

INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

JULY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2025



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Thank you to our incredible team for their tireless dedication
to building a more inclusive society.

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to present this year's Report to the Community. For nearly 60 years, the Institute for Human Development (IHD) has worked to foster an inclusive society by promoting attitudes that honor individuals with disabilities while improving access to all dimensions of the human experience. As a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), we carry out our mission through community service, education, research, and information dissemination.

Thanks to the dedication and hard work of our staff, IHD advanced multiple initiatives over the past year that expanded our impact. In October 2024, we hosted the first Northern Arizona Disability Resource Fair in direct response to community requests. The event brought together families, service providers, and advocates from across the region, creating a vibrant atmosphere and forging relationships to increase access to essential services. One parent shared, "I really enjoyed the fair and made many connections," underscoring its impact. Because of its success, we plan to make the fair an annual tradition, broadening its scope to draw even more families and partners.

Our programs continue to provide critical services across the state. The Growing in Beauty Partnership Program offers culturally responsive early intervention services to Navajo children from birth to age three. Through our Interdisciplinary Evaluation Clinic, children receive comprehensive developmental evaluations, with families consistently describing the team as sensitive, respectful, and attentive to the whole child. Our assistive technology

initiatives allow individuals to explore devices, participate in personalized training, and gain skills that enhance daily living and promote independence.

IHD continues to expand education and leadership opportunities for people with diverse abilities. College students with intellectual and developmental disabilities receive tailored supports through the Supporting Inclusive Practices in Colleges program, helping them thrive in higher education. Events such as our Amplifying Voices of Disability virtual day of learning and the 26th Annual Evidence for Success Disability Conference provides spaces for disability leaders, families, and professionals to learn from one another and shape the future of inclusivity.

These examples reflect IHD's commitment to ensuring individuals with disabilities can fully participate in all life experiences. Our accomplishments are possible because of the dedication of our staff, the commitment of our partners, and the support of our communities.

In closing, please remember that equality harms no one, but its absence does. Thank you for helping us build a world where equality and inclusion are not just ideals but lived realities.



KELLY D. ROBERTS, PHD

IHD Executive Director and Professor

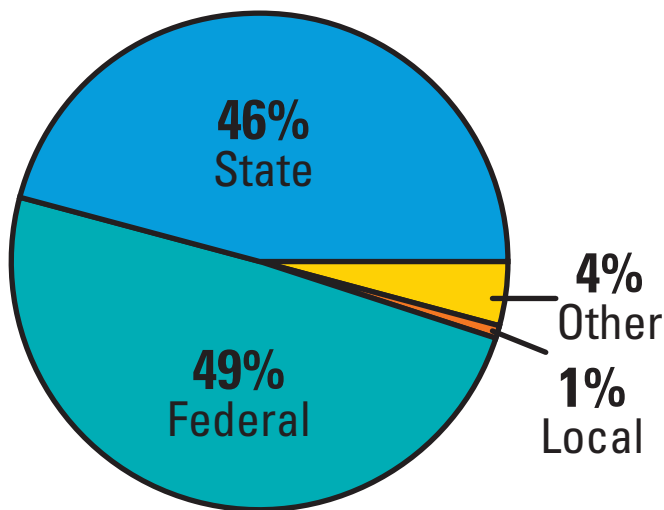
IHD OVERVIEW

IHD'S VISION

People with disabilities fully participate in all life experiences.

IHD'S MISSION

Promote full inclusion by advancing attitudes that value persons with disabilities while enhancing access to all aspects of the human experience.



During fiscal year 2025, IHD leveraged

\$11.5 MILLION

with funding from federal, state, and local sources.

