

THE Colorado Independent

Winter 2010

Independent Living Numbers Increase

By Judy Neal, IL Program coordinator

Sometime around the end of 2009, you probably heard a collective sigh of relief as all of us involved in the independent living programs completed our annual federal reports. These reports provide information that can be used to evaluate a local IL program, or give us a snapshot of how

we're doing on a statewide level. When both reports have been reviewed and approved by Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), they will be posted on the SILC website www.coloradosilc.org.

The 704 report contains information about the basic Title VII independent living program. The official 704 report submitted by the state to RSA, contains data from centers for independent living that receive no federal Part C funding. To get a better picture of our program throughout the state, I compiled the demographics of the official 704 with those of the six Part C centers.

Our ten centers for independent living (CILs) served 6,408 people with disabilities during the last federal fiscal year. This is an increase of 156 consumers over last year. Although there were 400 fewer consumer service records started in 2009, there was a significant increase in consumers still active at the end of the year.

This newsletter is published by the Provider Relations Unit of the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and edited by Judy Neal, Independent Living Program Coordinator. The goal is to share information among the ten Colorado Centers for Independent Living, the Statewide Independent Living Council, and DVR staff. The submission of information or articles from all affiliated with these organizations is both encouraged and welcomed. Please e-mail any articles of interest to judy.neal@state.co.us If you have questions, please phone me at (303) 866-4645.

Most services were provided to the 24-59 age group, representing 67% of the total consumers served. Other age groups remained consistent with previous years. As always, more women were served than men.

Of the 6,408 people served last year, 5,134 were still receiving IL services at the end of the year. The 2008 year-end total of active consumers was 4,549. This means that our centers are starting the new year with 585 more people who are using their services. Our CILs are steadily growing due to increased outreach efforts and to the greater need generated in our poor economy.

The 70B is the annual report for the Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) program that serves people who are blind and visually impaired and at least 55 years old. Colorado currently has seven OIB vendors throughout the state. This year, the number of OIB consumers increased from 803 to 1,020. Only 63 individuals were totally blind, and over half of the consumers served were losing their eyesight due to macular degeneration.

Our largest OIB population is the 85-89 year old age group. Combined with those between 80- 84, they make up 47% of the total consumers served. It is significant that barely 12% were working age people between 55 and 65 years old. There is concern that

people in this age group may fear losing their jobs if they admit to vision loss. As in our regular IL program, more women received OIB services than men.

The OIB program has made a significant difference in the lives of many people. Over half of the people in the program are still living in their own homes. More than 500 have the confidence to live alone. When the report is approved and posted, please read some of the great consumer stories contributed by our OIB vendors. There is no doubt that this program is highly valued by those it has served.

The next full meeting of
the Colorado

SILC

*Statewide Independent
Living council*
will be held at the
Hyatt Place in
Colorado Springs

**Wednesday,
March 17**

Please phone for details
303 866-4645



From the Director

**By
Nancy Smith**

Here's a news flash – the SILC and the ACCIL do not have a good working relationship. The fact that this was very evident to Sean Barrett from RSA only confirms what many of us have thought for some time. The question is: what are the two groups willing to do to change that relationship to one that is based on positive communication as well as mutual respect and goals?

The RSA on-site review was an intense experience for all of us at DVR. In some cases we were presented with new information on various aspects of our program. In other cases, the information was known to us and we talked with them about how we would handle it. This issue of the broken relationship falls under the category of “we knew this but have not figured out how to do anything about it.”

So I am wondering what the hostility and lack of communication is about. From the time I arrived at DVR 5 years ago, I had Center Directors telling me the SILC was useless and not to be heeded by them in any way. While the previous incarnations of the

SILC may have been less valuable, I do not think that is the case now. So perhaps the Center Directors need to start by understanding the SILC as it is today, not as it was years ago. We know that words have power and the way we think about and talk about one another has an effect.

Another issue raised by RSA is that the roles of the groups are not well-understood. The role of the SILC is embedded in federal regulation. It is clear that this group is there to provide overall guidance and direction to DVR on issues related to independent living in the state. Its members are selected by the Governor. Meanwhile, the ACCIL represents the centers in Colorado and their individual and collective operations. It is director-driven and even employs a lobbyist.

It is Sean Barrett's contention that the disparity between each group's focus and their misunderstanding of one another's roles produces a tension between them. Sean also noted that each group misrepresents what the other should/could/must do.

