

ILRU NetWork

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TWWIA: Ticket to funding for CILs?

■ Some CILs look for funding prospects in “ticket to work” programs

Hailed by many as the most significant disability-related legislation since the ADA, the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIA) is intended to create opportunities for people with disabilities to get off the Social Security benefits rolls and into the workforce. The law is unprecedented in its recognition of the values of consumer choice and control—no doubt a reflection of the tireless advocacy of many in the independent living community, among others.

Some IL advocates believe the law is equally unprecedented in the opportunities it brings to the doorsteps of centers for independent living. Already millions of federal grant dollars are earmarked for several major initiatives that have sprung out of the legislation (see page 3). A number of centers for independent living applied for some of those dollars and await word on who will get the nod—and the funds.

In the meantime, one opportunity—perhaps the biggest that the new law has to offer CILs—is waiting in the wings. Under TWWIA, Social Security beneficiaries will get a ticket for employment services—one they can “spend” with any participating employment network they choose. In order to give consumers a wide range of choices, the law gives broad leeway in terms of how many and what type of organizations can qualify as employment networks.

The regulations, which will spell out the specifics, should be released for public comment this month. But even without them, some advocates say the law’s general requirement that employment networks must demonstrate “sub-

stantial expertise and experience in providing relevant employment services and supports,” is perfectly matched to CIL expertise and philosophy.

Arizona’s Susan Webb is one such advocate. CILs, she says, are TWWIA’s best hope for moving away from old

employment models. Webb, former director of Arizona Bridge to Independent Living (ABIL), is now founder and CEO of Webb Transitions, a company that specializes in employment services for people with disabilities currently in the

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MAKING \$ENSE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

...by Richard Petty, IL Net Director

Earlier this year, with the help of Telesurveys Research Associates, ILRU conducted a survey of a good number of CIL and SILC directors to get some feedback on how we’re doing in our efforts to provide information and technical assistance to the independent living community. We got a lot of good feedback from that effort and, in the near future, we’ll post to our website a summary of the results and how we plan to respond to the issues it surfaced.

In the meantime, with this issue of ILRU NetWork, we want to begin to respond to one request that came up frequently in the survey—and one we hear more and more often in our work with centers and statewide councils: *Give us information about raising funds!*

That’s a big topic for a small newsletter. Nonetheless, we’ve put together some information we hope will prove useful if you’re looking for ways to enhance the income side of your ledger.

Some of the best opportunities, it seems, come from federal agencies that are trying to step up their programs and services for people with disabilities—especially in the employment arena. For example, TWWIA—the Ticket to Work and the Work Incentives Improvement Act—is generating a lot of interest among CILs that see an opportunity to generate income AND further the independent living philosophy of giving consumers more choice and control of their lives.

In this issue we feature a basic overview of TWWIA and the federal agencies that are putting millions of dollars “on the street” to carry out its intent. Yes, the deadlines to apply for the first round of TWWIA grants have passed. But we think the information may be useful to CILs that want to position themselves for the next round.

Next, we look at CILs that are taking advantage of other federal grants to further their efforts to expand services to consumers. And we feature a couple of centers that are exploring an entirely different course—setting up commercial businesses to generate revenue. Finally, we share some of our favorite resources for finding and applying for grant and foundation dollars.

This is an exciting time for CILs that are looking for ways to expand their programs and their revenues. While we certainly have not covered all the prospects in this newsletter, we hope it will whet your appetite for the additional information we plan for our website, publications, teleconferences and trainings in the months to come.

