

On Target

Informing Indiana About
Disability Issues

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Issues

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.

Suellen Jackson-Boner
Executive Director

Christine Dahlberg
Associate Director

Paul Shankland
Grants Manager

ADA anniversary finds advocates reaching out

On July 26, 2006, Hoosiers with disabilities celebrated the 16th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To coincide with the anniversary, ADA-Indiana released "Making the Grade: The ADA In Your Community," which documents the views of Indiana residents on ADA accessibility in the state.

ADA-Indiana also held a meeting that day with several advocates from across the state to learn of their efforts to implement the Act and other disability-related legislation in their communities.

Dee Ann Hart - area coordinator for Fifth Freedom in Delaware County, Partners in Policymaking graduate and Governor's Council board member - spoke about her efforts to make polling places in her county compliant with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

"When HAVA passed in 2002, Fifth Freedom had not yet been established in Delaware County," said Hart. "I, along with Julia Vaughn, worked with the Governor's Council Count Us In Project and met with county clerks to share our concerns on the lack of accessible voting equipment and polling places."

Since that time, Hart reported that they've probably had a 75 percent increase in accessibility in both

polling place locations and equipment. "We were able to make all locations more accessible before HAVA even required us to do so," she said.

Currently, Hart is advocating for the use of polling centers, similar to those used in Colorado. In that state, polling equipment is set up in public places 15-30 days before an election, and those with disabilities can vote at that time. The centers are manned by workers from voting precincts, and voters are allowed to cast their ballot at any location, as opposed to the one location in which they are registered.

Al Tolbert, executive director of the Southern Indiana Center for Independent Living, also presented at the meeting. He spoke about the Washington County Disability Council, which is working to make the city of Salem and surrounding areas accessible for people with disabilities.

"We have many projects currently in the works," said Tolbert. "We are building ramps for consumers with the help of the local chapter of the Future Farmers of America. We are also helping the local courthouse find assistive technology for an elevator they are installing."

The mayor of Salem has also allotted money to the Washington County Disability Council to help make the community more accessible. "We have installed handrails and less-slanted driveways," said Tolbert.

For more in-depth coverage of the "Making the Grade" report, see the September issue of On Target. For more information on ADA-Indiana, visit their Web site at www.iidc.indiana.edu/cpps/ada or call (812) 855-6508 (voice).

DDRS refines long-term vision

Indiana's Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) recently announced its revised

long-term vision for the way it serves people with developmental disabilities. Peter Bisbecos, director of DDRS, noted that the new principles were developed after consulting local and national experts and advocates. The new vision's key principles include:

- Work First. The opportunity and ability to work is vital to increasing self-esteem and economic self-sufficiency. o
- Self Advocacy/Self Direction. Many people with developmental disabilities are capable and should be empowered to design their own support plans. o
- Dignified Risk/Risk Management. Within appropriate limits, persons with developmental disabilities should be allowed the opportunity to take risks and learn from a full range of life experiences, both the successes and the disappointments. o
- Quality Measures. The state should establish indicators of quality performance for all services and implement a proactive quality assurance program.

FSSA announces reduction in waiver waiting list

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) recently announced that 650 people with disabilities currently on the Medicaid Waiver waiting list will receive services from the state's Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS).

According to FSSA, the increase in funding for the services comes from better management of individual care plans, savings from transitioning individuals to programs with more federal financial support and funds from the closing of the Fort Wayne State Developmental Center. The services for the 650 people will total \$18.1 million in the next year.

John Dickerson, executive director of The Arc of Indiana, said, "The Arc of Indiana is encouraged to see that savings achieved through reforms in programs and services for people with developmental disabilities, and from the movement of people from state institutions, is being put back into the system to provide new services to people who have been on waiting lists for years and years."

The recipients of the services include 500 people on the Support Services Waiver waiting list, 100 on the Developmental Disabilities Waiver waiting list and 50 on the Autism Waiver waiting list.

Statewide, more than 15,000 people are on waiting lists to receive Medicaid home- and community-based Waivers. These Waivers permit Medicaid to pay for the supports family members need to keep loved ones at home, and also provide a variety of residential and employment supports that help adults with developmental disabilities live in the community.

For more information about this announcement and other FSSA-related issues, visit www.in.gov/fssa.

Law enforcement receives ADA training

The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) recently introduced a three-part program for state and local law enforcement agencies. The program is designed to provide agencies an understanding of their responsibilities according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Several publications - including an outreach mailing to 25,000 police departments, sheriff's offices, highway patrols, and other law enforcement organizations and training academies nationwide - are provided as part of this new initiative.

A new law enforcement video, "Police Response to People with Disabilities," can be viewed on the Department of Justice's ADA Web site at

www.ada.gov. The video focuses on particular situations involving law enforcement and people with mobility disabilities, mental illnesses, cognitive disabilities, epilepsy or other seizure disorders, speech disabilities, hearing disabilities or vision disabilities. Copies of the video can be ordered from the DOJ.

As an initiative to prepare local law enforcement and personnel to better understand the ADA, the Indiana Partners in Justice program is developing a "Helpful Hints" card.

"The Partners anticipate these Helpful Hints cards will assist local law enforcement and corrections staff to have a better understanding of persons with disabilities," said Dee Enrico-Janik, assistant director of client services at Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services.

The prototype card will be tested in select communities in late 2006. To learn more about this initiative, contact Enrico-Janik at (800) 838-1131 (voice).

For more information on the DOJ's program, call the U.S. Department of Justice's ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or visit their Web site at www.ada.gov.

