

Section B– Significant Activities and Accomplishments

If applicable, describe any significant activities and accomplishments achieved by the DSU and SILC not included elsewhere in the report, e.g. brief summaries of innovative practices, improved service delivery to consumers, etc.

ACCES-VR Significant Activities and Accomplishments

DSU Narrative

During Federal Fiscal Year 2016, the ACCES-VR Independent Living Services Unit (ILSU) facilitated a wide range of activities including:

- Fostering collaboration among agencies and partner organizations
Including the development of the 2017 – 2019 SPIL in partnership with NYSILC
- The development of resources and materials to enhance independent living services;
- Provision of training and technical assistance across the ILC network;
- Refinements in data accountability, performance criteria and mechanisms for identifying overall program outcomes with emphasis on implementation of the second year of program and data collection in the three year ILC contract extension and strategies for a new three year ILC contract; and
- The third-year implementation of the 2014-16, SPIL.

Specific details of activities noted above are as follows:

Collaboration:

ACCES-VR ILSU joined NYSILC at four public forums held in Rochester, Manhattan, Plattsburgh and Binghamton to obtain input into the design of the 2017-19 SPIL and worked in partnership with NYSILC and its State Plan Development Committee to frame objectives and responsibilities required in the SPIL driven by anticipated changes in the WIOA.

ACCES-VR ILSU continues to serve on the Department of Health's Disability and Health Council; the Office for Aging's Family Care Council; the NYSCB State Rehabilitation Council and NYSILC's Executive Committee, Outreach Committee, Needs Assessment Committee, Data Integration Committee, Development Committee, Recruitment Committee and Customer Satisfaction Committee.

The ACCES-VR ILSU continues to join quarterly meetings of the steering committee of the University of Rochester five year systems change grant known as Partnerships in Employment Services with the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) made available through the Administration on Developmental Disabilities to develop new models to engage youth with intellectual disabilities in integrated employment.

The ACCES-VR ILSU continues to participate in follow-along activities initiated during a statewide Office for Aging "think group" to identify priorities for expanding legal assistance and resources to people with disabilities and seniors which has led to involvement by Independent Living

Centers in the design of an online resource guide and regional planning groups to replicate aspects of New York City's mobile legal services project.

The ACCES-VR ILSU has been monitoring the New York State Assembly and Senate support for the establishment of an Office of Community Living (OCL) to coordinate common interests of seniors and disability communities and continues to provide the New York State Education Department leadership and the New York State Board of Regents with detailed briefings of implications of the proposed legislation. If an OCL is created, it is proposed that the ILC program would move to the new office.

As part of ongoing efforts to train ACCES-VR student interns, the ILSU provides a comprehensive training program for all new interns on independent living philosophy, history and New York's ILC program.

ACCES-VR ILSU issued a competitive request for proposal (RFP) to pilot integration of peer independent living services within two ACCES-VR district offices. The purpose of the pilot was to help VR participants overcome barriers to employment with the assistance of a peer specialist who is connected to the local ILC network. The Regional Center for Independent Living was selected to work within the Rochester District Office and Westchester Independent Living Center was selected to work within the Westchester and Rockland District Offices.

The ACCES-VR ILSU maintains ongoing involvement in NYSILC activities and committees. During the year, ten contracts were monitored for Capacity Building for Independent Living Center Opportunity projects addressing SPIL priorities to serve the unserved and underserved populations of youth with disabilities, veterans with disabilities, healthy lifestyles of individuals with disabilities and Latinos and other ethnic and cultural groups with disabilities.

The ACCES-VR ILSU executed a competitive application process to address the SPIL objective to establish a SSAN comprised of 15 providers including a separate competitive application process to identify an entity to coordinate the network.

The ACCES-VR ILSU also executed contracts to operate the NYSILC for another three-year period and for the NYAIL to support a statewide ILC conference planned for September 2017.

The ACCES-VR ILSU continues to prepare an annual revenue chart that reflects State, Federal and resources from other funding sources available within the ILC network.

While executing the process for the new SSAN under the 2017-19 SPIL, the ILSU also continued to monitor and evaluate the contracts with 14 providers and one coordinating entity for the SSAN which had a very active year successfully promoting a \$1 million increase in State funding for the ILC network and a variety of legislative and regulatory initiatives.

The ACCES-VR ILSU coordinated an upstate and downstate forum with ILCs to exchange information about respective priorities and to encourage greater ILC involvement in the provision of core Rehabilitation Services (CRS) ahead of the proposed application process anticipated sometime in 2017.

The ACCES-VR ILSU developed a self-advocacy for employment individual and group service component based on WIOA requirements as part of the next statewide application for Core Rehabilitation Services due out in 2017.

Training and Technical Assistance:

The ACCES-VR ILSU provided extensive support and technical assistance to ILCs on a variety of topics and issues. New ILC executive directors and staff were oriented to ACCES-VR's CIL Standards, Performance Measures and Data Collection Guide in Brooklyn and Rockland.

