



Rural Institute



**20** | **IMPACT**  
**22** | **REPORT**

IMPROVING LIFE  
FOR RURAL AMERICANS  
WITH DISABILITIES

## BY THE NUMBERS



The Rural Institute has **57** active projects and programs



We published **49** reports, articles and book chapters



We shared **37** conference presentations and posters



We mentored **45** trainees



We trained **5,665** people in Montana and across the country



We provided continuing education to **1,512** people



The RIIC spent **\$4,725,989** in FY2022 to meet community needs



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

As we turn the page to 2023, I'm excited to share a summary of the Rural Institute's impact on innovative service, training, and research. With the assistance of the Consumer Advisory Council highlighted in this report, more than 60 students, staff, and faculty at the Rural Institute promote thriving communities that support opportunities for all.

Highlights of this year include a return to more in-person programs while retaining remote engagement options. We launched innovative activities, such as building accessible canoe launches, facilitating peer support to reduce social isolation, evaluating community health worker programs, and developing a model for a successful transition into adulthood. And check out our redesigned website that provides visitors with more accessible resources.

This has been a time of change and renewal for the Rural Institute, with the departure of long-time Director Martin Blair and welcoming the new Director in 2023. As the Interim Director, it has been my pleasure to serve our partners in Montana and in rural communities during this transition.

I wish you happiness and success in 2023.

Kari Harris



## WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE RURAL COMMUNITY LIVING

# PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### URLEND

Provides leadership training and education focused on family-centered healthcare

### National CIL and SILC Training and Technical Assistance

Shares information and resources to support independent living nationwide

### National Care Coordination Academy

Offers technical assistance to improve care coordination for children with complex medical needs

### Montana Deaf-Blind Project

Provides resources and assistance to school systems and people supporting children with deaf-blindness

### Montana Transition Planning Model \*

Developing a student-specific version of discovery for a successful transition

### National Center on Deaf-Blindness: Transition Outcomes for Youth with Deaf-Blindness

Offers technical assistance to State Deaf-Blind Projects to improve transition outcomes for youth

### University of Montana OUTREACH

Trains speech-language pathologists to provide service in rural and tribal communities

### Center for Disease Control (CDC) /Administration Community Living (ACL) Vaccine Support

Shares evidence-based information and support to increase COVID-19 safety measures

### Rural Disability Hub for COVID-19 Vaccination Outreach

Collaborates with partners to promote COVID-19 vaccination and related health safety measures

## SERVICE

### Montana Family to Family Health Information Center

Provides family-focused healthcare information

### MonTECH: Montana's Assistive Technology Program

Supplies technology, support, and services to improve quality of life

### Montana Assistive Technology Loan (MATL) Program

Facilitates low-interest loans for assistive technology

### Floating Across Montana \*

Partnering to build accessible kayak and canoe launches

### Montana Access to Outdoor Recreation (MATOR) project \*

Supplies adaptive recreation equipment

### Children's Special Health Services: Montana Transition Resources

Provides transition-to-adulthood resources for youth, families, and providers

### Healthy Community Living

Offers independent living workshops focused on health and community living skills

### Montana Disability and Health Program

Promotes health-related policy and practice initiatives

### All of Us Outreach in Montana

Recruits participants for national health outcomes research

### Public Health Workforce Expansion \*

Partnering to support a health and wellness outreach coordinator

### Community Outreach Collaborative of the American Association on Health and Disability \*

Increasing enrollment of people with disabilities in Medicaid and the ACA marketplace

### Montana: Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Promoting early identification of developmental disabilities

### Disability Data Advocates Taking Action (DisDATA) \*

Promoting data equity



## RESEARCH

### Project Connect: Online Peer Support to Reduce Social Isolation \*

Develops an intervention to improve social connections for disabled people

### 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

### Loneliness and Its Relation to Health in People with Spinal Cord Injury (SCI)

Identifies how loneliness impacts the health of people with SCI

### Alliance on Innovation in Maternal Health \*

Improves maternal safety

### Psychosocial Stress and its Relation to Maternal and Infant Outcomes among Women with Disabilities \*

Examines the relation of intimate partner violence and depression with maternal and neonatal outcomes

