

**PROJECT:**

Center on Effective Rehabilitation Technology (CERT)

**INVESTIGATORS:**

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**SPONSOR:**

National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research

**AMOUNT AWARDED:**

\$2.5 million

**BACKGROUND:**

Rehabilitation and assistive technology (RT/AT) can increase the independence and the quality of life of people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities can productively use RT/AT to enhance functioning in activities related to daily living, recreation, mobility, and employment-related skills. Nevertheless, people with diverse disabilities still experience a critical gap in awareness and use of suitable technology products.

Few technology access solutions are customized to user needs, appropriate for the user and environment, and meaningfully involve the user in the design and delivery process. The lack of an appropriate match and customization between the technology and the consumer often leads to the rejection or abandonment of technology solutions.

The main objective of CERT is to conduct rigorous participatory research on the effective delivery of RT/AT services to obtain successful employment outcomes for people with significant disabilities. CERT's two overarching goals address system, organizational, and individual-level factors impacting the delivery and use of RT/AT to improve employment outcomes in measurable ways for individuals with significant disabilities.

To accomplish these goals, the research team focuses on evaluating different organizational models and systems, and understanding the interplay between key actors and forces within those environments. In addition, researchers develop scientifically rigorous and practically useful tools and measures to assist individuals within those systems to better provide and use RT/AT toward improved employment outcomes.

Research partners include the Institute for Matching Person and Technology, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Engineering Society of North America, Rehabilitation Technology Associates, Inc., National Council on Independent Living, and AbleLink Technologies.

**POTENTIAL IMPACT:**

CERT is expected to have a national impact by generating new knowledge on the systematic supports needed for effective RT/AT service delivery, promoting changes at state and local levels through replication of effective practices, improving sustainable collaborations among key stakeholders, and improving informed decision-making to better match RT/AT with the individual's needs and preferences.

Outcomes will include:

- A model policies and procedures template for effective service delivery.
- A quality indicators self-assessment check list for service delivery programs.
- Development of a new RT/AT assessment tool and measures designed to create a better match between consumers and technology to advance employment outcomes.
- Technical assistance and training opportunities based on research findings.