Council announces new awards program

The Governor's Council has issued a call for nominations for their new Community Spirit Awards program. This year, the Council will present four awards at the annual conference Awards Luncheon Friday, Nov. 17.

The Distinguished Leadership Awards will recognize one person with a disability and one parent or guardian of a child with a disability. The recipients will be honored for extraordinary contributions to

disability advocacy.

This annual award was established last year in honor of David Scott, a powerful advocate for people with disabilities who had a vast knowledge of human service systems. Over many years of advocacy, he went out of his way to make sure people got the help and encouragement they needed. His death last year led the Council to establish this awards program to celebrate and recognize the efforts of the disability community's most valuable resources: advocates.

Indiana advocates who meet the criteria are eligible to apply for these two awards. The second set of awards are the Disability Awareness Campaign Awards, which recognize one individual and one group or organization for outstanding efforts to promote Disability Awareness Month in schools, businesses and/or communities.

All awareness campaigns that kicked off or occurred during March are eligible for submission. Applicants can be an individual, group or organization. The Council will select one individual and one group or organization based on the criteria established for the award.

Award recipients and one guest will be offered a scholarship to attend the conference, including registration, parking and double occupancy overnight hotel accommodations (for those 50 miles or more from Indianapolis).

Information about the application criteria and nomination forms can be found on the Council's Web site at www.in.gov/gcpd or by calling (317) 232-7770 (voice).

All applications must be submitted or postmarked by Aug. 25, 2006.

DNR improves accessibility

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is working hard to improve the accessibility of parks, reservoirs, museums, historic sites, fish and wildlife areas, and forests and nature preserves in our state. Currently, there are more options for people who have mobility disabilities than ever before.

There are presently 13 museums and historic sites that offer full accessibility. From the sleek grounds of the Indiana State Museum to the rugged beauty that inspired T.C. Steele, all sites are currently accessible except for two. Plans are in the works to also make the Gene Stratton-Porter home and Lanier Mansion accessible.

According to Rick Edwards from the DNR, "One of my personal philosophies is to ensure a natural experience while not making the experience too rugged." For example, there is an accessible boardwalk over the Pisgah Marsh west of Fort Wayne.

There is still work to be done. Some of the more extensive plans include using a series of lifts to make the cave at O'Bannon Woods accessible, along with other sites. The goal is to insure that at least one trail in every state park and reservoir complies with the accessibility standards for outdoor recreation areas.

To gain input on Indiana's plan to make a statewide network of connected trails, community meetings were held in June at several locations around the state. These meetings allowed advocates to ensure that the trails would be accessible for people with disabilities. For more information on the plan, visit www.in.gov/dnr/2006trailssummit.

If you find barriers at a DNR location, please call Edwards at (317) 232-4145 (voice).

Fifty-one million U.S. citizens report

disability

The U.S. Census Bureau recently released a report stating that the number of Americans with disabilities has increased in the United States. Nearly 18 percent of the total population has some level of disability, and of the 51 million Americans with disabilities, almost 33 million have a disability that is considered severe.

According to the Bureau, a person with a disability is identified as someone unable to perform a particular action including any of one's senses, house chores, bodily cleanliness or anyone who has a specific condition such as Alzheimer's disease.

The results show that more than half of those with disabilities between the ages of 21 and 64 have been employed. The average earnings for someone with a severe disability were \$12,800 compared to \$22,000 for those with non-severe disabilities.

The report also stated that an increasing number of people with severe disabilities are more likely to have coverage by Medicare or Medicaid, live below the poverty level, have an income less than \$20,000 and have health conditions below average.

To view a full report, visit www.census.gov/hhes/www/disability/disability.html.

Of Note

Keynote speakers chosen for annual conference

At this year's Conference for People with Disabilities, Dr. Peter Blanck and Dr. Al Condeluci will serve as keynote speakers. Blanck is one of the world's leading scholars and experts on disability law and policy and will present "The Impact of Globalization on the Disability Community." Condeluci is one of America's leading consultants on human services and

community issues and will serve as the Awards Luncheon speaker. He addresses national and international audiences reaching more than 10,000 people each year. Conference registration materials will be mailed out by mid-September.

Reminder: register to vote

The deadline to register to vote in November's general election is Wednesday, Oct. 4. To register, visit www.in.gov/sos/elections/vote_reg.html or visit your local branch of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles.

Council announces evaluation drawing winners

Congratulations to the following people, whose names were drawn from among those who submitted Disability Awareness Month 2006 evaluation forms. Those chosen were Karen Bandelier, Mary Raber Elementary (Columbia City); Adrienne Clark, Marie Thurston Elementary School (Alexandria); Vivian Kistler, James A. Garfield School 31 (Indianapolis); Dennie Ohrazda, Jimtown North Elementary (Elkhart); and Carol Romine, East Brook Elementary School (Upland).

White House internships available for Spring 2007

Students with disabilities are encouraged to apply for an internship at the White House. In addition to normal duties, interns attend weekly lectures and tours, and complete an intern service project. For more information, visit www.whitehouse.gov/government/wh-intern.html. Completed application materials must be submitted by Oct. 13.

Save the date!

The 2006 Indiana Conference for People with Disabilities, "Seeking New Truths; Forging New

Paths," will be held Nov. 16 and 17 at the Westin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis.

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Indiana Governor's
Council for People with Disabilities
150 West Market Street, Suite 628
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

(317) 232-7770 voice

(317) 232-7771 TT

E-mail: GPCPD@gpcpd.org

Web site: www.state.in.us/gpcpd