# RSA-704 Part II for Disability Action Center of Georgia, Inc. - 90IL0315-01 report through September 30, 2015

## Subpart I - Administrative Data

### Sources and Amounts of Funds and Resources

Indicate amount received by the CIL as per each funding source. Enter 0 for none.

#### Item 1 - All Federal Funds Received

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (A) Title VII, Ch. 1, Part B | 228,628 |
| (B) Title VII, Ch. 1, Part C | 542,566 |
| (C) Title VII, Ch. 2 | 0 |
| (D) Other Federal Funds | 0 |

#### Item 2 - Other Government Funds

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (E) State Government Funds | 11,077 |
| (F) Local Government Funds | 82,538 |

#### Item 3 - Private Resources

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (G) Foundations, Corporations, or Trust Grants | 0 |
| (H) Donations from Individuals | 27,099 |
| (I) Membership Fees | 0 |
| (J) Investment Income/Endowment | 0 |
| (K) Fees for Service (program income, etc.) | 34,646 |
| (L) Other resources | 119,304 |

#### Item 4 - Total Income

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total income | 1,045,858 |

#### Item 5 - Pass-Through Funds

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Amount of other funds received as pass through funds to consumers (include funds, received on behalf of consumers, that are subsequently passed on to consumers, e.g., personal assistance services, representative payee funds, Medicaid funds, etc.) | 31,551 |

#### Item 6 - Net Operating Resources

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| [Total Income (Section 4) minus Pass-Through Funds amount (Section 5) = Net Operating Resources | 1,014,307 |

## Subpart II - Number and Types of Individuals With Significant Disabilities Receiving Services

### Section A - Number of Consumers Served During the Reporting Year

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Enter the number of active CSRs carried over from September 30 of the preceding reporting year | 249 |
| (2) Enter the number of CSRs started since October 1 of the reporting year | 265 |
| (3) Add lines (1) and (2) to get the *total number of consumers served* | 514 |

### Section B - Number of CSRs Closed by September 30 of the Reporting Year

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Moved | 1 |
| (2) Withdrawn | 21 |
| (3) Died | 1 |
| (4) Completed all goals set | 39 |
| (5) Other | 25 |
| (6) Add lines (1) + (2) + (3) + (4) +(5) to get *total CSRs closed* | 87 |

### Section C - Number of CSRs Active on September 30 of the Reporting Year

Indicate the number of CSRs active on September 30th of the reporting year.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Section A(3) [minus] Section (B)(6) = Section C | 427 |

### Section D - IL Plans and Waivers

Indicate the number of consumers in each category below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Number of consumers who signed a waiver | 36 |
| (2) Number of consumers with whom an ILP was developed | 478 |
| (3) Total number of consumers served during the reporting year | 514 |

### Section E - Age

Indicate the number of consumers in each category below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Under 5 years old | 3 |
| (2) Ages 5 - 19 | 11 |
| (3) Ages 20 - 24 | 17 |
| (4) Ages 25 - 59 | 359 |
| (5) Age 60 and Older | 124 |
| (6) Age unavailable | 0 |
| (7) Total | 514 |

### Section F - Sex

Indicate the number of consumers in each category below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Number of Females served | 283 |
| (2) Number of Males served | 231 |
| (3) Total | 514 |

### Section G - Race and Ethnicity

Indicate the number of consumers served in each category below. Each consumer may be counted under ONLY ONE of the following categories in the 704 Report, even if the consumer reported more than one race and/or Hispanic/Latino ethnicity).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) American Indian or Alaska Native Number of Consumers | 5 |
| (2) Asian Number of Consumers | 8 |
| (3) Black or African American Number of Consumers | 349 |
| (4) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Number of Consumers | 0 |
| (5) White Number of Consumers | 116 |
| (6) Hispanic/Latino of any race or Hispanic/Latino only Number of Consumers | 7 |
| (7) Two or more races Number of Consumers | 17 |
| (8) Race and ethnicity unknown Number of Consumers | 12 |
| (9) Total | 514 |

### Section H - Disability

Indicate the number of consumers in each category below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| (1) Cognitive | 32 |
| (2) Mental/Emotional | 94 |
| (3) Physical | 250 |
| (4) Hearing | 13 |
| (5) Vision | 44 |
| (6) Multiple Disabilities | 81 |
| (7) Other | 0 |

### Section I - Individuals Served by County During the Reporting Year

List each county within the CIL's service area, as indicated in the CIL's application for Part C funds and the approved SPIL. Add additional rows as necessary. For each county, indicate how many individuals residing in that county were served by the CIL during the reporting year.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| County name | Number of county residents served |
| Cherokee | 10 |
| Clayton | 49 |
| Cobb | 34 |
| Coweta | 4 |
| DeKalb | 217 |
| Douglas | 4 |
| Fayette | 5 |
| Fulton | 111 |
| Gwinnett | 51 |
| Henry | 13 |
| Newton | 11 |
| Rockdale | 5 |

## Subpart III - Individual Services and Achievements

### Section A - Individual Services and Achievements

List the number of consumers requesting and the number of consumers receiving each of the following services during the reporting year, including the IL core services. The total of these numbers is not expected to equal the number of active CSRs during the reporting year, as a consumer may receive multiple services during the reporting year. Also, individuals who receive information and referral (I&R) services only may not have a CSR.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Services | Consumers Requesting Services | Consumers Receiving Services |
| (A) Advocacy/Legal Services | 355 | 205 |
| (B) Assistive Technology | 120 | 99 |
| (C) Children's Services | 22 | 12 |
| (D) Communication Services | 176 | 119 |
| (E) Counseling and Related Services | 397 | 299 |
| (F) Family Services | 77 | 59 |
| (G) Housing, Home Modifications, and Shelter Services | 102 | 56 |
| (H) IL Skills Training and Life Skills Training | 559 | 390 |
| (I) Information and Referral Services | 3,176 | 3,080 |
| (J) Mental Restoration Services | 28 | 25 |
| (K) Mobility Training | 134 | 55 |
| (L) Peer Counseling Services | 481 | 284 |
| (M) Personal Assistance Services | 39 | 26 |
| (N) Physical Restoration Services | 26 | 22 |
| (O) Preventive Services | 81 | 32 |
| (P) Prostheses, Orthotics, and Other Appliances | 9 | 7 |
| (Q) Recreational Services | 83 | 37 |
| (R) Rehabilitation Technology Services | 14 | 12 |
| (S) Therapeutic Treatment | 17 | 14 |
| (T) Transportation Services | 251 | 115 |
| (U) Youth/Transition Services | 48 | 39 |
| (V) Vocational Services | 321 | 260 |
| (W) Other Services | 87 | 64 |

### Section B - Increased Independence

#### Item 1 - Goals Related to Increased Independence in a Significant Life Area

Indicate the number of consumers who set goals related to the following significant life areas, the number whose goals are still in progress, and the number who achieved their goals as a result of the provision of IL services.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Significant Life Area | Goals Set | Goals Achieved | In Progress |
| (A) Self-Advocacy/Self-Empowerment | 108 | 33 | 60 |
| (B) Communication | 114 | 33 | 67 |
| (C) Mobility/Transportation | 166 | 55 | 104 |
| (D) Community-Based Living | 97 | 28 | 60 |
| (E) Educational | 51 | 9 | 41 |
| (F) Vocational | 106 | 15 | 84 |
| (G) Self-care | 69 | 18 | 42 |
| (H) Information Access/Technology | 27 | 7 | 17 |
| (I) Personal Resource Management | 38 | 13 | 19 |
| (J) Relocation from a Nursing Home or Institution to Community-Based Living | 23 | 4 | 13 |
| (K) Community/Social Participation | 102 | 61 | 37 |
| (L) Other | 10 | 2 | 5 |

#### Item 2 - Improved Access To Transportation, Health Care and Assistive Technology

##### (A) Table

In column one, indicate the number of consumers who required access to previously unavailable transportation, health care services, or assistive technology during the reporting year. Of the consumers listed in column one, indicate in column two, the number of consumers who, as a result of the provision of IL services (including the four core services), achieved access to previously unavailable transportation, health care services, or assistive technology during the reporting year. In column three, list the number of consumers whose access to transportation, health care services or assistive technology is still in progress at the end of the reporting year.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Area | Number of Consumers Requiring Access | Number of Consumers Achieving Access | Number of Consumers Whose Access is in Progress |
| (A) Transportation | 105 | 47 | 55 |
| (B) Health Care Services | 38 | 27 | 9 |
| (C) Assistive Technology | 50 | 43 | 8 |

Note: For most IL services, a consumers access to previously unavailable transportation, health care and assistive technology is documented through his or her CSR. In some instances, consumers may achieve an outcome solely through information and referral (I&R) services. To document these instances as successful outcomes, providers are not required to create CSRs for these consumers but must be able to document that follow-up contacts with these consumers showed access to previously unavailable transportation, health care and assistive technology.

##### (B) I&R Information

To inform RSA how many service providers engage in I&R follow-up contacts regarding access to transportation, health care services or assistive technology, please indicate the following:

Follow-up contacts with I&R recipients

The service provider **did** engage in follow-up contacts with I&R recipients to document access gained to previously unavailable transportation, health care or assistive technology.

### Section C - Additional Information Concerning Individual Services or Achievements

Please provide any additional description or explanation concerning individual services or achievements reported in subpart III, including outstanding success stories and/or major obstacles encountered.

1. Information and referral: Over the last year disABILITY LINK partnered with several organizations and developed memorandum of understandings including the local ADA Center and Metro Fair Housing. We also worked with MENA, a local organization dealing with employers in the community. Each partnership allowed disABILITY LINK to provide resources, increase IL skills training while providing valuable insight to the community organizations. We continue to work with GACHI- GA Council for the Hearing Impaired (e-mail list 4,000 people in GA). disABILITY LINK’s staff continue to be Certified Application Counselors under an agreement with Medicare & Medicaid Services to assist individuals in applying for healthcare coverage. disABILITY LINK also was an access point organization for Georgia’s Aging and Disability Resource Connection for aging and disability services through the BIP (Balancing Incentive Program). We received calls and provided information and referral to the consumers calling in. We had approximately 195 calls received from consumers through this program.