### The Living Well in the Community App

Builds an app using the Living Well program content

### Rural Community Living Development

Develops peer-to-peer training to support independent living in rural areas

### Rocky Mountain Region Americans with a Disability Act Research

Researches ADA legal issues

### Rural Youth Apprenticeship Development Project

Promotes apprenticeship opportunities in rural communities

## RTC:Rural

### Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities

#### Expanding the Availability and Quality of Rural Data

Uses existing large data sets to conduct rural analyses

#### Exploring Rural Disability Onset

Explores 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

### Partners for Healthy Community Living

Scales up the Living Well program to rural audiences

### Personal Assistance Services (PAS) 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

### Impacts of COVID-19

Explores COVID impacts on people with disabilities in rural and urban places

### Collaboration with the Research and Training Center on Promoting Interventions for Community Living

#### Home Usability Project

Promotes community participation of adults with disabilities through home modifications

#### Out and About

Evaluates community intervention to promote health and wellness

## EVALUATION

### Montana Access to Pediatric Psychiatry Network (MAPP-Net)

Evaluates the impact of statewide pediatric behavioral health program

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Rape Prevention Education Evaluation \*

Evaluates rape prevention efforts in Montana

### A Needs Assessment of the HIV Care Continuum in Montana \*

Evaluates HIV services and supports in Montana

### Disease Intervention Specialist (DIS) Workforce Needs Assessment \*

Investigates the needs of Montana's DIS workforce

### Participatory Evaluation of the Missoula Community Health Worker Program for Equity and Resilience \*

Evaluates the Community Health Worker Program

### Office for Public Instruction Agency Capacity Assessment for System Improvement

Improves state education agency capacity to implement multi-tiered systems of support

\* Indicates a new program



## Montana Obstetrics and Maternal Supports Evaluation (MOMS)

Evaluates Montana's maternal health supports

### Emergency Obstetric Services Study

Exploring the use of Recovery Doulas to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Montana

### MOMS Contraceptive and Postpartum Care Survey

Maternal Health Care Experiences and Patient Care Study

Montana Centers for Disease Control Levels of Care Assessment Tool Initiative

## Disability Counts

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

Disability service providers, advocates, and researchers rely on data. However, accessing rural disability data has been challenging.

RTC:Rural developed Disability Counts to improve access to rural data via interactive maps and a data lookup tool. Disability Counts users can:

- Explore general disability rates
- Zoom in on rural areas, states, and regions of the United States
- Search across disability-focused indicators such as employment and poverty
- Show where people with disabilities may be living, such as high-risk congregate settings
- Connect people with additional resources and support, such as emergency planning and response
- Help users develop and download data for advocacy, grant writing, and reporting

*"The Kentucky Statewide Independent Living Council is using the Disability Counts dashboard to access county-level disability data. The dashboard is valuable for us because it gathers county-level data in a convenient place and enables us to research the disability populations in the service areas of our state's Centers for Independent Living. This information will be used in our State Plan, in our annual federal reports, and wherever else we can, to demonstrate a need for additional resources for people with disabilities in Kentucky."*

- Ester Ratajeski, member of the Kentucky State Independent Living Council

## Consumer Advisory Council

The Consumer Advisory Council (CAC) helps the Rural Institute develop strategies to reach and serve individuals with disabilities, families, and professionals in Montana. CAC members also present at conferences and webinars, disseminate information in their communities, and manage the Community Investment Fund.

The CAC is made up of 12-15 people with disabilities, their family members, and professionals in the field, who provide leadership on disability issues in Montana. Council members serve one-year terms and may reapply at the end of their term.

If you are interested in learning more about the CAC or would like to apply to serve, contact Kim Brown (Kim.Brown@mso.umt.edu) or visit the CAC page on the Rural Institute website.

## Montana Voices Amplified

Montana | Agitate, Advocate,  
Help Each Other Navigate  
**Voices AMPLIFIED**

The Rural Institute and the Montana Family to Family Health Information Center (MT F2F) are promoting advocates' voices. Montana Voices Amplified (MVA) is a platform for people to speak for themselves. We publish, promote, and distribute articles and videos sharing lived experience.

To learn more, visit the Montana Voices Amplified page on the Montana Family to Family website.

*"Montana Voices Amplified has given me a way to share my story. This is empowering and allows us to help build awareness and understanding in others. These are powerful tools and meaningful gifts. When our stories resonate with readers, lives are impacted and partnership grows."*

- Elizabeth Cummings

*"I love the MT Voices project as it gives a voice to the crowd that is most often not heard. It allows us to tell our stories in our own way, which makes it such a unique format and it's all made possible by the talented and dedicated staff. Without your hard work, we can't get our stories or information out to the world."*

- Ed Worrell



## Rural Institute

For Inclusive Communities

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