- TWWIIA was signed into law in December 1999 and will be phased in nationally over a three-year period beginning in January 2001.
- The law is intended to make it easier for people who receive Social Security disability benefits to enter the workforce, if they want to.
- Title I creates the Ticket to Work and Self Sufficiency Program that allows consumers to go to their choice of employment networks to prepare for and get jobs. Consumer participation in the program is voluntary. There is no limit to the number of employment networks a state can have.
- Title II seeks to remove disincentives that have historically kept people out of the work force—specifically the loss of medical benefits. TWWIIA gives states the option to provide expanded Medicaid and Medicare coverage to include more people who are working.
- Draft regulations to implement TWWIIA were scheduled for release for public comment on Labor Day. At this writing, they have not been released. Many questions about how the program will actually operate cannot be answered until the regs are out, comments are in and final rules are published.
- Approximately eight- to 10-million Americans currently receive benefits through the Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Social Security Insurance (SSI) programs and are potential participants in TWWIIA programs.
- The Social Security Administration has primary responsibility for TWWIIA implementation, administration and generating consumer awareness of its provisions. The Health Care Financing Administration and Department of Labor, due to their respective responsibilities for health care benefits and employment programs, are also major players in TWWIIA implementation.
- A 12-member advisory panel advises SSA on all aspects of TWWIIA implementation. By law, at least half of the members must be people with disabilities, with preference given to current or former Social Security beneficiaries. Panelists represent the interests of consumers, service providers, employers and employees. To communicate with members, send e-mail to TWWIIAPanel@SSA.gov.



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welfare system or on private long-term disability benefits. She's also a member of the TWWIIA advisory panel that gives guidance to the Social Security Administration (SSA) as it rolls out the new program.

On the financial side, Webb says, with the large target population, TWWIIA has the potential to provide centers with a long-term funding stream. The law allows employment networks to choose between two reimbursement options—the details of which are expected to be included in the regs.

In a nutshell, one option will pay off when an employment network accomplishes certain “milestones” in the course of serving a consumer, in addition to payments over 60 months after the consumer is employed, based on a percentage of savings to the trust fund. The other option doesn't pay for milestones, but pays a greater amount over the 60 months the consumer is employed. In either case, Webb notes that CILs who want to be employment networks will have to figure out a way to finance the operation up front.

Finding that initial funding will be a challenge, Webb says, one that highlights the critical importance of good networking with foundations, employers, financial institutions—anybody that can provide seed money.

For CILs that are not already established in the employment services arena,

Webb says, another challenge will be to build relationships with a broad range of businesses and organizations that have jobs and other resources to help beneficiaries succeed in their efforts to get jobs and attain financial independence.

“Find out who got the benefits planning assistance and outreach grants in your state and partner with them,” she advises. “Join chambers of commerce, human resource associations and staffing agencies. Let them know who you are and what you're doing.”

Beyond that, Webb notes that, so far, only a few states have opted for TWWIIA's Medicaid buy-in provisions. She encourages CILs to “get in the fray” to convince their state to participate. Without the option to keep the health care coverage Medicaid provides if they go to work, consumers are less likely to participate in the program—which translates to fewer people for employment networks to work with.

It's important for CILs to be involved in the regulations process, even if they don't plan to go for employment network status, Webb says. Not only will the regs dictate how employment networks operate, they will dictate such things as who gets a “ticket” and how disputes will be handled.

She sees TWWIIA as a golden opportunity to infuse the massive service system with the independent living philosophies and practices. “Shame on us if we don't do everything we can to make sure that consumers do, in fact, have choice under this new law,” Webb says.

“Our philosophy—our peer mentoring approach, our advocacy approach, the fact we do things with consumers and not to them or for them—holds great promise for TWWIIA being successful.”

Bryon McDonald, public policy advocate for the World Institute on Disabilities, shares Webb's enthusiasm for TWWIIA's potential to change the way people with disabilities access and participate in the nation's employment and health care systems. In California, he says, CILs are partnering with other community-based organizations to bring about “interconnected program reform.”

The California Workgroup on Work Incentives and Health Care, formed in March 2000, includes consumers, advocates and organizations that view TWWIIA as only one part—albeit an important one—of total systems change. Noting that the Workforce Improvement Investment Act (WIIA) is being rolled out at the same time, McDonald says the California group is working toward reform that includes—but goes beyond—Social Security beneficiaries. The workgroup is advocating to convince state lawmakers to create programs to complement and supplement the new federal initiatives.

