

GOING HOME

A FULL LIFE IN THE COMMUNITY

Frequently Asked Questions

Everyone can Live a Full Life in the Community

How does Illinois compare to other states?

Illinois is the third most institutionalized state in the country and ranks 47th in the nation in providing funding for community living. With state institutions housing 1,662 people with disabilities compared to the 14 states with no institutions, Illinois is lagging behind the national trend to close institutions and invest in the community.

What is the cost of community based services compared to institutional costs?

Illinois spends \$429 million funding 7 fully operational state institutions; despite the fact that for every one individual in a state institution, 4.5 people can be supported living in the community. It costs \$258,000 a year to fund each person in an institution versus just \$53,000 to fund one person in the community.

Illinois is facing financially challenging times; can we afford to invest in community supports?

Yes. If Illinois follows the national trend to close state institutions and invest in community services, the state will save approximately \$337 million a year.

What is a CILA?

A Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) is a neighborhood home for no more than four individuals. The home can be an apartment or a house and depending on the severity of the disability, there may be a caregiver living on-site to offer 24-hour assistance and care.

Can anyone with a disability live successfully in the community?

Yes. The state has a comprehensive “person centered planning” process in place that includes a thorough assessment of each individual’s situation and develops a customized plan to set them up for a successful life in their new home. This could include 24-hour assistance.

What about people with severe disabilities, can they live in the community?

Yes. There are many people with severe disabilities living successful lives in the community. There was a time when institutionalization was thought to be the only option. However, with the national movement to offer people with disabilities the proper resources to live in the community, that is no longer the case. 14 states have closed all state institutions and Illinois ranks close to last in the nation in supporting people with disabilities in the community.

Is community living a “one site fits all” approach?

No. Unlike state institutions, community living plans are customized based on the individual’s needs. A thorough and individualized planning process is conducted and all community-based services and supports must be in place before moving. Each person is assigned a service coordinator to advocate, monitor, and assist in carrying out his or her plan. This individualized approach allows each person to leave an institution and relocate to a community of choice that is closer to family and friends.

What are community-based services?

Community-based disability services could include assistance with preparing meals, bathing, grooming dressing, implementing therapies, and taking medication. It can also include services to overcome communication or behavioral challenges, improve social skills, and determine employment opportunities. 24-hour care is available to individuals who need around the clock support.

Is there evidence documenting the successes of living in the community vs. an institution?

Yes. Studies show moving people from institutions into the community has been extremely successful and the outcomes for people living in the community, even those with the most severe disabilities are doing “better” than the individuals segregated in institutions.

A recent survey after the closure of the Jacksonville Developmental Center (JDC) revealed family members’ attitudes changed dramatically after community placement. Initially 83% of guardians were dissatisfied with the JDC closure. Now, 89% are satisfied with their relative’s current living environment and say their loved one is “happy in their new home”. Approximately half of those living in the community came from an institution or nursing home.

How will this process be monitored?

An Individual Service Coordinator (ISC) will be assigned to each individual and will meet at least once a month to assess progress, confirm needs are met, and ensure they are happy in their new home. There are several not-for-profit agencies offering free assistance and resources to help individuals and families and guarantee a successful transition into the community.

What is Employment First?

The Employment First law that was passed in July, 2013 obliges Illinois state agencies to collaborate to make employment for people with disabilities a main priority. Employment First established competitive employment in integrated settings to be the first opportunity offered to people with disabilities.