTC:Rural:

- **Geography of Rural Disability** analyses lay the groundwork for examining demographics of people with disabilities living in rural areas. This work has led to the creation of the **Step-by-Step Guide to Accessing Disability Data** that explains how to get disability data and make maps to show the data.
- **Employment** research explores solutions to barriers people with disabilities face in achieving and maintaining employment. We created the **Vocational Rehabilitation Self-Employment Guide**, a web-based tool for individuals and VR counselors to assess self-employment readiness and develop a business plan.
- **Health and Wellness** activities aim to address unique rural health challenges by developing and testing health promotion delivery models to serve people with disabilities in rural areas. Through RTC:Rural's training and technical assistance activities, service providers share their experiences and receive support to implement the **Living and Working Well with a Disability Programs**.
- **Rural Community Living** research focuses on how the accessibility of rural environments affects community participation and quality of life. This research led to the creation of resources available through the **Rural Disability Resource Library** and includes the **Toolkit for Operating a Rural Transportation Voucher Program**, developed with the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL).

A sample of upcoming Research and Development activities include the:

- **Geography of Rural Disability** project which continues to study the relationships between the presence of community resources and disability rates in rural communities across the U.S.
- **Rural Self-Employment** project, a collaboration with American Indian VR service providers, to adapt the VR Self-Employment Guide website for people with disabilities residing on rural American Indian Reservations.
- **Rural Community Living** research initiative to explore rural-urban differences in personal assistance services (PAS) and develop an adapted PAS training for providers working in rural communities.

EDUCATION **Building the future**



Utah Regional Leadership and Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (UR-LEND)

The Rural Institute partners with the Utah Center for Persons with Disabilities and the University of Utah School of Medicine to train Montana graduate students to become leaders in providing family-centered care for children with special healthcare needs. Trainees from different disciplines attend weekly seminars on topics such as epidemiology of developmental disabilities, special education law, working with refugee families and financing healthcare, among many others. Family perspective is the thread that weaves through every lecture and community-based training experience. Trainees complete the program with an improved ability to collaborate with other healthcare professionals outside their discipline, an increased ability to recognize and address the complexity of disability, and a deeper understanding of the value of family input while providing evidence-based care.

SERVICE **Helping people achieve independence and self-support**



MonTECH provides technology, support, and services that improve the quality of life for Montanans with disabilities. By loaning assistive technology and adaptive equipment, MonTECH helps people increase their independence. For example, screen reader software and screen magnifiers allow Montanans with low vision read books or watch sporting events.

A grandfather who is hard of hearing used a Contego listening device to join conversations at his family reunion. MonTECH's free device-loan program enabled Olivia, an 11-year-old with dyslexia and dysgraphia, explore how an iPad could help her 'ear read,' learn, and show others what she knows. With her new iPad, she is successful and less anxious at school.



MonTECH loans assistive technology and adaptive equipment to any Montanan with a disability. Last year, over 800 devices were borrowed by Montanans looking for tools to help them live more independently. MonTECH saved device borrowers \$230,055 through open-ended loans and device reuse. In partnership with Rural Dynamics, Inc., MonTECH offered 15 financial loans to Montanans who could not otherwise afford assistive technology equipment.

A YEAR IN REVIEW



\$6,498,767

Rural Institute FY2018 Annual Budget



18 Funding proposals submitted



37 Programs & Projects

- 13 Community Service and Training
- 24 Research and Evaluation



58 Trainees representing 13 disciplines



41 Seats on local, state and national committees, councils and boards



16 Reports and Monographs



115 Training activities that served 7,075 participants



42 Conference presentations and posters



10 Peer-reviewed articles submitted to scholarly journals for publication

VISIT US:

Rural Institute
For Inclusive Communities

RuralInstitute.umt.edu



RTC.RuralInstitute.umt.edu

MonTECH

Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities

Montech.RuralInstitute.umt.edu



RTC.RuralInstitute.umt.edu/geography



TelecomToolbox.ri.umt.edu



HealthyCommunityLiving.com

RESEARCH

Healthy Community Living

Independent living skills and multimedia health promotion program

SAFETY Project

Self-advocacy training to prevent interpersonal violence

Concerns Report Method: A Family-Centered Approach to Quality Services

Family and provider input on children's health services

Effort Capacity and Choice: Investigating a Dynamic Model of Participation

Investigates link between personal exertion and impact on choices

School Climate Transformation: MBI in High Need Areas

Evaluation of PBIS in high-need schools

Partnering with Women with Disabilities to Develop a Health Information Website

Creating an online information resource on women's health

Texas Model Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Systems

Evaluating ways to improve the health of people with SCI

Pain, Depression, and Resilience and their Prediction of Life Satisfaction in people with SCI