“The conjunction of these two federal laws gives us a big opportunity,” he says. “If we don't take advantage of that, we are not systems advocates.”

Contact Susan Webb at 602-778-0116 or susanwebb@webbtransitions.com. To contact Bryon McDonald call 510-763-4100 or write BRYOSEMITE@aol.com.

Federal grants support TWWIA rollout

While the Social Security Administration has primary responsibility to implement TWWIA, the Health Care Financing Administration and Department of Labor are also charged with helping to assure the initiative's success. All three agencies are funding grant programs to address various aspects of the law's requirements. The following is an "in a nutshell" summary of the grants and their status as this newsletter goes to press. (*Editor's Note: Keep an eye on the ILRU website—www.ilru.org—for updates.*)

WORK INCENTIVE GRANTS

AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration, Dept. of Labor (ETA/DOL)

PURPOSE: To develop or strengthen the capacity of the "One-Stop" employment system to provide effective and meaningful services to people with disabilities.

AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$20 million in 20-40 grant awards ranging from \$500,000-\$1.5 million

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: CILs are specifically named in a list of state and/or local public and private entities considered eligible to apply for grant funds. DOL strongly encourages collaborative efforts. If an applicant consortium does not include CILs, the applicant is instructed to describe how it will include them in grant activities.

DEADLINE: August 1, 2000 (*Note: While the application deadline has passed, there is speculation that the process could be re-opened in the event not enough applications were received or approved.*)

STATUS: At this writing, grant award announcements are pending.

BENEFITS PLANNING, ASSISTANCE AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

AGENCY: Social Security Administration (SSA)

PURPOSE: To inform consumers about work incentives programs and provide benefits planning and assistance (awardees are required to select "benefits specialists" to conduct outreach and benefits counseling). Projects that are funded are also required to collect and report data pertaining to the effort.

AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$23 million issued through cooperative agreements ranging from \$50,000-\$300,000

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: CILs are specifically named in a list of potential recipients the SSA Commissioner could determine qualified to perform the activities, including public, private, profit and non-profit agencies or organizations within "targeted geographic" areas.

DEADLINE: July 31, 2000 (*Note: While the deadline has passed, SSA is expected to solicit more applications next year.*)

STATUS: At this writing, cooperative agreements are pending.

MEDICAID INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM TO SUPPORT THE COMPETITIVE EMPLOYMENT OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

AGENCY: Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), Dept. of Health and Human Services

PURPOSE: To build and strengthen state Medicaid systems' ability to support people with disabilities in their efforts to get and keep jobs.

AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$20 million in the first grant year with annual increases so that fifth-year funding will total \$150 million. Eligible states can get up to \$1.25 million in the first grant year and \$1.5 million in subsequent years. (*Note: While all states are eligible to apply for grants, the amount and duration of funds they can receive is directly related to their capacity to provide comprehensive, statewide personal assistance services in accordance with specific criteria laid out in the funding notice. The PAS requirement may provide CILs with opportunities to generate income by working with the state Medicaid agency to build or maintain comprehensive, statewide services.*)

Eligible Applicants: The Single State Medicaid Agency or any other state agency "in partnership, agreement and active participation with the state Medicaid agency."

DEADLINE: July 31, 2000 (*Note: New funding notices will be published annually for four years.*)

STATUS: The announcement of the first round of awards is expected in October 2000.

MORE INFORMATION

Work Incentive Grants

www.wdsc.org/disability/html/docs/work_incentives_sga.html

Benefits Planning and Outreach

www.ssa.gov/work/ServiceProviders/congrant2.html

Medicaid Infrastructure Grants

www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/twwia/advocacy.htm

Demonstration to Maintain Independence and Employment

www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/twwia/independ.htm

Note the date!

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For more information:
Kristy Langbehn
703-525-3406 (V)
703-525-4153 (TTY)
703-525-3409 (FAX)
kristy@ncil.org

Details coming soon!

