



2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Our Mission



Working with people with disabilities, their families and the community, we create independence so that all may thrive.





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LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Dear Supporters,



It is hard to believe that another year has zoomed by and it's time to share with you some highlights and key activities of 2014! I am delighted to report that overall it was a good year for us, our number of supporters and those who use our programming has not only grown, but grown stronger.

In this report you'll read about our Home Health and Independent Living Programs, and how we are making a special effort to focus on health. We changed the inventory in our café to include healthier options, and participated in many recreational opportunities such as beep baseball, YMCA events, and sled hockey!

The Accessibility Store, which had its opening in December of 2010, was closed in December of 2014. It was an experiment for us to be one of the few stores in southern Colorado that sold assistive technology. It turns out the market was not what it needed to be in order to continue operating the store. We remain committed to helping people find the right type of equipment and technology needed to enhance their lives. Currently we continue this focus through our Home Modification/Assistive Technology program as well as our Older Individuals with Blindness program.

2014 was a year of supporting the individual, their family and also creating an impact in the community. I believe when you read through these pages you will see the ripple effect of reaching all of these vital areas.

Please stay tuned in looking back next year to 2015. It has already started with a bang. We are conducting a new Spinal Cord Injury program and the peer support group is planning to do a lot of fun things we haven't tried in the past, such as archery, fishing, and even skydiving!

Thank you for your interest, participation, or support of The Independence Center. However you have come to know us, we are grateful and enriched by our knowing you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Patricia Yeager". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Patricia Yeager, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer



CORE VALUES

Inclusiveness

- Having equal standing with our peers in a community where our voices are valued and sought after.
- Having the necessary supports to live and work in our communities.
- Access to technology that allows us to do things as we choose.
- Access to people and information that ensures our informed participation.

Flexibility

- We establish a culture of continuous creativity in response to agency and community situations.
- We have the ability to shift focus when needed and to meet the needs of our community as they arise.
- We are ready and prepared for change and have the right frame to do so.

Person First

- We recognize the power inherent in naming ourselves and our abilities and embrace the right of everyone to self-identify.
- We accept and encourage the wholeness of the individual.
- We strive to accept people as they are, where they are, and see them as a person first, beyond their individual attributes.

Accountability

- We make responsible choices and decisions that are true to our core purpose, values and vision.
- We are accountable as individuals and as an organization.
- We take responsibility for our actions as they influence the lives of our co workers, consumers and those in our community.

Integrity

- We do the right thing and strictly adhere to our core values.
- We build trust by maintaining high standards.
- We integrate our core values as a healthy, vital and irresistible force in the community.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Understanding Disability Means...

- Recognizing that applying the right technology, the right designs, and the right attitudes opens up the world for everyone.
- Recognizing that independence doesn't look the same for everybody.
- Knowing that our needs are human needs.

Customer Service

- At the Independence Center we offer the tools, resources and/or solutions to improve quality of life in our community.
- We do this by listening, being proactive and following through on our promises.
- We treat each person with respect, empathy & care while encouraging their unique skills & talents.

Efficiency

- Our staff has the authority to make decisions to streamline services and respond to consumers' needs.
- We collect data to assist us in helping direct our focus.
- Staff has the tools needed to fully and completely respond to consumers.
- We communicate effectively.
- We respect people and our natural resources.

Development of People

- We support our staff and consumers in reaching their individual goals.
- We encourage the opportunity to learn.
- We celebrate an individual's right to develop their own capabilities and to create the life they choose.
- We encourage the process of development and discovery.

Marketing

- We will communicate our vision and increase awareness of our programs throughout all the counties we serve.
- We encourage all those within the organization to advocate on behalf of The Independence Center.
- Through effective messaging and outreach strategies, we will strengthen and increase exposure and community connections for all aspects of the organization.



HOME HEALTH

The year 2014 marked the 28th year The Independence Center has conducted a home health care service. The level of caregiving can range from one visit a week up to 11 hours per day.

Our program stands out from most other home health care agencies not only for the dedication of our field staff, but also due to our ability to let the person needing care designate who they would like as their caregiver, whether that is a family member, a friend, a neighbor or one of our trained staff. We want the best possible care for our consumers and the person who can provide that is many times a family member or close friend. With the support of our RN's we ensure the proper care is given without the need of a CNA license. In 2014 we made strong headway to be able to offer this choice and service to area veterans.

