



**INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT  
NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**

# **REPORT** TO THE **COMMUNITY**

**JULY 1, 2023 TO JUNE 30, 2024**



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We are grateful to our incredible team, whose tireless efforts help to make a more inclusive society.



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



As the executive director of the Institute for Human Development (IHD), I am pleased to present this year's Report to the Community. For almost 60 years, IHD's mission has been to promote full inclusion by advancing attitudes that value persons with disabilities while enhancing access to all aspects of the human experience. As a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), IHD has four core functions dedicated to community service, education, research, and information dissemination. The accomplishments of each core function area from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 are described in the following pages.

Over the last year, IHD has expanded our services and increased efforts to promote access, attitudes, and inclusion for individuals with disabilities. We received awards to pursue exciting new projects, such as training home visiting professionals serving parents with intellectual and developmental disabilities and providing Navajo families with culturally responsive training on autism spectrum disorders. We also received new funding to support activities aligned with our Minor in Disability Studies.

Our 25th annual Evidence for Success Disability Conference introduced several programmatic elements, including four new

full-day strands that allowed participants to gain in-depth knowledge on focused topics. This year's strands focused on early childhood, parents with disabilities, assistive technology for blind and low-vision individuals, and the tribal vocational rehabilitation process.

In February of 2024, we introduced a new virtual day of learning, "Amplifying Voices of Disability," which took place entirely on Zoom and provided a forum for disability activists and self-advocates to discuss the topics that matter most to them. This will continue as an annual event.

We've also welcomed a new instructor to our Minor in Disability Studies program, a young man with Down syndrome who shares his unique lived experiences with students.

I want to thank our team for their hard work and express gratitude to our partners, our university, and the community at large for helping us create a more inclusive society.

Together we do make a difference.

A black ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Kelly D. Roberts", written in a cursive style.

**KELLY D. ROBERTS, PHD**

Executive Director and Professor



# IHD OVERVIEW

## IHD'S VISION

People with disabilities fully participate in all life experiences.

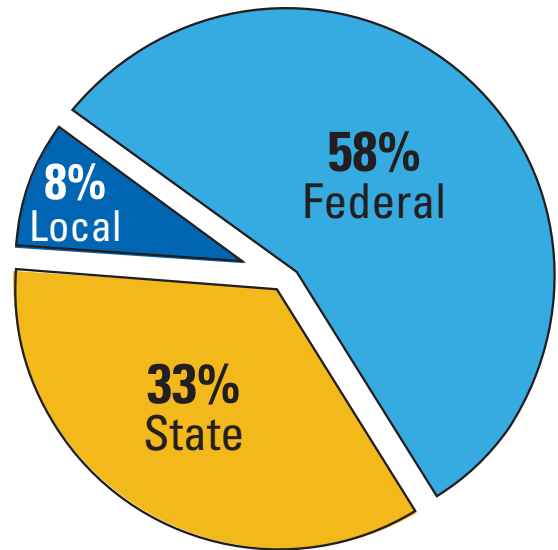
## IHD'S MISSION

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

During fiscal year 2024, IHD leveraged

# \$9 MILLION

with funding from federal, state, and local sources.



INDIVIDUALS SERVED

19,347

ACTIVITIES

704

PRODUCTS DISSEMINATED

12,512

PRODUCTS AND PUBLICATIONS

45

TRAINEES

94

GRANT PROPOSALS SUBMITTED

19

PROJECTS

38

# FEATURED INSTRUCTOR: JUSTICE ARMFIELD

In 2023, IHD welcomed Justice Armfield as a guest presenter to the Introduction to Disabilities course. Justice, now employed by IHD, is a young man with Down syndrome who brings an important perspective to the class, sharing his lived experiences while also demonstrating to students that people with Down syndrome can be meaningfully engaged in leadership positions.

*I teach people about what it is like to live with Down syndrome. I want to help people see that a disability is a difference, but not a limitation to living a happy, healthy life with a purpose.*

- Justice Armfield



*“Students get to hear about how Justice has typical experiences for a 20-year-old, and they also get to see how we can include someone with Down syndrome in roles that many people don’t think are possible. That kind of representation is very powerful.”*

John Schaffer, Academic Program Coordinator

As one student stated, *“I really love having Justice in class because he is able to add a perspective I would’ve never been able to*

*experience otherwise. He adds something to my education I didn’t even know I needed.”*

The Introduction to Disabilities class, taught by John Schaffer, covers the definitions of disabilities, the history of the disability rights movement, disability pride and culture, media representations of disability, and other related topics.



