

## **UNH's Institute on Disability Awarded \$413,000 Federal Grant**

### **New Program Will Help Individuals with Disabilities Determine Their Futures**

By [Sharon Keeler](#)  
UNH News Bureau

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DURHAM, N.H. -- The Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire was recently awarded a \$413,400 training initiative grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Developmental Disabilities.

The five-year grant will fund the university's new Project LEAD (Learn, Empower, Advocate, and Determine), which builds on existing state efforts to increase self-determination among individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The project focuses on teaching people how to advocate for change within the human services system, and working with human services professionals on how to collaborate individually with people with disabilities.

According to Jan Nisbet, director of the institute, self-determination based support programs "grow from the belief that all people, including those with disabilities and their families, have the need to determine their futures, instead of relying on programs of care that provide for them. v"The project grows out of a national effort to change the way human services are organized and delivered," she says.

The Institute on Disability is the National Program Office on Self-Determination for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the largest U.S. philanthropy devoted to health care.

The staff of the institute is coordinating and performing the training activities of Project LEAD in partnership with People First of New Hampshire, the N.H. Division of Community Supports and Long-Term Care, the State Developmental Disabilities Council, the Disabilities Rights Center, and N.H. Leadership.

Training sessions will be conducted with each of the state's 12 developmental disability area agencies\*. These non-profits are designated by the state to provide (or contract with another organization to provide) direct services to individuals with disabilities and their

families, including supportive living assistance, in-home care, day programs and supportive employment.

Additionally, Project LEAD will foster community relationships, and provide an opportunity for individuals to pair with mentors who are involved in its leadership and advocacy training initiatives. Individual outcomes will be analyzed each year to determine the effectiveness of the training curriculum and model.

The Institute on Disability is a university affiliated program which works in collaboration with the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center's Center for Genetics and Child Development and Hood Center for Children and Families, as well as Franklin Pierce Law Center's Institute for Health, Law and Ethics.

For additional information about Project LEAD contact April Myers at 603-862-4320, or visit the institute's web site at [www.iod.unh.edu](http://www.iod.unh.edu).

**\* The 12 area agencies working with the institute include Northern New Hampshire Mental Health & Developmental Services, Inc. in Coos County; Developmental Services of Sullivan County; Lakes Region Community Services Council in Belknap County; Region IV Developmental Services in Merrimack County; Monadnock Developmental Services, Inc. in Cheshire County; Area Agency for Developmental Services in Hillsborough County; Moore Regional Services, Inc. in Hillsboro County; Developmental Services of Strafford County, Inc.; Community Developmental Services in Rockingham County; Region 10 Community Support Services, Inc. in Rockingham County; Center of Hope, Inc. in Carroll County; and United Developmental Services in Grafton County.**

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