

National Council on Disability: Promoting Self Sufficiency of People Living with Disabilities

Federal indicator systems should include people with disabilities to ensure effective enforcement, program monitoring, evaluation, and performance reporting. Indicators and data need to inform decision makers about quality of life status across all citizens.

Lead Agency:

National Council on Disability

Agency Mission:

The mission of the National Council on Disability is to promote the full inclusion, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency of people with disabilities of all ages and backgrounds by providing advice, analysis, and recommendations on disability policy to the President, Congress, and other federal agencies.

Principal Investigator:

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General Description:

Through this research, NCD sought to: (a) ensure appropriate Federal Government monitoring, program evaluation, and supports for people with disabilities, without duplicating ongoing efforts, and (b) determine how the Federal Government can contribute effectively to improve performance reporting across major social programs for Americans with disabilities and their families.

Nationally, a major reporting mechanism has been the use of indicator systems; yet, few adequately address (or even include) outcome data related to people with disabilities. Most indicator systems also are domain-specific (e.g., addressing health while omitting other areas of people's lives). On one hand, better information that presents a full picture can benefit people with disabilities, business, and government. On the other hand, some of the proposed changes might require regulatory and legislative action .

NCD's research identifies valid federal indicators and data focused on people with disabilities. It also describes the status of the U.S. population of Americans with disabilities and points to knowledge gaps. NCD's report makes recommendations for transforming the existing indicator system and contributing to the knowledge base. This

includes the prospect of gaining useful information about the extent that federal programs are beneficial to people with disabilities.

Excellence: What makes this project exceptional?

No other federal research report exists which has examined the issues of improving federal statistics, outcome data and indicator systems, and proposed a set of quality-of-life indicators for the United States based on extant, reliable and valid statistical data.

Significance: How is this research relevant to older persons, populations and/or an aging society?

The research conducted for this report included a review of federal aging data collection, indicator projects, and statistical reports. The proposed set of quality-of-life indicators offered by this report are applicable to people up to 64 years of age.

Effectiveness: What is the impact and/or application of this research to older persons?

One impact is that this report has demonstrated the ability to use existing federal statistical data to depict the quality of life of people with disabilities who are aging. Extant federal indicator systems for older persons could adopt and/or adapt specific items from NCD's set of 18 for the purpose of enhancing the extant systems.

Innovativeness: Why is this research exciting or newsworthy?

There has been an almost immediate demonstration of public excitement and newsworthiness about this research. On June 4, 2008, less than two months after the report's public release, the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on Information Policy, the Census, and National Archives conducted a hearing on the topic.