



Centers for Independent Living and Transition-Aged Youth: Building Support for Transition-Aged Youth with Disabilities

Over the past three years, the RRRTC-ILM and the Beach Center on Disability at the University of Kansas have examined CILs' roles in transition services for youth with disabilities. This project's three goals are: 1) an analysis of the literature on CIL involvement in transition services for high school aged youth with disabilities and their families, 2) identification of innovative models or CIL best practices serving youth and their families, and 3) replication of model programs, training, and dissemination of information and resources to the CIL audience. Previous *RRRTC-ILM Newsletter* articles highlighted outcomes from this project's first two goals. This article reviews the primary means by which we are achieving the third goal - disseminating information and resources to CILs through a website that contains information, resources and strategies for ways that CILs can support transition-aged youth to become fully integrated into the community.

Development of the **Centers for Independent Living: Building Support for Transition-Aged Youth** website began in Spring 2004. Deborah Benitez, a Beach Center doctoral student, prepared a preliminary outline of the web page to include sections on:

- providing CILs with an overview of transition services,
- examining the relationship between transition services and self-determination,
- exploring roles and services for transition-aged youth,
- reporting on CILs' best practices to support transition,
- listing resources for providing transition services, and
- providing useful links.

The content of the web page is based upon our previous project activities which included a literature review of research and services provided to youth in transition at CILs and a survey of transition services provided to transition-age youth by CILs. Our intention is to provide an accessible website that will be useful to CILs who are providing support to youth in transition all over the country. Obviously, it is critical that such web-based information is accessible and project staff worked hard to ensure this outcome. The web page will provide resources on multiple relevant topics and will be linked through RRRTC-

ILM's web page. Our intention is to ensure that information is straightforward, accessible, educational, and useful for CILs to promote transition outcomes for youth.

Emphasis is placed on best practices that have been experimentally evaluated or which are currently being implemented by CILs, as identified by our survey or the literature review. Three of the best practices were evaluated through project activities: Youth Empowerment, Peer Mentoring, and the Self-Determined Career Development Model. The first was an examination of the efficacy of "empowerment groups" operated by a CIL for transition-age youth. Project staff examined efficacy with transition-aged youth who met weekly at a CIL to learn to set transition related goals and assume greater responsibility for their transition planning. Implementing *The Self-Determined Career Development Model* to enable youth to self-regulate career and employment decisions, a second best practice was examined by training and supporting CIL-based peer mentors to support youth to set transition goals. A third evaluated best practice was CIL involvement in Youth Leadership Forum activities. On the website, best practices are set up for a user to walk through the process of implementing the best practice. This includes instructions on implementing the practice along with questions that have to be answered in order to individualize the practice for consumers. Additional best practices (forthcoming) will include the role of CILs in assisting transition-aged youth to access social security work incentive programs like PASS and the role of CILs in developing customized and supported employment outcomes for youth.

The **Centers for Independent Living: Building Support for Transition-Aged Youth** web page will be officially unveiled in October at the **10th Annual National Conference on Rural Independent Living** sponsored by **The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)**. It will be available via a link on RRRTC-ILM's web page after that time.

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The CIL Pathfinder for Services & Programs for Older Americans

The RRTC-ILM and the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Technology for Successful Aging (RERC Tech-Aging) have been exploring how centers for independent living (CILs) can play a major role in providing services for older consumers (age 60+). One objective is to encourage collaborations between CILs and the aging network of organizations.

Current research studies indicate that our aging population will increase dramatically by 2030 as more "baby boomers" reach age 65. People over age 85 are the fastest growing population segment. While medical technology has made it possible to live longer lives, quality of life issues remain. As "boomers" age, they will become the most affluent and largest potential consumer base for CILs during the next twenty years. As the number of older people increases, assistance may be required by two older groups: people with disabilities acquired earlier in life who are now dealing with age-related changes and older people who acquired a disability later in life.

In 2001, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 14.2% of the elderly population had difficulty performing at least one activity of daily living (bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility) and 21.6% had difficulty with instrumental activities of daily living (managing finances, cooking and housekeeping, shopping and using transportation).¹ The Administration on Aging (2001) reported that 35 million Americans were age 65 years and older, which represented 12.4% of the U. S. population. Minority populations are projected to represent 26.4% of the elderly population in 2030, up from 17.2% in 2002.² As the numbers of elder consumers (and caregivers) increase, so will the demand for services and resources. CILs are well situated to provide services through existing programs or to develop new programs to meet older consumers' needs including fee-for-service programs funded under the Older Americans Act.

