

**Exceptional Persons, Inc.**

**FY19 Accessibility Plan**

**Progress Report**

The following plan has been developed to address accessibility barriers that may exist within EPI and/or the surrounding community. Members of the Accessibility Committee and the EPI Management Team were involved in the creation of the plan.

A barrier to accessibility is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully taking a part in society because of their disability. To determine the level at which EPI influences a barrier-free environment, both within and outside the organization, the following methods are used:

* Frequent and ongoing internal facility programs and policy review.
* Regularly scheduled surveys/program review from external agencies, such as:
  + Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
  + Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA)
  + Department of Human Services (DHS)
  + Fire Marshall
  + Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF)
* Solicitation of input from persons served and stakeholders through surveys, planning meetings, informal conversations and involvement in various agency committees.
* Education of persons to report barriers they experience within their homes and community within agency program handbooks, printed brochures, and fliers.
* Availability of Accessibility Barrier Forms at program sites with training on form use at new hire orientation and annually thereafter. These forms are used to help identify barriers within the organization and community.

The following plan provides a mechanism for tracking progress toward the removal of identified accessibility barriers in the lives of persons served by EPI, as well as its employees and other stakeholders. It should be noted the plan does not necessarily include all barriers but does identify trends, patterns, information, and data which support the presence of a particular barrier. This plan, highlights the barriers to be addressed during this fiscal year (October 1-September 30). Progress and results are analyzed annually and considered during the annual budget planning process.

**Architectural**

Architectural or “physical” barriers refer to barriers that impede physical access to an environment.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Current housing does not consistently meet changing needs of persons served. Accessible housing is especially important as people with disabilities work to become independent, productive members of their communities. | Maintenance and Property Department will make modifications to renovate homes of persons served as well as EPI facilities. Modifications will increase accessibility through reduction/elimination of physical barriers. | Continuous  *(Terry)* |
| Community Services Department will seek out and secure accessible housing for persons served to rent/lease within the community. | Continuous  *(Melissa)* |
| Community members without access to health insurance who have medical needs are not able to remain or return to their own homes and are faced with moving to a more expensive or restrictive setting such as a nursing home. | Obtain durable healthcare equipment by donation and provide needed equipment to families without insurance. Equipment is loaned at no cost for the timeframe a person needs (months, years, or a lifetime) | Continuous  *(Lori)* |
| Sidewalks are not available to allow access to bus routes and other areas within the community. | EPI’s Accessibility Committee will develop a list of needed sidewalks and present it to members of the Waterloo Building Inspections Department, City Sidewalk Department, and the ADA Compliance Commission. This list will be presented annually to the City of Waterloo | June 2019  *(Nicole R)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Modifications made by the Maintenance Department:  Exterior Modifications:   * Repaired/replaced concrete to prevent tripping hazards in 5 locations. * Replaced concrete and brick area to create wider sidewalk at one location * Installed handrail on lower level steps of apartment complex. * Updates to ramps and decks around several homes to improve safety for tenants, including:   + Replacing ramp brace boards   + Replacing rotted deck steps and boards   + Adding traction treads to the stairs   + Fastening loose decking   + Removal of a tree growing through deck planking * Removed bushes along a driveway where placement was impairing access to the home for the tenant. * Added topsoil and grass seed along sidewalk of one location to even out the area and prevent tripping hazard. * Tightened exterior railing that was loose at one location. * Made updates to the Deery Center office location, including:   + Installing a small ramp at Entrance B for accessible building access.   + Removing the end section of the railing outside Entrance D to widen the space, allowing for easier access for persons served who use walkers and wheelchairs for mobility.   + Replacement of several feet of the parking lot in front of Entrance A   Interior Modifications:   * Installed an ADA refrigerator at a location. ADA refrigerator controls are positioned **within arm's reach (between 15 and 48 inches above floor)** and allow one-hand operation. * Remounted or tightened basement stairwell railing to improve full access of 3 homes. * Completed accessible kitchen remodel in one home to meet needs of tenants. * Leveled flooring and reinstalled carpet in a home where the floor was bowing and had become a hazard. * Update flooring at five locations where raised areas were creating a tripping hazard. * Installed grab bars to reduce risk of falls within the bath tub/ tub surround in 3 locations. * Installed safety treads within bath tub in 1 location * Lowered closet rod to accommodate independent access for a person who uses a wheelchair.   As part of the transition of EPI Day Hab from Southbrooke to the Deery Center, a large renovation was completed at the Deery Center office location to accommodate the program and ensure an accessible location for staff and persons served. Architectural updates included:   * + Addition of a kitchenette on the south end of the building   + Removal of the deck and widening of the drive on the east side of the building to accommodate bussing   + Construction of doorway between maintenance storage and back loading dock area for easy storage/access.   Secure accessible housing:  EPI continues to develop new housing opportunities by establishing and cultivating relationships with external landlords who provide accessible housing. In this fiscal year ten (10) locations were opened, five (5) of which were site moves so homes were more appropriate for persons served and their needs. Nine (9) sites were closed, with only one (1) of them continuing to be utilized.    Durable healthcare equipment:  Durable healthcare equipment loans continue to allow persons to remain or return to their homes. This program loaned out 181 pieces of accessibility equipment of the following type:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * Wheel chair (26) * Wheel chair cushion (1) * Walker (28) * Seated walker (14) * Walker basket (3) * Spare walker wheels (2) * Cane (1) * Crutches (2) * Bath chair (16) * Bath transfer bench (7) * Bath step (1) | * Grab bars (6) * Transfer bench (7) * Gait belt (2) * Commode (9) * Elevated toilet seat (8) * Bed rail (4) * Dress assist (1) * Sock aid (2) * Shoe horn (2) * Grabber/Reacher (1) |   Sidewalk recommendations:  FY19 sidewalk recommendations made to the Waterloo ADA Compliance Commission focused on the same locations recommended in FY18: University Avenue in Waterloo, on East Ridgeway Avenue between Ansborough Avenue and Kimball Avenue, and Progress Ave. between Greenhill Road and University Avenue. | | |

