



ANNUAL REPORT 2020



CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING - ADVOCACY
HOME HEALTH CARE - VETERAN DIRECTED CARE

A NOTE FROM THE CEO

Patricia Yeager

The pandemic has caused an unprecedented seismic shift in nearly everything we do. For people with disabilities, who face numerous barriers even without a pandemic, the COVID-19 crisis added another layer of challenges, including increased isolation and depression.

The Independence Center's (The IC's) services are designed to empower people with disabilities and to help increase social interaction and community. How would we continue to offer our much-needed services during these challenging times?

To be honest, we took a cue from what people with disabilities have always done—we adapted and overcame!

Thanks to our incredible IT staff, our Independent Living and Administration staff transitioned from working in the office to working from home in March of 2020. We continued helping our consumers remotely via creativity and technology.

Of course, most of our Home Health staff are considered essential employees so they continued to work in our office or in the field. They worked tirelessly on the front lines to ensure clients received exemplary homehealth care. Our Veteran in Charge team, which is part of Home Health, continued to honor their commitment to our Veterans with crucial services.

I am so proud of all our staff members for pulling together for this once-in-a-lifetime event. It seems like the world changed overnight. But one thing that will never change is our commitment to those we serve.



Mobile Food Pantry: Supporting Our Community

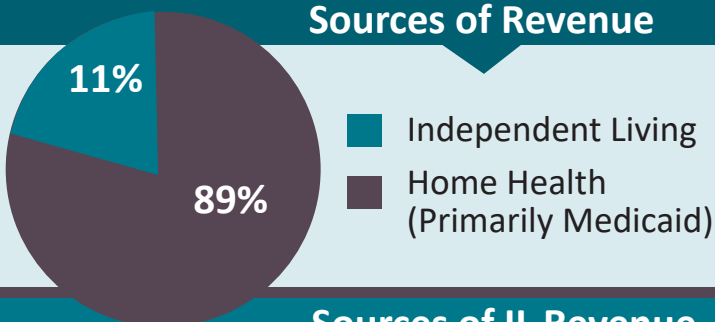
COVID-19 has not just had an impact on the physical health of those in our community. Job and income losses due to the pandemic have increased economic hardships such as difficulty paying bills, putting off filling prescriptions, and greater food insecurity.

As part of its mission to help people with disabilities live more independently, The IC partnered with Care & Share Food Bank in the summer of 2020 to address food insecurity amongst our consumers and in the community. Eighty-five volunteers, including many of The IC's staff members, staffed a mobile food pantry in the parking lot of our main building on the fourth Thursday of June, July, and August. During these months, almost 1,000 adults and children received 28,469 pounds of food, including fresh produce, dairy, meats, and canned and dry goods.

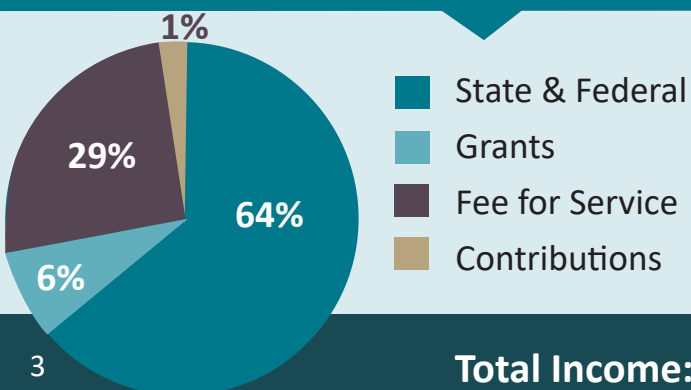
FINANCIALS

Net Assets:
\$13,312,028

Sources of Revenue



Sources of IL Revenue



Total Income: \$13,039,937



84% of total revenue is spent on programs benefiting consumers

Expenses by Programs: \$10,882,060

Administrative: \$1,870,809

Fundraising: \$205,444

Total Expenses: \$12,958,313

Creating Connection with Online Classes and Groups

When Governor Polis issued a statewide stay-at-home order in March 2020 due to the coronavirus, most of The IC's staff had to figure out new ways of serving our consumers and clients. As the organization's IL Skills Specialist, Edgar Morales was used to working in-person with consumers to help them develop the skills necessary to live more independently. Suddenly, he had to find ways of connecting through a virtual platform.



