



Greetings from the Research & Training Center on Independent Living (RTC/IL) at the University of Kansas. We are committed to supporting centers for independent living and other community-based organizations that serve people with disabilities. This update informs you about resources and news you may find useful.

Spreading the Good Words



Do you have your copy of the new *Guidelines: How to Write and Report About People with Disabilities* and its companion poster, “Your Words, Our Image”? We published the 8th edition last summer, with updates to many of the terms.

In the brochure, we also added a few new sections. For example, we discuss identity language as an alternative that some people prefer to person-first language. An entry on disability humor was contributed by the late [Linda Gonzales](#), who founded the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)

and advised our center on many issues.

You can download the publications for free or order printed copies. Please share them with your colleagues, friends and community members!

Rural Realities: Testifying for the National Council on Disability

Several of the Center’s partners and colleagues testified in a panel on “Living with a Disability in Rural America” when the National Council on Disability (NCD) held its quarterly meeting in Topeka, Kan., on Dec. 4-5, 2013 ([read story](#)). The NCD is an independent federal agency making recommendations to the President and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families. Martha Hodgesmith helped the NCD identify the panelists.

Tom Seekins spoke about the “rural accessibility penalty” for people with disabilities. Seekins is our research partner and Director of the University of Montana’s [Research and Training Center on Disability in Rural Communities](#).

Colleagues from Centers for Independent Living also spoke about rural issues, along with consumers and leaders of advocacy agencies. They included Audrey Schremmer, Executive Director of Three Rivers Inc., in Wamego, KS; Gary Maddox, Executive Director of Southwest Center for Independent Living in Springfield, MO; Marie Clement, a consumer from the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation; and Julia Thomas, Executive Director of the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy.

RTC/IL Director Glen White also spoke about education for people with disabilities during a public comment session.

For photos, visit our [Facebook album](#) “National Council on Disability Meeting in Topeka, KS.”

Home Visitability Gains Visibility

Dot Nary's research on home visitability was featured in the *Lawrence Journal-World* on Dec. 17, 2013. The article "[Make sure your home is 'visitible' during the holidays for guests with disabilities](#)" highlights the health aspects of staying socially connected.

Nary (*pictured*) also presented her research on home visitability for an IL conversation hosted by APRIL in 2013. "[Visitability: Advocating for Basic Home Access](#)" is online as an [audio recording](#).



APRIL in October

It was wonderful to visit with many of you at the APRIL conference in Tulsa last October. We distributed our Center's products there, and are happy to send you any of our resources if you couldn't make the conference.

Two of our staff also made presentations at the conference. Glen White discussed a project that helps [CILs build their capacity to support the community participation of consumers](#). We will share successful methods from this ongoing research in coming months. And Dot Nary presented her findings on home visitability, discussed above.

Health Care for People with I/DD

Martha Hodgesmith presented "Listening to Their Voices – Improving Access to Health Care Using a Community Engagement Initiative Model" at the National Home & Community-Based Services Conference last September. Attendees included people who work in the field of Medicaid long-term supports and services.

Hodgesmith summarized a series of town hall meetings that were held across Kansas in 2012. The resulting recommendations are outlined in [Improving Access to Health Care for Kansans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: A White Paper](#) (PDF).

Access to Success: Free Training for College Students

"[Access to Success](#)" is a free online training for college students with disabilities. Glen White, Jean Ann Summers, Alice Zhang and former staff member Leslie Schmille created the training with funding from the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

College students who have disabilities don't always know what they are entitled to under the law or how to request accommodations. The training is designed to improve students' self-advocacy skills and knowledge about their legal rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

New Disability Statistics Now Online



Our research partner Andrew Houtenville released the [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#) in Dec. 2013, which is produced by Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Statistics and Demographics at the University of New Hampshire.

This web-based tool gathers disability statistics published by various federal agencies together in one place. When you're working on legislative and other

matters relating to persons with disabilities, the Compendium will make finding and using disability statistics easier. A few of the findings from 2012:

- Poverty: The poverty rate was 29.2 percent for individuals with a work limitation and/or a broad disability.
- Employment Gap: The employment rate for individuals with disabilities was 31.1 percent versus 73.6 percent of people without disabilities.

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