The Minor in Disability Studies is a unique academic program offered to undergraduate students at Northern Arizona University, and the first of its kind in the state. Since 2010, the minor program has provided students with a solid foundation of knowledge in disability studies. Courses examine topics such as the historical and legal treatment of individuals with disabilities, the role of disability in contemporary society, and the concept of “normal” and how it influences our understanding of disability.

# 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.

## Growing in Beauty Partnership Program (GIBPP)

GIBPP works with the Navajo Nation to provide early intervention services for children up to three years old. GIBPP staff provide professional services to the Navajo Nation, including physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech language pathology.

### GIBPP HIGHLIGHTS

- 355 children enrolled in the Navajo Nation Growing in Beauty Program
- 200 families were served
- 76 children per month (on average) received therapy from GIBPP therapists

*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 GIBPP participant

## PATHS: Providing Accessible Training and Home Support for Parents with Intellectual Disabilities

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

### PATHS HIGHLIGHTS

- 312 articles were reviewed to inform PATHS training materials
- 13 home visitors were interviewed to learn more about their experiences working with parents with ID
- 3 virtual trainings were conducted for home visitors from around the state
- 2 advisory committees were formed, composed of home visiting program supervisors and parents with ID
- 1 presentation about PATHS was conducted at the IHD Evidence for Success Disability Conference



# 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.

Last year's highlights include the following.

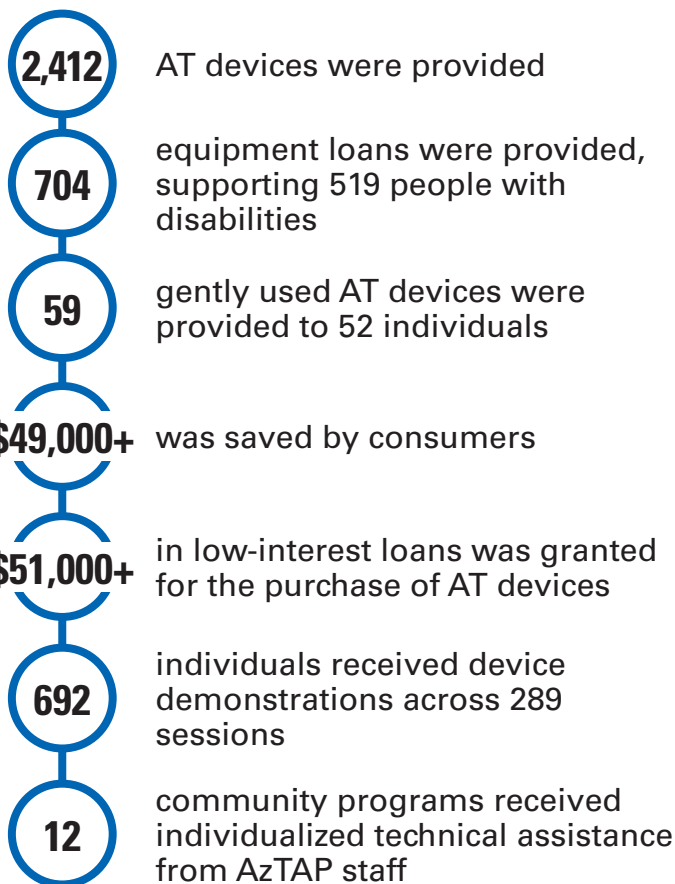
- AzTAP, ATC, and ATEI staff provided training on AT related topics to 2,219 individuals.
- AzTAP and ATC staff provided 1,529 information and assistance support events on AT devices or AT funding related needs.
- AzTAP, ATC, and ATEI staff held 73 public awareness events on our programs and services, reaching 1,994 individuals in the community.



## Arizona Technology Access Program

AzTAP offers a range of assistive technology services throughout the state.

## AZTAP HIGHLIGHTS





## Adaptive Gaming Clinic

The 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.

