

On Target

Informing Indiana About Disability Issues
Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities
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New state program to help Hoosier veterans

Following a successful 18-month pilot effort, Indiana officials recently announced a new program to provide employment, workforce training and education to Hoosier veterans with disabilities through the Crane Learning & Employment Center for Veterans with Disabilities (CLEC).

CLEC is the first, all-inclusive program in the nation dedicated to helping veterans with disabilities return to the workforce. Participants will receive paid, on-the-job training, as well as personalized post-secondary education.

"We must be successful in removing any and all obstacles that our returning veterans face, and efficiently and effectively provide these veterans with the education and support programs they need to be successful in the work place," said Indiana Department of Workforce Development Commissioner Teresa L. Voors in a press release issued by CLEC.

The program, which is committed to meeting the needs of returning U.S. combat troops with disabilities, will offer each participating veteran a permanent job at the Naval Support Activity (NSA) Crane Center in southwest Indiana upon successful completion.

The Crane Center will provide program graduates access to comprehensive services, including medical and rehabilitation care, housing for their families, transportation, workforce, education and salaried employment.

Approximately 15 to 20 veterans participated in a successful pilot program in the fall of 2007, which received funding from the Indiana Department of Workforce Development and Lilly Endowment Inc. The pilot served as a strong model for helping our country's veterans and, upon conclusion, CLEC decided to seek support to further implement the program.

In a press release, CLEC program director Jim Schonberger stated, "Too many disabled veterans fall through the cracks in our country's training systems and are forced to navigate the bureaucracy for the most part on their own. The pilot program focused on returning veterans from the current conflict and eased them back into civilian society through workforce training and job placement."

CLEC is the result of many partnerships throughout Indiana, including:

- Crane Technology, Inc.
- Family and Social Services Administration/Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
- Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs
- Indiana Department of Workforce Development

- Ivy Tech Community College
- Naval Support Activity Crane/Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane
- Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center
- U.S. Department of Labor — Veterans' Education and Training Service
- U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs — Indianapolis Regional Office
- Vincennes University

To learn more about this program, please call (812) 863-5044 (voice).

New members appointed to Council board

The Governor's Council for People with Disabilities recently announced changes to its board of directors, including two new board members and two new ex-officio members. Ex-officio means "by virtue of one's office." Such members are inducted due to their professional affiliations.

Melody Cooper and Jody Courtney are the Council's newest board members representing people with developmental disabilities. Additionally, Peter Bisbecos, director, Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, and Kimberly Minniear, program director, Indiana State Department of Health, have joined as ex-officio members.

All board members are appointed by the Governor and 60 percent of the delegates must be people who have a developmental disability — either personally or via a family member.

Indianapolis celebrates Disability Networking Day

Indianapolis Mayor Gregory A. Ballard hosted the third annual Disability Networking Day in April for people with disabilities who were interested in communicating with potential employers.

Initiated by the Indianapolis Business Leadership Network (IBLN), a group of businesses and organizations that promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities, the goal of the event was to help people with disabilities understand the importance of networking, as well as provide a forum for enhancing networking skills. The IBLN is supported by the Indianapolis Private Industry Council and the Indianapolis Office of Disability Affairs.

The event, held at the Conrad Hotel in downtown Indianapolis, had 33 student and adult participants and was deemed a great success, according to Juli Painsi, coordinator, Indianapolis Office of Disability Affairs.

“It’s not just a great event for people with disabilities hoping to learn more about their chosen career paths, but also for employers,” said Painsi. “It helps these business leaders open their eyes to the fact that disabilities will not hinder career objectives.”

Painsi also stated that the event was a way to help people with disabilities learn how to communicate about their professional interests — not just about their disabilities.

“It’s a great way for people with disabilities to build their confidence, while being in a safe environment,” said Painsi. “The fear of the unknown is the leading barrier for this group of job seekers. We are hoping programs like this will help to break that barrier.”

Given the success of this year’s program, planners hope to continue the event again next year. For more information or to learn how to get involved, please call (317) 327-3798 (voice).

Child maltreatment report newly released

A 2006 report from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children and Families (ACF), released in April of this year, found that children with disabilities are less likely to be victims of repeat abuse and that they are more likely to receive post-investigation services.

In the report, “Child Maltreatment 2006,” children with disabilities were defined as those with mental retardation, emotional disturbance, visual or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, behavioral problems or other medical problems. However, many victims of child abuse with such risk factors are undercounted, as not every child is assessed for disabilities by the Child Protection Services (CPS). Overall, 8 percent of all victims of child abuse had a reported disability.

The research found that for many victims of abuse, the efforts of the CPS system have not been successful in preventing it from happening again. Overall, children who had experienced abuse in the past were 96 percent more likely to experience it again within six months of each reported occurrence. This compares to 52 percent of children with disabilities.

In addition, children with disabilities are twice as likely to receive post-investigation services as children without disabilities. Only some children and families with reports of maltreatment receive post-investigation services or family reunification services due to a variety of factors, including a lack of resources to assist every family living with abuse.

Within the 50 United States, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, there were 905,000 children that were determined to have been victims of child abuse. Approximately 60 percent were victims of neglect, 16 percent victims of physical abuse, 8.8 percent were sexually assaulted, 6.6 percent were psychologically maltreated and 2.2 percent were medically neglected. Nearly 80 percent of perpetrators were parents of the victims.

For more information or to view the report, visit www.childwelfare.gov and follow the link to Child Maltreatment 2006.