2. Communication: Over the last year a new opportunity was developed at disABILITY LINK, it incorporates a variety of services (communication, advocacy, recreation, IL skills, youth, and other/employment, etc.) and supports reaching a variety of goals - Toastmasters is an international organization that supports public speaking and leadership - disABILITY LINK has sponsored a chapter for disABILITY LINK consumers and other interested parties - chapter members have taken on leadership roles (including planning and preparation, marketing, meeting facilitating, etc.) and participated in public speaking (off-the-cuff and planned) - the members are rightly pleased with the achievements of the chapter - outcomes include; IL outreach (through other toastmasters chapters and their members in the region); inclusion of a wide variety of consumers, and members of the disability community; and personal skill development - for example, a youth member, who is generally quiet and might even be described as timid, after several weeks of attending Toastmasters, volunteered for increasingly more challenging roles...from time keeper, to short speeches, to longer speeches, to evaluator and to a leadership role - over the course of the summer, he reached his IL goals (employment and leadership) and continues to grow in skills, confidence and readiness to take on new opportunities

3. Peer Support: disABILITY LINK provides different venues of peer support. disABILITY LINK hosted trainings using the Georgia Peer Support Project curriculum locally and at one other Centers for Independent Living. The participants were individuals with a range of experience, disability labels and goals, learned about peer support, why it is important, how it works to support independence and best practices in delivery. The training included lots of opportunities to share personal experiences of living with a disability, and lots of opportunities to practice peer support skills with one another – the more participants share, the more we all learn. As with each peer support training, there were difficult moments and “breakthroughs” as we explored the very personal elements of our lives – we work hard to ensure these trainings are a “safe space” – the participants did an excellent job of listening to and respecting one another…peer support in action. Some participants are already well known to disABILITY LINK, others are relatively new to Centers for Independent Living (CILs) – either way, the training strengthens the Independent Living (IL) community, and we all benefit from increased, (1) community development, (2) passion for IL, (3) peer support skills, and (4) self-determination. It is always a privilege to host and facilitate such important events. In addition, we host peer support classes to learn how to become a peer supporter/mentor for consumers, community and organizations which has led to providing peer support to other consumers. This year we began a peer support group for LGBTQIA +disability. LGBTQIA stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual. One peer support success story includes a consumer who was not aware of the different supports that were available for him to continue his education. He was provided with various resources such as tools for life to assist him with accessible equipment that he needs while continuing his education. He was also provided with a listing of various schools for him to enroll in. Through peer support he was able to complete applications and successfully enrolled in the school. He also was in need of transportation and did not know how he was going to get to school, he was provided information in order to receive transportation at a low cost with peer support he was accepted into the program. He was able to increase access to transportation because of it.

4. Advocacy: We host “Nothing About Us Without Us” each month - a 2 hour, interactive, peer led, IL based opportunity to learn and ideas be more active in a variety of topics impacting the disability community - topics included transportation, housing, veterans issues, services animals, AT, communicating with elected representatives, The Declaration of Independence, alternatives to the printed word, advocacy by civil disobedience, etc. - the content has included guest speakers, discussion panels, PowerPoint presentations, videos, discussions, and a combination of these tools - attendees participate enthusiastically and report an increase in empowerment and community involvement. An example of a success story includes: A consumer who had been referred for employment services from Vocational Rehabilitation Services had been terminated from his previous position instead of being provided the accommodation he requested and needed to perform his job duties. The IL specialist referred him to a contact with EEOC who found his ADA compliant valid and cleared him to file suit against the company who had fired him. He won that law suit and was paid damages. He was able to secure a new position with a different employer during the interim. This consumer was provided guidance on requesting accommodations in the workplace. The consumer used this information and he was successful in securing those accommodations from his new employer.

5. Assistive Technology: A consumer, who because of an accident, has limited use of his hands and also requires he use a wheelchair was referred to his Vocational Rehabilitation counselor to obtain Dragon software and training. He was able to obtain the software. The IL specialist provided the training of how to use it and worked with the consumer on a one to one basis. The assistive technology and training provided him with the ability to use his customer service transferrable skills to secure a sedentary position in this area of the customer service labor market.

6. Children’s Services. A consumer referred from her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for employment services had a complication which affected her ability to work. She has a young son who also had disabilities which required and will require ongoing support. Since he is on Medicaid she is only able to have a family income of less than $1200 a month in order for him to maintain his status with Medicaid. Since her husband earns $1000 a month this leaves little room for her to earn money working. The consumer was referred to an attorney who specializes in this area of the law to assist her in applying for other options with Medicaid to allow her more freedom to work and her son to maintain his Medicaid assistance. She was also referred to another local organization, Parent to Parent, for more support, information and access to more services for parenting a child with a disability. The parent was able to obtain information and make an informed decision in regards to returning to work.

7. Employment, Vocational, counseling services and Independent Living Skills Training: disABILITY LINK provides employment classes as well as working with GA Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Through the program consumers have been able to find meaningful positions. We also expose consumers to job fairs and networking opportunities. In addition, we are an employment network organization that assists consumers with the ticket to work program. Effective communication is a primary focus in disABILITY LINK’s job readiness program, (LEAPS). The ability to successfully present skills both verbally on the interview and written in the form of a resume are key to obtaining a job. Consumers are provided guidance in developing this skill and also have an opportunity to actually practice this skills in all sorts of different avenues. Consumers develop an elevator speech and regularly practice it. They have opportunities for mock interviews both in class and with chosen employers who provide this opportunity. Consumers who are interested are encouraged to teach one of the LEAPS classes and do presentations and outreach with staff from disABILITY LINK. Several consumers who has gone through the LEAPS program actively teach and assist different aspects of the classes. One success story includes a consumer who was referred by her Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for employment services was recommended to secure an opportunity as a volunteer before seeking a permanent job even though she has highly competitive skills to offer the labor market. She has mental health issues and had not worked for several years because of her symptoms. A volunteer position would allow her to practice working and at the same time learn to manage her symptoms without the stress of meeting the requirements and expectations competitive employment. She followed this advice and obtained a volunteer position at a non-profit retail organization. She was later hired by this organization for a part-time job because she was successful in learning to work and at the same time manage her mental health symptoms.

8. Family Services: A consumer who was referred to the LEAPS program by his Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor was able to communicate with his family about his own independence after working on his goals with disABILITY LINK. This consumer is a young man with Asperger disorder. Despite having a college degree, his father initially attended all classes with him and both parents attended all meetings concerning this consumer. He lived at home, his parents provided this transportation and took care of all his basic needs therefore he had very little independence or the opportunity to develop independent living skills. His Independent Living Specialist worked with both him and his parents to transition him into an increased independence status. He is currently working as an intern at disABILITY LINK, has worked out his own transportation, lives at an assistive living apartment for individuals with disabilities and he has learned to take care of his own day to day needs. He has learned to do this without his parent’s constant interaction through peer support, Independent Living skills and advocacy.

9. Transportation and Housing: disABILITY LINK continues to be very active with transportation and housing issues. disABILITY LINK participates in identifying housing issues and working with entities such as Housing Authorities, apartment and local landlords and legal services when needed. disABILITY LINK also participates in working with the Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) in providing guidance and suggestions to the different managers. disABILITY LINK participates as an entity to assist in certifying individuals for MARTA mobility. disABILITY LINK also receives a grant to provide transportation voucher assistance so that individuals with disabilities can participate in all activities of living including but not limited to shopping, spiritual activities and visiting others in the community. We also held housing Classes partnering with Metro Fair Housing Services these classes provided education on fair housing laws, landlord-tenant laws and a home-buyer education seminar to consumers and others in attendance. One success story that involved a consumer who was part of the internship program at disABILITY LINK. The consumer was living with his mother at the beginning of the internship, however was looking at wanting to live on his own. The specialist worked with him to get on the wait list for subsidized housing and after he obtained a permanent job he was able to move into his own apartment which was accessible and affordable. Another success story included a consumer who was living in an apartment paying over $800.00 a month went through the home buyers class and found a low interest rate, assistance with a down payment and now pays $300.00 less a month including taxes and home owner’s insurance than what she was paying for rent.

10. IL Skills Training, information and referral and Peer Support: An employer contacted disABILITY LINK about an employee who was struggling on the job because of her disability. Although accommodations were considered in the hopes of this employee being able to continue employment, however none were identified that assisted the consumer. disABILITY LINK worked with both the employee and the employer on the goals. The consumer was unable to find an accommodation that would truly assist. The Independent Living Specialist was able to assist with IL skills training and peer support. The consumer decided to apply for social security, medical insurance of the healthcare marketplace and apply for resources in the community. She has increased access to healthcare.

11. Recreational Services: disABILITY LINK has a health and wellness gym with different activities to increase the participation in the community including healthy eating, WII activities, bocce ball and many others.

12. Nursing Home Diversion: disABILITY LINK is a provider for the Independent Care Waiver Program which assists individuals in remaining in the community of their choice. A consumer was at risk of going into the nursing home. The IL specialist worked with her on different resources and discussed shared experiences. The consumer applied for the Waiver program and became eligible. The consumer was able to continue to live in her home because of the program and reports that she just “loves being in her own home and doing the things she likes to do”.

13. Nursing Home Transition: Over the last year disABILITY LINK assisted consumers living in long term facilities in understanding the transition process as well as the independent living process. Some of the individuals transitioned into their own homes or apartments and some have shared housing or roommates. We were able to successfully transition 23 consumers from the nursing home back into the community.

14. Youth/Transition Services: We have a specialist who works directly with the youth in all aspects of transitioning. Group activities were held over the course of the year focused on peer support, identifying job skills, employment opportunities, applying to college and becoming involved in the community. Two youth were able to participate in the National Council for Independent Living with community financial supports and peer support provided by the youth specialist. The youth traveled with the youth specialist for peer support and mentoring. Neither of the youth had traveled without their parents before and both voiced the experience was truly a learning one that made them feel more independent in their own lives.

15. Board Leadership: The board continues to learn about the IL philosophy during training opportunities. Over the course of the year we developed a board training class that involved anyone interested in serving on different boards in the community. It also assisted in identifying consumers who applied to become a board member for disABILITY LINK. Members of the board contribute volunteer hours and are active in different programs within the CIL.

## Subpart IV - Extent of CIL Compliance with the Six Evaluation Standards

### Section A - Compliance Indicator 1: Philosophy

#### Item 1 - Consumer Control

##### (A) Board Member Composition

Enter requested governing board information below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total Number of Board Members | 10 |
| Number of Board Members with Significant Disabilities | 7 |

##### (B) Staff Composition

Enter requested staff information in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total Number of FTEs | FTEs Filled by Individuals with Disabilities | FTEs Filled by Individuals from Minority Populations |
| Decision-Making Staff | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Other Staff | 8 | 7 | 6 |

#### Item 2 - Self-Help and Self-Advocacy

Briefly describe how the CIL has promoted self-help and self-advocacy among individuals with significant disabilities during the reporting year.