**Environmental**

Environmental barriers include any location or characteristic of a setting which compromises, impedes, or hinders service delivery and the benefits gained from service.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Set up of PDM center with cubicles allows results in reduced privacy and higher noise levels | Review and implement options to make cubicles at PDM more private | 9/30/2019  *(Brittney)* |
| Current housing does not consistently provide a comfortable environment. This impacts quality of service for persons served and productivity of staff. | Maintenance and Property Department will make modifications to renovate homes of persons served as well as EPI facilities. Modifications will reduce/eliminate environmental barriers of the location. | Continuous  *(Terry)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| PDM Center privacy:  In the Winter of 2018/2019, construction started at the PDM Center. The first set of cubicles were removed and affected managers moved to existing offices. Four additional offices were built to provide office space for an additional 7 people. Due to weather-related delays, the timeline was adjusted and office spaces were completed around March. By April, new carpet was installed and tables moved into the open workspace. Construction continued to add beams with drop cords and remove unneeded supplies. All PDM employees where moved into new offices and by August all small paint touchups where complete. PDM continued to be “by appointment only” and an additional computer was provided for interviews. The PDM committee was able to reach the goals of this project.   * All PDM staff have an office they share with 1-2 co-workers to help with privacy * Sound machines continue to be used by the front desk/front bathrooms * Open work space is available for all employees * All interviews are completed at PDM * Conference rooms are available to check out * External meetings have been moved to another EPI location   Modifications made by the Maintenance Department:  Exterior Modifications:   * Installed mailbox sensor and set up monitor for person served to know when mail arrives * Repaint sign posts for handicapped parking spaces at Ansborough office   Interior Modifications:   * Installed a safety lock to stove to prevent fires.   As part of the transition of EPI Day Hab from Southbrooke to the Deery Center, a large renovation was completed at the Deery Center office location to accommodate the program and ensure an accessible location for staff and persons served. Environmental specific updates included:   * Addition of windows in exterior doors, signage, and awnings at Entrance B and D to improve external visibility * Installation of doorbell at Entrance D to notify program staff of arrivals * Update of exit and room location signage * Repainting trip hazards, poles and defined curb changes in the south parking area. * Construction of doorways to separate southern program area from training space to help manage sound and facilitate a quiet space for both areas regardless of activity. * Installation of swinging door to separate program area and program office space to create a quiet workspace for Day Habilitation and Supported Employment program supervisors while allowing unobtrusive access for persons served when needed. | | |