The ACCES-VR ILSU introduced ACCES-VR's Manager of Rehabilitation Service Delivery to the ILC program by arranging for site visits to the Brooklyn Center for the Independence of the Disabled, Rockland Independent Living Center, Northern Regional Center for Independent Living in Watertown, Access to Independence of Cortland County, Western New York Independent living Center in Buffalo, Long Island Center for Independent Living in Levittown, Harlem Independent Living Center and Self-Initiated Living Options in Suffolk County.

Onsite data verification and case record management reviews were conducted at Access to Independence and Mobility (AIM) CIL in Corning, Westchester Disabled On the Move Inc. in Yonkers and the Northern Regional Center for Independent Living in Watertown.

Additionally, over the course of the year, the ILSU oriented many in-house ILC staff responsible for mid-year and end year report preparation on the many facets of narrative and statistical data reports.

Beginning in November 2010, a select work group of representatives of ILC member organizations and ILCs with experience in data driven decision making were invited to participate on the 21st Century Data Collection Work Group. Seven ILCs have participated and in March 2012 agreed on a common set of data for the statewide database, training needs of staff and initial SPIL funding of the project. NYSILC drew from the work of the 21st Century Data Work Group to establish a Database Work Group that developed a comprehensive proposal to inform Objective 9 of the 2014-16 SPIL to develop a universal, inter-relational database for the ILC network that can identify trends, service patterns and service impact. ACCES-VR and NYSILC continue to work together to shape a scope of work and determine a potential project vendor to execute the project in 2017.

NYSCB Activities and Accomplishments

NYSCB uses a portion of its IL funds to provide independent living services to individuals who are legally blind. The individuals served through this program are not eligible to receive services through other NYSCB programs. For this reason, the services provided with independent living funds fill a significant need that would otherwise not be met. NYSCB district offices provided IL services to 305 individuals with IL funds in FY 2016. Of this number, 163 have met their independent living goals during FY 2016 and have had their cases successfully closed. Services are provided in accordance with an Independent Living Services Plan (unless waived by the individual), after a determination that the individual is eligible to receive services. The individuals receiving services span a broad range of circumstances including: individuals who are not able to achieve a vocational goal due to the severity of their disability (ies), but need services to maintain their independence; individuals who for other reasons choose not to pursue an employment goal; and individuals who live in group homes who need limited services for a specific need to maintain independence in their group home/or community. Generally, individuals served have self-care, communication, personal resource management and mobility goals and receive rehabilitation teaching, orientation and mobility, adaptive equipment needed to support the training received through rehabilitation teaching and orientation and mobility services, low vision and social casework services.

NYSCB IL funds are also used to support the SILC resource plan, the SSAN and capacity building grant opportunities to Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Service Centers for Independent Living (SCILs).

Increase in the number of CILs or SCILs providing NYSCB IL Fee Based Services

In FY 2016, two IL Centers began providing new fee based services for NYSCB consumers:

1. The Regional Center for Independent Living (RCIL) in Rochester began providing sign language interpreter services.
2. The Resource Center for Accessible Living (RCAL) in Kingston began providing job coaching and sign language interpreter services.

Collaboration with ILCs

Independent living centers provide an array of services to consumers working with NYSCB. These can include: home modification evaluations, job seeking skills/job development, vocational evaluation, job coaching and job placement assessment services, computer software training, interpreter (sign language) services, Medicaid Waiver and benefits advisement. Specific new initiatives are listed below.

NYSCB has further developed relationships with several ILCs this year. NYSCB continues to cultivate and appreciate the necessary and unique services provided by ILCs. NYSCB staff met with and/or partnered and/or collaborated with the following ILCs:

- Albany DO presented NYSCB services at Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) in Amsterdam and attended the 26th Celebration of the ADA at RCIL in Amsterdam.
- Western NY Independent Living, Inc. (WNYIL) presented at the NYSCB Buffalo DO staff meeting on ILC programs and the Medicaid Application Assistance Program (MAAP). Also, the NYSCB Buffalo DO Mobility Specialist participated on the planning committee of the WNYIL's Disability Pride Celebration and worked at the event in July 2016.
- NYSCB White Plains DO staff along with the NYSCB Associate Commissioner attended the October 2015 Rockland Independent Living Center/Associate for the Visually Impaired White Cane Awareness Day. The NYSCB Associate Commissioner spoke at the event.
- NYSCB staff attended a Westchester Disabled on the Move (WDOM) Outreach event at Yonkers Riverside Library.
- NYSCB and Putnam Independent Living Center (PILC) staff are working together to form a Diabetic Education group for consumers.
- NYSCB staff participated in Transition workshops with Putnam Independent Living Center (PILC) and RCAL.

These meetings gave staff at the centers and NYSCB staff a chance to re-acquaint themselves with services provided by both entities. Follow-up regarding service needs in each territory and ways that ILCs can provide fee based services for NYSCB consumers in the future is anticipated.

NYSCB NYSILC Representative Activities

The NYSCB participates in the Emergency Preparedness Committee.