Identifies impact on life satisfaction

Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment (ASPIRE)

Evaluation of comprehensive independent living and employment supports

Rocky Mountain Region ADA Research

Partnership to research ADA policy issues

All of Us

Collection of health data to improve outcomes

Home Usability Project

Promoting community participation of adults with disabilities

Out and About

Intervention to promote wellness, goal-setting and self-advocacy skills

RTC: RURAL RESEARCH

Monitoring and Managing Community Accessibility

Ecological Decision Support for Health Promotion

Geography & Rural Disability

The Ecology of Rural Community Participation

Resilience in Rural Community Participation

Person - Environment Fit in Rural Communities

Measuring Opportunities in Rural Events

Rural Contracted Services

The Use of Social Media for Employment

Rural Self Employment Opportunities

FUNDED FOR 2018-2023

Building Networks to Expand Living Well Delivery

Personal Assistance Services (PAS) in Rural America

Rural Transportation Options

Rural Self-Employment

Expanding the Availability and Quality of Rural Data

Rural Resource Analysis

Rural Communication Strategies

SERVICE / EDUCATION

Living Well / Working Well with a Disability

Peer-led health and wellness training and support

Healthy Communities for People with Disabilities

Supporting accessible community health initiatives

Montana Disability and Health Program

Policy and practice initiatives to promote health and wellbeing

Inclusive Healthy Communities

Promoting community health initiatives

MonTECH: Montana's Assistive Technology Program

Technology for independence across the lifespan

Wheels Across Montana

Free access to adaptive trikes

Children's Special Health Services: Montana Transition Resources

Transition-to-adulthood resources for youth, families and providers

National Disability Navigator Resource Collaborative (NDNRC)

Resources to ensure accurate ACA Marketplace information

Montana Early Diagnosis

Developmental milestone resources for families and providers

Deaf-Blind Project

Assistance to school systems

Pre-Employment Transition Services Technical Assistance Center

Training and assistance to schools and employment providers

UR-LEND

Leadership education in family-centered healthcare services

Movin' On in Montana

College experience for high school students with disabilities

UM OUTREACH

Training speech language pathologists in rural and tribal communities

SPOTLIGHT ON RIIC PROJECTS:

The Safety Project

Partnering with People with Intellectual Disabilities

Addressing Abuse Against People with Intellectual Disabilities

The Rural Institute is a national leader on research and training to prevent abuse of people with disabilities. Recently, Rural Institute researchers and colleagues partnered with people with intellectual disabilities and staff from 13 Centers for Independent Living across the U.S. to create The Safety Class, an eight week safety awareness program for people with intellectual disabilities. Initial feedback shows that the program is an effective way to teach safety skills and awareness. Participants stated:

"I liked learning about how to be independent, the types of abuse, how to be assertive."

"[I liked] listening, hearing about abuse and how to talk about relationships. If you have something to say about abuse, tell someone."

"[I] Learned about boundaries, being assertive, saying no in a difficult situation, telling someone I trust my story so they can help me."

The Safety Class is the first known violence prevention group program designed for people with disabilities that has undergone a rigorous evaluation by 170 people with intellectual disabilities. National partners are working with us to make this program available across the U.S.



Healthy Community Living (HCL)

RTC:Rural brought together Centers for Independent Living (CIL) staff and consumers, the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), and researchers to create Healthy Community Living (HCL). HCL is an inclusive health, wellbeing and independent living skills program. HCL includes two workshops (Community Living Skills and Living Well in the Community) designed to accommodate the diverse learning styles and needs of participants. Both workshops are

delivered via multi-media websites that feature images and videos created and collected by project partners. HCL was created and piloted with more than 20 staff members at 12 CILs across the U.S.; the full program launch is expected in 2019.

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK

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Transition and Employment

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Beginning with the first \$200,000 grant in 1978, Rural Institute staff have raised over \$175 million to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Dozens of education, research and service initiatives have come and gone over our 40-year history, but they have a common theme: Partnership.

Thoughtful reflection on the lessons we have learned with our partners and the good we have done over four decades demonstrates we are at our best when working side-by-side with those who benefit from our efforts.

We appreciate and value people with disabilities, their families, the service providers and personal assistants who assist them, and policy makers who work closely with us. It is through our shared expertise that we achieve our most important successes—the improved quality of life and life satisfaction of people with disabilities and their families. Year 41 starts now and we look forward to working with you in the years to come!

Marty Blair