**Attitudinal**

Attitudinal barriers are behaviors or perceptions which prevent people from communicating properly. Persons with disabilities face attitudinal barriers related to misperceptions of their abilities. Often these attitudes patronize people with disabilities, usually relegating them to low-skill or child-like positions.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Misperceptions of abilities of persons served impact service quality and effectiveness | EPI staff training to promote the value and individual needs of each person served. | 9/30/2019  *(Jaclyn)* |
| Misperceptions of the abilities of persons served impact overall community awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities | Provide information to the community through training, speaking events, and development of community partnerships. | Continuous  *(Nicole R, Stacey & Nicole E)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Internal awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities:  Throughout the year, specialty trainings were made available to staff:   * Ergonomics: Office – October 2018 * Sexual Harassment for Employees – October 2018 * HIPAA Do's and Don'ts: Electronic Communication and Social Media – October 2018 * Defensive Driving: The Basics – November 2018 * Handling Food Safely – November 2018 * Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls – November 2018 * Accessibility – December 2018 * Documentation and Incident Reporting; Waste, Fraud, and Abuse – December 2018 * Blood borne Pathogens – January 2019 * EPI's Rights, Responsibilities, & Restrictions – January 2019 * Brain Injury – March 2019 * People with Disabilities: Building Relationships and Community Membership – April 2019 * Cultural Competence – May 2019 * Workplace Violence – May 2019 * EPI's Emergency Management, Medication Procedures, and Dependent Adult Abuse – June 2019 * Ethical Decision Making: The Basics – August 2019 * Got Bugs? Dealing with Infestation – August 2019 * EPI's Service Documentation – September 2019   Community awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities:  EPI continues to work to raise internal and community awareness of persons with disabilities. Through quarterly newsletters, electronic communications (eNews), blogs, videos, social media, donor stewardship mailings, speaking engagements, and 1:1 donor visits, information about what EPI does is getting out into the community. This year, a multitude of events focused on raising awareness within the community:   * Service Outcomes Managers, Bethany Jura and Amber MacLoughlin represented EPI at UNI each semester, where they presented information regarding services available for persons with disabilities to the Special Education Teaching program. * EPI hosted the "Assistive Technology and Employment Training" presented by IA-APSE and Easterseals Iowa, on October 3. This event focused on available assistive devices aimed to support persons of all abilities in the workplace, home and community. * Courier recognition of Executive Director, Chris Sparks for receiving the Suellen Galbraith Award for Excellence in Public Policy from the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) on October 7. * **Courier Inclusion magazine** article *Making Connections* (October 2018). The article features Employment Specialist, Shannon Henson's work within EPI Employment Services to promote community employment for persons with disabilities. <https://wcfcourier.com/app/inclusion/FallWinter2018/mobile/index.html> * The Employment Services team represented EPI at the American's Workforce, Empowering All event hosted by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation held at Hawkeye Community College on October 30. * 2018 annual Giving Tree donation drive (November/December 2018) – EPI partnered with Ameriprise – Larry K. Fox & Associates, CBE Companies, Harrison Truck Centers, Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Waterloo Police Protection Association to meet the needs of those who might not otherwise have gifts during the holiday season. **Through the amazing support of our community, staff, local business, and organizations, we were able to fulfill over 400 needs on the tree this year – our greatest year yet.** * **Program Director, Megan Henning and Quality Improvement and Outcomes Director, Maghan Bowman presented at the local Brain Injury conference on Person Centered Planning and HRST on December 18.** * Program Director, Nicole Rand and Associate Program Director, Nicole Ericson attended the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa Grant Award Ceremony, where they accepted a grant for EPI's Employment Services on January 11. * Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with representatives from George Wyth State Park, resulting in a partnership supporting EPI Day Habilitation volunteer efforts (January 2019). The partnership allowed to have a weekly volunteer opportunity including planting trees, general cleanup and painting benches, tables and buildings. * Associate Program Director, Nicole Ericson and Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with the HR Director and Volunteer Coordinator with the Waterloo Community School District, resulting in a partnership supporting EPI Day Habilitation volunteer efforts (January 2019). Participants with EPI Day Habilitation now volunteer in multiple schools throughout the district, supporting students with reading and activities, and supporting teachers with lesson planning preparations. * Executive Director, Chris Sparks spoke at the North Carolina Providers Council Conference ‘Overcoming Challenges…Seizing Opportunities’ (January 2019). * Associate Program Director, Nicole Ericson and Intermittent Services Coordinator, Brittney Montross spoke at the YMCA Annual Campaign Night on February 18 regarding the benefits of the partnership between EPI and the YMCA, including the specific positive health impacts this partnership provides for persons served. * EPI spread awareness for Brain Injury Awareness Month using the hashtag #BeTheAwareness and encouraging staff to wear purple every Thursday in March. * Service Options Managers Bethany Jura and Amber MacLoughlin represented EPI at Peet Jr. High School and River Hills School in Cedar Falls in March, where they discussed EPI services. * Business partnerships – EPI’s signature fundraising event, More Than You See, brought in 6 new business sponsorships. The event’s purpose is to celebrate the value persons of all abilities contribute and to raise awareness that we are all more than what meets the eye (April 2019). * Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with representatives from the Cedar Valley House of Hope, resulting in a partnership supporting EPI Day Habilitation volunteer efforts (May 2019). * **Program Director, Megan Henning spoke at the NAMI Black Hawk County Board Meeting on May 7.** * Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with representatives from the Hartman Reserve of Hope, resulting in a partnership supporting EPI Day Habilitation volunteer efforts (August 2019). * Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with representatives from the Waterloo Leisure Services, resulting in a partnership supporting EPI Day Habilitation volunteer efforts (September 2019). * Business partnerships - EPI Employment Services grew its network of businesses employing persons with disabilities to over 100 this year. | | |

**Financial**

Financial barriers include lack of adequate county and state funding for services and the impact of limited income for persons living with disabilities.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Low reimbursement rates offer insufficient funding for services/supports. | Exploration of additional resources outside of major funding streams, including fundraising to assist in meeting the needs of persons served and maintaining financial health of the organization. | Continuous  *(Stacey)* |
| Remain active at both the local and state levels in advocating for increased funding to cover the cost of services and provide regular wage increase for DSPs | Continuous  *(Nicole R)* |
| Limited incomes result in situations where individuals cannot meet monthly obligations, unusual expenses or one-time expenses | Use of the Essential Needs Fund to assist those who do not have the resources to meet these financial obligations. | Continuous  *(Stacey)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Exploration of additional resources outside of major funding streams:  EPI continues to seek out options, including grant opportunities through foundations and organization to assist with quality service provision. The Development department completes an online and direct mail appeal annually.  The 6th Annual**More Than You See Dueling Pianos/Silent Auction Fundraiser (April 2019) raised over $48,000 this year. This** entertaining fundraising event showcased and celebrated the value persons with disabilities contribute, raising funds to support EPI’s mission. We saw our highest number of reservations and generated 36 donors the night of the event.  Grant requests include:   * Waterloo Housing – Tenant based rental assistance - approved * Otto Schoitz Foundation –EPI Employment Services - approved * Veridian Credit Union – General charitable support - approved * Grainger Foundation – Critical housing updates - approved * US Bank – Critical housing updates – funding status unknown * Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa – EPI Employment Services – funding status unknown   EPI Day Habilitation services continue to partner with the Joint Volunteers and participate in their annual Cookie Walk. Funds raised at this event are shared between EPI and another local day habilitation program. This income is used to cover activity costs as they arise for persons who attend day habilitation throughout the year.  Exceptional Persons Foundation Kickoff was August 29, 2019 at the Ansborough Office. All EPI staff were invited to come for lunch and some fun. The event serves as the kickoff to our annual fundraising campaign and allows staff to see how their donations benefit EPI and persons served.  State/local activity advocating for increased funding for service:  EPI remains active at both the local and state levels in advocating for increased funding to cover the cost of services and provide regular increases to providers. Inherent in this request is the need to be able to pay adequate wages to both recruit and retain a quality workforce.  EPI joins the efforts of others and is part of a larger voice through its membership in the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), a national, nonprofit trade association representing more than 1000 private community providers of services to people with disabilities, and the Iowa Association of Community Providers (IACP), our state association of providers supporting children and adults with disabilities.  Deb Jungling, EPI Business Director worked with CSS to align Regional rates with rates paid by HCBS. This impacted payment for IDD daily services, as well as day habilitation.  Intermittent Coordinator, Brittney Montross joined the Olmstead Consumer Taskforce, a statewide advocacy group charged by Executive Order to monitor Iowa's response to the 1999 Supreme Court's Olmstead Decision. Activities of this taskforce support the full inclusion of people with disabilities in housing, employment, transportation, healthcare and other areas.  Deb Jungling, EPI Business Director continued involvement with a statewide workgroup which transitioned ID Daily services to a tiered rate structure in 2017. The group provided input to IME regarding how the tiered rate system was working, including a request for specific information on struggles with appropriate tier assignment. Ultimately, rate changes were proposed again for tiered services, reducing rates on lower tiers in order to increase rates for persons requiring increased services and supports on higher tiers. This proposal impacted EPI anticipated revenues significantly, the most significant of which was the reduction of rates for persons living in a Residential Care Facility setting. Adjusted rates went into effect on March 1, 2019.  Program Director, Megan Henning is involved in an IME work group focused on Medicaid Brain Injury Services. This group worked to get the Mayo Portland assessment approved as a supplemental assessment for persons with a traumatic brain injury. The group also reviewed rules and requested/drafted change which resulted in elimination of the Brain Injury Waiver monthly budget maximum cap, effective July 1, 2019. This change allows persons who access the Brain Injury Waiver to have greater opportunity to receive support services tailored to their individual needs.  Essential Needs Funds assistance:  Challenges to meet financial obligations continue to impact persons served. The Essential Needs Fund provided over $14,000.00 of support this year. Funds were used in the following capacity:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Category** | **# Funded** | | Personal Needs/ Milestones | 11 | | Rent Assistance | 23 | | Temporary Child Care Emergency | 3 | | Home Furnishings | 2 | | Stuff, Etc. Voucher | 4 | | Child Care Start Up/ Expansion | 3 | | Move In Packages | 18 | | **TOTAL** | **64** |   Numbers for Rent Assistance continue to rise, as alternate rent assistance programs become less available. We anticipate this area to continue to grow as our community experiences a higher prevalence of homeless individuals and finding affordable housing is more of a struggle than ever before.  At this spring’s More Than You See dueling pianos benefit, attendees joined forces to raise over $1,400 in funds to support the Essential Needs Fund and help provide for the basic needs of persons served. | | |