- 40+ individuals were served in the last two years
- Nine informational events were held to educate attendees about the clinic and adaptive gaming technology options
- Academic and volunteer opportunities were provided to students from NAU and other universities and high schools

*Gaming is something [our son] has loved since he was 3! Watching him get back into his element today was so exciting.*

- Parent of a clinic participant

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication Evaluation and Training Program

The AAC program helps individuals with speech and language barriers and their families find devices to improve communication.

486

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

168

AAC evaluations were completed

## Assistive Technology for Employment and Independence

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

\$450,000+

worth of AT equipment purchased

2,200

hours of training and implementation services provided

310

clients received assessments for assistive technology, new equipment, 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.

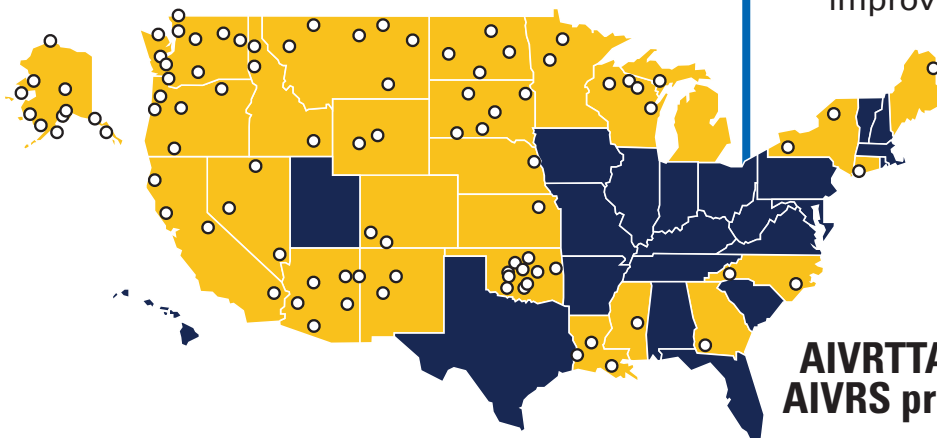
Over the past year, AIVRTTAC staff:

- held two virtual AIVRS Academies, providing training and support to over 80 individuals
- provided training and technical assistance to 3,807 AIVRS personnel
- published a practice guide on the vocational rehabilitation process
- compiled two AIVRTTAC newsletters
- shared AIVRS-related news and updates with AIVRS project staff every week



## AIVRTTAC HIGHLIGHTS

- 4,093** individuals attended training events
- 1,020** hours of technical assistance were provided to 573 individuals, including emails, telephone calls, and website resources
- 125** individual students from 51 AIVRS projects enrolled in courses offered by the TVR Institute, with 21 earning an award of completion in Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Studies
- 86** training events were held, including regional trainings, AIVRS Academies, and in-person events at conferences
- 26** webinars were conducted
- 20** AIVRS projects received intensive technical assistance (in-person, long-term assistance dedicated to improving project services)



**AIVRTTAC supports more than 90 AIVRS projects across the country.**

# INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION & TRAINING

IHD's Interdisciplinary Education and Training programs foster academic attainment, skills development, and professional growth for individuals working in disability related fields as well as educators and service providers.

857

individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), providers, professionals, families, and community members received education/training to increase disability literacy and access to relevant materials and resources

460

teachers, administrators, and educational professionals working with individuals with I/DD completed IHD's continuing education courses

196

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

82

students with developmental disabilities and 180 individuals, community members, and family members of individuals with I/DD received technical support

20

courses were offered for academic credit

17

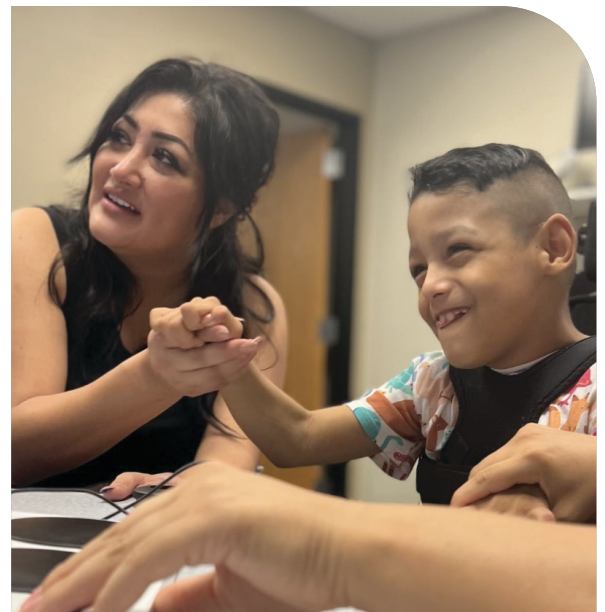
workshops and events were held that introduced students to educational and vocational pathways