In 2014 we continued to improve the Pediatric Assessment Tool (PAT) through meetings with the state. In 2013 the Health Care Policy and Financing group (HCPF) cut back the care giving hours of many parents taking care of their young child. We advocated for change in 2013 and received relief. Our efforts increased in 2014 and now the Pediatric Assessment Tool is working to the satisfaction of consumers who need medical services in the home, and for their family caregivers.



2014 Home Health Data





INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS

Our Home Health Services continued to fund our Independent Living Programs along with foundation grants and contracts with state and local governments. We operate 13 different programs, and never charge our Independent Living consumers for our services.



Assistive Technology – Home Modification Program

Our certified Assistive Technology Specialist assists consumers with finding assistive technology as well as obtaining funding for those technologies. He also manages the Home Modification fund which allows consumers to access funding to make their house accessible. In 2014, more than \$55,000 was spent on home remodeling and providing equipment for our consumers. The program built ramps, provided

technology/training, and distributed three converted vans. Funding from the The Independence Center was supplemented by private donations and grants provided by Friends of Man, A.V. Hunter Trust, and the Luther T. McCauley Charitable Trust.

Benefit Support

This program provides SSI/SSDI application assistance. In 2014 our IL Benefits Coordinator was trained on the SOAR approach which helps people who are homeless acquire benefits.



Community Organizing

Our Community Organizing program builds coalitions to advocate for social change. In 2014 the Community Transit Coalition saw success with expansion and some restoration of bus service. The City increased the budget for transit services in 2015 and Mayor Bach wrote the Coalition a letter thanking them for their input into the process. Accessible



Communities Today (ACT) was a catalyst for El Paso County hiring their first ADA Coordinator. A needs assessment on housing is helping formulate our strategies for expanding housing options in 2015.

Community Transition Services

The program supports people who are living in skilled nursing facilities that have a strong desire and ability to live in a less restrictive surrounding to move into their own apartment or home. In 2014 we helped thirteen people move from skilled nursing facilities to their own home in the community. In 2014 we added follow-up services to this program. Up to 540 hours are provided to help the transitioned person reintegrate successfully into the community and maximize their independence and quality of life. A large Thanksgiving dinner was held at The Independence Center for all participants who have transitioned through this program.



Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

This program ensures all of our programming is available to those who are deaf or hard-of-hearing. Some highlights for 2014 include conducting an ASL Interpreter Workshop about Ethics and biases and we collaborated with other statewide agencies to develop “Advocacy Coalition for Equality” which is a group that expands services for deaf, hard of hearing, and those that are deaf and blind. The program worked with other advocacy groups to ensure land lines continue to be available to contact 911 and also to advocate for 911 Call Centers to accept text messages and be able to respond via text message.

Emergency Preparedness

This program works to prepare consumers to respond effectively and safely during a natural disaster. It also connects with first responders and disaster planners to assist them in knowing the needs of people with disabilities during an event. In 2014 more than 1,000 people were



INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAMS

trained in emergency preparedness. It was the first year that we were fully included and considered in a disaster evacuation exercise conducted by the City of Colorado Springs. Our Emergency Program Manager presented a program about emergency preparedness to the 2014 National ADA Symposium.

Employment Services

Provides support for consumers seeking employment. People in this program may receive help on writing a résumé, building job interview skills, an assessment of their skills, and general information on not only how to get a job but how to keep that job. In 2014 we began to conduct job assessments for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to determine the employment placement that will have a perfect fit with a person's interest and abilities.

Independent Living Skills Classes

Classes and workshops build skills that foster independence and self-confidence. Subjects vary and include Money Management, Cooking/Eating Healthy, Microwave cooking, Independent Living Skills, Basic Grammar and Handwriting. New classes which were offered in 2014 include: Positive Attitude and Self-Advocacy.



Information and Referral Services

This is one of our busiest programs with over 2,000 contacts in 2014. This program helps with getting reduced cost bus passes, learning about resources in our community and provides referrals for agencies who work with us.

Older Individuals with Blindness (OIB)

The OIB program provides services for anyone over 55 who is currently experiencing vision loss. Many times this is due to macular degeneration, glaucoma or cataracts. We received a grant from Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments –Area Agency on Aging to provide free equipment for seniors with low-vision to increase their independence and enhance their lives. We also started a new popular audio book club.

