

IRB Bulletin: January 2024

STAFF EVENT SPOTLIGHT



The IRB Office Closes 2023 With a Winter Open House in a Grand Atrium

Each December, in place of our monthly educational Brown Bag session, the IRB Office loosens its proverbial tie for our annual Winter Open House reception and gathers colleagues from disparate departments to warmly welcome the wonders of a year anew. Beyond its social value, we take sincere pride in hosting this annual affair as it builds community, provides networking opportunities, and fosters collaboration.

The Winter Open House is typically held on Northwestern's Chicago campus, but for the first time, in 2023, the event was hosted in the beautiful, glass-adorned Simpson-Querrey Potocnak Family Atrium, where 150+ of Northwestern IRB Office's research community colleagues and friends gathered for catered refreshments and good cheer. Guests were entertained with engaging conversation, lively music, and curated table games, including research trivia and a shot at winning IRB-branded "swag".

We hope to see you at our December 2024 Winter Open House but, for now, from the Northwestern IRB Office staff, we wish you a happy and healthy year ahead!



RELIANCE READY

Reliance Welcome Packet

Are you thinking about starting a collaborative multi-site project with investigators at external institutions? Do you intend for Northwestern to serve as the IRB of Record for all sites? Are you unsure about what the roadmap to IRB approval and site onboarding will look like for this new project? The **Reliance Welcome Packet** is now here to help you get started! Located on our [IRB of Record webpage](#), this packet of materials contains great resources such as a Reliance Process Overview and Reliance Process Flow Chart. These materials outline the general steps for getting initial IRB approval, executing Reliance, and onboarding external sites. In the Welcome Packet, you'll also find important and helpful template materials for you to distribute to collaborators.

UPCOMING IRB BROWN BAG - *TODAY!*

Research Consent:
A Review of the Document that Facilitates the
Process

Wednesday, January 17
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

[REGISTER NOW!](#)



FOSTERING ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSIVITY IN RESEARCH (FAIR) NEWS

A Federal Perspective: Disability Inclusion and Research

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released its [Language Access Plan](#) in November 2023. The plan is aimed at ensuring greater access to the services that HHS provides for people with Limited English Proficiency and people with disabilities.

Prior to the Plan of HHS, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) announced in December 2022 actions to [transform the American science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine \(STEMM\)](#) to advance the equity of people who have been marginalized and underserved, such as people of color, women, people with disabilities, people who live in rural communities and LGBTQ+ people.

In 2021, NIH established a Subgroup on Individuals with Disabilities to the broader Work Group on Diversity. The subgroup's [recommendations on how to increase disability equity and inclusion](#) were published in December 2022. Some of the recommendations include:

- Changing the NIH mission statement to remove “to reduce disability” and add “to optimize health and prevent or reduce illness for all people”;
- Establishing an NIH Office for Disability Research with a mission to include disabled individuals in research, and an NIH Disability Equity and Access Coordinating Committee;
- Fostering support for the equity, inclusion, and belonging of people with disabilities within NIH culture and structure;
- Advancing disability inclusion and anti-ableism through training, communication, policies, and accessibility;
- Review policy, culture, and structure to identify opportunities to promote disability inclusion in the NIH-funded research workforce

- Expand efforts to include disability communities and the perspectives of individuals with disabilities;
- Conduct research on disability health and health care disparities and equity
- Ensure that disability inclusion and anti-ableism are core components of all NIH DEI and accessibility efforts; and
- Maintain accountability for disability inclusion efforts

OSTP's goals are similar to the recommendations of NIH's Subgroup on Individuals with Disabilities. The NIH's leaders are working toward meeting the recommendations for improving disability equity and inclusion. NIH has encouraged other federal agencies and academic institutions to adopt their approach.

Ways that the Northwestern research community can support the inclusion and equity of persons with disabilities include: supporting the inclusion of people with disabilities as research participants, creating infrastructure to support researchers who have a disability; connecting researchers with the NIH funding for research on health and health care disparities experienced by people with disabilities; review of policy, culture, and structure to identify opportunities to promote disability inclusion and address barriers; include at the table the perspectives of people with disabilities in conducting research and the review of research.

The Fostering Accessibility and Inclusivity in Research (FAIR) is a dedicated committee within the Northwestern IRB Office. Our mission is to nurture inclusive and equitable practices across the Northwestern University human research landscape in alignment with the Belmont Principle of Justice. We will achieve this by partnering with groups across the University's human research protection program to create and share resources in order to implement these practices.

Please use the [Northwestern University IRB Office Website](#) as your primary source of information and resources on human research protections