

Rural Institute

For Inclusive Communities

2019 ANNUAL
REPORT



NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities fosters research partnerships, provides education and training, and offers services that improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, their families and those who partner with them. This past year provided our team of 70 staff and students abundant opportunities to demonstrate our commitment to this mission.

We value our relationships with advocates, families, funders, researchers, policy-makers, and local, state and national agencies as we address policy challenges, learn better ways of doing things, and improve disability-related services. These relationships take us across Montana and into rural and urban communities across the U.S. and beyond.

We are successful when we harness the strength of community to meet shared challenges and address emerging and ongoing needs. In the year ahead, we will advance our commitment to support children, youth and adults with disabilities to fully participate in their communities. We appreciate your continued partnership and look forward to more opportunities for learning and growth.

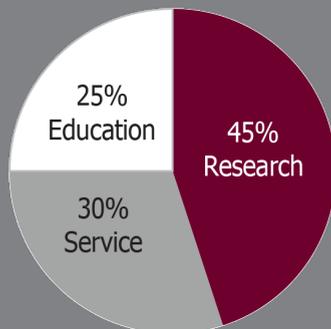
“ We are successful when we **harness the strength of community** to meet shared challenges and address emerging and ongoing needs. ”



Martin E. Blair, PhD
Executive Director

FY 2019 budget =

\$4,463,013



28 published
articles and reports



LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS LEAD TO INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE

In late 2018, the Rural Institute, Summit Independent Living, and the University of Montana Mansfield Center hosted Ms. Nguyen Thi Van for a three-week visit. Ms. Nguyen was recognized by the British Broadcasting Corporation as one of 100 inspiring and influential women in 2019. She is the director of the Will to Live Center which provides vocational training to people who are disabled, and Imagtor, a company that creates real estate marketing materials.

In May 2019, Bronwyn Troutman, Community Living Specialist at Summit Independent Living and Anna-Margaret Goldman, MonTECH director, visited Vietnam to expand the partnership between the Rural Institute, Summit Independent Living, the Will to Live Center, and Imagtor.



MonTECH
Rural Institute for Inclusive Communities

Ms. Troutman led workshops that featured content from the Rural Institute's **Healthy Community Living** and **Working Well with a Disability** programs. Dr. Goldman shared information on assistive technology.

63 students mentored
across 14 disciplines

2019

63

2018

54

2017

42

5,777 people trained in
Montana and across the
country



EXPANDING UNDERSTANDING OF PARTICIPATION

Participating in the community requires effort, and everyone has different amounts of energy they can spend before needing to rest. For many people with disabilities, this means making tough choices about how to spend their available energy.

The **Effort Capacity and Choice** project explored ways to conserve a person's energy and reduce the effort required to perform certain self-care activities. One intervention paired participants with a licensed physical therapist to assess physical needs. Participants were provided bathing equipment and trained on its use. The other intervention provided guided physical activity in an accessible gym.

Both interventions led to positive results: participants reported increased energy and more choices and opportunities to participate. Findings from this study are currently being prepared for publication.



INVESTIGATING PLACE-BASED SOLUTIONS FOR RURAL COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

In 2018, the Rural Institute received a five-year, \$4.3 million grant to support its **Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities** (RTC:Rural). The award continues 30 years of RTC:Rural research and training to improve the lives of rural people with disabilities.

"The opportunity to build on our past work and continue to conduct applied research with our stakeholders from the disability community is a great honor," said RTC:Rural Director Dr. Catherine Ipsen.

RTC:Rural research addresses barriers identified by rural people with disabilities in the areas of health, community living, and employment. These barriers are often related to the limited resources available in rural environments.

RTC:Rural

Research & Training Center
on Disability in Rural Communities

RESEARCH

Montana Pediatric Medical Passport (MP2)

Builds an app for healthcare information and decision making

Montana Access to Pediatric Psychiatry Network (MAPPNet)