Outreach Services

Our catchment area changed in 2014. We now offer services to a six county region.

Three staff members work in the outlying areas from El Paso County and provide a link to our main services. In 2014 we staffed an office in Cripple Creek and Calhan. Some activities included participating in the Woodland Park Hospital Health Fair, conducting outreach in Bailey, meeting with the Wounded Warrior Retreat Group at the Golden Bell Conference Center in Divide, Calhan started an accessible garden and we reestablished outreach to Limon.

Peer Support

Providing individual advocacy, peer mentoring, and support groups to build the independence and well-being of people with disabilities. In 2014 new staff members came on board to expand our services and number of support groups. A big push was made to provide recreational activities for all consumers who want to participate.

Housing

This program provides information related to affordable & accessible housing in addition to oversight of 27 housing vouchers.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordination

In 2014 we hired a consultant to provide ADA trainings for staff and consumers. ADA audits and walk-throughs were also conducted for local medical facilities.



The Board of Directors of The Independence Center have set aside some of our financial reserves to support programs that advance the interests of people with disabilities. All non-profit organizations in our six-county region are eligible to apply, a committee made up of members of the community who have disabilities decide on who receives funding. 2014 was the first year grants were distributed. Approximately \$75,000 was dispersed to the following groups:

Amblicab

Amblicab was given \$25,000 to help in the purchase of a new wheelchair accessible van. It could operate on weekends and a group of people with disabilities will help in deciding on weekend trip destinations.



Blue Star Recyclers

Blue Star Recyclers was awarded \$20,200. Blue Star's staff is made almost entirely of people with disabilities. They requested the funds to purchase a conveyor belt that will speed up the recycling of electrical equipment, be safer for staff, and allow the hiring of two additional staff members.

Friends of El Paso County Nature Center

Received \$20,000 to repair the boardwalk of the popular Songbird trail located at the Nature Center. The new Trex planks, railing and signage will make the trail easily accessible to wheelchair users, seniors, and visually impaired visitors.

Lake George Community Park

Lake George Community Park was awarded \$3,875 to cover two picnic table areas in Lake George as well as to build an ADA compliant concrete walkway to the Park pavilion.

Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition (CVRC)

The IC Fund also granted the Colorado Veterans Resource Coalition (CVRC) \$5,000 (along with our Home Modification fund giving \$10,000 for a total of \$15,000). The CVRC's Health Care for Homeless Veterans and Substance Abuse Treatment Program has a residential facility with five showers in disrepair. Our grant will pay for the showers on the first level to be made more accessible for those with physical disabilities.

RECREATION

2014 was a big push for us to offer recreational opportunities.



It was a fun year of sled-hockey for kids and adults, beep baseball, bike riding, bowling, running, horseback riding and adaptive yoga.

Garden Ranch YMCA let all The Independence Center consumers use their facility for a week for no charge and the Downtown YMCA conducted several special events for us.

We had a team enter the **Emma Crawford Memorial Coffin Race** in Manitou Springs – The coffin was designed and built by The IC staff members and consumers helped decorate the coffin. While we didn't win the race we won our heat!