The Independent Living philosophy is the main focus of all staff, volunteers and consumer relationships. All consumers are encouraged to participate in the development of their plan. Our staff and our programs offer the tools necessary so consumers can help themselves. The IL skills training component of the core services includes how to express what you want and or need to maintain and/or increase independence and the necessary steps in order to accomplish the goal. IL specialists work one on one as well in group settings with consumers in areas of employment, budgeting, health and wellness, enrolling in benefit programs, advocating for their right to equal access in the community. disABILITY LINK distributes registration applications. IL specialists offer voting options and offers registration as a key component in having each voice heard. Independent Living Specialists educate consumers on ADA guidelines and fair housing and encourage the consumers to educate themselves to advocate effectively. disABILITY has conducted different activities that encourage consumers to become directly involved in their own self-help and advocacy. Choices and resources are the tools of self-reliance and each person is encouraged to use those tools to solve their daily as well as lifetime issues. disABILITY LINK was active in a variety of advocacy issues during the reporting year. This serves a dual purpose, participation in necessary advocacy, and the opportunity to invite consumers to learn about the issues, see the big picture, get involved and practice self- help and self- advocacy. During the reporting year, disABILITY LINK initiated, developed and supported a variety of advocacy and disability rights activities to promote "an equal playing field" for people with disabilities - issues included a number of events as part of the recognition of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the ADA, Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) advocacy at the state and federal levels; Home Buying (and other housing issues) seminars; ADA training to consumers and provider organizations and entities; supporting other grass roots peer led organizations (BIPVA, People First, etc); facilitated individual and group meetings with decision makers (policy and legislative staff and representatives, etc.); outreach to promote IL to a huge variety of individuals, service providers, private and public entities; participation in the annual Atlanta Martin Luther King, Jr. Day parade, developing a Georgia Get Out The Disability Vote (GGOTDV) campaign; and undertook the statewide Disability Pride Parade in downtown Atlanta as well as many other events. The office space at disABILITY LINK is full of positive self-help and self-advocacy messages. For example, posters, pictures, photos, etc., of accomplished people with disabilities, messages of power, hope and support. During the reporting year different activities and meetings were held that encourage the consumers to become directly involved in their own self-help and advocacy. A few of these activities include: Nothing About Us Without Us (NAUWU) which is a monthly interactive opportunity to learn, and share, about topics of interest, conversations so far have included the disability community regarding: included transportation, housing, veterans issues, services animals, AT, communicating with elected representatives and human rights. Each session is facilitated by consumers or guest speakers (often new to making presentations), with support from staff, and a "take action" segment encourages participants to make a commitment to and be empowered by the topic, (for example, to learn more, to advocate - specifically or generally, to support others to get involved, etc., as appropriate). NAUWU is attracting old friends and new visitors to disABILITY LINK and is a popular addition to the monthly calendar of events. •disABILITY LINK participated in the Home Usability Study. This research project is a collaboration between the University of Montana and the University of Kansas. Home Usability is about ensuring that people with disabilities are living in homes that meet their needs and desires the research project provides funds to help improve minor barriers, Other events include: Circle of Support meetings – disABILITY LINK supports individual “Circles of Support” as a “tool” for self-advocacy and self-determination, supporting people to develop dreams and reach goals - when appropriate, disABILITY LINK has provided meeting space, circle facilitation, technical assistance, etc., for the meetings themselves, and for individuals and their supporters to plan their circle meetings, etc, ; Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA) – is an independent transportation advocacy group supporting self and systems advocacy, and embodies the notions of self-help and self-advocacy, the “tag” line of the group is, "Inform, Educate and Advocate for Efficient, Effective and Accessible transit." The group is run by people with disabilities who use public transit – the group works to hold service providers accountable, for example, by increasing membership of members with advocacy skills and interests to the advisory committee of the major transit provider in Metro Atlanta and working on projects that promote collaboration between riders and operators. disABILITY LINK and CTREA co-hosted a community events focused on MARTA and the changes to ensure individuals with disabilities have a “Seat at the table” during the reporting year. The ADA Legacy Project is a national coalition to spotlight the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 2015 ("to preserve, to celebrate, to educate"). disABILITY LINK is participating in the planning for national, statewide and local activities, helping to build the disability community, increasing awareness of the ADA, incorporating Independent Living into the discussions, attracting media attention, etc. Empowering Our Youth (EOY) – disABILITY LINK recognizes the need to promote self-help and self-advocacy at an early age through the development of Empowering Our Youth (for youth and young adults ages 14 to 29) where the participants are the leaders and decision makers, supported by the Youth Advocacy Coordinator. As youth several webinars and group meetings including “Disability day” and “Pride Day” involved youth. The youth independent living specialist has presented on various occasions to a diverse audience of young adults with disabilities about self- help and self-advocacy. Particularly transition related events.

#### Item 3 - Peer Relationships and Peer Role Models

Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL has promoted the development of peer relationships and peer role models among individuals with significant disabilities.

Our IL specialists represent a variety of disabilities as do our board members. They are readily available to assist and support a consumer with a similar disability or situation. The establishment of relationships with outside agencies has been beneficial in creating peer relationships with consumers who have a disability or recently acquired a disability and needs support services and peer mentoring directly after to resume independence. Referrals are made to support groups and documented in the case notes. The advantages of such connections are continually promoted. The specialists also promote consumers working with each other. disABILITY LINK offers classes that are targeted towards developing relationships while using peer role models. These are conducted in private one on one meetings and group meetings. Examples include job classes, tech talks, Empowering Our Youth, Georgia Radio Reading Service, Transit Riders for Equal Access, People First, Independent Living skills classes, and the volunteer trainings. We utilize peer relationships and modeling in our Nursing Home Transition program and Peer training programs. We utilize volunteers to provide peer support to other consumers as an ongoing activity. Peer Relationships are firmly established through our classes as well as formal and informal gatherings. It is not unusual to see a group of peers gathered together in the activity room discussing the day’s events and challenges they face. Peer Role models are evident at all levels of disABILITY LINK through staff, consumers and volunteers. disABILITY LINK utilizes the knowledge of staff in order to reach out to specific targeted groups. Our staff has conducted workshops to other organizations on topics of interest related to best practices and has been seen as a leader. disABILITY LINK was instrumental in creating and coordinating the federally funded Georgia Peer Support Project. The Georgia Peer Support Project (GA-PSP) curriculum is used to train hundreds of peer supporters in, (1) Metro Atlanta, (2) around Georgia, and (3) across the US. disABILITY LINK has provided peer support training to peer supporters. Supporting peer support has the double benefit of improving the skills and outlook of both the peer supporter and peer, good "bang for the buck." The 3-day, interactive and lively experience has helped to create excellent peer supporters and improved the quality of peer support in the disability community...and has highlighted disABILITY LINK as a Center for Independent Living with excellence in peer support. disABILITY LINK continues to receive interest from CILs and other organizations around the state and country to provide the three day GA-PSP training. Most disABILITY LINK staff are certified through The Georgia Peer Support Project training and we continue to support many consumers and volunteers, etc., to experience the GA-PSP training. Board membership of the CIL is comprised of more than 51% people with disabilities. Board members clearly recognize and discuss that they serve as role models and that the process of conducting board meetings is a function of the peer relationships and community involvement. Several of our board members were once consumers who had gone through programs such as the job classes and are now gainfully employed. They use their experience as a peer supporter to many other consumers. In addition, our staff are excellent peer role models utilizing their stories and experiences to assist others. The youth independent living specialist provided peer support to two youth while attending a national conference. Several of our staff members participated in telling their story of working with a disability at the MARTA ADA celebration along with several consumers. RESPECT Institute (RI) has been facilitated and hosted by disABILITY LINK for several years - it a 3 1/2 day experience of peer led skills training and coaching to transform personal stories of disability into educational and meaningful presentations - participants report increased confidence and control while learning the skills to deliver stories to various audiences . disABILITY LINK and RI has increased the opportunities for graduates, and other interested parties, to meet monthly and peer support one another with the presentations, personal goals, etc. - leadership has emerged from each of the 3 graduating classes and are working together to support all graduates, and potential graduates, with a full range of peer relationships. Numerous previous members from the employment class have returned to the LEAPS meetings to encourage the current members and to demonstrate that success of the program. Several of the previous members have actually presented a topic which they wanted to share with the group. The LGBTQ + disABILITY group was initiated and met monthly. This new intersectional group is meant to build a more inclusive environment for these two communities that strive for the same things: advocacy for human rights, but not special rights; valuing the inherent worth of each individual, all of whom deserve dignity and respect; promotion of inclusion and recognition of the talents and abilities of all individuals; and supporting for self-determination and choice. The meeting locations varied from in the office or in the community. But the main goal was to provide a safe space for the consumers who identified with both communities, seeking empowerment and future support. Per request by a consumer, who was struggling through their daily living activities (e.g. self-care, mobility, college life, and maintaining personal/social status) with a new and life-changing diagnosis, a panel of peers was coordinated. The panelists were people who live by the independent living philosophy, and have positive insight to what life is like after such diagnosis. This opens doors for future resources beyond the scheduled event.

#### Item 4 - Equal Access

##### (A) Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL has ensured equal access of individuals with significant disabilities, including communication and physical access, to the center's services, programs, activities, resources, and facilities, whether publicly or privately funded. Equal access, for the purposes of this indicator, means that the same access is provided to any individual with a significant disability regardless of the individual's type of significant disability.

All of disability LINK’s office, programs and activities continue to be barrier free and all materials are distributed in alternative format upon request. We offer an information board that utilizes large print for board minutes, latest events and other special announcements. In addition, this board has an iPod that individuals can listen to that reads what is presented on this board. disABILITY LINK provided interpreter services on a regular basis to assist in job classes, peer groups and provision of core services. Our office currently use Access Video Interpreting app as an ideal communication services alternative. With webcam technology, it connects a Deaf or hard of hearing consumer with a hearing person by including a qualified Access interpreter from another location who provides interpretation through a computer screen. We currently have a video phone and access to video interpreting services for our deaf consumers which allow us to provide employment services to the deaf community. This service was not in place at the beginning of the year due to our office relocating and then during our period of construction, however was reinstated with a new video phone after completion. We can accommodate individuals through scheduling an appointment or walking into our office. 14 point Verdana font is utilized as a standard for print materials. Lighting levels, noise levels, wheelchair access as well as AT supports were provided as requested for different venues. Our office is a scent free environment. A common request is lighting levels for different sensory requests. We have been able to successfully accommodate this through removal of light bulbs in different areas while allowing ample lighting for others. In addition, for most of the year we had two staff members who were able to utilize sign language for communication on an as needed basis as well as Spanish and Mandarin speaking staff for language barriers with those specific needs. We provided tactile signing with their hands for individuals who identified as Deaf-Blind. disABILITY LINK also provides services by visiting homes, in the community and other methods of communication such as but not limited to Skype for video conferencing when unable to physically be present at the center. Outside our entry to our office, we have a voice door greeting that is activated by motion, allowing those who are blind or low vision ease in identifying where our access entry door is located. In addition we utilize different social media venues including facebook, twitter, newline, etc to provide more tools for accessibility and resources.