INDIVIDUALS
SERVED

38,972

ACTIVITIES

550

PRODUCTS AND
PUBLICATIONS

120

PRODUCTS
DISSEMINATED

84

PROJECTS
AND PROGRAMS

42

TRAINEES

26

GRANT
PROPOSALS
SUBMITTED

22

FEATURED: NORTHERN ARIZONA DISABILITY RESOURCE FAIR

The inaugural Northern Arizona Disability Resource Fair took place at the High Country Conference Center in Flagstaff, Arizona on October 5, 2024. Developed in response to community requests, the fair was hosted by IHD and Care 4 the Caregivers, in collaboration with High Country Adaptive Sports and the United Way of Northern Arizona.



Focused on the northern Arizona disability community, the event featured a vibrant exhibit hall with 35 organizations showcasing a wide range of local resources and supports, including service providers, nonprofit organizations, assistive technology companies, and local, state, and federal agencies. Light refreshments, inclusive activities such as make-and-take assistive technology stations, and raffle prizes helped create a welcoming, fun environment that encouraged meaningful connections and community engagement.

The event drew 169 individuals from Coconino, Apache, Navajo, and Yavapai counties.

The atmosphere was described as “awesome,” “welcoming,” and “full of amazing resources that gave me hope.” One widely shared social media post praised it as a “great conference—well done AND affordable!”

The success of the 2024 Northern Arizona Disability Resource Fair has set the stage for it to become an annual gathering, growing each year with new services, resources, and opportunities to connect people from across the region.



COMMUNITY SERVICE

Through its community service programs, IHD provides individuals, families, and professionals with services and supports that promote the full participation of individuals with disabilities in their communities.



Providing Accessible Training and Home Support for Parents with Intellectual Disabilities (PATHS)

PATHS works with home visiting programs to improve support for Arizona parents with intellectual disabilities who have infants or young children.

6

trainings were delivered to home visitors statewide

100%

of participants reported being highly satisfied with the training

1

manuscript summarizing findings from home visitor research was completed

Growing in Beauty Partnership Program (GIBPP)

GIBPP works with the Navajo Nation Growing in Beauty Program to provide early intervention services for children up to three years old. GIBPP staff provide professional services that include physical, occupational, and speech therapy.

160

children enrolled in the Navajo Nation Growing in Beauty Program

80

children per month (on average) received services from GIBPP therapists

100%

of families strongly agreed that providers treated them with respect and cultural understanding

The team helped us understand more (about how to support my child's development) and was very friendly and engaging with the kids, especially at a very young age.
- Parent of a GIBPP participant

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

Assistive technology (AT) includes thousands of devices and aids that enable people with disabilities to lead more productive and independent lives.

AT remains central to IHD's work through the Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP); the Assistive Technology Center (ATC); Assistive Technology for Employment and Independence (ATEI); the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Evaluation and Training Program; and the Adaptive Gaming Clinic.

Collectively, across all AT programs over the last year:

2,399

AT devices were loaned to 758 individuals

965

individuals participated in capacity-building and awareness training on AT and related topics

13,952

individuals attended the 59 public awareness events held by IHD staff

Just wanted to let you know that I received the equipment and I feel very grateful to you and your organization. I promise to make good use of it in my career moving forward. Thank you so much!!
- ATEI participant

Arizona Technology Access Program (AzTAP)

AzTAP is Arizona's designated Assistive Technology Act Program, offering a range of AT services throughout the state.

747

AT device loans were provided, totaling 2,357 devices

89

individuals received assistance in acquiring used or preowned AT devices, with an estimated savings of \$151,291

\$123,175

in low-interest loans was granted for the purchase of AT devices

1,530

individuals received device demonstrations across 415 sessions

7

community organizations received individualized technical assistance

1,159

individuals received support with their own, a family member's, or a client's AT needs





Adaptive Gaming Clinic

AzTAP's Adaptive Gaming Clinic helps individuals with disabilities learn about and experience the social and physical benefits of video gaming. Through consultations, device demonstrations, and equipment trials, AzTAP staff help participants determine what games, hardware, and settings best meet their needs.