The RERC Tech-Aging and RRTC-ILM have developed an aging services manual called **The CIL Pathfinder for Services and Programs for Older Americans**. It is designed to help CILs:

- understand the specific needs, problems, and solutions unique to older people as they age,
- understand the network of aging organizations, including their organizational structure and funding sources,
- identify ways to network with these established "aging agencies" and
- tap into some of the monies that are available for senior programs.

The **Pathfinder** consists of thirteen sections including information on: the aging network of organizations, a comparison of CIL operations and programs and those

of Area Agencies on Aging, and issues that affect older people such as home modification, transportation, housing, assistive technology, health status and chronic conditions. At the beginning of each section, there is a brief summary called Relevance for Centers for Independent Living (CILs).

The **Pathfinder** is being edited. Upon completion in October, it will be posted to the RRTC-ILM and the University of Florida's RERC-Technology-Aging websites. All CILs will be notified when the **Pathfinder** is available.

References

- ¹U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, Administration on Aging. (2004). *A profile of older Americans: 2003*. Retrieved September 13, 2004 from <http://www.aoa.gov/prof/Statistics/profile/2003/4.asp#figure1>
- ²U. S. Census Bureau. (2001). *Americans with disabilities, 1997. Current population reports, p 70-73*. Retrieved September 13, 2004 from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/sipp/disable97.html>

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Add your management documents to the **COMPENDIUM of Resources for Independent Living Management**.

We want to add your policies, procedures, job descriptions, mission statements, forms, program descriptions, etc.

Your documents will be held in strict confidentiality.

All references to the source of the document will be removed.



Would You Take A Three-Year Trip Without a Map? A Strategic Planning Road Map

Don't call the automobile club, call the RRTC-ILM !

It's that time again. It's time to embark on a journey to the future of your independent living center. Legislative and funding changes, program opportunities and reporting requirements create new routes and new destinations for your center to explore. It's crisis management. You've seen the symptoms. Consumer needs are growing, programs are changing, staff is complaining about space, resources are spread thin, and you seem to be buying some kind of computer technology every other week. So how do you find your way? Where do you start?

Does this sound familiar? Do you need a way to sort things out in order to become pro-active rather than reactive? Then maybe you need the **Organizational SnapShot®**. What's the Organizational SnapShot? It's a strategic planning tool that gives you a picture of your center and makes your board, staff and consumers part of your planning team.

The Organizational SnapShot is a step-by-step questionnaire that enables you to take a picture of your center as it exists today. Structured within nine management categories, the questions guide you to identify various resources that support the day-to-day operations of your organization. These resources include policies, procedures, programs, services, finances, equipment, staff and more. It can reveal everything about your organization to get as complete a picture as possible.

The Organizational SnapShot is an investment of your time and an investment in the future of your organization; the greater your effort, the greater the payoff for your center. It all begins when you and your board members look at the organizational culture (IL philosophy) of your center and the elements that create that culture. You begin to examine the administrative management practices and governance of your center along with other management practices including human resources, financial resources and physical plant. The Organizational SnapShot guides you through programs and services, consumer involvement and community relations.

Your completed responses to the SnapShot questions give you an overall picture of your center with enough depth and detail to support your strategic planning efforts. At this point, getting board, staff and consumer input will add to the richness of the information you have collected. As you identify what you currently have in place at your center, you also identify things you do not have and might need to meet future consumer and community needs. This list of potential needs

becomes a list of discussion points for your strategic planning process.

Once your board, consumers, staff and volunteers have had time to review the Organizational SnapShot, schedule a planning session where all attendees have an opportunity to review and set goals in each of the nine management categories. Then, examine the urgency and the importance of these goals as they contribute to the vision and mission of the center, establishing their priority. Schedule the sequence through task planning, activity assignments and deadlines, and committing resources in a three to five year strategic plan.

This becomes a map to your center's future. Once in place, the Organizational SnapShot becomes a benchmark. In three to five years, when it is time to do it again, the Organizational SnapShot shows where you were and how far your center has come.

How do you get this useful strategic planning tool? Contact the RRTC-ILM @ info@wnyilp.org or call 716-836-0822, extension 166, and ask, "What is this Organizational SnapShot, and how do I get it?"