**Employment**

Employment barriers include those which inhibit people from obtaining or maintaining employment.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Recruitment of staff to manage position vacancy rates. | Streamline the hiring and orientation process in order to quickly onboard staff while ensuring they are adequately prepared for their jobs. | Continuous  *(Jessica)* |
| Retention of trained, effective staff. | Continued focus on staff appreciation/celebration to positively impact staff satisfaction and retention. | Continuous  *(Brittney)* |
| Provide front line supervisory staff with training regarding positive leadership practices | Continuous  *(Jessica)* |
| Growth in the program and increased interest (waiting list) to gain employment have impacted the SES’s ability to develop and access a network of interested employers. | Increase opportunity for community employment within Enclave and Job Development services through connection between SES and community employers. | Continuous  *(Shannon & Nicole E)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Streamline hiring and orientation:  Project team work related to this area includes three groups. The first is focused on new hire orientation (hire to 6 months) and how we can inform, train and job shadow to support success and engagement. The second is looking at creating a mentorship program so there are options for career advancement for current employees but also as a recruitment tool. The third is a Career Pathways Project Group to identify career advancements opportunities for our industry.  The HR Department was restructured this year, which resulted in the development of a position focused on recruitment and retention. The Talent Recruiter and Retention Coordinator was filled in July 2019.  Changes were made regarding recruitment practice, including:   * Increasing new application to having an interview scheduled from 5-7 days to 3 days. * Adjusting job postings process so postings go external after 3, rather than 5 days. * Streamlined the website positions available to eliminate confusion for external applicants. * Implementation of HR support to schedule interviews for every department, reaching out to the candidate within 24 hours to get their availability to come in for an interview, and reaching out via phone call if not heard back by 2nd day. * Connection with all colleges in the Cedar Valley area to associate with their Career Centers and join in on their career fairs. EPI visited 6 colleges, held an onsite recruiting event and a recruiting event at Iowa Works. * Connection with Healthcare Partnership to have the opportunity to speak to middle schools, high schools, and colleges on what we do and help students can envision a career at EPI. * Connection with career centers of Waterloo school district to get familiarize with high school students who may not go on to a 4 year college with opportunities available at EPI. * Inviting DSPs and persons served to attend career fairs and offer a face-to-face experience for potential new hires. * Adding an opportunity for job candidates to view and write a reflection on what they observe in the video to help interviewers assess the ability of job candidates to document service.   Changes were made regarding new hire orientation and employee retention, including:   * Transition to a three day orientation, consisting of roughly 12 hours of in-person training. * Talent Recruiter and Retention Coordinator began reaching out to new hires to check in how they are doing and making sure their supervisors are connecting with them and that they feel comfortable with how they have been trained. * HR staff are reconnecting with employees who have voluntarily terminated and are rehire eligible to see what EPI could have done differently to keep them as an employee * A third Staff Development Assistant was hired to support HR with onboarding and training of new hires. * New hires are limited to working only within their scheduled tier in the first 30 days, at 60 days they can pick up shifts in their current home, after 90 days can pick up any shifts in POD or department.   Staff retention and appreciation:  Acute DSP shortage continues to be a major concern for EPI, as for similar provider agencies looking to hire staff to fill a caregiving role. In recognition of this shortage, EPI continues to take strides to improve hiring and retention practices, with mindful focus on celebration of current staff. Ongoing efforts include:  October 2018   * Annual Soup day potluck was available for all staff. Staff voted on their favorite soups, with a prize for the top three winners. * A free flu shot clinic was available to staff, held at the Ansborough Ave. office. * Supervisors working DSP shifts outside of regular office hours (M-F 8a-5p) were paid time and a half of their DSP wage. * Beyond the $50 stipend paid to DSPs for on-call weekends, DSPs who offered to pick up a 5th on-call for November, December and January received an additional $100.   November 2018   * EPI offered staff an opportunity to take part in the "Maintain Don't Gain Holiday Challenge" wherein those involved were challenged to stay on track during the holiday season by maintaining weight. All weigh-ins were confidential and tracked by PDCM's Wellness Coordinator. Those who participated were entered in a drawing to a Fitbit, a gift card to Ninja-U or an hour massage. * DSPs hired within the calendar year became eligible for a $150 bonus should they sign up for additional beeper weekends. Based on hire date a DSP hired since January would be eligible for the bonus as they pick up an extra weekend beyond their expectation. Depending on hire date, this is a 4th, 3rd, or 2nd weekend. * EPI long sleeve mission shirts, made available to staff to order for free in September, were available for pickup. * A survey of stakeholders (parents, family members, case managers, etc.) was completed. Staff specifically mentioned by name were acknowledged for providing great service on with a personal email and a collective shout out on the Epicenter. * An employee satisfaction survey was put out to staff via Bamboo HR.   December 2018   * Celebration of the role of DSP occurred during our annual holiday meal held at the Central Rivers AEA. Gift cards for an alternate meal option were made available to staff in residential and intermittent services working at the time of the event so all could be involved. * Office staff were invited to wear holiday attire on Fridays in December, participate in a Secret Santa activity and were eligible for a $25 prize for the best holiday themed door or office space. * Executive Director, Chris Sparks sent a message to all staff updating on the success of the CARF survey. Chris thanked staff for their commitment to EPI and the crucial role each staff plays to make the agency a success. * For Day Habilitation and Supported Employment staff, who have positions which are consistently scheduled during the holiday meal, a holiday breakfast was catered to celebrate their contribution to EPI and persons served.   January 2019   * EPI staff were offered a 50% discount on tickets to the More Than You See (MTYS) event. * Continuation of the 5 Star DSP of the month program within the Community Services department: three of the monthly winners were submitted to ANCOR for DSP of the year. * Free wellness screenings were offered to all employees regularly scheduled 30 or more hours per week who are enrolled or eligible to enroll with EPI’s health insurance.   February 2019   * Staff were reminded of opportunities to support the HR Department with recruitment such as Social Media Sharing (entry into $100 monthly drawing) and Referral Bonus (up to $750 for each new hire referred who stays 6 months) * Staff interested in volunteering at the MTYS event were offered volunteer training to prepare them for the event. * Persons served and the staff attending with them were offered free tickets to the MTYS event.   