HCFA DME demo tests consumer control

A few weeks ago, the Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) announced the selection of four local centers for independent living to help the federal agency determine ways to give Medicare recipients more choice and control when they buy wheelchairs and related equipment. HCFA gave each center \$150,000 for the first year of a four-year "Consumer-Directed Durable Medical Equipment (CD-DME) Demonstration Project."

Oklahoma's Ability Resources, Inc., is one of the four centers. Director Carla Lawson says her center's interest in the project has more to do with the opportunity than the money it brings in.

The demonstration sites will test ways to put consumers in charge of the whole wheelchair-buying process—from prescription, to selection, fitting and, finally, submitting their own payment forms. The main role of the CILs in the project is to educate consumers about the process and the products so they can make informed decisions about the equipment that will best meet their needs.

In conjunction with the demonstration projects, HCFA will try out a change in the process by which wheelchair purchases are authorized. A Durable Medical Equipment Regional Carrier (DMERC) will be assigned to work with the four CILs to preauthorize purchases, allowing consumers to know up front what HCFA will pay for their wheelchairs. As opposed to the current system, where the authorization comes after the equipment is ordered, Lawson says the new process will strengthen consumers' negotiations with equipment providers.

The CILs won't actually serve consumers until the second year of the project. Year one, Lawson says, will be devoted to a multitude of tasks including working up service protocols, creating marketing materials, developing quality assurance guidelines, training staff and more.

The most challenging task will likely be figuring out how to make services to consumers "budget neutral" as required by grant rules. HCFA won't pay CILs for the services they provide individual consumers, Lawson says, "so our challenge is to see how we can provide the service and still have a revenue stream."

Lawson thinks that Medicaid home and community-based waivers may hold some prospect for that. She says the center is also exploring the possibility of setting up consultation fees for things like reviewing wheelchair prescriptions for HMOs as a source of income.

Lawson says she doesn't see how the grant will create any immediate new financial opportunities for CILs—HCFA doesn't plan to expand the demonstration. And, she says, it's way too early to tell if this activity will ever have any potential to generate significant income. Nonetheless, she is glad to participate.

"We see it as a fantastic opportunity," Lawson says. "If we can possibly make a wheelchair acquisition a little bit easier on consumers and see them in the right chair

with the right tires and the right fit—it would be something we would be proud to say we were involved with."

In addition to the Oklahoma CIL, HCFA awarded demonstration funds to Maine's Alpha One Center for Independent Living, Massachusetts' Center for Living and Working and the Center for Independent Living of Southwest Pennsylvania.

Contact Carla Lawson by sending e-mail to ar@cottagesoft.com or calling 918-592-1235.

HOT LINKS

TO GRANT AND FOUNDATION INFORMATION



cybergrants.com – www.cybergrants.com

Free to non-profits, this website allows users to search for foundations, develop proposals and submit them online.

Environmental Protection Agency – www.epa.gov/seahome/grants/src/msieopen.htm

This site features a great interactive proposal writing tutorial with a lot of good tips, mock grant writing activity and an excellent glossary. Most of the links are related to EPA issues, but the generic information should be useful to anyone.

Grant Proposal.com – <http://www.grantproposal.com>

Free information for non-profit grant writers at all skill levels. The site contains advice from funders, a bunch of tips and tricks—even a listing of active verbs to perk up grant applications.

The Foundation Center – fdncenter.org/index.html

The center offers a truckload of information on grant making organizations. You can sign up for free newsletters including *The Philanthropy News Digest* and the weekly *RFP Bulletin*. Check out the *Grant Maker Websites* for links to foundations in every state.

The Grantsmanship Center – www.tgci.com

Our favorite spot on this site is a direct link to "today's" Federal Register. Click on "federal government" from the home page and you'll find it. You can also order low-cost publications on a variety of topics or learn about training opportunities.

Disability Funding News – www.cdpublications.com/funding/dfn.htm

There's not a lot of information on this site beyond how to subscribe for the monthly *Disability Funding News* (print or electronic version) that provides details on public and private funding opportunities for a wide range of disability-related programs. A 12-month, prepaid subscription is \$299.

