COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LIVING SUCCESSFUL LIVES IN THE COMMUNITY

Community Integration offers people with disabilities a thoughtful and customized plan to ensure a safe and productive life in a community of choice. It gives people the chance to live with family, on their own, or in a residential setting and provides the opportunity to live full and vibrant lives that maximizes independence and full inclusion. From a financial standpoint, Illinois can support 4.5 people living in the community for every 1 person living in an institution. Illinois operates 7-state institutions at $429 million annually. This model is antiquated and unsustainable in today’s fiscal climate which is why most states have or are moving toward eliminating these facilities.

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 7-state institutions housing 1,730 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-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 cost $248,000 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 followed the national trend to close state institutions and invest in community services, the state would save approximately $337 million a year.

What is a (CILA)?
A Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) is a neighborhood home that houses 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 with supporting people with disabilities in the community.

Is community living a “one size 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 institutional setting and relocate to a community of choice that is closer to family and friends.

What types of programs are considered community-based services?
Individualized programs are designed to offer choice and accommodate the needs for people with all levels of disabilities. Community-based disability services could include assistance with preparing meals, bathing, grooming, dressing, therapies, and taking medications. 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 that 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 that 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 a 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 to guarantee a successful transition into the community.

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

**Institute on Disability and Human Development: University of Illinois at Chicago, An Evaluation of the Jacksonville Developmental Center Closure: Preliminary Results, May 2014
***Illinois Department of Human Services

www.GoingHomeIllinois.org