March 2019   * Staff volunteering at MTYS were offered free event shirts. * 401K meetings were offered to all staff to explain the benefit and offer a Q&A opportunity with Laurel Thompson. * Benefits-eligible employees (those regularly scheduled 30+ hours per week) were invited to attend Open Enrollment meetings to hear about the range of benefits available at EPI.   April 2019   * Certified trainers for Personal Outcome Measures (POM) and Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI), began receiving a stipend (paid out each November) for the time dedicated to obtaining/maintaining certification and training EPI staff.   May 2019   * Three DSP of the month candidates sent to the ANCOR Conference in Portland, Oregon. * Supervisory staff were provided Jimmy John's for lunch after 100% of manager assessments were completed within the month of April – the first official roll-out of the electronic performance management via Bamboo HR. * EPI staff were able to purchase furniture, appliances, printers, and other items as agency storage was cleared out. * A Health Fair was made available to EPI staff and persons served. Vendors included Community Bank and Trust, UntiyPoint Health, Wellmark, PDCM, MercyOne, My25 and more! Each vendor offered free items and participants were eligible for door prizes. * Staff were made aware of an opportunity to earn $50 to write for the EPI Blog. All published entries for the topic: "What does it mean to be a DSP?" were eligible.   June 2019   * An additional $50 referral bonus was offered to any staff who referred a friend or family member to the Walk-In-Interviews and that family member/friend accepted a DSP or Bus Driver job offer at the event. * A 6.6% market based pay adjustment was implemented for the DSP Night Attendant- sleep position. * Staff were provided an opportunity to purchase a Maintenance Vehicle pulled out of service.   July 2019   * Due to improved stability and agency financial performance, EPI staff were offered a one-time additional compensation within paychecks received in July. All staff, with the exception of agency leadership, received either a $500 or $7500 bonus. * Employees were invited to wear wacky red, white and blue on 7/3 in celebration of Independence Day. * Information regarding market pay grade and performance based pay grade increases was provided to all staff.   August 2019   * Staff were provided tips to ensure they are correctly paid mileage reimbursement. * The EPI Foundation Kickoff was held at the Ansborough Office Side Lawn. All EPI staff were invited to come for lunch and some fun. This year, the celebration included daily themed dress-up opportunities during EPI's Sprit Week. * Information regarding designated lactation areas in the Ansborough, PDM and Deery offices was provided to staff. * Staff were reminded of opportunities to support the HR Department with recruitment via as Social Sharing (entry into $100 monthly drawing).   September 2019   * Seven members of EPI’s Supported Employment services were able to attend the Iowa APSE Employment Conference in Des Moines. * Celebration of Direct Support Professionals Week (September 8-14), where EPI DSPs were invited for a lunch in their honor on at the Central Rivers AEA. At this event, 12 DSPs were recognized for their exceptional services in the community. Staff were also provided an appreciation gift of EPI cup. Agency leadership delivered a meal to each DSP working in residential services during the luncheon. * For Day Habilitation and Supported Employment staff, who have positions which are consistently scheduled during the DSP Recognition event, a breakfast was delivered to celebrate their contribution to EPI and persons served. * Staff were provided an opportunity to purchase an available 32" LED TV via the EPICenter. * Staff were made aware of an opportunity to earn $50 to write for the EPI Blog. All published entries for the topic: "What does inclusion mean to you?" were eligible.   Continuous benefits for all employees:   * Vehicle repair for all EPI employees and family members. With approval, repairs over $100 may be paid over a 3-month period with no interest through payroll deduction. * Wells Fargo Membership Program, which qualifies EPI employees for a valuable bundle of Wells Fargo accounts and services. * Cell phone discounts with US Cellular and Verizon Wireless * Free Child Care Referrals through Child Care Resource and Referral * Free car seat fittings * Employee Assistance Program – a 24 hour national call center provides confidential telephone consultation, convenient in-person counseling, legal, financial and eldercare consultation at no cost to employees. * Nationwide pet insurance * Corporate discounts for local athletic clubs   + River Plaza Athletic Club   + Cedar Falls Recreation Center   + Cedar Valley SportsPlex   + Anytime Fitness * EPI points - employees need 5 EPI points to receive a $25 gift card. Submit a point in each category (people, stewardship, creative cooperation, integrity, and years of service) and earn 2 gift cards. * EPI staff have preferential access to Hawkeye Child Development center for child care spots. * ANCOR Shared Resources Purchasing Network – as a ling-time member of ANCOR (American Network of Community Options and Resources), EPI can extend discounts to a number of services to our employees, persons served, and family. Participating companies include, but are not limited to, Dell, Furniture Concepts, and mores.   Continuous benefits for all Full Time employees:   * Wellmark BCBS Health Insurance * Delta dental and vision insurance * Life Insurance * Voluntary Supplemental Life and AD&D insurance * Assurity accident, hospital, and critical illness plans * Freshbenies - Teledoc * Annual wellness screening * Access to the My25 online nutrition portal * Retirement 401k Plan * Flexible Spending Plans * Supplemental Plans – accident, Critical illness, Hospital Plans * College tuition discount for EPI employees and family members with Upper Iowa University   Frontline Supervisor Training:  Supervisor meetings this year were often focused on supervisor/staff relationships and building of support and positive influence. July 2019: Facilitating a meeting, August 2019: Join the movement: Being present in conversations, September: Connection Culture, October 2019: Work Compensation, How can you help?  Increase opportunities for integrated employment:  Within Employment services, the Business Developer and Employment Specialist positions have focused on increasing opportunities for community employment for persons with disabilities within individual community jobs. Less focus this year was placed on capacity for small group employment services through enclave. However, the work done by these positions have allowed EPI to continue to build partnerships with businesses throughout the Cedar Valley and resulted in community employment for 32 persons served with the following employers:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * + Freddy’s Frozen Custard and Steakburgers (2)   + Spencer Gifts   + Hawkeye Child Development Center   + Days Inn   + Texas Roadhouse   + Applebees – Cedar Falls (2)   + Walmart – Waterloo (2)   + PepperJax Grill (2)   + Hampton Inn   + Hardee’s – Flammang Drive   + Orchard Hill Church | * + Stuff Etc.   + Home Depot   + Carlos O’Kelly’s   + Goodwill Industries of NE Iowa   + Lowe’s (3)   + Burger King   + Menards – Cedar Falls   + Fareway – Waterloo   + Hilton Garden Inn   + Firehouse Subs   + YWCA Black Hawk County   + Pinnacle Specialty Care (2) |   Within this year EPI Supported Employment Services partnered with the American Dream Network and is now an EN provider. This has expanded EPI Supported Employment Services by being able to offer SES to ticket holders, with this EPI now has a Certified Benefits Specialist. | | |

