

Annual Report



The Division of Persons with Disabilities exists to promote the employment of Iowans with disabilities and reduce barriers to employment by providing information, referral, technical assistance, training, and negotiation services to employers and citizens with disabilities.

*Division of Persons with Disabilities
Department of Human Rights
September 30, 2002*

Highlights

This report highlights the achievements of the Division of Persons with Disabilities, especially new and innovative directions to improve the employment opportunities for Iowans with disabilities.

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YLF Photos

Staff:

Administrator

Jill Avery

Disability Consultants

John TenPas

Harlietta Helland

Mike Williams

Secretary

Becky Danilson

Commission Activities

A 24 member Commission is appointed by the Governor. They are charged with setting priorities for the Division, promoting local advocacy committees, recognizing individuals or groups who promote employment of people with disabilities, and making recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.

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Members of the Commission

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Annual Awards Banquet

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Local Committees

Developing Abilities of the Workforce

Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities

In partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Department for the Blind, we organized and managed the five day Youth Leadership Forum for Students with Disabilities. It was once again held at Iowa State University and provided training for 21 high school juniors and seniors.



Volunteer staff and students enjoyed a variety of speakers, events and challenges promoting leadership and team building. The evaluation results indicated this was a very worthwhile project and our partners agreed to continue this function. Federal funding from our partners provides half of the cost of the forum. This forum is provided at no cost to the participants.

The experience of living in a dormitory on your own was an eye-opener for some students with severe disabilities and their parents. Assistive equipment, special needs, and attendant care were provided as requested and at no cost to the participants.

Because of the very positive experience, 14 of the 21 student delegates volunteered to come back to work as assistants, peer counselors, attendants, or other jobs.

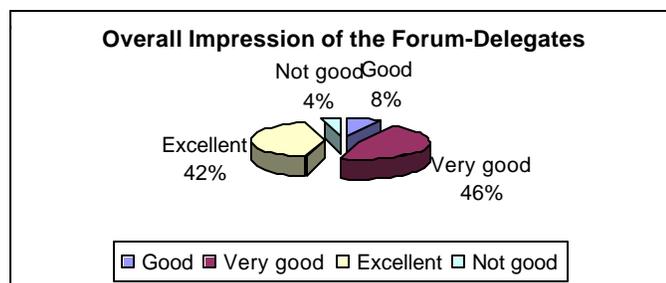
Also, this year's forum claimed 12 YLF alumni as staff out of the 15 volunteers that provided leadership for the program. Several of the volunteer staff also indicated a desire to work at YLF in future years.

More photos of activities on page 9 and 10.

"That's what being young is all about. You have the courage to think that you can make a difference. You're not prone to measure your energies in time".

-Ruby Dee

Results



The chart above shows delegate response to the question of their overall opinion of the forum. Our commitment is to follow up for at least two years with each of the delegates has shown a very positive result.

Delegates and staff requested some type of program to occupy the students during the check-in time and a welcome committee and room was planned for this year's forum. This worked out so well that it will be included in future YLF's.

Volunteer staff noted that some extra training material could be included in the facilitator's guide. Some highlights noted by staff were how well the groups went beyond the curriculum during discussion by not only focusing on individual disabilities but looking at disability issues as a group. Staff also commented on how the students were all positive about their experience at the forum. Many of the volunteers have expressed the desire to return next year.

Information for Applicants/Employees

One of the primary functions of the Division is to provide information and referral to lowans with disabilities. Many of our inquiries are from individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment.

We also provide information to those employees with disabilities wanting to retain employment or possibly obtain a promotion. With the appropriate information on accommodation issues and application procedures, these individuals are better equipped to become productive members of the workforce.

We provide printed materials, electronic information, and advice on resources available to job seekers and employees with disabilities. See *page 6 of this report for performance measures.*



For information call:
1-888-219-0471 (V/TTY)

Referral to Rehabilitation Agencies

Many of our constituents are not aware of the services available to lowans with disabilities. When a call or electronic request is received, we take great care to make sure the caller has all of the information they need including referral to agencies to assist them when more than job placement is needed.