90+

individuals were served

28

informational events were held to educate attendees about the clinic and adaptive gaming technology options

2

students gained internship experience with the program

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) Evaluation and Training Program

The AAC program helps individuals with speech and language barriers and their families find devices to improve communication. Evaluations are conducted by speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists using in-person, telehealth, and hybrid approaches that combine both.

253

AAC evaluations were completed

469

hours of AAC implementation training were provided to users and their support team

3

state-level professional development presentations were delivered

Assistive Technology for Employment and Independence (ATEI)

ATEI helps Arizona State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) clients reach their employment and independent living goals.

\$1M+

in AT equipment was purchased for participants

559

AT devices were obtained

14,485

hours of training and implementation services were provided to participants

1,461

participants received AT assessments and follow-up training



American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Training and Technical Assistance Center (AIVRTTAC)

AIVRTTAC provides training, technical assistance, and continuing education opportunities to personnel at the 90+ American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) projects across the nation. AIVRTTAC is a partnership between IHD and the Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Institute at Northwest Indian College.

SUCCESS STORY: WINNEBAGO TRIBE

When the Winnebago Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation (TVR) Program began receiving intensive training and technical assistance (ITTA) from AIVRTTAC in March 2023, staff had limited experience with tribal VR programs, and their existing grant was insufficient to meet all program goals.

Through ITTA, staff gained a deeper understanding of VR and enrolled in courses offered by the TVR Institute. They collaborated with tribal leadership to revise their grant strategy, ultimately applying for a larger grant that would allow them to serve all eligible tribal members and expand their services. By October 2024, with new grant funding, the program was providing comprehensive VR services to the tribe.

You guided us with expertise and patience... Thanks to your guidance, we were funded at a level that will allow us to fulfill our mission of serving all tribal members with disabilities seeking employment that will have a lasting and positive impact on our community.

- Tribal representative

Online Privacy and Safety (OPS) Training Program

OPS delivers trainings to help Arizonans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) navigate online spaces safely and protect their personal information.

individuals received training, including 75 individuals with I/DD along with community partners and family members

trainings were delivered across the state

free online OPS course is currently in development to expand access

895

individuals participated in training and technical assistance activities, including regional trainings, AIVRS Academies, and in-person events at conferences

91%

of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the training was high quality, relevant, and useful

20

AIVRS projects received intensive training and technical assistance (in-person, long-term support to improve services)

7,234

website views were recorded, a 327% increase from the previous year

35

products were disseminated, including two practice guides, three newsletters, nine webinars, and 20 supplemental resources

113

AIVRS staff members completed one or more of the 21 courses offered by the TVR Institute

140

14

1

INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION & TRAINING

IHD's Interdisciplinary Education and Training (IET) programs foster academic attainment, skills development, and professional growth for individuals with disabilities as well as those working in disability-related fields, including educators and service providers.

IET HIGHLIGHTS

20

courses were offered for academic credit

4,068

individuals participated in 110 continuing education opportunities

130

students with developmental disabilities received adaptive educational coaching, employment coaching, and peer mentoring from IHD

162

family members, community members, and other supporters of individuals with developmental disabilities received practical guidance and resources

190

providers/professionals working in disability-related fields received topic-specific training materials and technical support

2

grant proposals were submitted

Assistive Technology Graduate Certificate Program

The AT Graduate Certificate program prepares individuals to provide AT services and supports to adults and children with disabilities. It is a professional development opportunity for individuals working in education, health care, rehabilitation, or other human services fields.



7

courses were offered

101

students across several departments enrolled in the program courses

2

students earned the Graduate Certificate in Assistive Technology





Advancing Assistive Technology for Learning and Accessibility in Higher Education for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (ATLAS)

The goal the ATLAS program, which concluded in 2025, was to increase the effective use of AT among students with intellectual and developmental disabilities in postsecondary education. The initiative aimed to improve academic performance, promote independence, and enhance self-determination.

