



## **DRRC Opposes Cuts to Agency Staff Impacting Rehabilitation and Disability Research and Services**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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The Disability and Rehabilitation Research Coalition (DRRC) is dismayed by the recent reductions in force that have devastated the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) including the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the operations to support the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). These cuts are a serious blow to the federal infrastructure that supports millions of Americans with disabilities and older adults.

The ACL lost many employees, including public affairs and key policy teams, as well as all the regional offices that communicate with organizations in the field to ensure that the grants and services reach the intended populations. Many of these federal workers spent their careers developing hard-won trust with the disability community. This wholesale dismantling of a critical federal agency responsible for \$2.6 billion in annual disability and aging services funding is an abandonment of our most vulnerable community members.

Critical funding for disability services and research will likely be delayed as the staff responsible for grant disbursement have been laid off. HHS has not offered a plan for next steps to allocate grant funding that supports programs that are meeting the needs of people with disabilities. Organizations operating on razor-thin margins cannot withstand this uncertainty. NIDILRR's groundbreaking research into disability, independent living, and rehabilitation that drives policy improvements and technological innovations faces an uncertain future as the agency's structure is largely dismantled.

These cuts affect not just federal employees but millions of Americans who depend on ACL and NIDILRR programs. People with disabilities seeking independent living services, older adults requiring meal delivery, families navigating complex healthcare systems, and researchers advancing disability science all face disruption from these indiscriminate cuts.

The disability community has fought for decades to establish federal programs that recognize our right to full participation in society. These cuts threaten to undo that progress and undermine the federal government's commitment to supporting Americans with disabilities on the eve of the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. We will continue to advocate for the full restoration of these vital federal programs that ensure our community's dignity, independence, and full participation in American society.

We call on HHS to release next steps that detail how the core functions of ACL and NIDILRR will be maintained. We also request immediate measures to ensure all allocated disability and aging services and research funding reaches intended recipients without delay.