

Independent Living

March 2018 – 2019

The primary goal of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) is to maximize every individual's opportunity to reach their economic, independence, and employment goals. An equally important goal is to increase advocacy and support for the rights of individuals with disabilities. IVRS is an integral part of the statewide disability community, and staff collaborate with partner agencies to improve effectiveness in all areas of Iowa. IVRS uses a network of outside agencies that provide services to individuals with disabilities, in addition to those that offer specific services or assistance to minority populations.

Currently, IVRS is partnering with over 100 organizations to provide comprehensive rehabilitation services. IVRS has connected with agencies that serve diverse populations within each area office service areas. Staff have also found that some individuals served by IVRS require Independent Living Services. IVRS is able to connect these individuals to any of the six Independent Living Centers in Iowa. IVRS also provides services or assistance on behalf of individuals referred by a CIL for services from IVRS. As a partner and Designated State Entity, IVRS provides financial and programmatic monitoring to each of Iowa's six CILS, as well as the SILC.

IVRS currently supports an in-house Independent Living/Assistive Technology Counselor Specialist who is responsible for collaborating with each of the thirteen IVRS area offices. This individual also connects CILs and IVRS offices, and presents information on the role of IL services to increase independence for individual recipients of services, including how IL services can complement VR service programming.

In terms of governance responsibilities, IVRS operates under both a Unified State Plan and the IVRS Strategic Plan. The IVRS Strategic Plan was refined in 2018 and shared with our State Rehabilitation Council and internal staff. The Unified State Plan requires a planned approach for outreach to minority and unserved or under-served populations within each region. In addition, equal access to state-funded initiatives are required to include services to all individuals on a statewide basis, regardless of race or disability-status.

IVRS continues to increase service capacity, work effectiveness, and outreach through advances in information and assistive technologies. The IVRS Administrator and IL staff communicate regularly with partners, and have an ongoing interest and commitment to expand and explore collaborative opportunities. IVRS is dedicated to building external collaborative relationships to enhance results for Iowans with disabilities. Toward that end, IVRS continues to identify, develop, and pursue partnerships to expand the ability of various systems to positively impact services to Iowans. IVRS' IL service delivery program has limited resources and a waiting list for recipients. However, IVRS remains able to provide services that are unique and not duplicated by the IL Centers, in addition to not being restricted by geographic coverage.

The IVRS IL Specialist continues to coordinate IL direct service delivery across the state of Iowa with the goal of serving increased numbers through direct service delivery and also using comparable benefits and services. IVRS IL staff continue to monitor and support IL efforts by providing technical assistance to the SILC and CILS as needed; presenting IVRS updates to IL

partners and communicate any changes in regulatory requirements; and participating in shared leadership and self-advocacy initiatives with the SILC and CILs. Information related to IVRS IL services provided are included in subsequent sections of this report.

All six CILs are listed as resources in the information that IVRS shares with community rehabilitation partners. IVRS also invites CIL staff to training sponsored by IVRS related to financial literacy and similar topics.

IVRS also continues to provide information about training and other opportunities to all CILs and the SILC. Collaboration and joint training will be emphasized between IVRS and partner agencies this next fiscal year. IVRS also intends on providing information about IL programs directly to clients of the agency. IVRS will also ensure the Independent Living plan is implemented with services consistent with the IL State Plan and targeted for those clients in the IL Program, and consistent with WIOA changes.

IVRS Activities

The IVRS Administrator David Mitchell maintained close communication with CIL Executive Directors, in addition to hosting several meetings at the IVRS state office in Des Moines in FY2018. The SILC ED scheduled and facilitated the SPIL regular meetings which improved SPIL activity follow-through; all but one of which were attended by IVRS representatives, including Administrator Mitchell.

In FY2018, the IVRS IL Resource Manager (Lee Ann Russo) visited two CILs to complete a file review and connect with staff (Access 2 Independence of the Eastern Iowa Corridor, Inc. in Iowa City and Central Iowa CIL in Des Moines). Additional visits to two other CILs were made in collaboration with staff representing the Iowa Department for the Blind (Kim Barber) and the Statewide Independent Living Council Executive Director (Dawn Francis). These included Disabilities Resource Center of Siouxland in Sioux City and South Central Iowa CIL in Oskaloosa.

Messaging has been sent by IVRS to supervisory staff encouraging their contact with CILs in their areas of service. Additionally, IVRS provided contact information to all CIL Executive Directors advising them how to connect with IVRS supervisory staff.

The IVRS Independent Living (IL) Program continues to provide a variety of services to assist individuals with significant disabilities live independently in their community. This program is available to individuals who do not have a vocational goal. This last fiscal year the IVRS IL program assisted 19 clients in obtaining their Independent Living Goals. Those services included advocacy, information and referral, counseling and guidance, 5 Bathroom Modifications, 3 ramps, 2 lift chairs, 2 stair lifts, 1 van modification, 1 Cognitive Prosthetic, 1 Scooter, 1 Scooter Repair, 1 wheelchair repair, 1 accessible sidewalk, and running water to 1 home. Staff involved in this program provide every Independent Living Applicant with an introduction to the Vocational (VR) side of Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, along with an invitation to speak with a Vocational Rehabilitation Staff member about VR services should they be interested in the possibility of work.

