



Coleman Institute for Cognitive Disabilities Student Design Awards for Technologies to Benefit People with Cognitive Disabilities



Focus: Encourage, recognize and reward group and individual student projects that result in technical prototypes to assist people with cognitive disabilities, their caregivers, or both.

Eligibility: undergraduate and graduate student projects in a technical, engineering or social impact course, or independent study.

Award structure:

“Silver” award – design, build and document a “proof-of-concept” prototype that addresses a problem facing people with cognitive disabilities and/or their caregivers. The problem to be addressed can be documented from a literature search or from interactions with local advocates, a representative member of a disability group, associated family members, caregivers, or an expert in a recognized cognitive disability field (developmental disabilities, aphasia, traumatic head injury, etc.).

“Gold” award - same as “Silver” award criteria plus an informal assessment (a pilot study or focus group study with a representative user or advocate) that provides (1) insights about how well the prototype addresses the stated problem and (2) suggestions for additional improvements. Note: User assessment may require local approval by institutional Human Research Committee, especially if results are to be shared or published.

Special recognition – All submissions will be judged by a panel of disability experts, advocates, and technologists for exceptional novelty, creativity, and potential impact on the disability community, for the possible award of additional recognition.

Key deliverables, awards and deadlines:

Tier	Deliverables	Awards*	Deadlines
Silver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written report stating problem to be addressed, how prototype works and potential benefits to intended user community (< 5 pages). 	\$100	All entries accepted and rewarded continuously
Gold	Same as Silver PLUS description of assessment study highlighting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the prototype worked for representative user(s) potential design improvements (< 10 pages total) 	\$250	All entries accepted and rewarded continuously
Special recognition	All entries or Silver and Gold awards will be judged; no additional application is required.	Travel to Annual Coleman Institute Conference	All entries submitted prior to July 1 st will be eligible for special recognition that Fall.

*While our intention is to immediately recognize all eligible contributions, we reserve right to modify or delay awards in the event of an overwhelming response.

Frequently asked Questions and Answers (FAQs)

Q: What is a cognitive disability?

A: Cognitive disabilities include conditions such as: intellectual and developmental disabilities, autism, Down syndrome and other genetic conditions; acquired brain injury, and Alzheimer's disease.

Q: Will all entries receive an award?

A: Yes, ALL entries that meet the minimum award criteria specified above will receive an award. Additionally, ALL entries will be eligible for possible additional recognition based on exceptional novelty, creativity, and potential impact on a disability community.

Q: Why do I need to do a literature search or interact with people from a disability group to identify a problem?

A: People with disabilities often face issues with using technology that people without disabilities may take for granted. For example, some people with cognitive disabilities may have difficulties reading, understanding computer vocabulary, or may have a physical disability that makes understanding and selecting menu choices difficult. Unless you personally know a person with an cognitive disability, it can be difficult to anticipate the issues that a person with a disability will have, and so interacting with a disability group or doing a literature search for a documented problem is a great way to get started.

Q: Why isn't there a deadline?

A: Our intent is to encourage, recognize and reward group and individual student projects that result in technical prototypes to assist people with cognitive disabilities, their caregivers, or both. Since some projects may be designed in a course project or independent study, with different timelines, we will accept entries continuously and make awards as soon as eligibility is determined.

Q: May I resubmit a project for an additional award if it has been significantly improved and enhanced, or if I conduct an assessment study after receiving an award?

A: Yes, we strongly encourage improvement and additional enhancement to a previously submitted project, but you are only eligible for ONE Silver or Gold award in a 12 month period. For example, if you submit a satisfactory entry and receive a \$100 Silver award, you may then continue to improve the prototype or conduct a usability assessment. If you resubmit the project for a Gold award within 12 months of receiving the Silver award, you may then receive a Gold award "upgrade" earning an additional \$150 (making your total \$250 for 12 month period). If you resubmit a significantly enhanced project AFTER 12 months of receiving an initial Silver award, then you are eligible for a another award (Silver or Gold as appropriate).

Q: Where can I find more information?

A: If you have specific questions, please contact Dr. Clayton Lewis, Coleman Institute Scientist-In-Residence at clayton.lewis@colorado.edu for more information.