- written by Douglas J. Usiak,
Principal Investigator, RRTC-ILM,
Executive Director, WNYILP, Inc.



John Moffat, RRTC-ILM Project Coordinator, reviews the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation Special Issue on Independent Living Management.

Taking Stock of Best Practices in CIL Management - Part I

The RRTC-ILM is conducting a series of research studies that help identify and replicate suitable management models from CILs and from other organizations.¹ An earlier RRTC-ILM² study profiled the vision of an effective CIL in the eyes of its diverse stakeholders (board members, executive directors, funders, volunteers, staff and consumers).

An essential initial step is knowledge of the status quo of CIL management practices, which are rooted in the IL philosophy and have evolved as a response to each CIL's community needs. As each CIL built and rebuilt itself organizationally, each collectively built the national CIL network of organizations. The RRTC-ILM is conducting a second study to uncover the status quo of CIL management practices across the national network. We seek to identify CILs' collective view of current practices as well as what practices are important for an effective CIL. This information can serve as a basis for reconstructing a useful model.

This study involves three steps:

- develop a draft set of management practices with major input from a small sample of CILs identified as top performers (based on aggregated data from the most currently available 704 Report),
- using Kano format,³ develop and administer a survey to a national sample of CIL executive directors to identify the relative importance of the management practices to the stakeholders, and
- based on Kano analysis, organize the results of the priorities expressed by the respondents into a useful model.

We drafted an initial survey of management practices and asked executive directors from a sample of top performing CILs to judge, modify and expand upon the list. Our earlier study on CIL organizational profile (on elements and outcomes of an effective CIL) suggested nine management categories. We used these nine categories as a basis for organization of this survey and we structured the survey for telephone administration.

In order to identify top performing CILs, we did an analytical examination of the 2001 704 Report data (242 CILs). We focused on disability types (cognitive, hearing, vision, mental emotional, multiple disability, etc.), examined the number of Goals Set and Goals Met by CILs in relevant areas (communication, community educational, informational access, mobility, personal resource, and self-advocacy, vocational goals), and looked at age and ethnic background. We also looked at CILs' performance in preventing people from entering institutions as well as in relocating individuals from institutions. This analysis resulted in 38 different data sets. Working systematically through these data sets, we compared CILs' averages with corresponding national

averages (from Census Bureau 2000 data). We identified 183 CILs who were performing well (at least 20% above the national average) across all data sets. Among these CILs, we identified the top ten centers (one in each of ten geographic regions) based on the frequency of their appearance in the list.

A draft management practices survey was administered to the executive directors of the top ten CILs during July and August 2003. All telephone interview responses were recorded on hard copies of the questionnaire and most were tape recorded for later analysis and reference.

This data was analyzed. We obtained a refined set of management practices based on the frequency of respondents' agreement to include each practice as well as on the additions suggested by respondents. This list of practices was then put into a Kano format structured for telephone administration. Each question called for the degree of agreement (on a rating scale of 1 to 5) about the importance of a specific practice. The final survey consisted of 181 pairs of questions. Each pair consisted of a practice stated in the positive and the negative as per Kano requirement.

During December 2003 and January 2004, we identified a national sample of CIL directors to participate in the Kano survey stratified by the center's age (young, mid-age and old), its size (small, mid-size and big) and geographical category (urban and rural). We obtained the needed additional demographic data on CIL age and size (number of employees at the center) through our *Independent Living Organization Survey* data and telephone contact. We used Census Bureau data for 2000 and criteria developed by the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) for classifying centers as rural or urban. In constructing the sample, we first categorized all 390 main centers into the 10 federal regions. We then classified them by size (big, mid-sized and small), age (old, mid-age and young) and geographical category. Age classification criteria were defined as: established before 1979 (old), established between 1980 and 1992 (mid-aged), and established after 1992 (young). Size criteria were defined as: 2-14 employees (small), 15-50 employees (mid-sized), 50 employees or more (big). We defined a rural center using APRIL's definition of "a center located in city of less than 50,000 persons." Using a random number table, we constructed a stratified sample of 131 centers distributed by region, age, size and geographic category.