While a job may be the ultimate goal, interventions of a medical or counseling nature are often needed prior to achieving that goal. It is important that individuals with disabilities know where to find those services. No concerns about referrals were made by either individuals or agencies.

"When we do the best we can, we never know that miracle is wrought in our life, or in the life of another."

- ***Helen Keller***

Responsible Citizens

Informed citizens with disabilities have less need to file complaints or bring litigation. We give individuals accurate information on rights and responsibilities relative to employment.

We provide information on federal and state laws that pertain to disability issues and encourage communication and negotiation to work out differences. We also provide options for individuals to choose from while exercising their rights. See *page 6 for performance measures.*

Developing Abilities of the Workforce

Disability Solutions that Work

Information for Employers

Our goal to improve employment opportunities for Iowans with disabilities prompts us to make every effort to assist employers as they seek to hire a person with a disability. This may mean accessible facilities, job accommodations, properly writing job descriptions, recruiting in the right places, or training for supervisors and coworkers. We provide this assistance as requested or find an alternate provider as needed.

Employers appreciate the fact that we are not a compliance agency and that we address all types of disabilities. We researched and responded to 203 inquiries during the year and gave presentations to over 137 employers. See page 6 for performance measures.

In addition, printed information, web sites resources, and referral to training agencies are provided to employers to assist them in hiring Iowans with disabilities.

Partners in Workforce Development Grant

With the 10th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on July 26, 2000, indications are that there has been a dramatic increase in accessibility of public facilities since its passage. However during a conversation with the Executive Director of Iowa Communication Network (ICN), it was felt that not all Iowans have been able to participate in programs over the ICN due to sites being inaccessible to Iowans with Disabilities.

In March of 2001, the Iowa Telecommunications and Technology Commission (ITTC), the governing board of the ICN, working in conjunction with the Division of Persons with Disabilities mailed out a survey to each of the 759 ICN sites across the State. The surveys were returned to us for a review of the information, writing recommendations for improvements, and assigning an accessibility rating which is available on the ICN web site (www.icn.state.ia.us). This rating gives individuals an idea of the accessibility of the site so they can determine if they can use it for meetings or other learning opportunities.

Of the 759 surveys mailed, 526 were returned. Of those 526 reviews, 44 of the sites were accessible and required no further modification; 142 sites needed some modifications to their accessible parking and entrances; 285 sites needed some modifications to their interior circulation including restrooms as well as to parking and entrances; and, 55 sites were found to be inaccessible in all facets.

Healthy Iowans 2010

The Division of Persons with Disabilities is part of the IANet Task Force, Healthy Iowans 2010 Project, *Communicating with people who have disabilities*, in conjunction with the Department of Public Health, Wellmark of Iowa, City of Des Moines, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Department of Human Services, Center for Disabilities and Development, Iowa Program for Assistive Technology, Department of Elder Affairs, Governor's DD Council, Parent Training Connection, University of Iowa Child Behavioral Specialty Clinics, Department for the Blind, and U of I Healthy and Ready to Work Program. The goal is to create a systematic approach to the development and dissemination of health care information to allow maximum benefit to persons with disabilities within our state as they seek to make decisions about their health care needs. One completed activity was preparation of written guidelines for development and dissemination of health care information in an accessible format for utilization throughout the state.

Iowa Access Grant

It is estimated that there are close to 400,00 Iowans with disabilities. Yet, only 32% of these individuals are working full or part-time. The State of Iowa government is a major employer with 800 hiring authorities. The purpose of the Iowa Access program is to provide better access to employment opportunities in Iowa state government and access and evacuation procedures for persons with disabilities. The Iowa Department for the Blind funds half of the costs of this program.

Our division in partnership with Deaf Services of Iowa, created procedures and presented Emergency Evacuation Training for Employees and Visitors with Disabilities. The training's host site was on Capitol Complex, but it was broadcast via ICN to over 80 individuals throughout many locations in the state. The manuals we created were distributed to those in attendance.

A survey was conducted of state of Iowa employees regarding the employment and retention of employees with disabilities. The response rate was high and the data was collected and tabulated into a report. The results of this report will be used to educate and train supervisors and other interested parties on various disability issues.