**Communication**

Communication barriers include the absence of materials needed to adequately communicate with all persons.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Staff are widespread across the community within a variety of office and service delivery environments. Dissemination of consistent messages and ensuring all entities necessary receive the information they need presents a challenge to service consistency. | EPI communicates with employees on a regular basis through the EPIcenter. Expansion of the use of the EPIcenter as well as exploration and use of other communication avenues will continue to develop a resource of consistent information for staff. | Continuous  *(Melanie)* |
| In order to improve interdepartmental communication, research and explore opportunities to expand communication avenues across agency departments. | Continuous  *(Jessica & Nicole R)* |
| **Progress:** |  |  |
| Consistent communication with employees:  EPI communicates with employees on a regular basis through the EPIcenter including communication among departments. Community Services began using the EPIcenter to track and house persons served Personal Outcome Measures® (POMs) interviews necessary for agency accreditation, The Council of Quality Leadership (CQL) and person centered plans. Payee Representatives began entering financial information for those who receive EPI payee services on the EPIcenter to be included in person centered plan. Project teams and committees continue to expand use of the EPIcenter to house OneNote notebooks so all members have quick and easy access to meeting agendas, notes, project updates and progress, meeting minutes, etc. Weekly communication is sent to all staff via email referencing the EPIcenter for further information. A history of email communication is stored and available to all staff. Training user guides are now housed on the EPIcenter  In addition to the EPIcenter, Facebook posts and updates have played a role in providing consistent commination regarding, career opportunities, fundraisers, agency announcements and promotional events. To further provide information regarding Hawkeye Child Development Center – Adult Learning Center, the center hosted an Open House event available to the community.  Expand communication across agency departments:  Friday All Staff Communication emails continue to help limit the frequency of emails staff may receive to keep them informed of happenings at EPI.  Roll-out of netbook and MiFi use for Intermittent Service DSPs has resulted in direct interaction between DSPs within this program and Information Technology staff rather than using supervisors as a go-through. This has improved the understanding of both teams regarding the needs and job expectations of the other.  Adjustments to processes regarding outstanding billing and internal audits have provided easy access and streamlined communication between accounting, QI/O and CS supervisory staff. | | |