##### (B) Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL has advocated for and conducted activities that promote the equal access to all services, programs, activities, resources, and facilities in society, whether public or private, and regardless of funding source, for individuals with significant disabilities. Equal access, for the purposes of this indicator, means that the same access provided to individuals without disabilities is provided in the center's service area to individuals with significant disabilities.

disABILITY LINK advocates and conducts activities for equal access at every possible opportunity. We collaborate with partners and challenge others on equal access. We have participated in conferences, trainings, events and education that include promoting equal access for individuals with disabilities. disABILITY LINK collaborated individually with organizations such as Metro Fair Housing, State Independent Living Council and Montana Rural Institute to find housing needs, discrimination and promote advocacy on fair housing issues. Staff and consumers participated in different events targeted towards finding gaps and needs. disABILITY LINK initiated, developed and supported a variety of advocacy and disability rights activities to promote "an equal playing field" for people with disabilities. Issues included a number of events as part of the recognition of the 25th anniversary of the signing of the ADA (ADA25 - preserve, celebrate, educate), as well as continuing issues of access. Examples include; Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) advocacy at the state and federal levels; Home Buying (and other housing issues) seminars; ADA training to consumers and provider organizations and entities; supporting other grass roots peer led organizations (BIPVA, People First, etc); facilitated individual and group meetings with decision makers (policy and legislative staff and representatives, etc.); outreach to promote IL to a huge variety of individuals, service providers, private and public entities; the lead organization to promote a 100+ participation in the annual Atlanta Martin Luther King, Jr. Day parade ("Disability Rights are Civil Rights"); hosted a Community ADA Celebration of 100+ people to promote celebration of, education about and compliance with the ADA; actively promoted community participation of the on-line ADA25 Pledge; developing a Georgia Get Out The Disability Vote (GGOTDV) campaign; participated the Georgia Disability History Alliance (GDHA) planning and activities; hosting regular NAUWU education and involvement training opportunities; one of handful of organizations that planned and undertook the statewide Disability Pride Parade in downtown Atlanta (with hundreds of participants); and more. disABILITY LINK works toward increasing choices and options for transportation. We administer the Voucher Travel Assistance Program (VTAP), through a grant from The Atlanta Regional Authority (ARC), which provides financial assistance for transportation options for people with disabilities. During the year our CIL advocated with other organizations regarding increasing the number and availability of accessible taxis in Atlanta. We worked with and was able to negotiate lower costs with different providers. Staff participated in Human Services Transportation Committee to increase access to transportation for people with disabilities, particularly in the suburban and more “rural” areas of Atlanta (and other issues of community accessibility. Staff provided Travel Training services for people with disabilities. disABILITY LINK also identified and assisted in resolving issues while working with consumers to be their own advocate. One of the most common access concerns is with regard to public transportation – more specifically the paratransit service. Multiple consumers have had issues and sought support from the independent living specialist to get equal access that they are supposed to be receiving. The CIL provided support of Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA) to increase grass roots participation in transportation advocacy efforts. Staff and consumers are consultants with the Veteran’s Administration’s (VA) One-Click Program for route planning and increased options, and successfully advocated with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to expand the program to all people with disabilities, not just veterans. disABILITY LINK continues to encourage people with disabilities to register to vote and engage in community programs and society to obtain equal access. Voter Registration and Educational classes were held. disABILITY LINK is a site that is a certified application center (CAC) organization for the healthcare marketplace. All staff have gone through the training to become certified application counselors to assist providing resources and useful information when applying for healthcare through the marketplace. We provide activities focused on “Empowering our Youth” on topics such as school transitioning, working their own IEP and gaining employment. The youth independent living specialist participated in an event by their children's freedom initiative and the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities. This was not only a one-time connection. The efforts also flow into Georgia advocacy days at the capital – pushing for waiting lists to be unlocked, and sharing personal testimony of the effect this would have for the disability community. The youth independent living specialist also worked with consumers individually to gain that equal access they were being denied within the classroom setting (elementary school and college campus). The LGBTQ + disABILITY group was initiated and began meeting. This new intersectional group is meant to build a more inclusive environment for these two communities that strive for the same things: advocacy for human rights, but not special rights; valuing the inherent worth of each individual, all of whom deserve dignity and respect; promotion of inclusion and recognition of the talents and abilities of all individuals; and supporting for self-determination and choice. Per request by a consumer, who was struggling through their daily living activities (e.g. self-care, mobility, college life, and maintaining personal/social status) with a new and life-changing diagnosis, a panel of peers was coordinated. The panelists were people who live by the independent living philosophy, and have positive insight to what life is like after such diagnosis. This opens doors for future resources beyond the scheduled event. We held job training classes that focus on asking for reasonable accommodations and we work with employers through several of our programs to educate on providing those accommodations.

#### Item 5 - Alternative Formats

Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL has ensured the availability in alternative formats of all of its written policies and materials and IL services, as appropriate.

All program materials are made available to all consumers upon request in alternative format including tapes, Braille, large print, CCTV, Sorenson Video Relay. Our business cards include braille printing and all videos we produce feature text captioning. We make our weekly Georgia Radio Reading Service announcements available in text format. In addition, we attempt to keep a regular supply of alternative format materials for other community resources available for our consumers. disABILITY LINK uses Verdana 14 print font for printed material as a standard practice. Newsletters and program events are made available in text format through email. We offer an information board that utilizes large print for board minutes, latest events and other special announcements. In addition, this board has an iPod that individuals can listen to that reads what is presented on this board.

### Section B - Compliance Indicator 2: Provision of Services on a Cross-Disability Basis

Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL has ensured that IL services are provided to eligible individuals with a diversity of significant disabilities and individuals who are members of populations that are unserved or underserved, without restrictions based on the particular type or types of significant disability and in a manner that is neither targeted nor limited to a particular type of significant disability.

Our staff and Board members represent a variety of disabilities (Multiple Sclerosis, deafness, visual impairments, mental illness, rheumatoid arthritis and well as many others). disABILITY LINK promotes outreach and collaboration at every opportunity. Examples include; ADA training to people and organizations that reflect the entire disability community; hosting a Low Vision event; recording IL updates (and PSAs) for broadcast via Georgia Radio Reading Service (GaRRS) on IL, transportation, youth and AT issues; regular collaboration with other peer led organizations (GMHCN, People First, NFB, BIPVA, etc.); regular collaboration with non-peer led organizations (GCDD, CLD, IHDD, ARC, Parent-to-Parent, providers, Shepherd Center, etc.); promotion and support of local, statewide and national concerns (education, employment, health, housing and transportation, plus attitudes, are cross-disability and cross-geographical issues); circulation of media and social media opportunities to promote full inclusion in community life; etc. disABILITY LINK’s publications and programs stress the fact that we serve all disabilities. disABILITY LINK provides IL services continuously on a cross disability basis. Services are provided to all consumers who are determined eligible according to the Title VII of the Rehab Act, and then specific eligibility criteria defined by the funding source. Education and training is provided on a continual basis to staff on equal access, diversity and cultural issues. During the reporting year, disABILITY LINK has continued plans, and initiated further plans, to ensure services are provided across disability labels and to a variety of people with disabilities, outreach efforts include: In an effort to reach the un-served and underserved areas, services expanded to reach out to the Blind and deaf population, transitional youth and transitional Veterans. disABILITY LINK worked with a new variety of organizations with activities to ensure we engaged others and reached out to a diversity of individuals. These organizations and activities included engaging several local pet stores and animal hospitals to provide service animal awareness with our doggie day activity, engaged the community as disABILITY LINK honored advocates and professionals from the Independent Living and disability services arena with our 25th ADA celebration with well over 300 individuals in attendance, engaged local organizations at our meet and greet held at the office in celebration of the ADA, hosted a workshops to provide information about workforce development and Independent Living Skills to different service organizations. disABILITY LINK continues to provide mentorship for the Brain Injury Peer Visitor Association; the disABILITY LINK brochure is included in the hundreds of packets of information shared with newly diagnosed people with brain injuries in 25 hospitals around Metro Atlanta. disABILITY LINK also participates in the training of the peer visitors. In order to reach a wider geographical area, the staff contacted community organizations such as libraries, Chambers of Commerce, doctors and other healthcare offices, schools and colleges, veteran’s organizations, organizations serving people with mental health disabilities, organizations serving people who are blind and visually disabled, organizations serving people who are deaf or hearing disabled, organizations serving people with brain injuries, transportation organizations, nursing facilities (all of them in the service area) and residences for seniors, organizations serving veterans, etc. - by phone, email, mail and in person (participating in resource fairs, etc.) - throughout the 12 county service area to inform people with, and without, disabilities about disABILITY LINK and Independent Living . Independent Living Classes were held on a very wide variety of topics which attracted participants who were not previously consumers. disABILITY LINK continues to have a positive relationship with other organizations run by and for people with disabilities, including – The National Federation of the Blind (Georgia and Atlanta), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the National Council for the Blind (Georgia and Atlanta), the Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network (and the Peer Support, Respite and Wellness Center), People First (National, Georgia and Atlanta), ADAPT (National, Georgia and Atlanta), and Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA). Staff and consumers participated in presentations and booths at Resource/Transition Fairs which provided opportunities to present IL philosophy and services; disABILITY LINK published a quarterly newsletter that included information about events and activities, and messages of self-help, self-advocacy and self-determination. disABILITY LINK participated in radio media in the following ways: Radio (1) - monthly GaRRS/Two Minute Advocacy Sessions about independent living and transportation – reaches 20,000+ people statewide; Radio (2) disABILITY LINK increased the use of social media (Face Book, Twitter, You Tube, blogs, etc.) providing additional opportunities for dialogue and connections with people who might not typically seek support from a Center for Independent Living, and providing ease of communication for those who prefer to communicate electronically. The CIL administers the Voucher Travel Assistance Program (VTAP). The grant was renewed within the last reporting period, outreach efforts continue in the all counties served, in particular to the most rural counties with very limited or no transportation options. Youth Program – Empowering Our Youth (EOY) is the youth and young adults program for youth and young adults with disabilities (ages 14 to 29). This program was developed to reach out to underserved transitional youth. We are in the beginning stages of initiating a Veteran’s transition program. Disability link also hosted an LGBTQIA + disability group for those that identify with both communities.

### Section C - Compliance Indicator 3: Independent Living Goals

#### Item 1 - Consumer Information

Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL has ensured that consumers have the opportunity to develop and achieve their goals (either with or without an ILP) and that the consumer has the opportunity to express satisfaction with the center and such consumer satisfaction results are evaluated by the center.

Consumer Service Record (CSR) is required to be completed for all consumers who require services, excluding those requesting only I&R. All consumers are encouraged to participate in the development of their goals and the ILP. ILPs are consumer driven. Consumers are notified of their right to develop or waive an ILP. The are also notified of their right to a hearing and/or contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP) should they believe that their rights or services have been denied unfairly. A consumer outcome and satisfaction survey is conducted by volunteers with a random sampling of consumers (approximately 10%) at the beginning, middle and end of the fiscal year. Surveys are also provided at the closure of each case. disABILITY LINK continued the use of social networks and encouraged participation of discussion through online message boards. There is a comment box in the office to allow consumers to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with our services. They are checked regularly. In addition, we have a contact us on our webpage that allows for people to utilize for comments. The results are reviewed by management. Some comments for the surveys "I used to think I had to live the way other people told me to, getting involved with disABILITY LINK and IL has opened up a whole new world for me, I now know that I am the expert in my life!", "I now have a job, a place of my own and a social life...I love it!", "Thanks for giving me the resources to find the assistance needed", “disABILITY LINK has helped me gain more confidence in myself, encouraged me to pursue other avenues and endeavors and provided me with opportunities I never thought of for myself. The peer support has been excellent and has taught me be to accept help from others” and “disABILITY LINK has help me get back out into the community living independently in my own apartment”. This year, we also conducted an outcome survey with our State Independent Living Council. The results showed that 58.33% of the individuals received information that they needed, 13.89% were unsure out of those 58.33% that received the information 44.44% used the information. 72.2% surveyed reported being more independent after receiving services from the CIL. 72.2% reported being able to speak up for themselves better after receiving services from the CIL and 19.4% said that working with disABILITY LINK helped keep them from moving into a group home or nursing home.