IL forms, brochures, and maps representing IL activity across the state were revised by IVRS. Training opportunities, legislative changes and other pertinent information is shared between

IVRS and CIL staff. IVRS is represented on the SILC and has proposed joint trainings, site visits, and ongoing communication to continue to enhance collaboration and partnerships between IVRS and CILs in the future.

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services (IVRS) began serving as the fiscal agent to the Iowa SILC in FFY2011. The SILC and IVRS developed a contract that covers the budget, activities to be completed, and expected outcomes. The SILC ED submits monthly billing reports along with receipts for all expenditures to IVRS financial staff. IVRS staff review and approve each billing and all receipts, and issue reimbursement funds to the SILC for approved expenses. IVRS provides a capital advance to the SILC at beginning of each Federal Fiscal Year, as the SILC has a very small amount of unrestricted funds to operate on a standard billing-reimbursement system.

IVRS staff members provided technical assistance to the CILs and the SILC on contracting requirements during FFY2018. IVRS generates contracts for Part B funds and the state appropriation for the CILs. The Iowa SILC contract includes Part B funds, Title I funds, and SSA Reimbursement funds. The IVRS staff, including Dawn Trenez (Budget Analyst 3), three accounting staff, and a contract manager, in addition to monitoring oversight by IVRS Administrator Mitchell, provided administrative support services to CILs and the SILC.

March 2017

A variety of activities involving IVRS and Centers for Independent Living (CILs) continue to occur. Since last September, IVRS amended all state and federal contracts for the six Iowa CILs. IVRS also provides financial support to the Statewide Independent Living Council, and participates as part of that board at quarterly meetings.

IVRS' recent reduction in IVRS state funding could have been applied to decrease CIL funds; however Administrator Mitchell decided to make cuts elsewhere so as to not reduce the allotment IVRS provides to Iowa CILs.

Two CILs have developed employment programs which will expand capacity and choice for job candidates served under the traditional IVRS program. Access 2 Independence in Iowa City is currently approved to provide Job Development, Customized Employment, Supported Employment Job Coaching and Job Follow-Up and Non-Supported Employment Job Coaching. It is anticipated that these five employment services will soon be available through the Central Iowa Center for Independent Living in Des Moines.

There are approximately 71 individual clients currently working with Robert Hendrickson of the IVRS IL program. At this point in time, all clients who had an application date of 1/11/16 or meaning applications prior to 1/11/16, have been removed from the waiting list or attempts have been made to make contact with them so that we can remove their names from the waiting list if they will respond. The 3+ year waiting list has been whittled down to just a little over a 1 year waiting list. IVRS sent contact letters to 45 clients requesting they make contact with Bob to discuss what services they need and inform them their names would be coming off the waiting list. If IVRS doesn't hear from them via the contact letter, we will start the process of making phone calls to the client, and or their listed contacts if we can't get ahold of the actual client. Bob is actively working with 19 clients who have a project in the works or are currently getting bids for jobs. The majority of the work needing done includes widening of doorways, modifying bathroom, and building ramps.

In March, 2017, IVRS hosted a meeting originated by Page Eastin of the Department of Human Rights with CIL Executive Directors and interested stakeholders, including IVRS. Due to the nature of the core services that each CIL is required to provide, a discussion was held to outline options for *Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination and Peer Mentoring* services. CILs are in the process of providing models on how these services are currently delivered in order to be incorporated into a curriculum that can be shared. Additional training materials and a tool listing current resources that exist in each area of the state is also under development.

The Annual Performance Report for State Independent Living Services Program was completed by IVRS and the Statewide Independent Living Council. It was submitted through SILC in January, 2017. This report combines a synopsis of activities, data, outcomes and goals for what was the 704 Report, now referred to as the "Program Performance Report".

IVRS participated in several webinars about IL information specific to Title VII Part C and Part B - provided by the Administration for Community Living (ACL). A secondary webinar series from the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) has been archived after being viewed by staff from IVRS, Iowa Department for the Blind and the Statewide Independent Living Council. This webinar series was designed to acquaint Designated State Entities and Statewide Independent Living Councils about their roles and responsibilities for Independent Living programs.

Ongoing meetings are planned between IVRS, SILC, and IDB to schedule annual visits with each of the six Iowa CILs.

Independent Living – September 2016

IVRS oversees state and federal contracts for six Iowa Center's for Independent Living and our State-Wide Independent Living Council. (SWILC) The SWILC has a representative on our State Rehabilitation Council for purposes of sharing information and helping to advocate for applicable services and supports. The Independent Living Programs moved from the Rehabilitation Services Administration to the Administration of Community Living under the Workforce Innovation Act. IVRS participates in the SILC and is part of a collaborative team effort led by the Centers and SILC representatives to develop and implement a State-Wide Independent Living Plan. As part of the plan, IVRS reports on IL services and outreach efforts. Below is a summary for what is included in the plan. The six IL centers in Iowa are:

Access 2 Independence, Iowa City
Central Iowa Center for Independent Living, Des Moines
Disabilities Resource Center of Siouxland, Sioux City
Illinois, Iowa Center for Independent Living, Quad Cities
League of Human Dignity, Council Bluffs
South Central Iowa Independent Living Center, Oskaloosa

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