From February to April 2004, we administered the Kano survey via telephone interview to 131 executive directors. Preferably, interviews were held in two sittings,

(Continued on page 5, see **Taking Stock...**)

Taking Stock... Continued from page 4

with each session taking approximately 75 minutes to complete. We acknowledge the executive directors' professionalism and cooperation in responding to a comprehensive, yet long, questionnaire. Many preferred to combine the two interview sessions. Not surprisingly, a quick, cursory analysis of each "response-pair" revealed need for confirmation of particular responses to particular questions. We had to follow-up in order to minimize possible measurement error. During May and June 2004, we customized re-surveys of 111 respondents. The number of responses to be verified by these executive directors was small (ranging from 2 to 18 question-pairs) compared to the total (181 question-pairs).

Some executive directors remarked that the survey was "thought provoking," although several found it "too long." Some acknowledged that they had not considered some of the management practices mentioned in the survey and that they would look into employing them at their centers. Others revealed their level of interest in the survey by suggesting that we include other practices. For example, one executive director commented that the survey lacked practices concerning "staff development or staff enrichment." Another suggested that we should have addressed practices concerning "environmental concerns" at centers.

We are in the process of examining the data using Kano analyses. We hope to answer such questions as: What practices are CIL directors currently using? What practices are important according to CIL directors? Are priorities different for centers based on size, age and type of communities served (urban/rural)? Are there strengths that might be tapped and transferred between centers? Is there a need for external models or strategies?

Stay tuned! You may find the emerging model a useful resource and management guide.

- written by Vathsala I. Stone, PhD, RRTC-ILM,
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Mark E. Montgomery, JD, RRTC-ILM

References

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- ²Usiak, D.J., Stone, V.I., House, R.B & Montgomery, M.E. (2004). Stakeholder perceptions of an effective CIL. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 20(1) 35-43. (Also available at: <http://www.wnyilp.org/RRTCILM/dissemination/publications.html>).
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COMPENDIUM OF RESOURCES FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING MANAGEMENT

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Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Independent Living Management

CATALOG OF RESOURCES 2002 - 2004

Computer-Based Tutorials

The RRTC-ILM offers three computer-based self-instruction programs:

◆ **Successful Outreach to Foreign-Born Consumers through Culture Brokering - on CD Rom**

This tutorial is an adaptation of the monograph Culture Brokering: Providing Culturally Competent Rehabilitation Services to Foreign-Born Persons. It was developed as a joint project of the Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE) and the Rehabilitation Research Training Center on Independent Living Management (RRTC-ILM), incorporating terminology, examples and case studies relevant to independent living.

◆ **Visit-Ability - on CD Rom**

Visit-ability is a program about making residential property accessible for visitors and friends with mobility impairments. The purpose of this tutorial is to promote and educate independent living center staff, volunteers and participants on Visit-ability and community action projects that support the development of Visit-able housing. Universal design at the community level permits full access to participation in community affairs and interaction with neighbors. This program is an adaptation of the booklet Visit-ability: An Approach to Universal Design in Housing created by the RERC on UD.

◆ **Independent Living Philosophy and History - on DVD Rom**

This program examines the values and beliefs that powered the independent living movement and established the core philosophy of independent living centers. The tutorial contains a variety of resources for learning and presenting the philosophy and history of independent living. These include: a 16 page tutorial with an exam and certificate, a one hour video program titled My Country, 5 video role play examples of the influence of I L philosophy on center decision making, a disability rights history timeline and a booklet titled Freedom of Movement. This tutorial is in computer DVD format.

Video Tape Series

The RRTC-ILM has a variety of video tape programs on independent living and disability awareness.

Pioneers in Community Organizing (14 video tape interviews). This series presents topics and challenges of community organizing, featuring nationally recognized leaders. \$10.00 each. Interviews include:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| ◆ Justin Dart | ◆ Bob Kafka |
| ◆ Linda Anthony | ◆ Kathleen Kleinmann |
| ◆ Diane Coleman | ◆ Gina McDonald |
| ◆ Marilyn Golden | ◆ Lillibeth Navarro |
| ◆ Tari Susan Hartman | ◆ Mike Oxford |
| ◆ Judy Heumann | ◆ Bill Strothers |
| ◆ Cyndi Jones | ◆ Sarah Triano |

Video Tape Programs

The following two professionally produced disability education videos are aimed at early to mid-elementary school students. Each delivers its message in about eight minutes with humor as well as facts, employing a mixture of live action and "semi-animation."