#### Item 2 - Consumer Service Record Requirements

Briefly describe how, during the reporting year, the CIL ensured that each consumer's CSR contains all of the required information.

disABILITY LINK utilizes a digital data management program for maintaining and ensuring CSRs are accurate and contain the required information. Supervisors/Program Managers and staff regularly confirm that this is being done by performing CSR reviews. There are staff trainings throughout the year to reinforce and modify policies and procedures. New staff are provided initial staff trainings during orientation. Additionally, staff participates in our digital data management program webinars in order to ensure accuracy of reporting. Ongoing staff trainings are held on a regular basis so that consistency in reporting is completed. Consumer files are audited on a regular basis.

### Section D - Compliance Indicator 4: Community Options and Community Capacity

#### Item 1 - Community Activities Table

Summarize the community activities involving the CIL's staff and board members during the reporting year. For each activity, identify the primary disability issue(s) addressed as well as the type of activity conducted. Describe the primary objective(s) and outcome(s) for each activity. Add more rows as necessary.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Issue Area | Activity Type | Hours Spent | Objective(s) | Outcome(s) |
| Health care | Community Ed. and Public Info. | 12.00 | Improve access to physical activitities for PWD | Developed plan for improved outreach and more wellness activities |
| Other | Community/Systems Advocacy | 88.00 | Cultivate relations with community service orgs | Met and developed collaborative plans with many service organizations |
| Other | Community/Systems Advocacy | 18.00 | Advocate for worldwide recognition of rights for PWD | Advocated congress to ratify CRPD |
| Health care | Community/Systems Advocacy | 58.00 | Participate in statewide disabilty day at state capitol | Met with statewide advocates, advocated for state to increase support of community living |
| Other | Community/Systems Advocacy | 22.00 | Familiarize staff/consumer with state capitol | Toured capitol landmarks, met with state legislators and staff |
| Other | Outreach Efforts | 54.00 | Encourage youth to become more active in community/cvil matters | Held monthly meetings with youth w/ disabilities, planned community and outreach activities |
| Other | Outreach Efforts | 170.00 | Conduct outreach/education to potential funders and sponsers | Conduct outreach/education to potential funders and sponsers |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 528.00 | Statewide advocacy organization meeting | Met on a monthly basis to coordinate legislative and community outreach |
| Other | Community Ed. and Public Info. | 170.00 | Improve outreach via Statewide accessible radio | Recorded two monthly broadcasts that were distributed to thousdands of listeners |
| Other | Community Ed. and Public Info. | 18.00 | Educate youth on transition from parental care into adulthood | Met with dozens of youth who learned about disABILITY LINK and support/strategies for transition |
| Housing | Community/Systems Advocacy | 72.00 | Organize participate in community living advocacy | Met with statewide advocates, advocated for state to increase support of community living |
| Other | Community/Systems Advocacy | 29.00 | Participate in statewide MH day at state capitol | Met with statewide advocates, advocated for state to increase support of MH concerns |
| Other | Outreach Efforts | 19.00 | Conduct outreach/education to potential funders and sponsers | Connected with sponsor, secured partnership |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 100.00 | Meet with community organization to support expanding voter rights | Met with many regional orgnizations to lobby for increased access to polls |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 33.00 | Cultivate relations with center | Toured museum, met with staff regarding opporunities for partnership |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 192.00 | National event to encourage legislative efforts important to PWD | Met and developed collaborative plans with many other CILs |
| Other | Community/Systems Advocacy | 153.00 | Statewide advocacy organization meeting | Met on a monthly basis to coordinate legislative and community outreach |
| Other | Community Ed. and Public Info. | 133.00 | Statewide advocacy organization meeting | Met on a monthly basis to coordinate legislative and community outreach |
| Housing | Community/Systems Advocacy | 834.00 | Nursing Home Outreach | Facilitied regular transition from nursing homes into community living |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 64.00 | Cultivate relations with community service orgs | Met and developed collaborative plans with many service organizations |
| Other | Outreach Efforts | 208.00 | Provide one-on-one peer support | Provided peer support to consumers to live more independently |
| Other | Community Ed. and Public Info. | 73.00 | Assist consumers with voter registration | Held workshops and one-on-one support for consumers to register |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 79.00 | Regional advocacy organization meeting | Met on a monthly basis to coordinate legislative and community outreach |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 29.00 | Statewide advocacy organization meeting | Met on a monthly basis to coordinate legislative and community outreach |
| Assistive technology | Technical Assistance | 96.00 | Organization to educate/promote assistive technology | Advertised disABILITY LINK services, learned about upcoming AT progress |
| Other | Community/Systems Advocacy | 46.00 | Cultivate relations with community service orgs | Met and developed collaborative plans with many service organizations |
| Other | Collaboration/Networking | 310.00 | National event to encourage legislative efforts important to PWD in rural areas | Met and developed collaborative rural support plans with many other CILs |
| Assistive technology | Technical Assistance | 86.00 | Educate consumers about assistive technology | Held montly workships to improve consumer education of AT |
| Other | Community Ed. and Public Info. | 210.00 | Support people to develop basic workplace skills and knowledge | Provided support for many consumers to become better job seekers and employees |
| Other | Outreach Efforts | 130.00 | Support people to become volunteers, learn about disABILITY LINK, and develop skills | Provided support to dozens of volunteers to assist the organization and grow in independence |
| Transportation | Technical Assistance | 196.00 | Assist consumers with understanding/navigating transit systems | Educated cosumers on various transit options, supported them to make effective choices, apply for transit assistance |

#### Item 2 - Consumer Service Record Requirements

For the community activities mentioned above, provide additional details such as the role of the CIL staff board members and/or consumers, names of any partner organizations and further descriptions of the specific activities, services and benefits.

disABILITY LINK coordinated with many different organizations. Activities include participating in a resource fairs, Health and Wellness Fairs, Conferences, Educational groups, National and local organizations, meeting with representatives of local, regional and state government and distributing pertinent information to consumers. disABILITY LINK worked with The Georgia Statewide Independent Living Council, The Georgia Advocacy Office and Atlanta Legal Aid, NCIL and APRIL on issues such as the Olmstead Decision Compliance and the Department of Justice settlement with the state of Georgia, Community Choice Options, transportation options and fair housing issues. disability LINK focused a great deal of time on Empowering Our Youth by working with local schools, parents, transition fairs and creating outreach avenues. disability LINK continued to work on emergency preparedness and DeKalb Emergency Preparedness Festival was a success. Staff and consumers had the opportunity to see interactive emergency vehicle displays, receive disaster and emergency preparedness info, and learn about fire safety & crime prevention and how to prepare for pet and large animal crisis care. Consumers, staff and volunteers provided education to the disability community and the general public. disABILITY LINK support and partnered with People First of Atlanta and People First of Georgia providing support and information for people with disabilities including technical support. We continued with our newsletter and dates to remember. disABILITY LINK conducted a voter registration and education campaign to promote voter’s registration and educating about getting out to vote. disABILITY LINK was instrumental in creating and coordinating the federally funded Georgia Peer Support Project in the prior year and utilized what tools were developed to continue to hold peer support training groups. disABILITY LINK contracts with the local Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) to provide essential peer support to the consumers transitioning from nursing facilities through Money Follows the Person. disABILITY LINK continues to advocate on transportation and housing issues. disABILITY LINK continued to work with employers such as the Center for Disease Control, Walmart, Kroger’s, USDA, and many others in an effort to put people with disabilities to work in appropriate and gainful employment. We collaborate with groups and provide resources for organizations such as Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access, Decatur Housing Authority, Georgia Legal Aid, National Federation of the Blind of GA, Metro Fair Housing and Disability Law and Policy Network. Staff, board members and volunteers collaborated and networked with many different entities including, but not limited to: Abilities, Inc., Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC), AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps/Georgia PAS Corps, AT&T, Atlanta Housing Authority (ALA), Atlanta Legal Aid Society (ALAS), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC),Atlanta Urban League, Atlanta, Georgia and National ADAPT, Brain Injury Peer Visitors Association (BIPVA), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Center for Financial Freedom and Innovations (CFII), Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD), at Georgia State University (GSU), Center for the Visually Impaired (CVI); City of Decatur, Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA), Concrete Change, Decatur Business Association, Decatur Housing Authority, DeKalb Chamber of Commerce; DeKalb Rape Crisis Center, Disability Law & Policy Network (DLPN), Disability Resource Group (DRG), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Georgia ADA Coordinator, Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO, Georgia Council for the Blind, Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR),Georgia Department of Labor (DOL),Georgia Department of Rehabilitation Services, Georgia Library for Accessible Services (GLASS),Georgia Mental Health Consumer Network, Georgia Micro Board Association,Georgia Radio Reading Service (GaRRS), Georgia Transplant Foundation,Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (VR),Institute on Human Development & Disability (IHDD), at The University of Georgia (UGA), Internal Revenue Service (IRS),Latin American Association (Associacion Latinoamericana),Manpower,Metro Fair Housing, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA),Metropolitan Employment Network of Atlanta (MENA), National Association of Blind Veterans,National Federation of the Blind (NFB) – of Georgia, Cobb County, Decatur and Metro Atlanta, O’Hern House (Project Interconnections), Pedestrians Educating Drivers (PEDS), Peer Support, Respite and Wellness Centers, People First of Atlanta, People First of Georgia,Public Sector Alliance, ReBoot Project (of Tools for Life),Rockdale County Recreation Department,Shepherd Center, Siemens,Social Security Administration,St Jude’s Recovery Center,The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH), The Georgia Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), Tools for Life, United Way of Greater Atlanta, Unlock the Waiting Lists! Campaign, US Department of Transportation,US Department of Labor,US Department of Veterans Affairs,VISTA, 101 Mobility, Affordable Medical Resources, AMS Vans, Atlanta School for the Deaf, Crossroads Atlanta, Cumberland Academy, Blaze Sports, Decatur City Government, Cobb County Council, GACHI- GA Council for the Hearing Impaired,GAD- Ga Association of the Deaf, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP),AARP, NAD- National Assoc. of the Deaf, GDBA-Ga Deaf Blind Association.and Destiny’s Child Home Care. For many of these organizations, staff, board members and consumers: • Serve on specific committees that deal with disability and independent living issues •Provide training, consultation or other service •Serve on Advisory Councils and Committees •Are active members • Are leaders, officers and board members, etc.