**Technology**

Technology barriers occur when a technology can’t be modified to support varied assistive devices.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Increase accessibility of agency internal communication mechanisms and technology | EPI will provide training to supervisors and staff as appropriate. | Continuous  *(Jaclyn)* |
| Continue to update agency technology to improve the experience of the end-user and positively impact the quality of service | Continuous  *(Melissa)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Training to Supervisors & Staff  Trainings regarding updates to the Quantum documentation software was provided to all direct-care staff. Additionally, the Staff Development Assistant meets with new hires as soon as they begin services to review documentation and help ensure documentation and use of agency technology is a positive experience and to help individualize the training process. New Hire Orientation is back to a 3-day training, consisting of roughly 11.5 to 12 hours of in-person training.  Supervisors were provided ongoing training within the Quantum documentation software, as well as training focused on employment law, performance management in Bamboo, giving feedback, and setting goals. A survey was made available to supervisors regarding topics they would most like to see presented at monthly supervisor meetings.  36 Supervisors were trained to conduct Personal Outcome Measures® (POMs) Interviews with persons served. This includes three staff who went on to receive POMs Training Certification. POMs are a powerful tool to ensure supports and services are truly person-centered. In a POMs interview, 21 indicators are used to understand the presence, importance and achievement of outcomes, involving choice, health, safety, social capital, relationships, rights, goals, dreams, employment and more. The insight gained during a POMs interview is then used to inform the EPI Individual Service Plan.  Update Technology:  An integration was created between Quantum and the CTS software used by the transportation department in October. This allows for the transfer of persons served diagnosis, medical emergency information and emergency contact information for those who access our transportation services.  Owl – all-in-one video conference camera is used for meetings held at the Ansborough Office. This has allowed staff to easily remote-in for meetings and see all attendees.  Updates were made to the scheduler used in daily residential services in order to prevent loss of supervision. The update results in the system cross-referencing Novatime staff punches in order to confirm presence of staff at assigned shifts. If a staff had not clocked in within five minutes of their scheduled shift time, an alert text message is sent to the on-call supervisor. A reply with a specific code (unique by site) is required to clear the alert before it is sent to the second stage (Program Director). When supervisory staff are scheduled for shifts, the system sends a text to the supervisor, requesting confirmation that the supervisor is at the site since Novatime is not used by supervisory staff. If no response occurs from the supervisor within five minutes, a second stage text is sent to the Program director. The system monitors every five minutes up to the las hour of the shift. For unconfirmed shirts, the system checks every minute.  A visual notification was added to the scheduler used in daily residential services which shows when a staff has been scheduled for a shift at a site where they have not been trained on the Individual Service Plans of the persons living at the site. In these situations, the scheduler shows the staff's shift as orange, representing the need for training prior to services. Staff also receive an alert notifying them of the need to sign off on the plan (one alert per plan needing signature).  The EPICenter resources for person served was streamlined to be easier for the end user to locate and access needed information.  Talk to text options for work completion have seen increased utilization in both service and office locations.  Concurrent documentation started in June for Intermittent team members. They received netbooks and MiFi's, allowing staff to complete documentation in a more timely fashion and to do so with the person served present, giving them a chance to discuss their goal progress at the time of service.  Several significant updates within the CS Quantum documentation software system included the addition of an indicator for needed Drill Log follow up for supervisors and Preventative Healthcare notifications (supervisors, directors and auditors can anticipate what wellness visits need to occur). With the latter update, the Health and Wellness DSP position received a netbook as well.  In conjunction with an office remodel at the Deery Center, cameras and remote release door locks were added to Entrance B, allowing clerical staff to see staff waiting to gain entrance and open the door from either the Deery front office or the Ansborough office.  Staff engagement surveys were sent out in September. The website was opened so staff could access it from all work sites.  The EPI Payee office purchased software specifically geared towards the services they provide with hopes of increased utilization, better communication, and more timely information. | | |

**Transportation**

Transportation barriers impact persons from participating in the full range of services or access activities in the community.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Inadequate public transportation for persons served limits opportunities to engage in community activity; persons served are unable to access community opportunities in which they are interested | EPI will explore available options for alternative transportation opportunities for persons with disabilities to access community environments. | Continuous  *(Shannon)* |
| EPI’s transportation company will continue to provide accessible transportation services within the community. | Continuous  *(Tammy & Bob)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Increase opportunities for community integration through access to transportation:  EPI continues to work with internal and external stakeholders to both individually address transportation barriers and increase awareness about them in the community.  Program Managers, the Employment Specialist and other members of person’s served interdisciplinary teams work together to secure funding for transportation services, discover and assess different transportation resources, and collaboratively problem solve to most effectively meet needs of people with disabilities.  Furthermore, EPI’s management team advocates for public awareness through regular communication with local transportation resources:   * Anytime Taxi offers individuals with disabilities a discounted rate to and from work. * MET Transit General Manager, Mark Little attended the April 2019 supervisors meeting to increase awareness of options available and provided training on the ParaTransit application process. * MET Transit fixed Route 9 now runs during full MET timeframes. This route was previously available only for a few hours in the morning and late afternoon. * MET provides EPI bus passes free of charge in order to support persons served with transportation training.   EPI transportation services:  EPI continues to collaborate with local transportation services to act as advocates and encourage continued expansion of accessible public transportation systems. However, changes to ID Waiver transportation funding, effective 12/1/2017, continue to have a significant impact on EPI’s internal transportation company. With service provider agencies having to pay for transportation directly, several agencies opted to have their staff provide transportation rather than make an arrangement with the transportation entities in place prior to the transition. As a result, EPI’s focus related to transportation continues to be on options to increase revenues in expand ridership for internal routes. | | |