"With COVID, I said to myself, how can I be creative with my classes," Edgar recalls. He decided if he was going to be teaching from his home, he would put it to work for his students. "I decided to make one-on-one workshops. So if, for example, someone wants to learn how to cook, I will go into my kitchen and I will go step-by-step teaching them how to cook virtually." Edgar now offers one-hour, personalized workshops on everything from basic cleaning to simple budgeting. He also facilitates a youth support group and teaches a Daily Living Skills Workshop for youth with The IC's Youth Advocate, Nina Kamekona.

Edgar isn't the only staff member who has adapted to a new socially-distanced reality. Lisa Gavel, Peer Support Coordinator, took her support groups online, allowing people with disabilities to continue to connect at a crucial time. She also facilitates a Healthy Living and Gardening Group and co-facilitates a Mindfulness Learning Group with Carrie Baatz, Community Training Coordinator.



State of Colorado: Signing the Times

During any emergency, all citizens should have equal access to information that potentially affects their lives. That's why The IC has put such emphasis on emergency preparation for people with disabilities over the last several years. We not only created an Emergency Preparedness Guide, we have worked closely with state and local officials to ensure that shelters and alert and communication systems are accessible to all.

In early 2020, The IC was asked by the State of Colorado Office of Emergency Management (CEOM) to produce a video of Governor Polis' Safer-at-Home Order in American Sign Language (ASL) for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. While The IC is not in the video production business, we felt it was important to be part of the solution and our team quickly jumped into action.

During any other time, this project would have been as simple as setting up a colored backdrop, arranging the lights, and shooting video of an ASL signer while an ASL

interpreter spoke into a microphone. But in a pandemic, when everyone is working offsite, nothing is simple.

The IC's Marketing and IT teams worked through numerous technical issues to capture a remote video session with The IC's ASL/English Interpreter Specialist, Naomi McCown, and Deaf interpreter, Kevin Harrer – who were miles away from each other in different cities. The video was then edited, captioned, and loaded to YouTube.

The state was pleased with the final product and The IC was thankful to be trusted with this important project.

Sadie Martinez, Access and Functional Needs Coordinator with CEOM, said of the partnership, "This is a true model to all of our Colorado communities, partners, and stakeholders related to opportunities about how we plan together, prepare together, and respond together."

You can view the video at
<https://youtu.be/mLAZ1hb3TAA>.



The IC Strives to Break Down Communication Barriers During COVID-19

During the pandemic, virtual technology proved to be a lifesaver for those suddenly faced with working, learning, and socializing from their homes. However, for many people with disabilities, virtual platforms create another obstacle to overcome. Those who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing often rely on captioning or American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation to be able to fully participate. People with low vision and hearing loss may need Streamtext, a service that allows the user to change the size and color of the captioning. Even just getting connected to the platform may be difficult or impossible for people who cannot see or have fine motor dexterity issues.

Unfortunately, some organizations do not offer accessible communication via their online platforms. Some simply do not know how to do so or where to begin.

To help organizations better understand how to offer accessible communication, The IC created a comprehensive information brief, “Amplifying opportunity: Videoconferencing for people who are d/Deaf or hard of hearing,” which can be accessed here: bit.ly/ic-videoconf. This can also assist those who need accommodations to better understand what to ask for from whomever is offering a virtual experience.

Remember that asking about accommodations is a right we all have. People with disabilities have a right to fully participate in workplace meetings, telehealth services, classroom experiences and religious services. The first step is learning about the services we need and then to start asking for the accommodations that will help us gain equal access.