10

students participated in the ATLAS program

8

students received comprehensive AT evaluations

4

participants were provided with trial AT devices

2

professional trainings were held at Kingman School District and Coconino Community College

Minor in Disability Studies

The Minor in Disability Studies helps students understand disability as a social experience, focusing on its history and role in contemporary society.



283

students enrolled in the Minor in Disability Studies program

250

individuals completed the courses offered

15

students graduated with the minor

2

new courses were developed: Disability and Feminism (WGS 399) and Neurodivergence in Society (DIS 399)



Supporting Inclusive Practices in Colleges (SIP-C)

SIP-C supports students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in attending and succeeding in postsecondary education.



29

students with ID received vital support services

6

summer workshops were held to introduce individuals with ID to postsecondary education options

Special Education Learning Experiences for Competency in Teaching (SELECT)

SELECT provides graduate-level courses to train professionals to work effectively with K-12 students with disabilities.



36

courses were offered

444

teachers, administrators, and educational professionals completed courses

[The courses offered] practical strategies, evidence-based approaches, and focus on individualized communication support, providing valuable tools to enhance engagement and interaction for autistic students in diverse learning environments.
- SELECT participant

Interdisciplinary Evaluation Clinic

The clinic offers free developmental evaluations to children and serves as a training experience for NAU graduate students in health and education fields. It is supported by a community reinvestment grant from Mercy Care.

19

children received comprehensive developmental evaluations

100%

of families attending the clinic agreed that service providers respected their culture, and all respondents said they would recommend the clinic to other families

Student and Community Engagement Events

Student trainees advised by IHD staff organized and co-led five events, reaching a total of 426 individuals:

- Developmental Disability Awareness Month Coconino County event
- Annual Disability Film Festival
- African American Conference on Disabilities presentation
- Arizona Youth Leadership Forum
- IHD Evidence for Success Disability Conference networking event

IHD delivered workshops and events introducing students to educational and vocational pathways that support professional practice, scholarship, and policies for promoting the inclusion of individuals with developmental disabilities. Key events included:

- IHD's Not Inspiration Porn Disability Film Festival
- Conversations on Disability open forum
- Judy Heumann Symposium
- Diversity Commission Film Festival

RESEARCH & EVALUATION

IHD has an outstanding team of researchers who are expert practitioners in the disability disciplines of medicine, psychology, speech-language pathology, and education.



RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

25

conference presentations

11

ongoing research projects

17

articles submitted to peer-reviewed journals

3

external project evaluations

22

grant applications

12

funded grants

3

bridge briefs

Culturally Appropriate Research in American Indian Employment (CARE)

CARE examines tribal vocational rehabilitation (TVR) practices to understand what helps American Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities achieve employment goals. This year, the project focused on creating a visual diagram to help TVR staff understand the factors that contribute to participants' success. Key activities included the following:

180

contributions were collected from TVR staff and partners during three conference sessions

5

TVR program directors summarized contributions into 27 key elements

60

TVR professionals provided feedback on a draft diagram

1

customizable toolkit is in development for programs to adapt to their cultural context

Advancing Hózhó in Autism Assessment for Diné Families

A collaborative research team from IHD, NAU, and the University of New Mexico received funding from the National Institute of Mental Health to improve autism assessment practices for Diné (Navajo) children and families. Researchers are gathering perspectives from Diné families and practitioners about the autism assessment process and ways it can be improved.

Comprehensive Review and Analysis (CRA) Portrait of State Services for People with Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities in Arizona

Every five years, the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) develops a strategic plan. To support ADDPC in its plan for 2027–2031, IHD is creating a portrait of state services in areas such as health care, employment, supports, interagency initiatives, and safety, with a high-level overview of education, housing, transportation, childcare, and recreation.