The Space Adventures of Porky Parker features two zany astronauts who reveal the need for everyone to respect the legal rights of citizens with disabilities, focusing on reserved parking spaces as a familiar example. \$20.00.

It's In The Bag follows a boy and girl arriving at the ballpark to watch a game, all the while ridiculing others who show signs of various sorts of mental illness. After a remarkable transformation they learn that an individual who is mentally ill, like others who are not well, may have symptoms, but that doesn't make them bad or less of a person. Once the children are restored to themselves, the duo immediately begins passing the lesson on to others. \$20.00

To order copies of these resources contact the RRTC-ILM at
info@wnyilp.org
or call (716) 836-0822, extension 166 or 168.

The Compendium of Resources for Independent Living Management

<http://www.wnyilp.org/RRTCILM/compendium.html>

Imagine the benefit of web-based resources for operating an independent living center; being able to review job descriptions, by-laws, policies and procedures and program descriptions of CILs from across the US.

CILs peer mentoring CILs, sharing experience and expertise. That is the philosophy of the Compendium of Resources for Independent Living Management. Over 300 independent living centers have responded to our national Independent Living Organizational Survey, providing information about their size, budget, programs / services, management structure and funding sources.

The RRTC-ILM website will allow access to the Compendium to look up information and copy resources to assist in operating centers.

How can you participate in this resource? Simple. Complete a survey and send it to the RRTC-ILM. We will e-mail you a password to access the Compendium. To obtain a copy of the survey, contact the Information and Dissemination Coordinator by phone at (716) 836-0822, ext. 168 or e-mail-
mmoffat@ilm.wnyilp.org. We will e-mail or fax a copy of the survey.



Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Independent Living Management

The National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) of the U.S. Department of Education jointly awarded funding for the Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Independent Living Management (RRTC-ILM) to The Western New York Independent Living Project Inc. (WNYILP).

WNYILP believes that the "hands on" consumer/community and IL philosophy perspective will enhance the direction and results of this five year project.

Research areas include: CIL Information Database, Non-Profit Entrepreneurship, Transition for Youth and Elderly, Management Best Practices, Culture Brokering, Collaboration with VR, and Alternate Learning Options.

Contact the RRTC-ILM to learn more about this project or visit our web site at www.rrtcilm.org or call (716) 836-0822.

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The Rehabilitation Research & Training Center on Independent Living Management is a member of the family of agencies of the Western New York Independent Living Project Inc.

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Board Orientation Training Program

A three-year study to determine the elements of a model CIL in the view of its stakeholders resulted in the development of a CD called **Effective Independent Living Board/Staff Relationships**. This orientation instructional CD for staff and members of the board of directors provides instruments, resource guides, and training materials to the independent living community.

Analysis of the pilot study of stakeholders' perception responses identified nine functions of a CIL. Among these was governance, which is the focus of this CD, directed to board members. The theme of governance is to provide direction to CIL activities through policies and principles underlying IL philosophy. The board also serves other functions, including consumer representation, communication, and an exchange of information between the community and the CIL.

One mission of the RRTC-ILM is to identify and adapt research findings and training materials to CILs from other management or community-based models. Applied Research and Development International, Inc. (ARDI) shared a similar mission "to strengthen the management and leadership of public benefit nonprofit

organizations." ARDI granted RRTC-ILM rights to their training materials designed for nonprofit boards. ARDI's video training materials on effective nonprofit boards of directors focused on the board members' legal responsibility to meet requirements established by the government for a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization. The video training materials were modified to reflect a CIL board of directors meeting. This is the basis for the production of the instructional CD, which includes several scenes of a board addressing governance in legal, financial, membership, physical plant, program services and policy issues.

The CD includes a version with a self-assessment survey instrument and instructional manual that can be used either by an individual or by a group for an orientation to board relations. The open captioned 30-minute CD incorporates an instructor's manual with original handouts for participants, a facilitator guide, materials for discussion and analysis of the five segments presented. Telephone Ron House at (716) 836-0822, ext. 165.

- written by Ronald B. House and
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Quest For Clearer Response To Training & Technical Assistance Needs

Questioning the validity of a question, the response for which is vital to planning or allocating funds to meet CIL needs in training or technical assistance. That is the basis of a study that was conducted by RRTC-ILM.