5

trainees and students were mentored by IHD faculty

2

workshops on intersectionality and universal design for learning were provided to NAU faculty



## 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, rehabilitation, or other human services fields.



8

courses were offered

57

graduate students enrolled in related courses

16

graduate students were admitted to the graduate certificate program

7

students graduated with a graduate certificate in assistive technology



## Minor in Disability Studies

The Minor in Disability Studies explores disability through the social model lens and focuses on the historical aspects of disability, as well as the role of disability in contemporary society.



254

individuals attended the six Disability Studies minor courses

22

students graduated with the minor

## Special Education Learning Experiences for Competency in Teaching (SELECT)

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



673

individuals participated

36

SELECT courses were offered on topics such as autism and communication, early childhood language, and trauma-informed practices

*[The SELECT course] was easy to navigate, the assignments were relevant, and the instructor is obviously passionate about the course.*

-SELECT program participant

## Interdisciplinary Training Clinic

The clinic offers free comprehensive health evaluations to children and serves as a training experience for NAU graduate students in health and education fields.



9

interdisciplinary training clinics were held, providing evaluations to 24 children

## Other Trainee Programs

Five events/workshops were held, each of which was co-led by and/or included trainees:

- Disability Film Festival
- Disability Poetry Slam
- two student-led discussion panels at the 2024 IHD conference
- dating and relationships summer conference for students with I/DD



## 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

*Being in the SIP-C program has helped me get back into school. It has provided me with new supports that I never had before.*

-SIP-C program participant

# 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 STAFF HIGHLIGHTS

- 24 conference presentations
- 19 grant proposals
- 10 ongoing research projects
- 8 articles in peer reviewed journals
- 5 external project evaluations
- 4 funded grant proposals
- 2 bridge briefs
- 2 book chapters

## TAPDINTO-STEM

TAPDINTO-STEM is a nationwide research project focused on preparing people with disabilities for success in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.

IHD leads the Mountain Hub region, serving 34 students and helping support campus leaders at Northern Arizona University – Flagstaff & Yuma, Arizona Western College, Paradise Valley Community College, the University of Nevada – Reno, the University of Wyoming, and Utah State University.

## TAPDINTO-STEM HIGHLIGHTS

- Mountain Hub students earned master’s degrees in biological sciences, geology, and integrative medicine and health sciences, as well as bachelor’s degrees in psychological sciences and chemistry
- TAPDINTO-STEM conducted a two-day faculty accessibility workshop for 10 STEM faculty covering topics such as universal design for learning and classroom policies
- Students obtained employment and internships at several prestigious universities, corporations, and nonprofit organizations



## Culturally Appropriate Research in American Indian Employment (CARE)

CARE studies the practices and policies used by American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services projects, with the goal of learning what practices are most effective in helping American Indians and Alaska Natives with disabilities obtain and maintain competitive integrated employment.

## Health and Disabilities-Related Research

In collaboration with the University of Arizona, our work emphasizes public health surveillance of birth defects, developmental disabilities, and genetic conditions. Projects include the following:

- Arizona Developmental Disabilities Surveillance Program
- Congenital Heart Defects Surveillance and Tracking Across Regions Project
- Hypermobile Ehlers Danlos and Congenital Heart Defects Autonomic Dysfunction Study
- Hypermobile Ehlers Danlos Deep Phenotyping
- Northern Arizona Disability Needs Project

