

# HDI at a Glance: 50 Years of Inclusion and Equity

Established in 1969, the Human Development Institute (HDI) is a unit of the Office of the Executive Vice President for Research at the University of Kentucky and part of a nationwide network of University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities. The mission of the Human Development Institute is to improve the inclusion, independence and contributions of people with disabilities and their families through education, research and evaluation, leadership and advocacy. Disability impacts nearly one-third of all Kentuckians, and intersects race, age, status, and gender identity, yet is too often overlooked as an intrinsic thread of diversity. HDI recognizes that creating environments and resources that are accessible and usable to the broadest array of people benefits people with disabilities. As such, the Human Development Institute is committed to being a national leader in Universal Design (UD) by modeling the principles of UD in all of our work, and by increasing the capacity of our partners and those we serve to ensure the maximum inclusion, engagement, independence, and opportunity possible for all people.

HDI's social justice efforts recognize that higher education plays a pivotal role in correcting inequities. Students with disabilities do not continue on to higher education at the same rate as their non-disabled peers. This inequity closes many doors to employment and economic self-sufficiency. With one-third of Kentuckians having a disability, the implications for the future of workforce are bleak without intervention and a shift in priorities. There must be an emphasis on ally-ship leadership, and inclusion of all students with disabilities from the earliest ages when considering the pipeline from school to work. Medical education must better prepare healthcare practitioners to serve patients with disabilities if disparities in healthcare are to be corrected. A variety of options must be available to students with disabilities, as is available for all students, including dual enrollment in higher education, apprenticeships, enrolling in college, acquiring internships and practica, conducting research as students, and obtaining leadership roles across all employment sectors and higher education.

HDI currently includes 72 externally funded accounts totaling approximately \$23 million led by 19 interdisciplinary principal investigators.

## **The over-arching goals of HDI are to:**

- Conduct research that contributes to improvements in practice and outcomes in the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.
- Provide interdisciplinary pre-service training and continuing education programs to promote the inclusion, independence, and contributions of people with disabilities and their families throughout life.
- Provide training and technical assistance to national, state, and local stakeholders that contribute to improvements in practice and outcomes in the lives of persons with disabilities and their families.
- Disseminate HDI products through a variety of methods, including electronic and alternate formats, to assure that multiple audiences have timely access to information to improve services and results.

## **The entirety of research and scholarly activity at HDI centers around inclusion and disability, with priority areas in:**

**Early Childhood &  
Education**

**Leadership &  
Self-Advocacy**

**Employment**

**Health**

**Universal Design &  
Assistive Technology**

While each of our above priority areas include research focused on social justice issues (e.g., enhanced employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, equitable access to childcare, education, and assistive technology), our health priority area is specifically focused on addressing the UK priority of health disparities in under-represented populations.

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## HDI leads scholarly activity through:

### Graduate Certificate in Developmental Disabilities

Over 300 interdisciplinary students have participated in the certificate, with over 20% being students of color and/or students with disabilities.

### Undergraduate Certificate in Universal Design

Affiliate faculty across eleven UK colleges

### Fall and Spring Seminar Series

Six seminars offered in 2019-2020 academic year, with over 1500 attendees; April 23 seminar “Justice for the Whole Self: Learning to Be a Better Ally” with over 200 attendees

### Scholarly Publications

59 scholarly publications in the 2019-2020 academic year

### University Lecture Series

Catalog of nearly 40 one-hour lectures available for faculty to offer as part of existing coursework. Topics include disability in advocacy, employment, universal design and assistive technology. Presenters are people with disabilities, family members and other interdisciplinary staff. [hdi.uky.edu/university-lecture-series](http://hdi.uky.edu/university-lecture-series)

## Externally Funded Research

### RETAIN

Multi-systems workforce inclusion model demonstration grant providing early intervention vocational case management services to support people with non-work related injuries and illnesses who are at risk of exiting the workforce to stay employed and avoid long-term disability. Funder: US Dept of Labor. [Learn more here.](#)