The contention is that the current phrasing of the query on the 704 Annual Performance Report on Training and Technical Needs is misleading, causing subsequent confusion in responses from executive directors of CILs and thereby jeopardizing the priority of the needs. The 704 Form question concerns "training and technical assistance needs for the next year." The point of confusion stems from the conjunction "and." Are CIL directors responding to training needs or technical assistance needs individually? Or is the response to both needs as one and the same?

The objective of this study was to examine consistency of response to this question and determine if the priority of training needs reflected the perceived needs of CIL directors.

The annual 704 Report is required of CILs as a result of the 1978 Title VII (an amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) that mandated allocation of funding to the states to establish CILs. The law also required CILs to provide quantitative and qualitative information regarding how they were meeting the Section 725 Standard assurances defined in Title VII. The report includes CILs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

This research study was based on the population of 242 CILs completing the 704 Report in 2001. The analysis of the response to the question on training and technical assistance needs required respondents to check a response for 20 topics. The analysis of the response to the 704 Form question would indicate the priority of CILs' training needs and technical assistance needs. To determine the validity of the question as to the priority of results, a survey was designed to obtain information on the perception of training and technical assistance. A sample of 25% of the 242 CILs was selected through a randomized sample. An e-mail survey was sent to 60 executive directors. The survey included a definition of training and technical assistance and a request to respond to two questions. 26 returned for a 43% survey response.

The survey provided a definition of training and technical assistance in order to clarify the meaning of both terms. The definition of training used is "the role performed by the organization for the education, training

and development of personnel." The definition for technical assistance used is "the direct intervention or assistance onsite of a person(s) to address or provide knowledge to solve a problem or issue involving the effectiveness of the independent living organization or services being performed."

The first question on the survey required respondents to check A, B, or C in answer to the 704 Form question on "training and technical assistance needs for the next year:"

A. Did you respond to the question as Training Needs?
B. Technical Assistance needs or as
C. Training and Technical Assistance needs as one and the same by definition.

The second question listed the 20 topics as they occurred on the 704 Form in 2001 except that there was a separate response column for training and another for technical assistance. The instruction read: "Please indicate your choice by putting a check in the appropriate column for each of the 20 topics below."

The research focus was on the context of the question as to whether the appropriate responses were valid. The response to the first question of the survey indicated that 6 of 26 checked A. There were no responses to B. 20 responded to C. This indicates that it is a "confounded" question. Survey questions should be clear and unambiguous. How respondents perceived the question will determine how they respond. The first problem is that the survey question asked the respondents for a single answer to a combination of questions. A second problem occurred when the word "and" appeared in the question. This indicated a double-barreled question. Some respondents perceived the question as a request for information on training while others perceived it as a request for information on technical assistance. The important issue in question construction is ensuring that the response reflects the intent of the question. Results indicate that this survey question needs to be reviewed and rewritten.

The summary of the interpretation of the data illustrates the comparative difference in the priority of training needs as a result of the revised question versus the original "confounded" question on training and technical assistance. The response to 704 Form Survey "Confound" question listed priorities in this order: Fee-For-Service, Systems Advocacy, Community/Grassroots, Institutionalized Potential Customers, Medicaid/Medicare/PAS/Waivers/Long-term Care and Ticket-to-Work.

(Continued on page 8, see **Quest For...**)

When the question is written requesting a response for training and a separate question for technical assistance needs, the following priorities emerge:

Response to **Training** by Priority

- 1.5 Ticket to Work
- 1.5 Institutionalized Potential Customers
3. Individual Empowerment
4. Community /Grassroots Organizing
6. Systems Advocacy
6. Case Documentation
6. Workforce Investment Act of 1998

Response to **Technical Assistance**

- 1.5 704 Reports
- 1.5 American Disability Act
4. Community/Grassroots Org.
4. Grant Writing
4. Case Management

In summary, there is clearly a misinterpretation of the question on training and technical assistance. Respondents to our survey indicated very different priorities for training and technical assistance when the question is unambiguous. It is apparent that the 704 Form

question regarding training and technical assistance needs is not providing the proper solicitation of information that would be useful in prioritizing training or technical assistance needs, and the subsequent planning or allocation of funds to meet those needs for CILs. Our recommendation is that the question on training and technical needs can be corrected by providing the appropriate definitions of training and technical assistance and by breaking the question into two parts: one question to respond to training and the other to technical assistance needs. A different response form that would allow for rank ordering and would improve the question's design is clearly in order. Our research also suggests that a pre-test of the revised questions be conducted with a sample of CIL executive directors reviewing the question for validity and reliability. The result will be a more standardized question - one that is less subject to error and more accurately indicate the needs of training and technical assistance of CILs. This research data is being submitted to RSA for consideration and redesign of the 704 Annual Performance Report.