Innovation Network, Inc. (InnoNet) – www.innonet.org

The site contains workstations to develop fundraising action plans and grant applications—free if you register as a user.

Grant Update! – www.arcpro.net/grantupdate

This is a good source for a lot of free information about writing proposals as well as information on new funding opportunities. It has a good links section, too. Some features are available to members only. They're currently having a "sale" on annual membership for \$39.95.

About.com – nonprofit.about.com/careers/nonprofit

This website has information on hundreds of topics and a good section about grants on its non-profits pages.

PWI JOINS CILS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Long before there were “tickets” for employment services or “One-Stop” employment centers—well before there were centers for independent living—there was Projects With Industry (PWI). This federal program was established in 1968 as part of the Rehabilitation Act. PWI’s mission is to create more job and career opportunities for people with disabilities by strengthening linkages between the public vocational rehabilitation program and private industry. The work is carried out by grantees that, in addition to building relationships in the business community, provide an array of support services to job seekers with disabilities.

A broad range of agencies and organizations—including centers for independent living—are potentially eligible for PWI funds. But until relatively recently, CILs have not been part of the PWI picture.

Ten years ago, the National Center for Disability Services—an organization that promotes employment for people with disabilities—had occasion to work with a CIL on a national project. Judy Young, PWI director, recalls it was her first real exposure to the independent living philosophy. Through that experience, Young remembers, “I learned that employment programs fit very nicely with the IL movement because CILs provide support services that can assist a person in getting and maintaining employment. IL services like housing assistance, personal assistance services, independent living skills training—all are really needed by people seeking employment.”

Three years later, PWI released a new series of grants and Young was ready to act on her revelation. She rounded up seven CILs in as many states to join NCDS in a proposal.

Kentucky’s Center for Accessible Living (CAL) was one of the CILs that joined the effort and subsequently became a subcontractor when NCDS got the PWI grant. Jan Day, the center’s executive director, remembers learning about PWI at the very first National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) meeting she attended.

“At that same time,” Day says, “we were taking a look at who we were. We had some good ties with Kentucky VR and it all just evolved. We liked the idea of an employment program being within a CIL—especially so soon after the signing of ADA and its focus on employment. We felt that by collaborating—and with our experience with disability—we could assist people with disabilities to achieve their employment career goals.”

Day says PWI funds, combined with other dollars from various grants, allows CAL to provide a more complete array of services to consumers—services the center would not be able to provide otherwise. Additionally, by providing employment services, she says the CIL has attracted a whole new sector of people with disabilities and increased participation in other center services. “They come in for a job, but we discover they need assistance with things like housing, attendant care or peer counseling. Our overall number of people served has gone up drastically.”

The other big payoff, from her perspective, comes from heightened visibility in the business community. The grant’s requirement to have a business advisory council put the center in touch with a number of “big players” who didn’t know anything about independent living issues previously.

The center’s increased visibility with businesses and employers, Day says, has increased the CIL’s advocacy activities—and bank account—in a big way. For example, she says, CAL recently received \$1.2 million for personal assistance services thanks, in large part, to the business advisory council’s support and advocacy for it.

In addition to the Kentucky CIL, NCDS has PWI subcontracts with centers in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Missouri and Texas. “In general,” Judy Young says, “I think what most of the sites have gained is a higher degree of visibility from our relationship. As a result, some are able to secure funds from other than RSA, they’re interacting with the employment community and quite a few have successful media coverage—all of which serves to bring in more people with disabilities and more money. I think PWI is particularly appropriate for CILs that set their sights on expansion.”

The next PWI grant announcement is expected within the next few months. CILs are eligible to apply for funds, however, Young notes that many individual centers will find it difficult to serve enough people through the program to qualify for even the minimum level of funding. In those cases, she advises, centers might benefit from creating partnerships with other centers or organizations to apply for PWI funds.