EVENTS

Celebrate Independence Expo



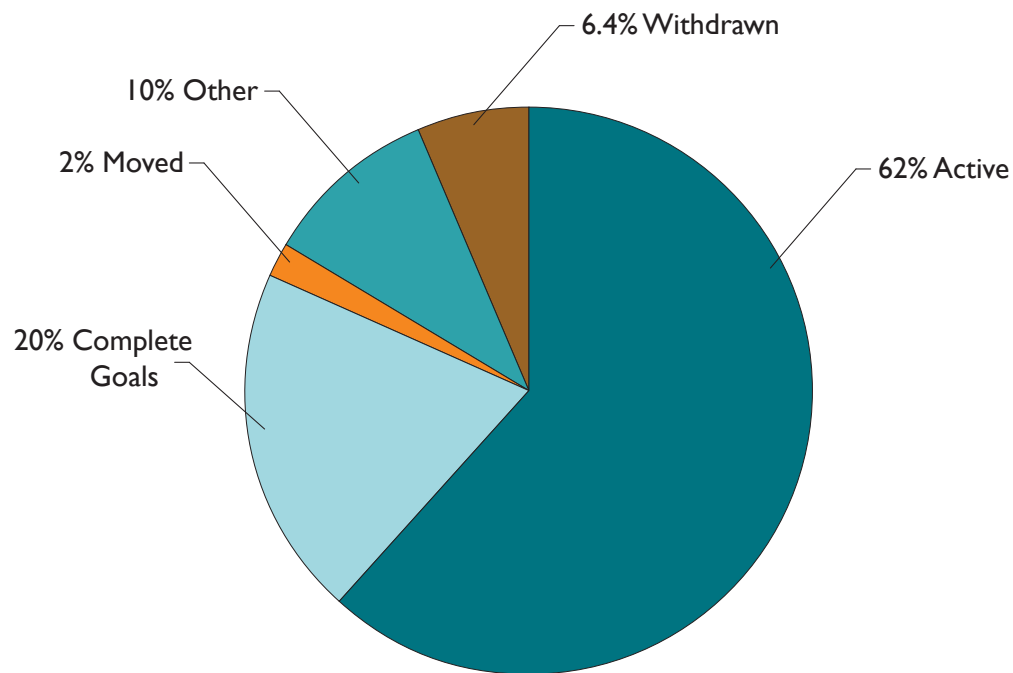
2014 was a year of firsts for our events committee, we combined five events into one big celebration. It was called the Celebrate Independence Expo and took place in July at the Freedom Financial Exposition Center for two days. Over 1,000 visitors came to the event which featured: a job fair with over 35 employers, an art show with 19 artists, a health fair, 82 vendors, and 2 Paralympic athletes speaking about their experience. An adaptive house was built to display the many types of assistive technology devices available. We conducted a celebration to honor the Americans with Disabilities Act, and held a concert with nationally known deaf rapper Sean Forbes who drew a crowd of over 200.



2014 DATA

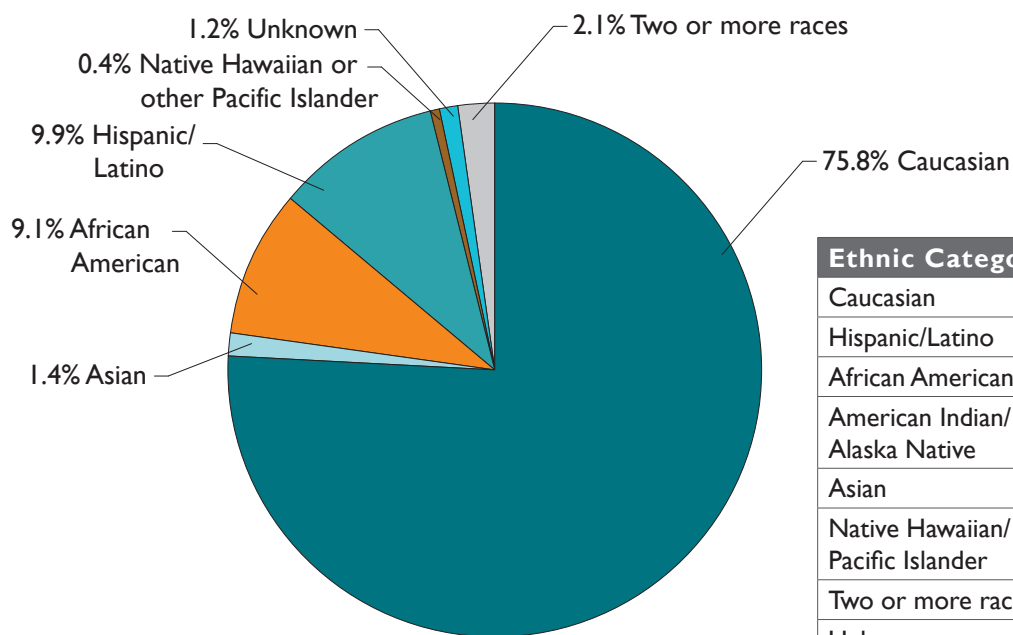
Consumer Count (Number of consumers is 491): 2014