- written by Ronald B. House, PhD and
Mark Montgomery, J.D.

RRTC-ILM Survey of SILCs Provides Insight on CIL Training Needs

The staff of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Independent Living Management (RRTC-ILM) has conducted information and training sessions at each SILC Congress during the past three years.

At this meeting each year, the RRTC-ILM has been provided with the opportunity to hold focus groups with SILC members to gain information on research topics. One example of this process is a study in 2001 that surveyed executive directors of SILCs as to their perception of CIL training needs. The purpose of the SILC survey was to compare the results of the perceived training needs of CIL executive directors to those of SILC directors, the stakeholder group. Ninety-three percent of fifty SILC executive directors or chairs completed the survey. In answer to the question, "In your opinion, please list the five management training needs for CIL executive directors (most important first)," the top needs that were cited included:

1. Financial and Fiscal Management
2. Management in General

3. Personnel and Human Resources Issues
4. Board of Directors
5. Consumers and Advocacy Issues

These training priorities subsequently became the basis for course materials designed for executive directors of CILs.

The staff of the RRTC-ILM will present a session at the January 2005 SILC Congress on the use of an organizational assessment instrument called "Snap-Shot" for strategic planning. Details of the presentation will be reported in a future article.

- written by Ronald B. House, PhD. and
Mark Montgomery, JD.

VR - IL Collaboration Training Program Offerings

The training program **Successful Collaboration: Independent Living Centers and Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies** is now available to VR agencies, ILCs, and SILCs as an on-site program. This evidence-based program, developed by Susan Stoddard of InfoUse and Brenda Premo, Western University of Health Sciences, combines results from our Center research and from empirical studies of successful collaboration with our own experiences in ILCs and in the VR system. In a survey of VR agencies, ILCs and SILCs, InfoUse and the Western University of Health Sciences explored the status of collaboration between ILCs and VR, with respect to employment of people with disabilities. Our research shows that while 40% of ILCs and 27% of VR agencies rate current ILC/VR collaboration as poor or less than adequate today, almost all ILCs and VR agencies see this collaboration as important, and over half of ILCs and 29% of VR agencies see it as essential.¹ "Because of the success of existing relationships we're coming to realize that we can do more together than apart to improve employment outcomes for persons with disabilities."²

Because employment of people with disabilities is such an important goal, and because collaboration on employment has potential for expanding the effectiveness of ILCs and VR, we believe that all organizations should add collaboration skills to their management "toolkits." Training participants will learn:

- the essential elements of collaboration,
- good examples of successful collaborations in VR agencies and ILCs,
- good examples of ILC employment services,
- how to analyze and identify potential for collaboration, and
- ideas for getting started in building successful collaborations.

The training program is currently available as an on-site presentation using PowerPoint®. We have tested and refined the content and presentation with ILC and VR participants at the National Rehabilitation Association Conference, in two state meetings of VR administrators, and in one state SILC. Participant evaluation feedback is very positive, and we look forward to bringing the training to other audiences in the coming year. The training format varies from a one-hour overview to a full day workshop.

At this time, we are taking applications for our 2004-2005 training year. Organizations (ILCs, VR agencies, SILCs - either individually or in combination) interested

in arranging for training can contact sustoddard@aol.com. We will continue to collect examples of good collaboration and good ILC employment services as we expand and refine the training.

"As we work together toward a common goal...it will be even more important to collaborate in our efforts."³

- written by Susan Stoddard, InfoUse

References

- ¹Stoddard, S., & Premo, B. (2004). Expanding employment opportunities: Independent living center employment services and collaboration with vocational rehabilitation. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 20(1), 45-52. [Also available at: <http://www.wnyilp.org/RRTCILM/dissemination/publications.html>].
- ²Survey comment.
- ³Survey comment.

RRTC-ILM Online Courses

To learn more about RRTC-ILM's online courses, visit <http://ilp.hconline.org/>.



RRTC-ILM's online instructors planning - Teresa Favuzzi, Carol Bradley and John Moffat.



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