For more information about the National Center for Disability Services’ Project With Industry activities, contact Judy Young at young@business-disability.com or 516-465-1491. Contact Jan Day at janday@callou.win.net or 502-589-6620.

Continued from page 3 ... Federal grants

DEMONSTRATION TO MAINTAIN INDEPENDENCE AND EMPLOYMENT

AGENCY: Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)

PURPOSE: To extend Medicaid equivalent benefits and services to workers who are not yet disabled enough to qualify for Medicaid or Social Security benefits under current rules, but whose potentially severe physical or mental impairments are likely to lead to disability.

AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$250 million overall to be awarded in six-year grants.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: The Single State Medicaid Agency. (*Note: Independent living advocates that work closely with their state Medicaid agencies believe there is an opportunity to collaborate in the demonstration.*)

DEADLINE: August 7, 2000 (*Note: There is speculation the notice will be released again in the near future.*)

STATUS: Demonstration grant recipients were not announced at this writing.

STW: ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY?

The federal Departments of Education and Labor recently distributed more than \$20 million among 10 states participating in the School-to-Work (STW) transition initiative. The funds are intended to help these states maintain their STW projects after their initial five-year grants end.

CILs in these states may want to check in with their STW representatives to learn about opportunities to tap into those funds. The states are California, Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, Rhode Island, Tennessee and Texas.

For more information go to the STW website: www.stw.ed.gov.

“Social entrepreneurialism” in the Aloha State

HAWAII CENTER GAINING VALUABLE INSIGHT FROM BUSINESS EXPERIENCES

Sometimes the quest to expand its funding base takes a CIL on a path that travels beyond the government programs, foundations, fundraisers and other more traditional funding sources we are familiar with. On these pages we feature two centers for independent living that are testing the entrepreneurial waters.

About five years ago, the Hawaii Centers for Independent Living (HCIL) board and staff took a good hard look at its financial situation and didn't like the picture. The entire state was in an economic slump brought on by drastically decreased tourist revenues resulting from Desert Storm. As state coffers dwindled, many state agencies experienced big budget cuts—some as much as 35 percent. Many nonprofits that relied solely on state dollars were forced to close their doors.

With finite Title VII dollars and one relatively small United Way grant, HCIL was having a tough time meeting a growing demand for services. With approximately 96 percent of its budget restricted by the requirements of its two major funding sources, the center was also looking for ways to bring in funds that didn't have so many strings attached.

A golf tournament fundraiser netted HCIL some \$5,000 dollars, a respectable sum. But, HCIL director Mark Obatake says the experience caused the board and staff to realize that the return on special events would not be enough in light of the expense and intensive effort it takes to put them together.

Looking for other options, they explored what Obatake calls a “social-

entrepreneurial model” of raising revenue—one he describes as “dovetailing a business provision with a mission statement.” It didn't take them long to find a promising prospect.

Hawaii businesses were woefully behind in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements and many were struggling with what to do and how to do it, Obatake says. With an abundance of ADA information and experience, HCIL had a marketable product. Access Aloha, Inc.—an ADA consulting firm—became the CIL's first venture into the commercial business world.

The company was set up to operate totally separate from the CIL. The center hired a staff person to run it and charged the fledgling company for rent and use of office equipment. “We wanted to keep the business at arm's length,” Obatake says. “We weren't involved in supervision or business operations.”

Within a year and a half, the company was in the black. “That was pretty unusual,” Obatake says. “Most new, small companies don't see profits for two or three years.”

But, the success was short-lived. The staff person left to have a baby and the business community was getting more educated about ADA and less in need of Aloha's services. The one-two punch was too much for the fledgling business, but not for HCIL's entrepreneurial spirit.

“We were on the right track,” Obatake says.

The center reviewed its strengths, its mission—and at some point its information and referral logs. Those logs revealed as many as 15 calls a week—from travelers all over the world—looking for information about accessible transportation to and lodging in Hawaii.