### Section E - Compliance Indicator 5: IL Core Services and Other IL Services

In addition to the data provided in Subpart III, describe how information and referral services and the other IL core and other IL services are provided to those who request such services in formats accessible to the individual requesting the services. Describe any innovative practices (not mentioned elsewhere in this report) to enhance the availability and effectiveness of IL services.

disABILITY LINK continues to provide IL core and other IL services in a variety of ways. Requests of accessible formats are handled on a case by case basis which have included interpreter services on a regular basis to assist in job classes, peer groups and provision of core services. In addition, for most of the year we had two staff members who were able to utilize sign language for communication on an as needed basis as well as staff who were fluent in Spanish and Mandarin. Staff is available to make home visits, meet consumers in their community, video conference, telecommute, email or voice. disABILITY LINK attracts a high number of people with disabilities looking for employment. In addition to referring to proper resources we also have an employment program which includes working with individuals on a one to one basis or in a group. The program also assists in setting up internships which are paid in order to gain skills. Several consumers have been hired by the organization they did the internship at. We have several individuals who are working at the CIL as part of the internship. We also have employees through the AARP. An important aspect of the employment program includes applying for and successfully receiving fee for service for providing job coaching, career counseling, employment services and paid internships. disABILITY LINK hosts a monthly event that educates individuals on disability rights and advocacy. The event is called "Nothing About Us Without Us" and has held topics that included local legislatures to come in and talk about the importance and best way to advocate to them, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors on their process, local schools and working with IEP. It has allowed individuals to learn different methods of advocating for different situations while being informed. disABILITY LINK staff, volunteers and board members continue to be members of transportation and housing boards as well as other disability related organizations. disABILITY LINK and staff continue to work with housing authorities and rental assistance programs. disABILITY LINK has initiated a program that will reach out to the Veteran and Youth populations. disABILITY LINK continues to work with consumers and advocating for their rights on transportation issues. A major issue continues to get the local public transit provider to include people with disabilities when planning and developing activities related to transportation and people with disabilities. Staff and consumers participated in many meetings, hearings and trainings relevant to the issues and advocacy of accessible transportation. disABILITY LINK continues to host a health and wellness program and has applied and received a grant for further development for the next fiscal year. This program focuses on overall wellness to staff, consumers and board members. disABILITY LINK continues to work with consumers in the Nursing Home Transition program who want to live in the community. It assists in providing rent, deposits, furnishings, and groceries as well as other needed items in order to move into the community of their choice. disABILITY LINK has partnered with the balancing incentive program through the state and provides information and referral to individuals through their system as well as having a specific information and referral specialist who answers the telephones. This individual is highly trained on the I&R process and can answer many questions and direct them to the resources and/or staff that can assist further in the process. In addition, we have developed an inter-office resource guide for staff to be able to easily access for resources. disABILITY LINK made great improvements to the assistive technology program to include tech talks, instructions on computer technology, smart phone technology and other assistive devices on a one to one basis as well as in group settings. We currently have an assistive technology display and currently looking at developing an internet café’. disABILITY LINK engaged in Emergency Preparedness in the means of meetings, community events and advocacy. We participated in the Dekalb Emergency Preparedness Festival. To ensure safety and education, disABILITY LINK held classes on Emergency Preparedness. This was especially important with the ice storms that hit the Metro Atlanta Area. We passed along information about emergency shelters, interpreters, food resources and volunteer attendants. We coordinated with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Get Ready Gwinnett and Dekalb Emergency Management Agency to disseminate this information via social media. disABILITY LINK has began the initiation for getting out to vote for the upcoming elections while working with local voting polls on accessibility features.

### Section F - Compliance Indicator 6: IL Resource Development Activities

Briefly describe the CIL's resource development activities conducted during the reporting year to expand funding from sources other than chapter 1of title VII of the Act.

Resource development efforts and sources include: Atlanta Regional Commission grant which provides travel vouchers and mobility training to consumers who are seeking employment, consumers coming out nursing facilities or other institutions, and consumers with limited transportation options. Department of Labor (transferred to the Department of Human Services) - providing Nursing Home Transition services, outreach, independent living services, etc. Fee for service through the Independent Care Waiver Program (ICWP) for providing service coordination. Fee for Service - Money Follows the Person (MFP) - providing Peer Support to consumers transitioning out of nursing facilities. Fee for service – facilitation of Peer Support Trainings in Atlanta, Augusta, South Carolina, etc. Successfully applied to Department of Labor (VR – transferred to Department of Human Services) for fee for service – providing employment, job coaching and career counseling. Successfully applied to Department of Labor (VR – transferred to Department of Human Services) for fee for service – providing employment services and paid internships. Successfully applied to become an Employment Network through Social Security Administration’s Ticket to Work Program – for employment services. Successfully applied for grant from the Georgia Department on Aging Services – providing nursing facility consultation services. Grant with the Balancing Incentives Program for information and referral for individuals with disabilities. Home modifications contract with the Department of Community Affairs Home Access Program. Applied to Fulton County Grant-the grant was cancelled by the organization as they didn’t receive funds, Applied for the Ida Alice Ryan Foundation employment-unsuccessful, Applied for Christopher Reeves Foundation on youth and employment-unsuccessful. Applied for grant with University of Montana, successful to begin next fiscal year. Applied for grant with SNAP, successful to begin next year. Other grant opportunities were applied for but not successful. Events held for youth including rummage sales-successful. Held a 25 year ADA celebration-successful with over 300 individuals in attendance. disABILITY LINK has initiated and began working with partnerships and developing sustainable donors. Held activities such as Doggie Day with approximately 85 community attendees, participated in the State of Georgia Charitable Giving Campaign, Rummage Sale for youth held in October. Inspiring Social grant applied for, on hold. Participated in Amazon Smile Program and Kroger Rewards. In addition, we worked with the other Centers for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation and GA State Independent Living Council on increasing funding and base level funding.

## Subpart V - Annual Program and Financial Planning Objectives Edit

### Section A - Work Plan for the Reporting Year

#### Item 1 - Achievements

Discuss the work plan's proposed goals and objectives and the progress made in achieving them during the reporting year

Goal 1: To operate a center for independent living that conducts all activities within independent living philosophy. Objective: To provide Independent Living Services in 12 Counties of Cherokee, Cobb, Douglas, Coweta, Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Fayette, Clayton, Rockdale, Newton and Henry. Action Steps: 1. Provide individuals with IL skills training on a variety of topics of interest. 2. Conduct advocacy and educational activities no less than quarterly to address transportation and housing issues.

Result: Held monthly meetings for NAWU (Nothing about Us without Us) -12 classes - a 2 hour, interactive, peer led, IL based opportunity to learn and ideas be more active in a variety of topics impacting the disability community - topics included transportation, housing, veterans issues, services animals, AT, communicating with elected representatives, The Declaration of Independence, alternatives to the printed word, advocacy by civil disobedience, etc. - the content has included guest speakers, discussion panels, PowerPoint presentations, videos, discussions, and a combination of these tools - attendees participate enthusiastically and report an increase in empowerment and community involvement A Seat at the Table - Board of Directors Training: a four hour training for consumers who were interested in becoming board members for non-profit organizations, was held twice during the fiscal year with over 40 consumers attending and 10 other organizations participating. Dates to Remember: Our monthly “Dates to Remember” newsletter containing information about events held by disABILITY LINK and other consumer-led organizations was distributed by mail and electronically to 1,500 people monthly; Assistive Technology Training - consumers received one-on-one training to use their assistive devices and other assistive technology to maximize their independence as well as hosting workshop Wednesdays with 10 classes and a total of over 120 consumers combined in attendance on topics such as powerpoint, Microsoft Word, Facebook, Mobile apps, etc.; History Classes - As part of the ADA 25 celebration, we hosted a monthly history class that focused on different aspects of disability history including education and civil/disability rights; Volunteer Orientation – Held monthly volunteer orientation classes in order to have consumers become involved in their community and become peer supporters. We trained 32 new volunteers over the course of the fiscal year. Employment – The LEAPS class continues to be well attended and broad consumer interest has led to a waiting list for future participants. 48 classes were held with an average of 18 consumers in attendance at each class. Topics include items such as resume writing, job hunting, social media, how to be an employee, and work place accommodations; Employer Education Workshops – Educated employers on hiring people with disabilities and providing appropriate supports in the workplace; Toastmasters-disABILITY LINK became an independent chapter of the organization that provides staff and consumers with the opportunity to hone their professional presentation skills. This group is held monthly with over 20 participants each event. Staff and consumers participated in many meetings, hearings and trainings relevant to the issues and advocacy of accessible transportation. The CIL provided support of Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA) to increase grass roots participation in transportation advocacy efforts by hosting meetings. Worked with local transportation groups and organizations such as MARTA and ARC. disABILITY LINK collaborated with Metro Fair Housing to promote fair housing practices for people with disabilities. Housing workshops were held on a monthly basis with 10 total classes with 150 combined participants and one home buyer’s class with 25 in attendance.

Goal 2: Expand program for youth transition and Veteran transition. Objectives: Support youth with disabilities to successfully transition into adulthood. Support Veterans to successfully transition into civilian life. Action Steps: 1. Expand the youth program that promotes lifelong learning experiences. 2. Provide activities for youth which promote peer relationships and a sense of community on a quarterly basis. 3. Provide outreach activities to local school districts and colleges with two new partnerships. 4. Provide programming to expose veterans to peer interactions and independent living skills.

Result: We have a Veterans specialist who provides the core services to Veterans. Worked with local VA, VA clubs and group in Metro Atlanta Area. Beginning stages of focus group to gain feedback on what programs specifically the Veteran’s group would like to see at the office. Youth programs were developed and coordinated a few programs based off of consumer direction – WATCH ME!, an LGBTQ + disABILITY group, and a brief peer support panel for the consumers who have questions about life after being diagnosed with a severe disability.

WATCH ME! – An acronym for, “When Advocacy and Teamwork Combine, Help Means Empowerment!” was developed which is a monthly, three-day opportunity to gain knowledge of disability history, to develop/maintain independent living skills, and to support and empower peers. Consumers attended the disability history workshops in the office, and took the independent living skills trainings and peer support into the community.

The LGBTQ + disABILITY group met monthly also (every second Saturday.) This new intersectional group is meant to build a more inclusive environment for these two communities that strive for the same things: advocacy for human rights, but not special rights; valuing the inherent worth of each individual, all of whom deserve dignity and respect; promotion of inclusion and recognition of the talents and abilities of all individuals; and supporting for self-determination and choice. The meeting locations varied from in the office or in the community. But the main goal was to provide a safe space for the consumers who identified with both communities, seeking empowerment and future support.

Per request by a consumer who was struggling through their daily living activities (e.g. self-care, mobility, college life, and maintaining personal/social status) with a new and life-changing diagnosis, a panel of peers was coordinated. The panelists were people who live by the independent living philosophy, and have positive insight to what life is like after such diagnosis. This opens doors for future resources beyond the scheduled event.

In addition to group programs, activities involving consumers seeking one-on-one mobility training and one-on-one money management training were conducted. This involves education on the MARTA fixed routes in the community – understanding the safety and operations of the buses and trains. The money management trainings were different from traditional educational settings, as they entailed community participation. The youth independent living specialist has gone minor grocery shopping, out to lunch, or leisure shopping with consumers. As preparedness for this activity, independent living specialist in the consumer had an appointment to draft a budget – or at least discuss the importance of budgeting.