2,591 Total People Served



2,297
People Served
Through
Independent Living

**Services
Provided
6,993**



294
Clients Served
Through
Home Health

**Home Visits
222,352
Total Hours
356,116**

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



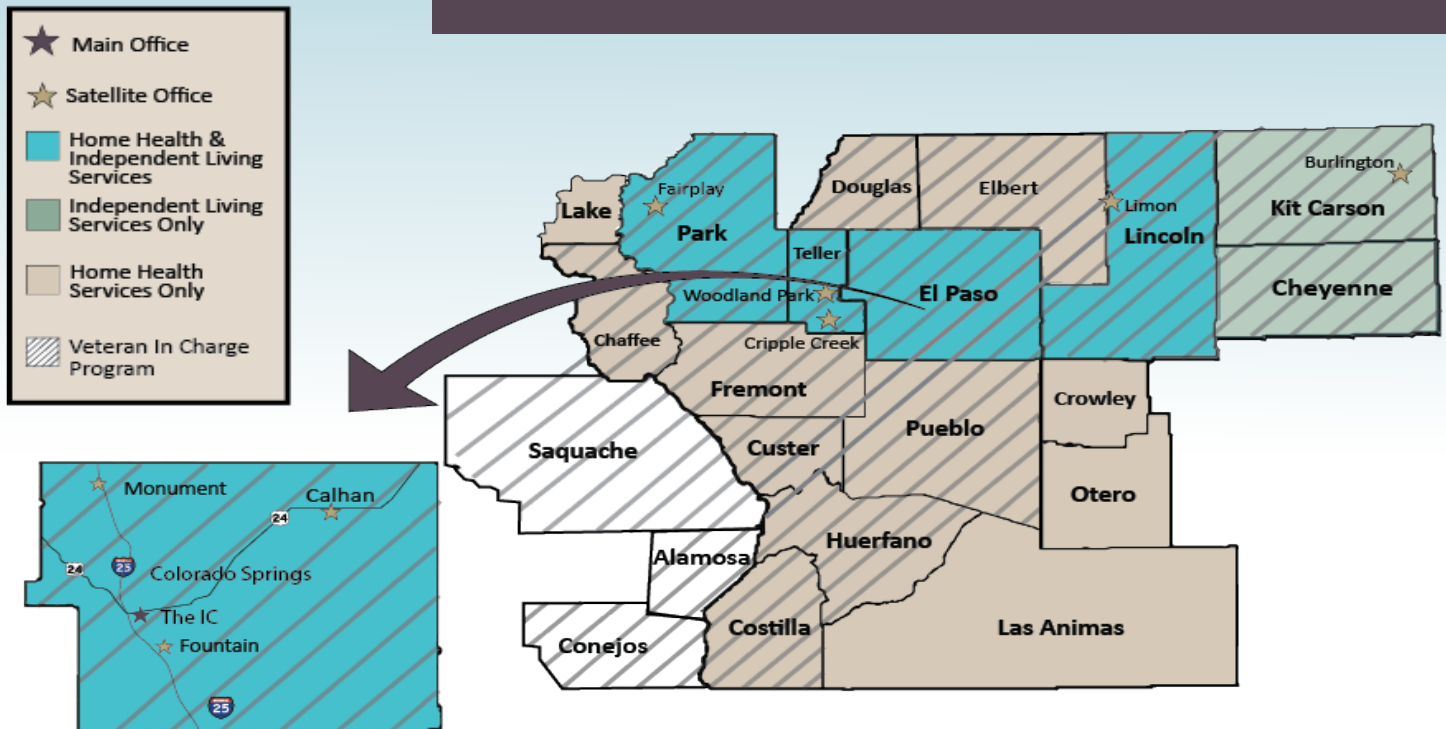
THE IC SERVICES

Advocacy
Assistive Technology
Benefits
Community Training
Community Transitions
Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Employment

Home Health Care
Hospital to Home
Housing
Independent Living Skills
Information and Referral
Low Vision
Older Individuals with Blindness

Options Counseling
Outreach
Peer Support
Quality Assurance
Youth Transitions
Veteran in Charge

Please visit the-ic.org for more information



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