“We started to ask around, we called travel agencies,” Obatake recalls, “and learned that they didn't have good understanding of access and didn't really give a rip about disabilities. So we decided if

nobody else was doing it, maybe we should. We used the same corporate shell, redefined the work and created Access Aloha Travel, Inc.”

This time, HCIL brought in a staff person with years of experience in the travel industry—HCIL taught her about accommodations. “We didn't want to have to learn the complexities of the travel trade,” Obatake says.

Once again, the combination worked—it didn't take long for the company to become profitable. And, once again, changes in the industry caused the CIL to reconsider its stake in the company. “The travel industry is a strange business and the net margin is very small,” Obatake says. “While it was carrying out a mission, it wasn't raising the kinds of dollars that we need.”

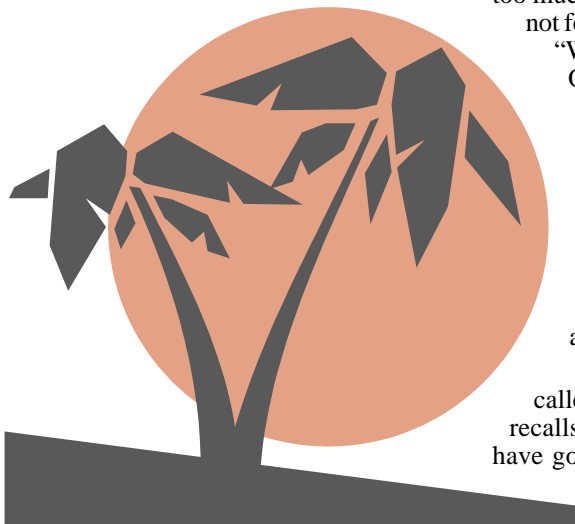
The center sold the business to the travel agent. In addition to the revenue from the sale, the center still rents space to the business and gets the income from that.

Neither venture has created the long-term funding stream HCIL envisioned, but Obatake says both have given the center important perspective in terms of the value of its services and their potential to raise revenue. “We have restructured our services to be more in line with fee-based operations,” Obatake says, noting the center has raised more than \$30,000 in fees providing services based on core IL services such as home assessments, consultation to home health care agencies, ADA training and more.

And while these fees come from sources other than center consumers, Obatake views looking at services in terms of their value as a consumer benefit. Despite the emphasis on consumer choice and control, he says, the reality is that “we are still operating in a system where rehab service providers control the dollars.” When consumers do control their own service dollars, the stream of resources will change.

“When consumers get control of their dollars are they going to spend it with you?” he asks. “If they're not paying you for the services now, how do you know they will later? I couldn't answer that question before we looked at our services in a more businesslike way. I can now.”

Contact Mark Obatake at 808-522-5400 or mobatake@diverseabilities.org.



TEXAS CIL HAS “DESIGNS” ON FUTURE FUNDING



What started as an effort to improve its own public image launched the Austin Resource Center for Independent Living (ARCIL) into the commercial business world. ARCIL Graphics is a one-man, full-service design and desktop publishing operation located in Austin, Texas.

From a state-of-the-art studio housed in ARCIL's headquarters, Earl Chandler designs logos, newsletters, brochures and more for a growing number of clients. Some of them, such as the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) and Texas Association of Centers for Independent Living (TACIL) are part of the IL community. Word of mouth advertising is bringing in businesses that have nothing to do with disabilities or advocacy—a local food distributor is a recent example.

Chandler joined the ARCIL staff in 1988 as an administrator. Shortly thereafter, the CIL started beefing up its arsenal of computers, which made it easy for program staff to develop their own public information materials. According to Jack Stratton, deputy director, the resulting publication frenzy lacked coordination and caused the center to experience a kind of identity crisis—materials were not consistent in message or appearance. This created problems for a center trying to establish a strong image with the public and existing and potential funding sources. Furthermore, it was getting expensive to produce materials using outside sources.

Their solution? Centralize the publication function and do the design and printing in-house. Due to his interest and emerging talent as a graphic designer, Chandler was tapped for the responsibility. He went back to college for formal training and earned a commercial art degree.