Disability community remembers self advocate

On April 15, 2008, Indiana's disability community lost a true pioneer of self advocacy, Darcus Nims, who once said, "I'm a self advocate. I make a difference."

Nims was known for her compelling and witty voice on the challenges faced by people with disabilities, particularly for illustrating injustice and discrimination with true stories. "She spoke the truth with humor and compassion," said Deborah McCarty, coordinator for the Back Home in Indiana Alliance.

The founder of Self Advocates of Indiana in 1990, and still active on the board as vice president until her death, Nims was a long-time advocate for people with developmental disabilities. She also served as the president of Indianapolis Self Advocates and on the board of directors for the Back Home in Indiana Alliance. In addition, Nims was a member of Project Vote where she helped teach people about the importance of voting and how to navigate political processes.

"She was always willing to help someone who needed her and encouraged other self advocates to work toward their dreams, be proud of who they are and band together to help each other," said Christine Dahlberg, associate director of the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. "She didn't give up until she got results."

Thanks to the efforts of Nims and others at Self Advocates of Indiana, the organization will bring its national conference to Indiana this September. Visit www.saind.org for more information.

Medicaid Waiver changes take effect January 2009

Beginning January 2009, the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) is making a major change to how Medicaid waiver services are offered to consumers. The change applies only to the Developmental Disabilities, Autism and Support Services Waivers.

The new system, OASIS — Objective Assessment System for Individual Supports — aims to create a uniform model to determine fair and equitable levels of State support for individuals. The changes were scheduled to take effect July 1, 2008, but the delayed start date was recently announced. District 4 (Greencastle) is the only area that will still implement the new system in July.

FSSA will begin phasing in OASIS to all Medicaid waiver consumers in Indiana based on when their annual plan of services is scheduled to be reviewed. Each consumer will receive an Individual Client and Agency Planning (ICAP) assessment that will be used to determine the level of funding each individual needs.

Currently, the amount of services that individuals receive depends on when the service is requested, how much money is available at the time and what services are available. OASIS

places more emphasis on the individual's needs, allowing for more flexibility, while also creating a standard system for determining that need.

There is a possibility that the assessment will either increase or decrease the amount of funding that Medicaid waiver consumers receive. It is important to know that you can appeal a decision that results from the OASIS process.

For further information, visit the ARC of Indiana at www.arcind.org and click on the OASIS link; or call (888) 527-0008 (toll free).

Supreme Court upholds Voter ID law

The U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled 6-3 to uphold Indiana's strict Voter ID law, which requires voters to provide government-issued photo identification at the polls. Supporters say the law seeks to prevent voter fraud, but opponents argue that it places an extra burden on low-income, minority and elderly voters, as well as voters with disabilities, because these individuals may have a harder time meeting ID requirements.

However, the new law provides that all citizens without proper identification may receive a free photo ID card issued by the state. Individuals living in nursing homes, where polling places are located, are exempt from the requirement, as are individuals who do not want to be photographed for religious reasons. Indiana is among more than 20 states now enforcing such a law.

If you had problems voting

If you experienced any voting problems due to the new photo identification requirements, national media may be interested in your story. If you are willing to share your experience, please contact Jim Dickson, American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), at (800) 840-8844 (toll free) or james.charles.dickson@gmail.com.

Or, if you experienced problems at the polls due to accessibility limitations, you can report your experience by calling the Hoosier Voter Hotline at 1-866-IN-1-VOTE (1-866-461-8683). Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services also welcomes calls at 1-800-622-4845 (voice) and 1-800-838-1131 (TTY), or you can visit their Web site at www.in.gov/ipas.

Of Note

Save the date!

The 2008 Conference for People with Disabilities will take place Tuesday, Dec. 2, and Wednesday, Dec. 3, at the Hyatt Regency hotel in downtown Indianapolis. Look for more information in future issues of "On Target."

Deadline extended for Partners applications

The Council will be accepting applications through July 7 for Partners in Policymaking. This advocacy training program teaches leadership skills and techniques for building positive relationships with government and community leaders who make important policy decisions. Submit your application today by calling the Council at (866) 234-1635 (toll free), (317) 232-7771 (voice) or send an e-mail to PIP@gpcpd.org.

Help available for Medicaid questions

The Voluntary Community Assistance Network (VCAN) is available to help those on Medicaid manage their benefits and better understand the system. If you've experienced problems or have questions about Medicaid or TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), contact Cheryl McNutt during regular business hours at (800) 855-6424, ext. 234 (toll free). The Indiana Public Health and Assistance Helpline is also available to answer questions related to TANF, food stamps and Medicaid at (765) 569-0309 (voice). In addition, the Indiana State Department of Health offers the Family Helpline to assist Hoosiers with a number of issues at (800) 433-0746 (toll free) or (866) 275-1274 (TTY / TDD).

Advocacy training series accepting applications

Indiana University's Institute on Disability and Community is now accepting applications for its fall Building Leadership Series. Twenty self-advocates are needed for three, two-day sessions that will be held at the convention center in Bloomington. Participants will receive a \$60 stipend per workshop, as well as meals and overnight lodging. Workshop sessions are Sept. 24–25, Oct. 22–23 and Nov. 12–13. For more information, visit www.iidc.indiana.edu/cac. To apply, contact Jennie Todd at jeptod@indiana.edu or (812) 855-6508 (voice).

On Target is a monthly publication of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities. We welcome your suggestions for newsletter content and ideas concerning the actions of the Council. on target is made available in accessible formats upon request.