Outside of direct services with consumers, the youth independent living specialist remained a part of multiple youth transition committees, presented at trainings and transition summits, and provided input from the independent living point of view for the 2015 student/youth transition handbook. The relationships built from these committees and community outreach opportunities were developed in the previous year, but maintained strong for the present and future.”

Goal 3: People with disabilities are leaders in all of disABILITY LINK’s activities, and in the community at large. Objectives: Staff and Board of Directors are role models and peers to our community members. Action Steps: 1. Staff and Board members will receive a full orientation and continued training that includes topics related to the independent living philosophy. 2. Staff and Board members will attend trainings that will increase their knowledge of services. 3. Staff will provide training to peers on specific IL skills.

Result: All new staff received training upon hire. Ongoing staff trainings were held with the data management system on a weekly basis with attendance by staff specifically needing those trainings. Staff meetings were held focused on serving consumers. Different staff attended conferences related to their positions in regard to the five core services, financial management, resource management, grant writing, and specific areas needed. All board members received training on how to be a board member and received a board manual with by laws, financial reports, introduction to being a board member and duties. All board members received financial training. In addition all staff and board received availability to trainings through the ILRU rapid courses. All staff completed ADA basic trainings. All staff and board received training specific to the IL philosophy and history. New board members received a new board orientation. In addition, our website now has a section for board members only that allow for all materials to be accessible for each member.

Goal 4: Expand and improve the Assistive Technology Program to provide improved access and usage of assistive technology to consumers within disABILITY LINK’s service area. Objectives: Will continue to collaborate with different agencies to expand marketing of Assistive Technology and increase loans and usage to consumers with disabilities. Action Steps: 1. Establish a display of AT devices for consumers to experience 2. Will provide trainings to consumers on AT devices through workshops. 3. Develop a consumer program extending to an internet café for consumers to learn about technology.

Result: A display of AT devices from different organizations including Tools for Life, One touch and other devices that individuals have created are on display for consumers to experience. The display hosts over 100 items ranging from a tool to button shirts to an ipad for accessibility features. In addition, consumers received one-on-one training to use their assistive devices and other assistive technology to maximize their independence as well as hosting workshop Wednesdays with 10 classes and a total of over 120 consumers combined in attendance on topics such as powerpoint, Microsoft Word, Facebook, Mobile apps, etc.; Classes were hosted also during the LEAPS employment class and the youth groups.

Goal 4: Wellness, particularly focusing on related secondary conditions of disabilities, will become an integral part of all activities of the organization. Objectives: Individuals will have opportunities to explore the full spectrum of wellness through different venues. Action Steps: 1. Provide an ongoing wellness program with monthly activities. 2. Advocate for expanding the Medicaid Buy-In for workers with disabilities. 3. disABILITY LINK will assist in educating and applying for services with the Affordable Health Care Act.

Result: disABILITY LINK continues to host a health and wellness program and has applied and received a grant for further development for the next fiscal year which was successful. A program was developed that. focuses on overall wellness to staff, consumers and board. The program consists of different activities to increase the participation in the community including healthy eating, WII activities, bocce ball and many others. We have a small gym that allows one on one trainings to occur. The IL specialist is preparing for an exam to become a certified personal trainer. A health and wellness fair was held at our location with over 90 participants and 25 organizations dealing with health and wellness displaying different aspects of health living including the Veterans organizations.

Goal 5: Assist people with disabilities to have accessible transportation while living in the community of their choice through advocacy and education. Objectives: Individuals with disabilities will have increased and accessible access to transportation that is accessible. Action Steps: 1. Continue to research existing (specifically accessible) transportation options, both public and private, in the CIL service area. 2. Expand relationships with policy makers in local transportation planning offices/agencies. 3. Continue to share Transportation Status Reports with local transportation planning offices/agencies. 4. Continue to provide MARTA Mobility application assistance, including eligibility. 5. Continue to participate in the Voucher Transportation Assistance Program to provide additional opportunities and choices to CIL consumers. 6. Advocate for improvements in availability and access to transportation by participating in transportation discussions and forums. 7. Apply for mobility coordination and training grants.

Result: disABILITY LINK also participates in working with the Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) in providing guidance and suggestions to the different managers. disABILITY LINK participates as an entity to assist in certifying individuals for MARTA mobility. disABILITY LINK also receives a grant to provide transportation voucher assistance so that individuals with disabilities can participate in all activities of living including but not limited to shopping, spiritual activities and visiting others in the community. During the year our CIL advocated with other organizations regarding increasing the number and availability of accessible taxis in Atlanta. We worked with and was able to negotiate lower costs with different providers. Staff participated in Human Services Transportation Committee to increase access to transportation for people with disabilities, particularly in the suburban and more “rural” areas of Atlanta (and other issues of community accessibility. Staff provided Travel Training services for people with disabilities. disABILITY LINK also identified and assisted in resolving issues while working with consumers to be their own advocate. One of the most common access concerns is with regard to public transportation – more specifically the paratransit service. Multiple consumers have had issues and sought support from the independent living specialist to get equal access that they are supposed to be receiving. The CIL provided support of Concerned Transit Riders for Equal Access (CTREA) to increase grass roots participation in transportation advocacy efforts. disABILITY LINK and CTREA co-hosted a community events focused on MARTA and the changes to ensure individuals with disabilities have a “Seat at the table” during the reporting year. Staff and consumers are consultants with the Veteran’s Administration’s (VA) One-Click Program for route planning and increased options, and successfully advocated with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to expand the program to all people with disabilities, not just veterans.

#### Item 2 - Challenges

Describe any substantial challenges or problems encountered by the CIL, and the resolutions/attempted resolutions.

Challenges continue to be in the fact that we are limited to what we can do because of funding restrictions. In order to provide programs that reach all types of individuals and have staff to provide the services wages are lower than what is normally paid for staff with the same qualifications. Our staff is dedicated. We utilize volunteers to fill gaps as well as partnering with organizations and internships that are unpaid. Limited funding restricts our center to be able to do the outreach we need to reach individuals that are underserved. This fiscal year our ARRA monies ended which led to even more challenges in keeping the programs we have established and the staff. Finding funding or increasing funding is a high priority and challenge for us. Discrimination, lack of self-determination and limited choices continue to be experienced by people with disabilities in our service areas. Major concerns include employment, living in the community of choices, services available in order to live independently as well as topics already listed. Challenges continue to be faced upon transportation and the involvement of people with disabilities being decision makers on issues involving them when it comes to local transportation providers. disABILITY LINK and consumers continue to advocate to be part of the voice. Housing continues to be a high challenge in all of our service areas due to older buildings and lack of accessible housing. disABILITY LINK continues to look for resources available, provide the four core services, develop coalitions and support people with disabilities to live full and meaningful lives in the communities of their choice. A major challenge for us is to provide accessibility to those consumers who are deaf and use ASL as their primary language. In an effort to meet this challenge, our office currently use Access Video Interpreting app as an ideal communication services alternative. With webcam technology, it connects a Deaf or hard of hearing consumer with a hearing person by including a qualified Access interpreter from another location who provides interpretation through a computer screen. We currently have a video phone and access to video interpreting services for our deaf consumers which allow us to provide employment services and all IL services to the deaf community.

#### Item 3 - Comparison with Prior Reporting Year

As appropriate, compare the CIL's activities in the reporting year with its activities in prior years, e.g., recent trends.

disABILITY LINK at the end of this year, we will lose programs and staff that have been funded under the ARRA monies. The ARRA monies has provided opportunities to hire people with disabilities, some of whom this is their first job or have resumed employment after an extended absence from the job market. This has allowed disABILITY LINK to reach more people in the community to provide more independent living services and develop more programs. We have utilized internships, volunteers and other organizations such as AARP to continue with some of the programs. disABILITY LINK has been able to hire and focus on individual programs for the underserved population including working with the youth by developing the "Empowering Our Youth", WATCH ME!, an LGBTQ + disABILITY group, and a brief peer support panel for the consumers who have questions about life after being diagnosed with a severe disability.

and implementing and developing a veteran’s program. disABILITY LINK has been continued to collaborate on themes and programs related to peer support, Veterans, Housing, and Transportation. Other programs that have been developed over the prior years is a health and wellness program. We have found that our Peer support training, Board training classes and Nothing About us Without Us classes has been successful in recruiting board members and volunteers. In addition, the training has been most successful in connecting individuals to a group of support to share experiences in living independently.

### Section B - Work Plan for the Year Following the Reporting Year

#### Item 1 - Annual Work Plan

List the CIL's annual work plan goals, objectives and action steps planned for the year following the reporting year.

Goal 1: To operate a center for independent living that conducts all activities within independent living philosophy. Objective: To provide Independent Living Services in 12 Counties of Cherokee, Cobb, Douglas, Coweta, Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Fayette, Clayton, Rockdale, Newton and Henry. Action Steps: 1. Provide individuals with IL skills training on a variety of topics of interest. 2. Conduct advocacy and educational activities no less than quarterly to address transportation and housing issues.

Goal 2: Expand program for youth transitional services. Objectives: Support youth in transitioning into adulthood. Action Steps: 1. Develop and expand the youth program that promotes lifelong learning experiences. 2. Provide activities for youth which promote peer relationships and a sense of community on a quarterly basis. 3. Provide outreach activities to local school districts and colleges with two new partnerships.

Goal 3: Transition 9 individuals from long term care to the community of their choice. Objectives: Support individuals in transitioning from long term care to independent living. Action Steps: 1. Provide activities that promote developing skills to transition into the community of choice. 2. Provide activities which promote peer relationships and a sense of community on a quarterly basis. 3. Provide outreach activities to local nursing homes and assisted living communities.

Goal 4: People with disabilities are leaders in all of disABILITY LINK’s activities, and in the community at large. Objectives: Staff and Board of Directors are role models and peers to our community members. Action Steps: 1. Staff and Board members will receive a full orientation and continued training that includes topics related to the independent living philosophy. 2. Staff and Board members will attend trainings that will increase their knowledge of services. 3. Staff will provide training to peers on specific IL skills. 4. Provide Board training to the community to recruit new board members as well as educate on serving on boards within their communities.

Goal 4: Wellness, particularly focusing on related secondary conditions of disabilities, will become an integral part of all activities of the organization. Objectives: Individuals will have opportunities to explore the full spectrum of wellness through different venues. Action Steps: 1. Provide an ongoing wellness program with monthly activities. 2. Advocate for expanding the Medicaid Buy-In for workers with disabilities. 3. disABILITY LINK will assist in educating and applying for services with the Affordable Health Care Act. 4. We develop a curriculum that reaches out to the underserved and more rural areas through technology by participating in a development group focused on living well with a disability.