Web Access

Several changes were made to our website this past year and more upgrades are being implemented in an effort to become more streamlined and efficient. All of our brochures and printed materials are now accessible on the website. Future upgrades will include:

- A new home page with updated pictures and information.
- A separate Youth Leadership Forum page.
- An e-newsletter for Iowans with disabilities and those interested in disability issues.

Also, through a partnership with The Iowa Department for the Blind and Deaf Services Commission of Iowa, we have developed an on line directory of state resources for persons with disabilities that will be access from the State of Iowa home page. This link will allow Iowans to locate disability services more efficiently and effectively reconnecting them to state government.

Access to Information –Goods and Services

We provide information and materials to public and private entities on how to include people with disabilities. Information on state and federal laws/codes and referral to special resources for adaptive equipment were provided for 100 requests.

Disability Solutions that Work

Iowa Excellence— Reconnecting Iowans with Their Government

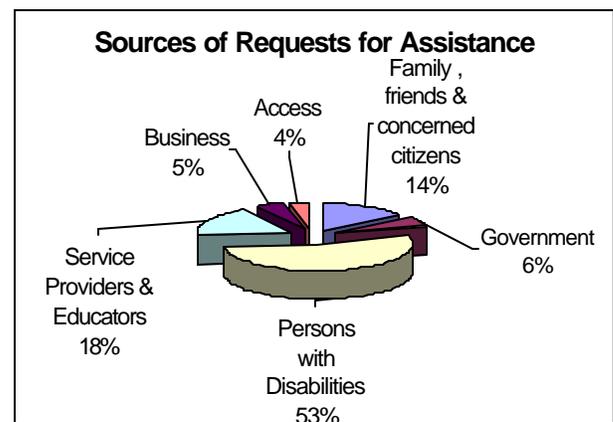
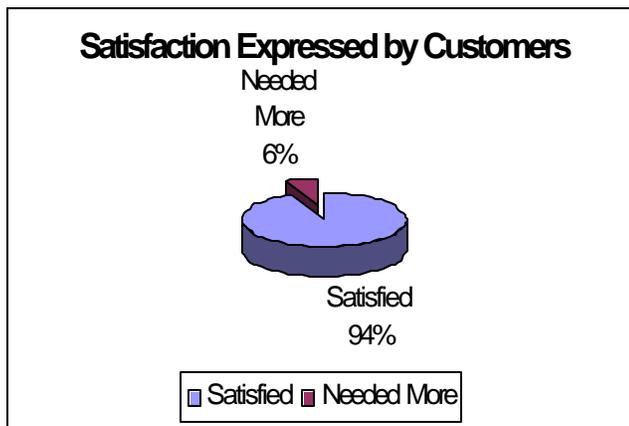
Self-Assessment & Areas for Improvement

The Division has continued to work with data base decisions and strategies to collect and utilize the information we need. The plan was updated to Governor Vilsack's office in December. The data collected has assisted in update of the strategic plan and program plan. Collection of the data has led to greater communication with customers as we measure their satisfaction.

As partners change, attention is given to performance measurements and how this measurement fits with the improvement plan.

Two disability consultants of the Division are now trained as Iowa Excellence Examiners.

Performance Measure Results



Individuals call with questions about applying for, obtaining, or retaining employment to be better equipped as productive members of the workforce.

Many of our constituents are not aware of the services available to them as they pursue employment. We take care to make sure the individual has all of the information they need including referral to appropriate agencies for specific services.

Due to a long history of unemployment or underemployment, individuals with disabilities may be unaware of workplace issues and laws that govern employment. We provide that information and encourage communication and negotiation to work out differences.

Employers ask us to address a variety of disability questions, because we are not an enforcement agency. We research and respond to their inquiries.

All Iowans should be able to access state government services. We make recommendations to state agencies on making goods and services available to Iowans with disabilities.