### National Core Indicators

22 year survey research project to track and measure performance of public developmental disabilities agencies. HDI has interviewed over 10,000 Kentuckians with disabilities to assess disparities across life outcomes including health, employment, access to care, rights, relationships, and community engagement. Funder: KY Division of Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. [Learn more here.](#)

### Kentucky Post School Outcomes

Provides data on outcomes for students with disabilities after exiting high school. Funder: KY Dept. of Education (KDE). [Learn more here.](#)

### CHEER

Community health education and exercise resources – uses universal design to address health disparities for people with intellectual and mobility impairments; Funder: CDC Capacity Building grant. [Learn more here.](#)

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## Community Education and Outreach Examples

### Project SCOPE

HDI's Supporting Children of the Opioid Epidemic (Project SCOPE) builds needed provider capacity in Kentucky for the use of evidence-based practices in screening, monitoring, and interdisciplinary support for children impacted by Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS), trauma, and related exposures. [Learn more here.](#)

### Child Care Aware Kentucky

HDI's Child Care Aware Kentucky has worked closely with the state as part of COVID-19 response. Up to 38,000 KY childcare providers have completed mandatory training to fulfill requirements to re-open their programs. This training was developed and hosted on HDI's online learning management site [hdilearning.org](http://hdilearning.org). The training is available at no cost. It includes current regulations on clean and healthy environment, new and enhanced regulations, and a refresher course on mandatory reporting of child abuse. The training is also provided in Spanish. [Learn more here.](#)

### Center for Assistive Technology Services

HDI's Center for Assistive Technology Services (CATS) provides training and a lending library of assistive technology (AT) devices for the Lexington area. CATS also participates in the statewide AT locator service and AT Reuse program that makes many AT devices available for free. [Learn more here.](#)

### Driver Rehabilitation

HDI's Driver Rehabilitation program provides evaluation and training services to people with disabilities who are seeking employment to enable safe independent operation of a motor vehicle. HDI provides this service in collaboration with the UK Clinic Outpatient Services to over 200 Kentuckians annually. [Learn more here.](#)

### Community Work Transition Program

HDI's Community Work Transition Program has supported students with the most significant disabilities in employment opportunities while they are in high school since 1985. CWTP is currently available in 99 school districts in the state. [Learn more here.](#)

**National Centers, the first three of which are focused on addressing specific health disparities for individuals with disabilities ranging from prenatal diagnosis through aging and end of life issues:**

**Mental Health and  
Developmental  
Disabilities National  
Training Center**

**National Center for  
Dignity in Health  
Care for People with  
Disabilities**

**National Center  
on Prenatal and  
Postnatal Resources**

**Individuals  
with Disabilities  
Education Act (IDEA)  
Data Center**

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As part of the 2020 legislative session, HDI received a \$500,000 state appropriation for the Supported Higher Education Project Technical Assistance Center for FY21. The work of the Center includes: 1) Supporting institutions of higher education in providing individualized support to students, 2) Increasing capacity of systems and students, 3) Strengthening collaboration across KDE, IHEs, local school districts, and the KY Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), 4) Providing professional development, 5) expanding the number of and support to Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) Programs statewide, and 6) conducting research and evaluation. The work of SHEP will improve higher education opportunities for students with disabilities, with an emphasis on students with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## HDI commits to:

- 1 Partnering with UK faculty across all colleges to provide disability content through our University Lecture Series**
- 2 Providing research support for students conducting disability-related research through our Student Scholarship Fund**
- 3 Providing stipends for up to 10 graduate students who are accepted into our Certificate in Developmental Disabilities**
- 4 Providing stipends for up to 10 undergraduate students who are accepted into our Certificate in Universal Design**
- 5 Providing research opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students through our Center for Assistive Technology Services**
- 6 Providing a minimum of 6 full-time Research Assistantships to UK graduate students**