Goal 5: Assist people with disabilities to have accessible transportation while living in the community of their choice through advocacy and education. Objectives: Individuals with disabilities will have increased and accessible access to transportation that is accessible. Action Steps: 1. Continue to research existing (specifically accessible) transportation options, both public and private, in the CIL service area. 2. Explore new opportunities for funding in areas of travel and mobility training. 3. Provide MARTA Mobility application assistance, including eligibility. 5. Continue to participate in the Voucher Transportation Assistance Program as grant allows to provide additional opportunities and choices to CIL consumers. 6. Advocate for improvements in availability and access to transportation by participating in transportation discussions and forums. 7. Provide trainings on advocating for consumers on a monthly basis.

#### Item 2 - SPIL Consistency

Explain how these work plan goals, objectives and action steps are consistent with the approved SPIL.

The work and plans of disABILITY LINK are consistent with the Statewide Plan for Independent Living. One example is disABILITY LINK provides services (including advocacy) in accordance with, “(1.1 Goals and Mission). The mission of Georgia’s Independent Living (IL) Program is to promote a philosophy of independent living that includes consumer control, peer support, self help, self determination, equal access, individual and systemic advocacy, services that maximize leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of people with significant disabilities, and promote the integration and full inclusion of people with significant disabilities into the mainstream of American society”. disABILITY LINK remains in frequent contact with The Georgia Statewide Living Council – activities include, attending quarterly meetings, serving on committees, collaborating in advocacy activities, sharing information and making referrals as necessary. Shared goals are reflected in our work plan including transportation and transitional services.

## Subpart VI - Training And Technical Assistance Needs Edit

### Training and Technical Assistance Needs

Please identify the CIL's training and technical assistance needs. For each category, choose up to 10 Priority Needs - Rate items 1-10 with 1 being most important.

#### Advocacy/Leadship Development

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 2 |
| Community/Grassroots Organizing | 3 |
| Individual Empowerment | 8 |
| Systems Advocacy | 1 - Most important |
| Legislative Process | 2 |

#### Applicable Laws

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General overview and promulgation of various disability laws | 2 |
| Americans with Disabilities Act | 6 |
| Air-Carrier"s Access Act | 10 - Least important |
| Fair Housing Act | 4 |
| Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act | 9 |
| Medicaid/Medicare/PAS/waivers/long-term care | 1 - Most important |
| Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended | 7 |
| Social Security Act | 5 |
| Workforce Investment Act of 1998 | 8 |
| Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 | 9 |
| Government Performance Results Act of 1993 | 3 |

#### Assistive Technologies

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 4 |

#### Data Collecting and Reporting

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 5 |
| 704 Reports | 2 |
| Performance Measures contained in 704 Report | 3 |
| Dual Reporting Requirements | 4 |
| Case Service Record Documentation | 1 - Most important |

#### Disability Awareness and Information

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Specific Issues | 7 |

#### Evaluation

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 7 |
| CIL Standards and Indicators | 1 - Most important |
| Community Needs Assessment | 2 |
| Consumer Satisfaction Surveys | 3 |
| Focus Groups | 4 |
| Outcome Measures | 5 |

#### Financial: Grant Management

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 1 - Most important |
| Federal Regulations | 2 |
| Budgeting | 3 |
| Fund Accounting | 4 |

#### Financial: Resource Development

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 6 |
| Diversification of Funding Base | 2 |
| Fee-for-Service Approaches | 3 |
| For Profit Subsidiaries | 6 |
| Fund-Raising Events of Statewide Campaigns | 4 |
| Grant Writing | 1 - Most important |

#### Independent Living Philosophy

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 1 - Most important |

#### Innovative Programs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Best Practices | 1 - Most important |
| Specific Examples | 2 |

#### Management Information Systems

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Computer Skills | 6 |
| Software | 7 |

#### Marketing and Public Relations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 4 |
| Presentation/Workshop Skills | 6 |
| Community Awareness | 2 |

#### Network Strategies

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 3 |
| Electronic | 8 |
| Among CILs & SILCs | 2 |
| Community Partners | 5 |

#### Program Planning

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview of Program Management and Staff Development | 3 |
| CIL Executive Directorship Skills Building | 1 - Most important |
| Conflict Management and Alternative Dispute Resolution | 5 |
| First-Line CIL Supervisor Skills Building | 4 |
| IL Skills Modules | 6 |
| Peer Mentoring | 2 |
| Program Design | 8 |
| Time Management | 9 |
| Team Building | 1 - Most important |

#### Outreach to Unserved/Underserved Populations

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 1 - Most important |
| Disability | 4 |
| Minority | 6 |
| Institutionalized Potential Consumers | 2 |
| Rural | 6 |
| Urban | 7 |

#### SILC Roles/Relationship to CILs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 8 |
| Development of State Plan for Independent Living | 2 |
| Implementation (monitor & review) of SPIL | 1 - Most important |
| Public Meetings | 7 |
| Role and Responsibilities of Executive Board | 2 |
| Role and Responsibilities of General Members | 6 |
| Collaborations with In-State Stakeholders | 9 |

#### CIL Board of Directors

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 1 - Most important |
| Roles and Responsibilities | 2 |
| Policy Development | 3 |
| Recruiting/Increasing Involvement | 4 |

#### Volunteer Programs

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| General Overview | 2 |

Option Areas and/or Comments

## Subpart VII - Additional Information

### Section A - Other Accomplishments, Activities and Challenges

Describe any additional significant accomplishments, activities and/or challenges not included elsewhere in the report, e.g., brief summaries of innovative practices, improved service delivery to consumers, etc.

During the reporting year, we have faced many challenges including a major move from a downtown area to the current office. In order to make sure public transportation was available and accessible required advocating for a crosswalk with a light to be placed at an intersection outside our office. This was accomplished after staff went to the local Mayor’s office. Our office construction, also created several disruptions as we had to wait on approvals to be completed. One major highlight was we increased our visibility with our webpage that is more accessible and easier to navigate. We continue to focus on how to develop partnerships and increase sustainable donors as an avenue of fundraising. We have collaborated with different organizations to host events and have reached out to more than 300 different organizations. This year we held our 25th ADA Celebration and had speakers that represented individuals who were affected directly by the passage of the ADA including Veteran Kenneth Holman and Lawyer and Board Member Bill Nabors. The event gathered more than 300 participants but most importantly developed relationships and created an awareness of our center and the ADA. We also focused on doing outreach efforts. Methods include traditional medium, such as; quarterly newsletters, monthly “Dates to Remember,” fliers for events hosted and supported by disABILITY LINK, presentations to a variety of audiences, meetings with people and organizations that can help us reach people with disabilities (especially underserved populations), booths at resource and transition fairs, distribution of brochures to (literally) hundreds of organizations that serve the general public, as well as people with disabilities, and using every opportunity to share the philosophy and services of a Center for Independent Living such as disABILITY LINK. We worked with Hands on Atlanta program to increase our social media presence. disABILITY LINK has developed a social media presence including an updated web page (that integrates social media), Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, You Tube, blogs (such as ILiveWithADisability.com and Live Free Project). In the previous fiscal year we saw some great growth and engagement with our online consumers. On Facebook we gained 160 followers bringing our total to 647 mostly local advocates and organizations. On average we get about 283 impressions of our posts with direct daily reach of 115 people. We do get additional exposure from followers sharing and reposting items, which has resulted in a photo being seen by more than 609 people each week and some added exposure for events at our center. On Twitter we had amazing growth gaining 1,620 followers bringing our total to 6,540, we had an average 39,242 people directly and thanks to @replies and retweets were exposed to an annual average of 401,214. We have acquired 1,906 views on our YouTube channel which features local advocates, organizations and our Center. All YouTube videos are captioned and accessible. Our Wordpress blog garnered a total of 1540 views in the past fiscal year, there we blog about current events and topics that are relevant to people with disabilities.

In the past year, one of our biggest successes was developing a chapter of Toastmasters here, which has been mentioned above. We also worked with the GA SILC to conduct an outreach survey to gain useful information on services. We also continued to work with Emergency weather conditions and getting the word out in regards to closures and weather advisories while providing education on safety and preparations. We passed along information about emergency shelters, interpreters, food resources and volunteer attendants. We coordinated with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, Get Ready Gwinnett and Dekalb Emergency Management Agency to disseminate this information via social media. We had a huge success with several retweets and post shares to reach the most people. This action not only helped empower the people we reached, but potentially saved lives. disABILITY LINK records “Two Minute Advocacy Sessions” with the Georgia Radio reading Service (GaRRS). One session per month is on IL issues and one per month is on transportation issues and one session on assistive technology. GaRRS has a listening population of around 20,000 people with disabilities statewide. disABILITY LINK has a volunteer program that reaches out to consumers both past and present to assist in meaningful tasks and assignments. The youth director is participating in a youth program that we anticipate to bring forth more involvement with the youth. We utilize our webpage and a job board at the offices to post the positions. Volunteer hours include board members, consumers and the community reach well over 5700 hours. Reaching out to the smaller communities due to the travel distances has been challenging. We utilize different methods including video conferencing and telephone conferencing to meet some needs. This upcoming year we look to develop more areas. A smart television was donated to the office which will allow for use for such events. Staff is continuing to learn our digital management system and capturing all the information that is needed. We have many programs that individuals with disabilities attend. We track how many people attend our different sessions. We served over 3900 individuals with disabilities through peer support groups, advocacy groups, Nothing about us without us, tech talks, topics of interest, emergency prep, voting education. We continue to work on ensuring that we capture all services provided to consumers with additional training to staff. We continue to develop programs utilizing the comments, panel groups and suggestions from the consumers.

### Section B - Additional Information

Provide additional information, comments, explanations or suggestions not included elsewhere in the report.

Increasing revenue is a major challenge for disABILITY LINK the ARRA money that has funded some key staff positions ended this year. With the loss of this funding it is essential that revenues are located. Major efforts have been and continue to be explored. Centers for Independent Living have not received an increase but are expected to keep up with the cost of living and wages to employ individuals who are capable of providing services. Several staff members continue to serve on boards. The youth director is a c-chair for the youth steering committee on APRIL, NCIL youth member, Georgia’s core transition team member of the Children’s freedom initiative. The Executive Director is an elected board member on the Associated Program of Rural Independent Living (APRIL) as well as on subcommittees for NCIL. She is also an active member of the Statewide Independent Living Council of GA. Board members serve on multiple disability related organizations including the National Federation of the Blind, Developmental Disability Council of GA as well as many others. Staff are members of different boards in the community including boards focused on transportation, health care issues, accessible housing and other issues related to the disability community. disABILITY LINK continues to share the independent living philosophy and services through our service area as well as being peer mentors to other Centers for Independent Living statewide and nationwide. Our work is guided by the vision of people being fully included in our communities.

## Subpart VIII - Signatures

### Signatures

As the authorized signatories, we will sign, date and retain in our files a copy of this 704 Report and the separate Certification of Lobbying form ED-80-0013 (available in MS Word and PDF formats) for this center for independent living.

Please sign and print the names, titles and telephone numbers of the CIL director and board chair.

#### Center Director

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name and Title | Kim Gibson |
|  | Signed |
| Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) | 03/03/2016 |

#### Center Board Chairperson

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name and Title | Garrick Scott |
|  | Signed |
| Date Signed (mm/dd/yyyy) | 03/03/2016 |