

DEVELOPMENT OF STATE PLANS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Introduction to a Single State Plan

Under the reauthorized Rehabilitation Act Amendments, the state plan for independent living is to be jointly developed by the statewide independent living council (SILC) and the designated state unit (DSU). The DSU is the same state agency, usually your general vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency, that is the "designated state unit" for Title I or basic vocational rehabilitation services.

The SILC is an autonomous, independent body representing people with significant disabilities across the entire state and the interests of centers for independent living and others. It is to be a planning body and to work effectively with the state's vocational rehabilitation agency and, if you have one, blind services agency as well.

Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the state plan is to describe how the state's network of independent living programs and services will meet the independent living needs of persons with disabilities in the state. The plan must address how federal, state and other funds will be used within the state to develop and maintain an IL program.

Development of the Plan

A specific format for the state plan is provided by RSA to the chair of the statewide independent living council and to directors of state vocational rehabilitation and blind service agencies. The SILC and state agencies must develop the state plan and submit it, along with any required information on RSA's "pre-print" plan form by a certain date. The next major deadline for state plan submission to RSA is July 1, 2010, when the jointly developed three-year state plan for independent living is due.

Copies of state plan pre-print forms can be obtained from RSA's central office. Contact the Independent Living Branch, RSA, 400 Maryland Avenue S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202, for more information. Also, copies of the state plan pre-print forms are available for downloading from RSA's website at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/rsa/pd-01-02.doc>.

State Plan Requirements

The federal government gives each state a certain amount of funding under Title VII, Part B based upon percentage of population. Determination of how the Title VII, Part B funds will be spent in each state will be made jointly by the SILC, VR agency, and blind services agency (if one exists in the state). It is extremely important that SILCs be thoroughly knowledgeable about the process of Title VII, Part B funding, the

requirements of the state plan, and the state's status and progress toward a network of centers for independent living in order to be effective planners of Part B funding.

The specific requirements of the state plan include:

- specific objectives and timelines;
- an explanation of how objectives are consistent with and further the purpose of Title VII;
- a description of how Title VII services are coordinated with or complement other federal, state, or locally funded services to people with disabilities;
- a description of how federal, state, and local funding for CILs and independent living services will be coordinated;
- a description of how outreach to unserved, underserved, minority groups, urban populations, and rural populations will be conducted;
- a description of how individuals receiving assistance under Title VII will be notified of the client assistance program (CAP);
- a description of affirmative actions that will be taken to employ qualified individuals with disabilities;
- a description of fiscal control and accounting procedures that will be used;
- a description of how records will be kept if independent living services are to be provided to individuals, especially amount and disposition of funds to an individual recipient, total cost of project, and amount or costs of project funded with other sources;
- a description of how public hearings will be held during formulation and review of the plan; and
- a description of how the plan's effectiveness will be evaluated, based both on achievement of objectives and extent of satisfaction of individuals with disabilities.

With the advent of SILCs and their real authority in the planning process, individuals with significant disabilities and centers for independent living have an opportunity to develop an innovative statewide vision for independent living. We urge you to work with your SILC and your CIL colleagues in your state to develop the best state plan possible.

Adapted from a paper developed for NCIL's Rehab Act Committee by Maggie Shreve, 1994. Modified by Bob Michaels, 2008.