Consumer Status



Ethnic Background: 2014

Ethnic Background

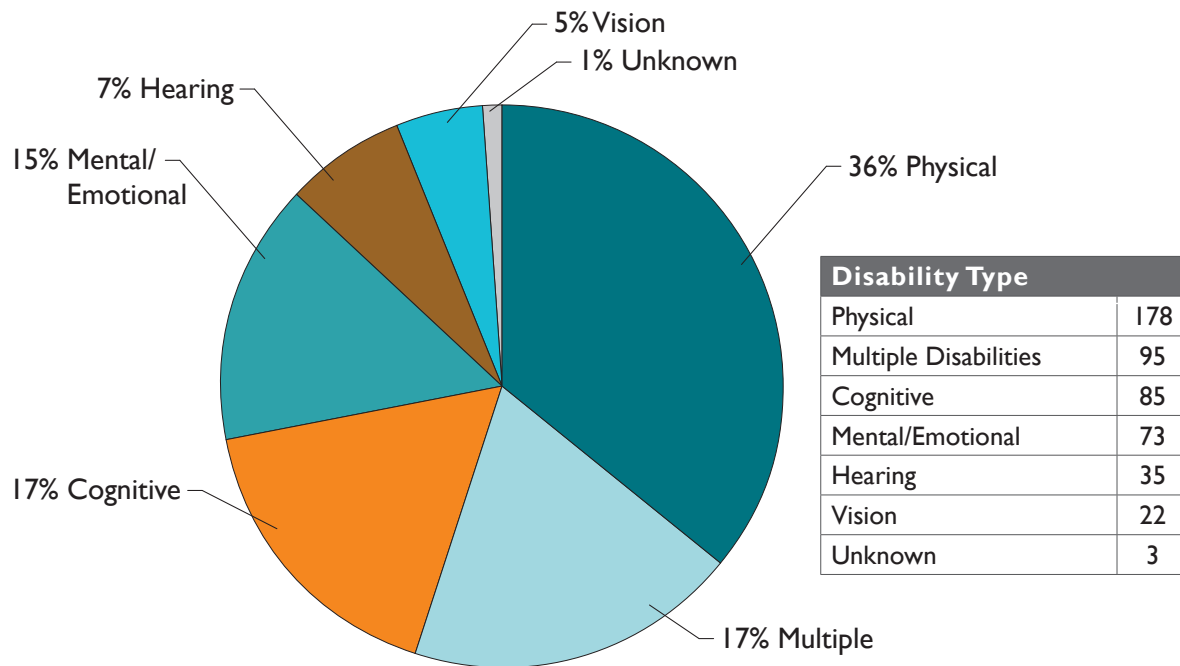


Ethnic Categories	
Caucasian	366
Hispanic/Latino	48
African American	44
American Indian/ Alaska Native	8
Asian	7
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	2
Two or more races	10
Unknown	6