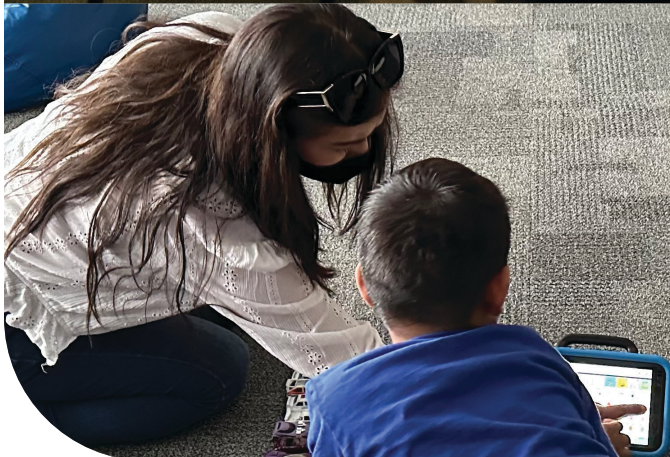


## DYNA-STEM

DYNA-STEM (Discover Your Neurodiverse Advantage in STEM) projects focus on assisting neurodiverse students in navigating and succeeding in STEM education and careers.

IHD researchers explore theories and strategies that play a role in neurodivergent learning and student success. Associated IHD projects include:

- Advancing Informal STEM Learning
- NSF INCLUDES: Developing a Collaborative Infrastructure for Educating STEM Undergraduate Students Who Are Neurodiverse Learners
- TAPDINTO-STEM





# DISSEMINATION

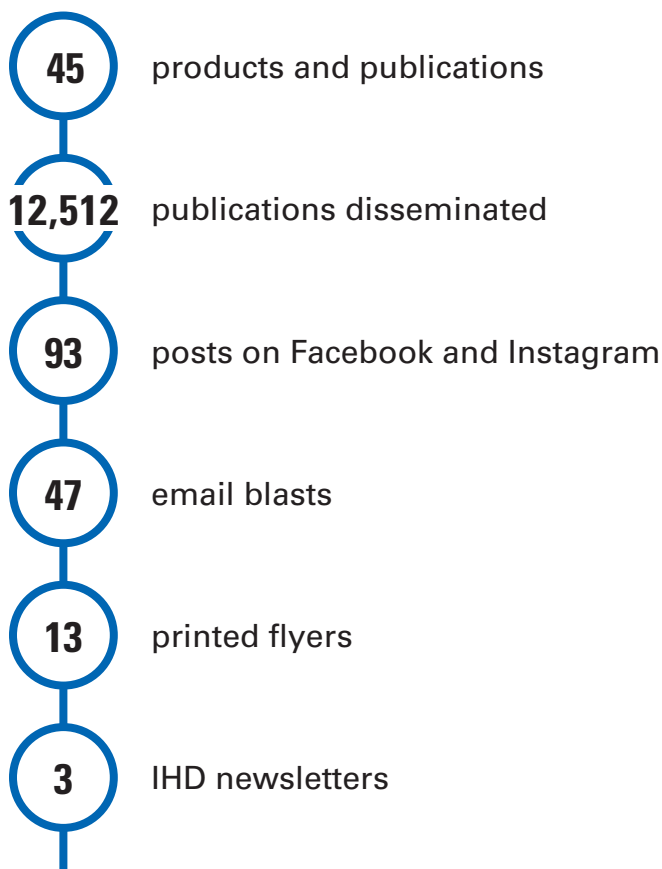
IHD's dissemination team is responsible for making IHD materials available to a broad audience. This year, the team strongly emphasized cultural responsiveness and accessibility, as the following activities demonstrate.

Over the past year, dissemination staff:

- ensured that all IHD products, materials, and websites were accessible to individuals with disabilities
- expanded our audience through social media, reaching 4,700 unique individuals on Facebook and 288 on our new Instagram account
- introduced a web-based virtual conference, "Amplifying Voices of Disability," attended by 131 individuals from across the country
- created a new website for the IHD annual conference and conducted outreach to increase participation
- assisted with online and virtual services, training, and learning opportunities
- developed and updated the IHD website, brochures, and other print and electronic materials with a greater focus on accessibility
- established the IHD quarterly newsletter, highlighting the real-world impact of our work and featuring stories about IHD projects, student and faculty successes, and upcoming events
- used the IHD listserv to share IHD highlights, events, research articles, and other announcements



## DISSEMINATION HIGHLIGHTS



## 2024 IHD EVIDENCE FOR SUCCESS

# DISABILITY CONFERENCE

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, the annual IHD Evidence for Success Disability Conference highlighted several IHD focus areas, including assistive technology and disability studies. The conference is a collaboration between IHD, the Arizona Department of Education – Exceptional Student Services, and Arizona’s Rehabilitation Services Administration.