- 260+ resources were reviewed, including reports, press releases, and publications
- 203 surveys of individuals with I/DD, caregivers, and family members on service access and priorities were conducted
- 159 surveys of service providers, advocates, and organizations on system barriers and improvement needs were conducted
- 10 community conversations (two virtual, eight in-person) were held with 125+ participants sharing local perspectives

Out-of-School STEM for Neurodivergent Learners

With funding from the National Science Foundation, IHD researchers completed a review of informal science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) experiences for neurodivergent learners. These include individuals with autism, dyslexia, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The findings highlight how informal programs, such as summer camps and after-school activities, can better support these learners by focusing on strengths, offering flexible learning, and training program leaders. The graphic below, based on a review of 2,600 documents and 10 informal STEM programs serving neurodiverse students, presents nine recommendations based on the results. When these are implemented, neurodivergent learners enhance their STEM learning, grow in confidence and interest, and develop a stronger identity as scientists.



DISSEMINATION

IHD's dissemination team works to make IHD materials and resources available to a broad audience and amplify the impact of its programs and projects across the campus, state, and nation. This includes supporting Arizona disability partners in sharing their own resources.

Over the past year, dissemination staff:

- expanded IHD's audience through social media, reaching 9,666 individuals on Facebook (up from 4,700 last year) and 1,930 on Instagram (up from 228)
- increased awareness of IHD's disability-related activities by creating graphic announcements for video display boards in the student union and other campus buildings
- hosted the second annual Amplifying Voices of Disability virtual day of learning, reaching over 100 participants from 14 states
- supported the delivery of IHD's online and virtual services, trainings, and learning opportunities
- published the quarterly IHD newsletter, featuring stories about IHD projects, student and faculty successes, and upcoming events
- used the IHD listserv and other delivery methods to share highlights, events, research articles, and other announcements with a wide audience



DISSEMINATION HIGHLIGHTS

99

products and publications

84

published resources

117

posts on Facebook and Instagram

45

email blasts

16

printed flyers

25

conference presentations



AMPLIFYING VOICES OF DISABILITY



Amplifying Voices of Disability

Virtual Day of Learning



On February 27, 2025, IHD hosted the second annual Amplifying Voices of Disability virtual day of learning, focusing on timely, hot-button issues from the point of view of those with lived experience of disability.

This year's program featured five engaging sessions covering a wide range of topics, including parenting with a disability, advocacy strategies, employment readiness training, and the role of service dogs.

By combining a virtual format with affordable pricing, the event reached over 100 participants from 14 states, including 44% who live in rural areas where training opportunities are typically limited.



The topics were already very engaging, but the real-life experiences and approaches were incredible.

- Amplifying Voices participant

The advice was raw and real, stemming from lived experiences and thoughtful explanations on why these approaches could work.

- Amplifying Voices participant

I enjoyed the diversity of the sessions. Each speaker was engaging and human.

- Amplifying Voices participant

2025 IHD EVIDENCE FOR SUCCESS DISABILITY CONFERENCE

IHD hosted the 26th annual Evidence for Success Disability Conference from June 22–24, 2025, at Gila River Resorts and Casinos – Wild Horse Pass in Chandler, Arizona. With record-breaking attendance, this year's conference brought together individuals from multiple states for three days of dynamic programming.

Content strands included disability-related generative artificial intelligence (AI), assistive technology (AT), American Indian/Alaska Native vocational rehabilitation and employment, and disability policy and advocacy.

New programmatic highlights included a panel discussion with service dog handlers that showcased different types of service animals and their roles, as well as a rapid roundtable forum. This gave participants the chance to explore a variety of disability-related topics in an informal setting, which offered a more personal experience than our typical breakout sessions.

The conference opened with a keynote by Lawrence Weru, who highlighted the role of the disability community in shaping inclusive AI. It closed with an address by Rachel Simon, who shared her family story to explore themes of independence, relationships, and community.

605

individuals participated

64

educational sessions were held

50+

exhibitors shared resources from national and local AT companies, government agencies, and disability services organizations

98%

of survey respondents reported being either highly satisfied or satisfied with the event overall

I appreciate the centering of people with disabilities of various sorts as presenters and experts.

- Conference attendee





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