Client Assistance Program

Services Provided

The Client Assistance Program is authorized and 100% federally funded by the Rehabilitation Act. It must be located in an agency that does not provide rehabilitation services under the Act. In October of 1991, the Client Assistance Program was designed to be provided by the Division of Persons with Disabilities. Duties of the program include: 1) provide information and referral services to all lowans with disabilities, 2) resolve disputes between individuals and programs funded under the Act, 3) provide services under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to eligible individuals, and 4) conduct systemic advocacy as deemed appropriate.

During Federal Fiscal Year 2001 (ending September 30, 2001) 347 individuals were provided information or referral services involving programs of the Rehabilitation Act and services leading to employment. An additional 139 lowans received those same services relative to ADA, job accommodations, and discrimination resulting in less litigation and a more productive workforce. Another 249 individuals had concerns about independent living or other community related issues to support remaining in the community and becoming contributing members.

During this same period, 64 disputes were resolved through negotiation or administrative review and without litigation.

Results

Below are the results CAP clients obtained after receiving services. This enabled each individual to pursue employment goals and receive the individualized supportive services they needed due to their disability.

“Thank you for all the help. It was greatly appreciated at a time when I needed support.”

Jack

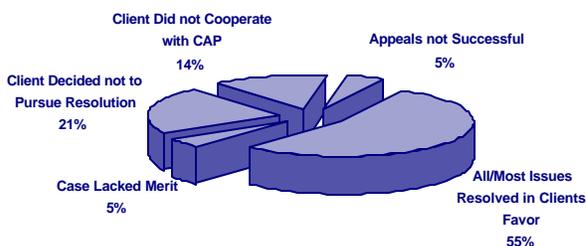
“Didn’t like the results but the services were professional.”

Linda

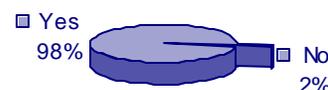
“110% Satisfied. Thanks.”

Alberto

Outcomes Achieved - CAP Services



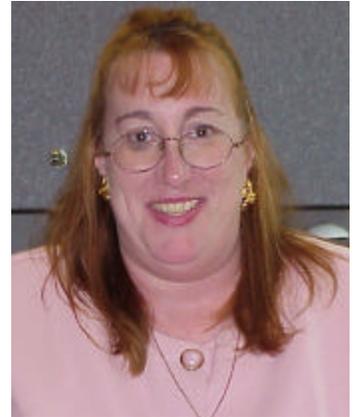
CAP Clients Who Would Refer Another Individual to CAP



Staff of the Division of Persons with Disabilities

Jill Fulitano-Avery, Administrator

Governor Tom Vilsack appointed Jill Fulitano-Avery as administrator of the Division effective March 18, 2002. Jill is formerly the Director for Children and Families of Iowa, Family Violence Center, one of the largest shelters in the nation for victims of violent crime. Her ten-year expertise includes serving and advocating for many victims with disabilities and service provision for those individuals throughout the state of Iowa. She and her daughter Hope Avery, traveled the United States last year promoting disability issues and Easter Seals services. They had the honor of meeting President Bush and Vice President Cheney in the Oval Office of the Whitehouse. Jill has a neurological disability and hearing loss. Jill's daughter Hope has a physical disability called split-hand deformity. Hope had her feet and ankles amputated when she was just eight years old. Hope wears prosthetics and uses a service dog. Over a thirteen-year period, Jill and Hope have had the opportunity to educate hundreds of individuals regarding both visible and non-visible disabilities.



Other Staff and Volunteers

John TenPas, Harlietta Helland, and Mike Williams continue as disability consultants with the agency. John primarily works with accessibility, education, and public agencies. Harlietta works with the Client Assistance Program (CAP), partner agencies, and employment under Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Mike's primary responsibilities are the Youth Leadership Forum, Access Grant and web page development/updates.

Becky Danilson provides the secretarial support for the division with her duties divided between the Client Assistance Program and the remaining division programs and activities.

Several former Youth Leadership Forum delegates volunteered their time and skills this year. Peer to peer support, is an important component of this program.

Our offices are located on the first floor of the Lucas State Office Building. We welcome your visits but, since we all travel around the state, it would be a good idea to make an appointment. We have meeting rooms available for small gatherings and will check on their availability for your visit



Youth Leadership Forum Photos



YLF Photos Continued

