



**Enhancing
community
living and
participation
for people
with
disabilities**

Our Mission

The Research and Training Center on Community Living (RTC/CL) develops evidence-based programs, policies and practices that further community living and participation among people with disabilities.

Why It Matters

Americans with disabilities have the right to live in a community setting rather than in an institution. This was decided in the U.S. Supreme Court's *Olmstead v. L.C.* decision in 1999.

Since then, progress has been made toward the goal of community living for people with disabilities through de-institutionalization, anti-discrimination policies, community-based service providers and other systems of care.

Yet people with disabilities still face many barriers to achieving enhanced participation and continuity in community living. The Research and Training Center on Community Living seeks to improve our understanding of those barriers and develop new ways to improve opportunities for community living and participation.



The Research Projects

RTC/CL research projects are designed to **expand our knowledge** and **develop new strategies** to improve community living opportunities for people with disabilities.

First, we must understand the problem. How do a person's age, economic status, place of residence and other personal factors influence his or her ability to live in the community?

Six projects use **secondary data**, or existing information, to analyze how barriers to and experiences of community living may differ across socio-demographic and geographic groups.

Next, building on this information, five projects **test interventions**, or new strategies, that are designed to improve community living opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

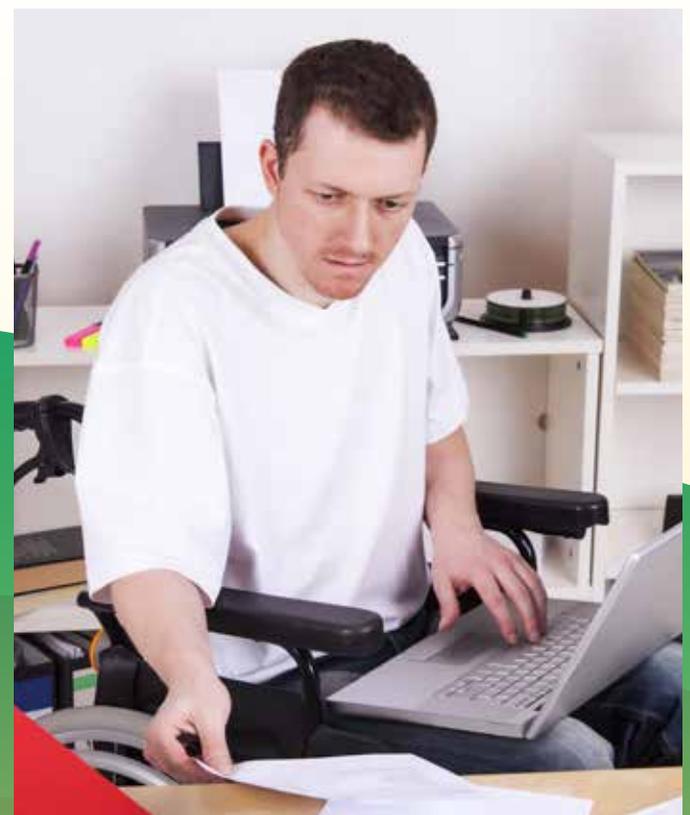
These interventions focus on housing, health, recreation, personal assistant services, and civic involvement.

In addition, we are gaining important information that will help shape the interventions by analyzing recent research in this field.

Stakeholder Benefits

The goal of this research center is to discover and translate knowledge that allows consumers, advocates, service providers and policymakers to create and maintain greater opportunities for community living and participation of people with disabilities.

We are committed to involving people with disabilities in our research so it is relevant to their lives. Consumer-empowered teams provide advice and feedback to the researchers who lead the intervention projects. In addition, consumers on our Scientific and Consumer Advisory Panel provide input on all aspects of the center.



Interventions *(In Process)*

Five intervention projects test ways to improve specific areas of community living.

R-7. Health Access for Independent Living (HAIL) is developing a tool for use by staff members at Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other community-based organizations that serve people with physical disabilities. The HAIL tool consists of a searchable database and website, along with procedures to help consumers set short-term goals and monitor progress. Consumers learn health-related skills and find resources to address chronic secondary conditions such as pain, depression and fatigue.

R-8. Development and Testing of an Informal PA Training Program implements a training program for providers and consumers of informal personal assistance (PA). The goal is to improve the knowledge and skills of informal care providers and consumers about how to avoid disruptions in community living and to enhance community participation.

R-9. Home Usability for People with Disabilities develops new tools and advocacy methods that CILs and other disability advocates can use to improve home usability problems identified by consumers. The project focuses on home usability, health and participation data to improve our understanding of the role a person's home plays in community integration. Researchers are also working with CILs to engage consumers and community partners to address home usability needs.

R-10. Community Engagement Initiative Knowledge Translation (KT) Project expands the Community Engagement Evaluation (CEE) project, a grassroots technique that was used to improve access to healthcare in our previous research center, RTC/MICL. The CEI project has two goals: to assess the efficacy of the CEI method to address recreation access, and to assess effective knowledge transfer methods for using the CEI.

R-11. Building Capacity for Full Community Participation is designed to expand the capacity of Centers for Independent Living and those they serve. The goal: changing community conditions to better support the full engagement in their communities of people with disabilities. CIL staff use the Community Check Box Evaluation System to document changes in programs, policies and practices that help consumers with disabilities more fully participate in the community.

Secondary Data *(Completed)*

Six projects conducted during the Center's first 18 months analyzed secondary data to build our knowledge base.

R-1. Housing and Transportation Access analyzes data from the American Housing Survey. The purpose is to identify the proportion and demographic characteristics of people with disabilities who experience significant housing and transportation barriers.

R-2. Time Use among People with Disabilities reviews American Time Use Survey data to understand factors associated with community living among people with and without disabilities. The study considers how much time people spend in community-based activities (such as employment and recreation), where they go, and with whom they engage in activities.

R-3. Relation of Socio-demographics and Local Characteristics to Community Participation/Living uses data from the American Community Survey to investigate the association of community living and participation with factors including socio-demographic factors (race, income, education, etc.), the built housing environment and local public policies.

R-4. Multiple Chronic Conditions and Healthcare Access examines data from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey to increase our understanding of the relationship between disability and chronic disease. The study focuses on common combinations of chronic conditions among four subgroups of people with disabilities.

R-5. Does VR Effectively Support Community Living? studies the impact of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services on the community living of recipients. It uses six years of socio-demographic and geographic data from the State of Illinois to find the rehabilitation outcomes for VR consumers.

R-6. Personal and Environmental Factors Influencing Community Living for People with Disabilities examines relationships between community living and participation and environmental facilitators, including personal, health-related, geographic and impairment factors. It uses data collected through two measures.

Systematic Scoping Reviews

Two systematic scoping reviews of the research literature helped shape the interventions.

SSR-1. A Systematic Scoping Review of the Literature on Risks for Institutionalization of People with Disabilities assesses the research and identifies gaps in it regarding barriers to remaining in the community. The study includes people with severe disabilities age 18-65.

SSR-2. Updating a Systematic Scoping Review of the Literature on Healthcare Use and Receipt of Clinical Preventive Services by People with Disabilities extends by two years a review that was conducted by the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Project on Health Disparities. The project identifies gaps in the literature regarding how persons with disabilities use clinical preventive services.





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The Research Team

The RTC/CL is a partnership based at the University of Kansas. Disability scientists from five universities bring their expertise to our mission.

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Scientific and Consumer Advisory Panel

This expert team of advisors brings an external perspective to our work, helping us keep the center's research both rigorous and relevant to the lives of people with disabilities.

Scientific Representatives

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Consumer Representatives

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