

Living in Illinois as a Young Adult with Developmental Disabilities

- ✦ In 2008, Illinois ranked last in funding community-based supports and services for young adults with developmental disabilities.
- ✦ Community based services are those programs that enable an individual to live a productive and meaningful life. Many of the individuals in need of funding for these services will remain at home with their families and simply require a structured learning environment to go to each day. This saves the state hundreds of thousands of dollars each year compared to institutional care or intermediate care facility arrangements. Unbelievably, there IS funding available for both of these types of care!
- ✦ In Illinois, an individual with developmental disabilities is effectively cut off from state funded services at the age of 22 unless they are lucky enough to “win” the opportunity to apply for funding. Regrettably, even winning the opportunity to apply does not guarantee an individual will receive the necessary funds for services as the budget has been cut severely and continually year after year.
- ✦ Many unfunded individuals end up at home while waiting for funding for services. This wait for services inevitably results in a loss of valuable life skills that took years to develop. Many families risk financial hardship as one parent is needed to leave the work force to care for their disabled adult child.
- ✦ The Illinois “waiting list” or PUNS list, as of January 12, 2010, had over 13,000 individuals with unmet critical and emergency needs. These are individuals currently waiting for support service funding necessary to help them to live a more productive and dignified life.
- ✦ In 2008, the average wait for funding for community-based services was 3 to 5 years. Since that time, the waiting list has grown by over 5000 individuals. Because of this, many young adults with developmental disabilities will wait up to 10 years or more to receive governmental funding for adult service programming.

- ✿ The private pay cost for day programs (vocational & developmental training, workshop) in the Chicago South Suburban area ranges from \$1,000 to \$1,500 per month per individual. (\$12,000-\$18,000 per year) The cost for servicing an individual with specialized needs can be even higher due to the need for higher support staffing. Currently, the Illinois Department of Human Services is the only funding source available to individuals in need of such programming.
- ✿ Due to recent budget cuts, the state of Illinois has made it virtually impossible for a young adult with developmentally disabilities who is currently transitioning into adult services to receive any governmental support for community-based services unless they are in an emergency.
- ✿ This funding crisis for adults with developmental disabilities did not happen overnight. "As the Illinois service system is presently constituted, these individuals have little or no prospect of receiving services any time soon." -2008 Gap Analysis: Services and Supports for People with Developmental Disabilities in Illinois.