At first, Chandler focused on ARCIL's needs and developed a unified family of

publications reflecting a new agency image. At the same time—perhaps helped along by its spiffed up image—ARCIL started getting more grants and offering additional programs and services. Each new program came with its own publication needs—for brochures, reports, manuals and the like. The graphics shop quickly earned its keep.

It wasn't until 1996 that the CIL started to think about the function as a potential moneymaker. ARCIL Graphics was created that year and Chandler started taking in a few outside jobs to test the waters. To this point, he says, ARCIL has done little to promote the business, preferring to grow it slowly and build a solid foundation. Even so, he adds, business is gradually growing and the company has definite potential to turn a profit.

Since its inception, ARCIL Graphics has operated within the center's program budget. Therefore, any revenue the company generates is considered program revenue and must be treated as such. Between the savings ARCIL realizes by doing its own design and printing and the modest income it's generating, ARCIL graphics pays for itself.

What doesn't show up on the center's ledgers is the value the graphics operation brings to the community. Chandler is still in touch with the college he attended and has taken in several student interns—some of them students with disabilities. "It gives students a chance to apply what they're learning and build their portfolios," Chandler says, "and gives ARCIL the chance to give something back to the community."

Mary Ann Hernandez, ARCIL's chief financial officer, says the CIL has hopes of "spinning off" the design business and creating an independent corporation that can bring in dollars that are not restricted by program requirements. Toward that

end, Hernandez says, the center is developing a business plan and beginning to look for foundation money or other outside funds that could support the business start-up.

Except for its own business needs nearly a decade ago, ARCIL might have never come up with the idea to start a graphics design company. While it's not the kind of business that every CIL can or would want to pursue, Stratton and Chandler believe some CILs might find it worth trying.

First, they say, it's important to know the market for such services in individual communities. Austin, Chandler says, is almost saturated with similar companies and area colleges are producing a lot of graphic artists who want to stay and work there. CILs in smaller communities might have an easier time finding a niche in a market where there are fewer companies providing the same service.

If the market is right, the next challenge would probably be financing the necessary equipment. It doesn't come cheap. ARCIL Graphics owns some of its own equipment but leases the high-powered printer that allows Chandler to produce full-color publications. "It takes a lot of printing to justify the expense," Chandler says.

"Then," Stratton says, "you have to have the person who has the education and experience in graphics production. This isn't something that just anybody in the center can do."

Chandler agrees, and adds there is quite a bit to learn on the business side of the operation, as well. "We had to learn how much to charge for services, what needed to be in our contracts—things you don't learn in art school."

For more information, call Earl Chandler at ARCIL Graphics at 512-832-6349 or send e-mail to arcil@bga.com.

NetNotes

Don't forget you can find this and all past issues of *ILRU NetWork* online at www.ilru.org. You'll find it under the *Independent Living* heading. With most issues, you'll find links to related information and resources we just couldn't fit in the newsletter.



In this issue's introductory article, Richard Petty, IL Net director, mentions a recent survey of CIL and SILC directors

to determine awareness of—and satisfaction with—ILRU services. A full summary of the findings is posted on our website along with this issue of the newsletter.

Through the survey, we got a lot of reinforcement for many of the things we're doing—and we like that. Even better, survey participants revealed some activities we can strengthen. We've already started to work on those and we'll report on our progress in future newsletters and on the website. If you have comments on the survey results or more ideas for ways we can improve, feel free to use the link on the website to send them our way. Or call, write or fax using the information in the masthead below.



The newest addition to the ILRU Bookshelf series—Bobby Silverstein's three-part Congressional Insider's Guide—is getting rave reviews! As you may know, Silverstein spent many years as a key Congressional staffer who was instrumental in the passage of important disability legislation. Now director of the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy, Silverstein shares a wealth of information about participating in all aspects of the legislative process in this series of publications. For more information, contact Carri George, ILRU publications coordinator, at 713-520-0232 or cgeorge@bcm.tmc.edu.



ilru NetWork

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