The 2024 conference was held at the Wild Horse Pass Resort in Chandler, AZ and featured the following:

- keynote presentations by self-advocates Mike May and Nina G
- over 80 nationally known presenters and local experts
- a reception featuring a comedy performance by Nina G
- a unique collaboration with the Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) at the Foundation for Blind Children
- a sponsorship by the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) that brought a team from Marc Gold & Associates to present sessions on customized employment
- the introduction of four daylong strands that provided participants the opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge about select topics
- roundtable discussions that allowed attendees to share stories and experiences with other participants

540

participants

60

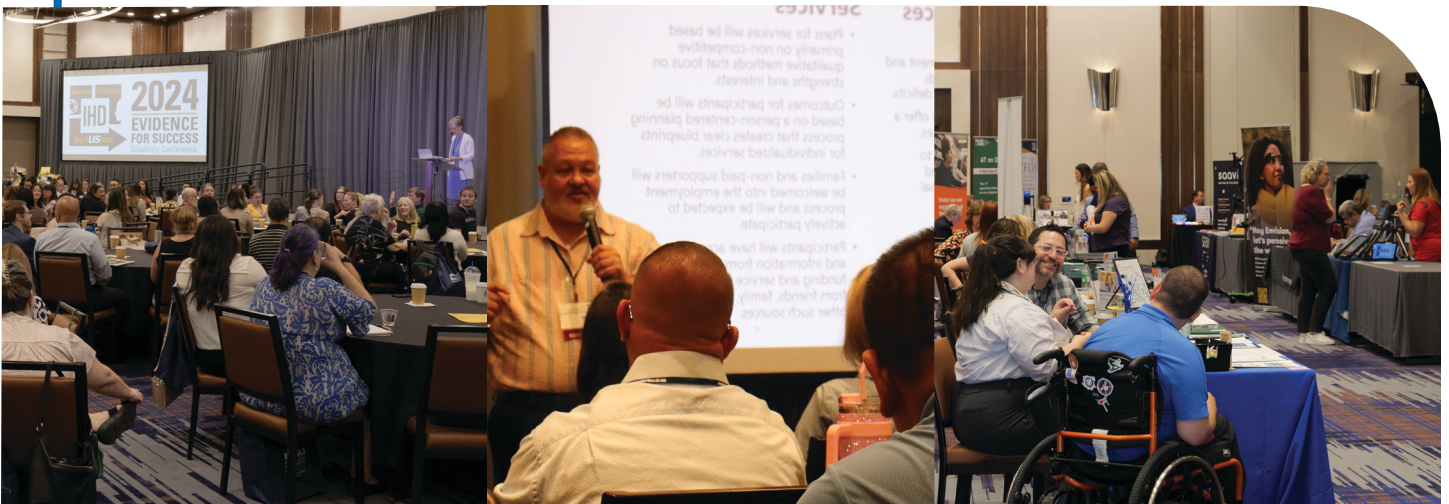
educational sessions

50

exhibitors, including national and local assistive technology companies, government agencies, and disability services organizations

4

full-day programmatic strands



# AMPLIFYING VOICES OF DISABILITY

On February 22, 2024, IHD introduced a virtual day of learning at which participants heard directly from disability activists and self-advocates about the topics that matter most to them. The event was delivered via Zoom to ensure that the content would be available to anyone interested in attending, regardless of where they live or work.

We received overwhelmingly positive feedback about the event, which we plan to host annually going forward.

*I loved all of the different presentations, the diversity of the presenters, the representation, and the compilation of information.*  
- Amplifying Voices participant

## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 131 people attended the event
- 5 sessions were held, attracting about 100 virtual participants each
- 50% of participants came from non-metropolitan areas in the U.S.
- 98% of survey respondents indicated they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the event

 **Amplifying Voices of Disability**  
Virtual Day of Learning

**NAU** NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY  
Institute for Human Development





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IHD is an institute of the College of  
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Northern Arizona University