He identified a few examples of this during his meetings with each group. The SILC was upset about not getting data it wanted from the centers. They were subsequently surprised to learn that the centers are only required to provide the data once a year. In some instances, it was asking for more data than had been agreed upon and the centers were refusing to comply. Another example was the CILS becoming upset because the needs assessment was indicating a need to utilize funds in new areas as opposed to simply shifting funds to the CILS. Even DVR and the ACCIL had an example. The ACCIL could not understand why I was not willing to lobby the legislature or the JBC on their behalf to preserve the General Fund they have acquired. Clearly they do not know that state employees cannot lobby on behalf of their programs.

It appears that we need to start from scratch. The SILC and the Designated State Unit (DSU that is DVR) both have legal requirements and authority. Rather than failing to acknowledge this, I challenge the ACCIL to become informed about these requirements and the authority given to each entity. Following that, I challenge the ACCIL to become truly knowledgeable about how the SILC

conducts its business, including and starting with the Statewide Plan they must submit to RSA every year. Further, I challenge the ACCIL to learn about DVR's obligations and responsibilities as the DSU.

I challenge the SILC to learn the ACCIL's agenda and how it intends to achieve its goals for the year. I challenge them to compare what they think the centers are required to provide to the DSU with what they would like to have from them. I ask the SILC to understand the data requirements for the centers and why they cannot simply ask for more.

It's time to air all grievances and reveal everyone's true agendas. Surely there are commonalities between what the SILC and the ACCIL want for Colorado?! There would be much to be gained from working together on issues as compared to remaining totally separate or at odds to one another.

Perhaps the SILC, the DSU and the ACCIL should meet in a summit. The event could educate all of us, allow us an opportunity to talk openly and collegially, and to look at ways that we might be able to join forces, as opposed to fighting each other or ignoring one another.



DIVISION of
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
State of Colorado



Colorado SILC

From the SILC

By Linda LaPointe

As we welcome in a new year in our private lives, the SILC is straddling 2 years simultaneously. One is the current year, and the other is next year, as we plan for the future of the SILC. This is the last of the current three year plan as required by the RSA, so we are working toward the fulfillment of those goals. While at the same time, we are doing work to prepare for writing the next three year plan. That work that prepares us for the future is a needs assessment. It is something that the membership of three years ago had a vision of doing, and in 2009 it began.

The needs assessment will help us determine the needs of people with disabilities so we can accurately reflect those in the next three year plan. A needs assessment is not something easily done, we are learning. The SILC contracted with a professional group, made up of professors at UNC to guide the process. Those profs developed the process, and to save money, some of the actual legwork is being done by the SILC membership. Those SILC members are very competent volunteers who have been trained by the profs to facilitate focus groups and

key informant interviews. The focus groups include people who have disabilities but who have not received services from an independent living center. Key informants are people who have knowledge of a group of people with a particular common situation, e.g. the director of aging services who would know of unmet needs of the aging disabled population s/he represents.

Julia Beems, who is the chair of the current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) committee, is keeping track of all of us who are doing a small share of the work. As if assigning and checking on all the players weren't enough, she has travelled many miles to focus groups and has spent many an hour as liaison between the professional group and the SILC volunteers.

The goal is that the needs assessment will create a data base of new information regarding the needs of diverse groups of those with disabilities and what should be offered in Colorado to meet those needs. It may also reinforce what the SPIL and the centers for independent living have thought the needs were. It

is those thoughts which have been the basis for the SILC's three year plans up until now. It would be nice to have hard data to indicate what direction the next three year plan should take, and that is the SILC's hope. Then, once written, we can work in just one year at a time again and focus all our efforts toward meeting the goals for 2011.

SILC Looking for New Members

By Cindy Powell, Membership Chair

Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) seeks members who are passionate about increasing access and civil rights for Coloradans with disabilities.

Preferred new members include:

- people with psychiatric disabilities
- people with physical disabilities (other than mobility or sensory)
- persons of color
- young adults
- rural residents
- people who live outside the Front Range.

