

National Collaborative on Disability, Religion, and Inclusive Spiritual Supports¹

Vision¹

People with disabilities and their families will have compelling opportunities and supports to develop and express their spirituality, engage in congregational life, and share their gifts and talents in ways that are personally valued and that strengthen communities.

Mission¹

The mission of the National Collaborative will be to support people with disabilities, their families, and those who support them in by providing national and international leadership in the areas of research, education, service, and dissemination related to disability, religion, and inclusive spiritual supports.

Activities¹

The National Collaborative will implement activities designed to:

- Develop and support an interdisciplinary and interfaith network of scholars and leaders who are addressing the intersection of disability, religion, and/or spirituality in their work
- Foster rigorous, collaborative, and interdisciplinary scholarship, including research, policy analyses, theological reflection, and program evaluations.
- Develop educational materials, programs, and technical assistance fostering collaboration among, or building the capacity of, religious leaders, human service professionals, service providers, congregations, individuals with disabilities, and families to address spirituality and build inclusive spiritual supports.
- Produce and disseminate compelling resources based on research and state-of-the-art practice in both disability services and inclusive spiritual supports.
- Provide national and international leadership by speaking to policy initiatives, cultural developments, and other emerging issues related to disabilities, religion, and spirituality.
- Serve as a central and visible “clearinghouse” for resources, research, trainings, conferences, programs, and organizations.
- Provide an accessible and engaging link between academic, professional, and lay communities.
- Support and enhance the efforts of other organizations, faith networks, and groups carrying out work in related areas.
- Pursue large-scale funding to carry out the work of the National Collaborative.

Organizing Framework¹

Since many of the collaborating partners would be affiliated with UCEDDs and seminaries, our overarching framework of this National Collaborative is organized into the four key missions of both: training/education, research, technical assistance/service, and dissemination. With six potential initial focus areas as a starting point, activities would be planned in the various cells on this matrix.

	Research & Scholarship	Education & Training	Service & TA	Dissemination
Supporting people with disabilities				
Supporting families				
Congregational inclusion and supports				
Theology and clergy training				
Service systems				
Religious education				

Potential Partners¹

Up to eight UCEDDs (including the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center and Vanderbilt Kennedy Center) would serve as founding institutions for this National Collaborative, each collaborating with local seminaries on some activities. Other UCEDDs, colleges/university programs, and individual scholars would be invited to affiliate with the National Collaborative in various activities. In addition, the National Collaborative would seek to work in conjunction with other national organizations whose work intersects with the National Collaborative’s mission (e.g., TASH, AAIDD, AAPD, AAR/SBL, ATS, NOD, denominational and faith-based groups, etc.).

¹ This document represents an early draft of our ideas for this proposed National Collaborative. The name, mission, and activities of the National Collaborative will be determined in consultation with our partners, with the goal of identifying language and activities that will resonate with and have relevance to diverse stakeholders within an interdisciplinary, interfaith, and multicultural arena. In addition, we are in the process of identifying key UCEDD partnerships.