

# TRECI Opens Research, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Services

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Alyson Ward, Ph.D, leads the TRECI team

## IDRPP group stresses the importance of well-designed evaluation and research

Not all data is good data or useful data. Sometimes, data that is collected can even mislead or cause harm, says Dr. Heather Kelley, a member of the IDRPP's Tailored Research, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement (TRECI) team.

That is why the IDRPP now has a team dedicated to evaluation and other research-related services. TRECI is a team of PhD-level professionals eager to assist researchers, non-profits, governmental and non-governmental organizations in Utah and beyond.

TRECI works closely with the IDRPP's Partners in Disability Research Board, comprised of individuals with disabilities and family members. In addition, "organizations can use the [TRECI] accessibility evaluation to make sure their buildings and services are more accessible to people with disabilities," said TRECI member Alex Schiwal, Ph.D. However, the TRECI team works on projects on a range of topics, not just disability related work. The group's clients have included public health programs, K-12 education agencies, higher education projects and nonprofits.

TRECI helps organizations gather and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data, said TRECI team lead Alyson Ward, Ph.D. "If the right research design and

evaluation plan is set up from the beginning, it really ends up saving the organization a lot of time, effort and frustration."

In addition to collecting data and ensuring good research design, the team can analyze the results and present the information to the client in ways that are easy to digest, like dashboards and infographics. "Especially in times when budgets are tight, people want to know that programs are worth investing in," said TRECI member Audrey Juhasz, Ph.D. "Being able to showcase the impact of your program and continuously improve your services, is essential for long-term success."

The TRECI team is able to support research, evaluation and continuous quality improvement. "Research is often designed to be more broad and generalizable to a larger population of people," Ward said. "It's often more structured and developed from the ground up, where evaluation is specific to an individual program. It looks at how they're doing, and how they're impacting the individual people that the program is serving."

Continuous improvement pairs well with evaluation and examines processes in a system that can be altered to make outcomes better using small tests of change, referred to as Plan, Do, Study, Act cycles. For example, Ward worked with a health care provider to reduce no show appointments, which cost their facility millions per year. "I'm working on a project right now that's facilitating getting families into the appointments, either through Uber rides or through medical taxis. So, it's doing these small tests of change to build confidence that whatever you're testing works, before you move to full implementation."

If you're interested in requesting a training, scheduling an accessibility evaluation, exploring collaboration on upcoming grants, or booking a free 30-minute consultation to discuss program evaluation, [contact the TRECI team](#).