SILC promotes independence and full inclusion of people with disabilities as equal citizens of Colorado. **SILC** responds to issues from the disability community and educates policymakers in areas including

affordable, accessible housing, accessible public transportation, home and community based services and employment for people with disabilities. More information can be obtained from **Colorado SILC's** website: <http://coloradosilc.org> There are typically five full day **SILC** meetings each year held throughout the state. Additionally, committee meetings are usually conducted by conference calls. Because **SILC** documents and information are shared electronically, members are also required to frequently access e-mail.

Hotel costs, if necessary, are paid for by the **SILC**. Members are reimbursed for mileage and per diem.

Interested applicants may download an application from the **SILC** website. Completed applications, accompanied by current resumes, must be submitted to Judy Neal, **SILC** Liaison, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, 1575 Sherman, 4th Floor, Denver, CO 80203.

The **SILC** Membership committee reviews applications prior to deciding whether to interview applicants face to face or by phone. The Membership committee recommends accepted applicants to the full **SILC**. Approved applications are submitted to the Governor for final approval.

CPWD Announces Executive Director

By Denise Hodgert

After conducting an extensive search, Center for People with Disabilities (CPWD) announces that the Board of Directors has appointed Ian Engle as Executive Director effective February 1, 2010.

Ian served as the Executive Director of the Southwest Center for Independence (SWCI) in Durango, CO. Ian brings to CPWD over fifteen years of experience in Disability Rights, Advocacy, Housing and Independent Living. Ian embraces the Independent Living Philosophy, is a Visionary Leader and brings management and marketing experience.

Ian has demonstrated ability to initiate and foster robust partnerships and strategic alliances with government, allied agencies and stakeholders for the effective delivery of programs and services to disabled consumers.

SWCI Seeks New Director

Executive Director sought for small Independent Living Center in the beautiful mountain and rural communities of Southwest Colorado. Southwest Center for Independence

offers disability programs in a 5-county area. The Executive Director will oversee the current programs and seek opportunities to grow the Center. The Director is also responsible for writing grants, overseeing finances, personnel and agency activities. Bachelor's Degree with experience in human services are required for this position. We are looking for someone with excellent organizational and computer skills to keep up with the demands of the job. **Preference given to individuals with a disability.** Knowledge and experience in Independent Living Philosophy are a plus. The starting salary will be dependent on experience, from \$37,750. E-mail job@swcidur.org for complete job description. To apply: Resume and cover letter to SWCI, 835 E. 2nd Ave., #200, Durango, CO 81301. Contact Tara Kiene at 970-385-3458 if there are further questions. Position open until filled.

NCD Appointment

Carol Jean Reynolds, Executive Director of the Disability Center for Independent Living (DCIL) in Denver, has been appointed by President Barack Obama to the National Council on Disability. Carol is a member of the governing board of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) and serves as Co-Chairperson of the Mental health Task Force.

» COMING TO DENVER, CO «
The 2010 National ADA Symposium on June 21 – 23
at the Denver Hyatt Regency Hotel

Features of the 2010 National ADA Symposium

- The latest information on new regulations and the ADA Amendments Act from the federal agencies that write the regulations.
- 48 sessions on a variety of significant issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Presenters include representatives from the U.S. Departments of Justice, Education, Defense, National Homeland Security/FEMA, the EEOC, U.S. Access Board, and the International Code Council.
- 2.5 hour sessions that allow for dynamic, interactive, in-depth training.
- Pre-conference designed for newcomers to the ADA.
- Opportunities for networking with people directly involved in ADA implementation throughout the United States.
- All participants will receive a USB Flash Drive containing materials from *all* sessions!
- Continuing Education Units available including International Code Council (ICC) CEUs.

For more information: <http://www.adasymposium.org>



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Graduates are *raving* about this experience! You will leave this two-day program with a specific plan to address performance issues with an employee as soon as you get back to work.

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April 29

Learn what it takes to get Social Security Disability Benefits. Get the inside look on how Social Security determines who receives benefits and what type of benefits.

More Money: Taking Advantage of Work Incentives –

May 19 \$95

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Get an overview of our 2-day workshop that helps supervisors and managers develop and sharpen skills to coach their employees.

Brain Injury and Employment - April 14, 2010

This exciting training gives survivors, care givers, supporters and professionals across the country usable, valuable tools.

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This Social Security employment support is designed to accumulate cash for those who wish to start a new career and/or launch a new business.

Customer Service – Nov. 10, 2010

In this new CTAT teletraining you will learn how to produce and maintain customer service skills.

CTAT, a partner in the TACE Region 8

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