Evaluates impact of statewide pediatric telehealth program

Effort Capacity and Choice

Investigates the link between energy exertion and quality of life

School Climate Transformation: MBI in High Need Areas

Evaluates effectiveness of PBIS in high-need schools

Achieving Success by Promoting Readiness for Education and Employment

Evaluates impact of independent living and employment supports on families

Partnering with Women with Disabilities to Develop a Health Information Website

Creates an online health information resource for women

Texas Model Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) Systems

Evaluates ways to improve the health of people with SCI

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

Identifies the impact of Spinal Cord Injury on life satisfaction

Rocky Mountain Region ADA Research

Researches ADA legal issues

Home Usability Project

Promotes community participation of adults with disabilities

Out and About

Evaluates community intervention to promote health and wellness

Expanding the Availability and Quality of Rural Data

Rural analyses of existing large data sets

Exploring Rural Disability Onset

Understands how disability evolves

Rural Access to Health Insurance and Health Care

Answers questions about health care and quality of life

Rural Resource Analysis

Maps community resources and networks

Building Networks to Expand Living Well Delivery

Scales up Living Well to rural hospitals

Personal Assistance Services in Rural America

Explores and addresses rural PAS outcomes

Rural Transportation Options

Explores accessible transportation in rural communities

Rural Self-Employment

Develops and evaluates online tools for state and tribal Vocational Rehabilitation

SERVICE AND EDUCATION

MonTECH: Montana's Assistive Technology Program
Technology to support independence across the lifespan

Wheels Across Montana
Provides adaptive trikes in rural communities

Montana Family to Family Health Information Center
Provides family-focused healthcare information

Montana Disability and Health Program
Promotes health-related policy and practice initiatives

Children's Special Health Services: Montana Transition Resources
Transition-to-adulthood health resources for youth, families and providers

Working Well with a Disability
Peer-led health and wellness training and support

Healthy Community Living
Independent living workshops focused on health and community living skills

Montana Healthy Communities
Accessible community health training

Montana Autism Center
Developmental resources for families and providers

Diversity Fellowship Program
Graduate fellowship for culturally-diverse students

UR-LEND
Leadership education in family-centered healthcare

UM OUTREACH
Trains speech language pathologists in rural and tribal communities

Movin' On in Montana
College experience for high school students with disabilities

National Disability Navigator Resource Collaborative
Promotes accurate ACA Marketplace information

All of Us Outreach in Montana
Recruits participants for national health outcomes research

Deaf-Blind Project
Resources and assistance to local school systems

NCDB: Transition Outcomes for Youth with Deaf-Blindness
Training to improve transition outcomes for youth

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES

In 2019, the Rural Institute opened the **Montana Family to Family Health Information Center (F2F-HIC)**, furthering the Institute's mission to partner with people to improve services, supports and outcomes for people with disabilities and their families.

The family-led F2F-HIC improves access to evidence-based health information so parents and families of children and youth with complex health needs and medical providers can make informed choices.

The F2F-HIC also:

- Provides family-to-family and peer-to-peer support
- Offers family training to help negotiate the healthcare system
- Trains healthcare professionals to understand needs of children with special health care needs



CREATING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Reaching People with Disabilities through Healthy Communities is a national initiative to design communities that support people with disabilities. The Rural Institute's Meg Ann Traci, Project Director for the **Montana Disability and Health Program**, served as an expert advisor on Montana's task force.



Community members with disabilities, public health representatives, city planners, and people from independent living were included in the diverse task force.

In Butte, group efforts led to an inclusive swimming pool and playground. In Helena, inclusive planning resulted in the **Active Living Wayfinding System**, a navigation tool that incorporates accessible route design and signage for parks, trails, and streets. Now, both cities have features planned by community members of all abilities that enables everyone to participate in healthy community experiences.

SUPPORTING EMERGING LEADERS

The Rural Institute's **Diversity Fellowship Program** supported two American Indian graduate students: Salena Beaumont Hill, a PhD student in Counselor Education and a member of the Crow Tribe and a Blackfeet tribal descendant, and Helen Russette, a PhD student in Public Health and a member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe.

Ms. Hill and Ms. Russette developed and taught **The Intersectionality of Disability, American Indians and Rurality**, an online course for graduate and undergraduate students at the University of Montana. The course explored the cultural aspects of being American Indian and how culture relates with the realities of rurality and disability.



Helen Russette



Salena
Beaumont Hill

"The opportunity to develop and teach an interdisciplinary course focused on American Indian culture, health policies, and accessibility issues was a very rewarding experience," shared Hill. "I appreciated the opportunity to both teach and learn from the extraordinary students enrolled in the class."

Rural Institute

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ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS ON DISABILITIES
RESEARCH. EDUCATION. SERVICE