2014 DATA

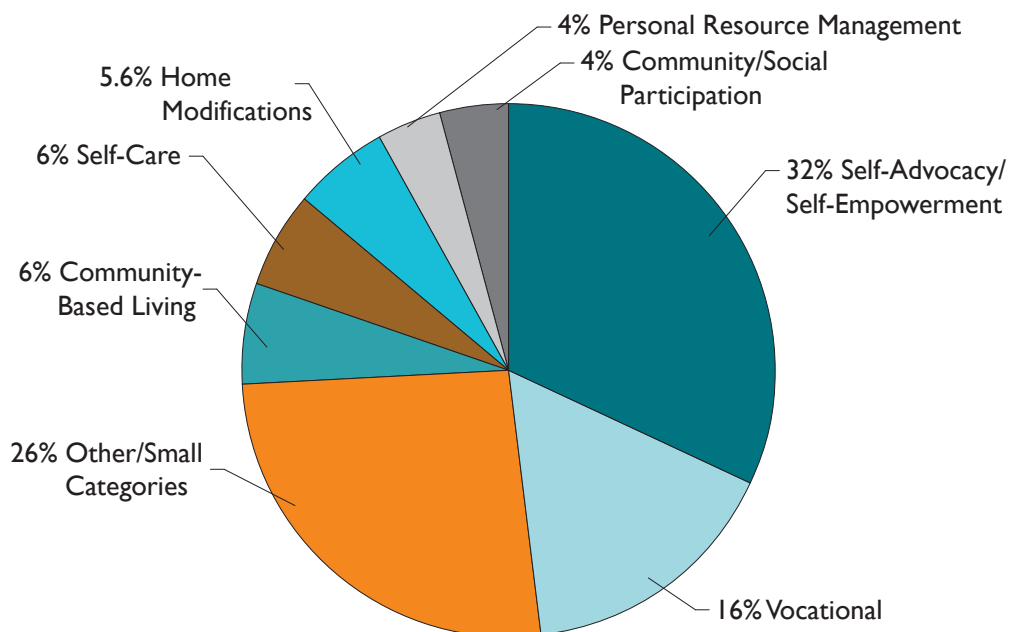
Disability Types: 2014

Disabilities



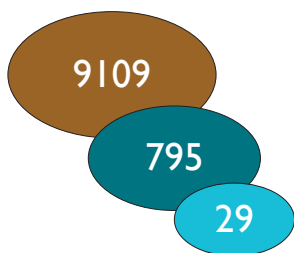
Goal Types: 2014

Goals



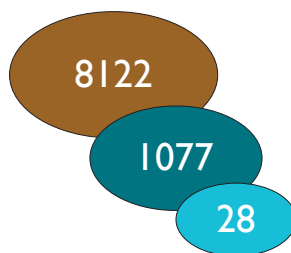
Community Activities: 2014

Community Education & Public Information



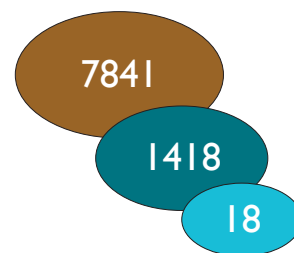
Attendees

Collaborating & Networking



of Hours

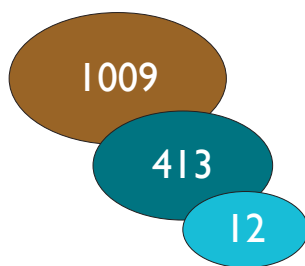
Community & Systems Advocacy



of Staff

Peer Group Activities: 2014

Overall Peer Group Activity



Attendees

of Hours

of Staff

Peer Group Activities	Hours	Impact
Peer Support Groups	248	799
Independence Living Classes	70	151
Overall (Includes Other)	413	1009



FINANCIALS

Financials

Revenue by Source	
Home Health Care	\$9,879,425
Independent Living	\$505,731
Accessibility Store	\$48,724
Investment Return	\$266,964
	\$10,700,844
Expense by Type	
Home Health Care	\$6,813,268
Independent Living	\$1,350,716
Accessibility Store	\$127,339
General & Administrative	\$2,092,409
	\$10,383,732



BOARD MEMBERS

Board Chair:

Billy Allen
Board member since 2010

Vice Chair:

Owen Stockton
Board Member since 2010

Secretary:

Gary Morse
Board Member Since 2013

Treasurer:

Dean Christensen
Board Member Since 2010

Member:

Beth Blakney
Board Member since 2012

Bill Brown
Board Member Since 2012

Serina Gilbert
Board Member since 2012

Tim Rowan
Board Member since 2014

A Final Farewell

In 2014 we had several losses. Paul Swim, one of The IC's Information and Referral Specialists passed away in December. He is sorely missed, as are the three consumers of The Independence Center who passed on during 2014.



PARTNERSHIPS

We Couldn't Do It Without You!

We are honored by the support we've received by individual donors, foundations, and area businesses. The Independence Center would not be able to provide the programming we offer without your help.

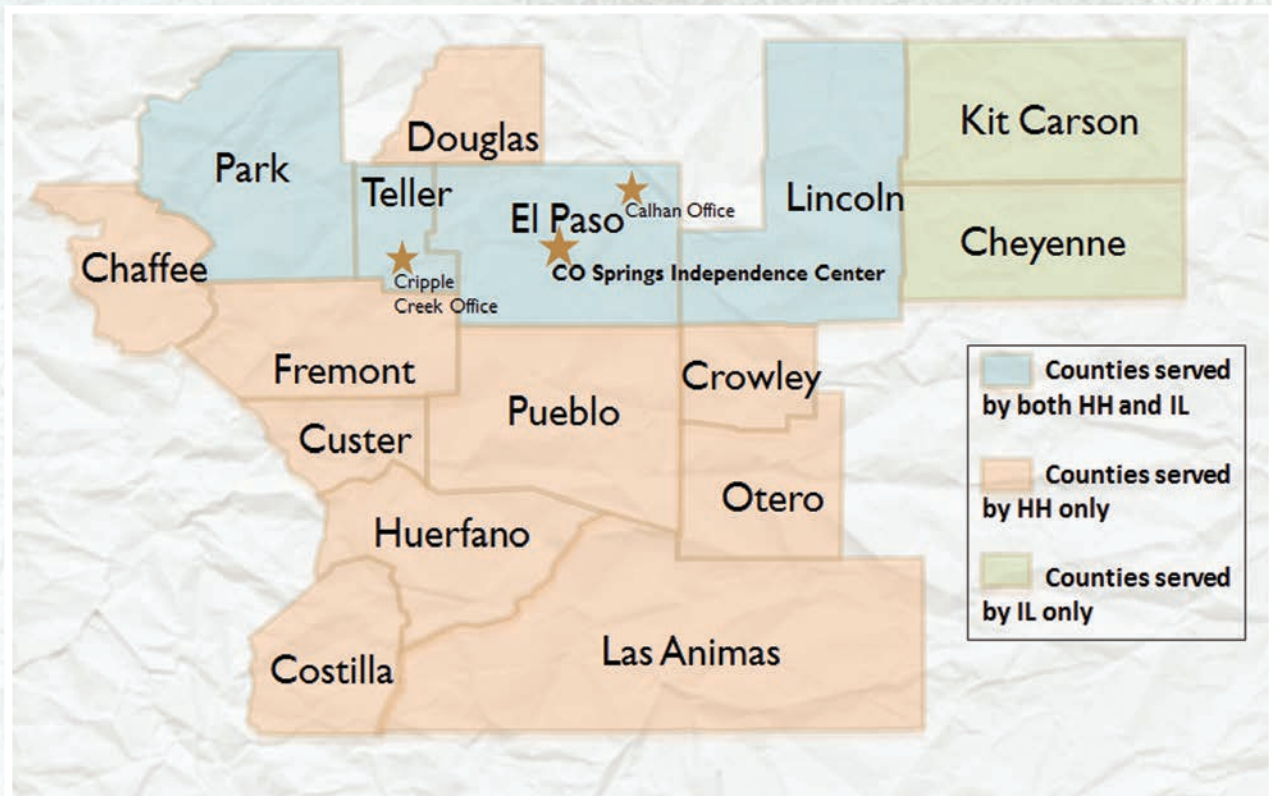
Organizations

ABC Dental and Orthodontics	Health South	Pat Going
Accessible Systems Inc.	Heuberger Motors	Patricia Berney
Angel Weiss	Il Vicino	Penrose Hospital
Antonio's Viva Salon	Intellitec Colleges	Revival by Stacy
Assist 2 Hear	Janet Burnett	Richard Smith
AT&T Relay Service	Janska	Rocky Mountain Health Care Services
Beth Blakney	Jim Miller	Sallyanne Perry
Beverly Carlson	Julie Cox	Serena Gilbert
Bill Brown	Julie Wallis	Sertoma Club
Billy Allen	Kinfolk Salon	Skye Weiss
BKD, LLP	La Baguette	Southside Johnny's
Brandon Smith	Lara Polniak	The Arc of the Pikes Peak Region
Cascade Investment Group	LBJ Maxwell	The Colorado Health Foundation
CB Insurance	Luther T. McCauley Trust	The Colorado Trust
Central Bancorp	Lynn Malloy	The Corundum Group
Colorado Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	Lynne Jones	The Famous
Chad Snow Personal Trainer	Marguerite Savage	Tim Rowan
Chuck Asay	Marjorie Baker	Tom Darbe
Club of Arts	McCabe's Tavern	Total Courtney Stone
Colorado Springs Health Partners	Meeting the Challenge	The Resource Exchange
Courtney Stone	Melat, Pressman, and Higbie Law Office	United Healthcare
David Schultz	Network Insurance	US Bank
Disability Benefits Support Contract Committee	National Association of Blind Athletes	Veda Spa Sampler
Denver Management Advisors	Neah Hess	Wells Fargo Community Support Campaign
Einstein Bros	Norma and John Robinson	Wendy Carter
Gail Melton	Owen Stockton	Years Ahead Salon
Gary Morse	PASCO Home Health	

This list is meant to be inclusive of our donors. If we have forgotten anyone please let us know and please accept our deep regret.



Counties The Independence Center Serves



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Colorado Springs, CO 80903

719-471-8181

www.TheIndependenceCenter.org