**Community Integration**

Community Integration barriers include those which keep persons served from fully participating within their community.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| Persons served live within community but do not reach full potential of belonging to community | Encourage and assist persons served with accessing volunteering opportunities to build social capitol within the community. | Continuous  *(Melanie)* |
| Maximize the availability of time in the community for persons served. | Continuous  *(Melissa)* |
| **Progress:** | | |
| Access to volunteer opportunities:  Persons served continue to increase involvement within integrated community activities, many times accessing support to arrive at these locations via natural supports or community bussing rather than depending on transportation from EPI staff.  EPI’s Day Habilitation program continues to access services within the community. Persons served experience activities focused on giving back to the community, increasing or maintaining stamina, and increasing community integration. Volunteer opportunities continue to grow and EPI has established new opportunities this year at such entities as George Wyth State Park, Waterloo Community Schools, Hartman Reserve and Waterloo Leisure Services. Partnerships continue to grow and EPI has been recognized for our support to our community:   * November 2018 – Persons served again volunteered with the Cedar Falls Community School Foundation to assemble 7,000 envelopes for their annual Tradition of Excellence mail campaign. This is the third year of this partnership. As a thank you, Cedar Falls Community Schools provided popcorn for EPI's Day Habilitation Program Christmas Party. * April 2019 – In addition to being active participate in More Than You See, persons served volunteer to set for the event. * May 2019 – For a second year, persons served planted and maintained flowers on Main Street in Cedar Falls. * August 2019 – While upholding EPI's mission to connect people and create opportunities, persons served accompanied HR to a career fair.   Maximize time in community:  This year the focus was primarily on those who participate in "daily" residential services. In this analysis, approximately 51% of persons served utilize unsupervised time while being transported to and from day habilitation or employment services. 36% of persons served have unsupervised time in the community in some capacity. There were a few folks who had stipulations of only utilizing this time with other house mates or other natural supports. There were 21% of persons served who did not have a notation of overnight staff. Most typically those in habilitation homes where unsupervised time may not be specifically stated and homes where Night Owl monitoring system was being used. If unsupervised time was agreed upon by the team, outside of those where there wasn't a specific limit, or those who didn't have any, the average was 3.56 hours per day in the community.  Opportunities extended specifically to persons served to attend in community events at free or discounted rates included:   * Free tickets to attend More Than You See on 4/6/19 * Discounted tickets to attend Cattle Congress * Free tickets for persons served to attend Waterloo Bucks game on 7/4/19 * Free tickets to attend shows at Waterloo Community Playhouse on various dates * Free tickets to ASPIRE Therapeutic Riding Program Cowboy Breakfast | | |

**Other Barriers**

Barriers identified by EPI persons served, staff, or stakeholders within the community (identified through Accessibility Barrier Forms). While improvements have been made, the Waterloo/Cedar Falls metro area presents challenges to persons with disabilities which create potential safety concerns.

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Due Date** |
| As identified through submission of Accessibility Barrier Forms | A representative from EPI’s Accessibility Committee will address issues and concerns with business owners, the ADA Compliance Commission, and/or the city to seek improvement. | Continuous |

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Completed** |
| 12/6/2018  Physical Barrier in community (Camelot Apartments) – Lack of accessible entry to restroom:  Within the Camelot Apartment building, a restroom on the main floor has historically been open for tenant use. New building management has chosen to lock this bathroom and not make it accessible to the tenants in the building. | Brittney Montross indicated this has been a concern of a tenant for some time. Management has locked the bathrooms following cleanliness issues and concern for people taking hygiene items. The request to reopen the bathrooms was made, but this is a private location and at the discretion of the owners/management. | 12/20/2018 |

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Completed** |
| 12/19/18  Physical Barrier in community (EPI Transportation) – Lack of accessible entry to bus:  The initial step onto the bus is difficult for person served to independently use to access the bus. Once on the first step, person served is able to use the hand rails to help with the other steps and access the bus independently. Due to short stature, using the railings from ground level to access the first step is very difficult for the person. | Nicole Rand followed up with Ron at EPI bus garage. Ron recommended having the driver come down and help staff support person served from both sides to make the transition from ground to the first step. Program Director, Megan Henning agreed staff/driver support as suggested by Ron may build confidence of person served and work to meet the person's needs.  Situation was managed with staff/driver support. Should the situation continue and further resolution be necessary, the committee requested the barrier be re-submitted. | 12/20/2018 |

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Completed** |
| 1/16/19  Physical Barrier in community (Marcus Theater, Waterloo) – Lack of accessible entrance  Many of the doors in the theater cannot be easily opened without an able-bodied person’s assistance. This includes doors to the entrances, doors to the individual theaters, and doors to the bathrooms. | Internal doors do not require automatic openers and installation of such would negatively impact the experience of patrons within the theater as the doors open and pause, allowing light. Theater staff are available to provide support within the building for any patron who needs support to access individual theaters. can’t  There are automatic entrance buttons to the theater but they aren’t easily seen. Jaclyn Hansen will contact the theater to see if a sign could be posted as to where the button is located. | Pending |

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Completed** |
| 6/28/19  Physical Barrier in community (Cedar Falls Recreation Center) – Lack of accessible entry:  The button used to activate the automatic door opener does not work to provide access to the building. | Brittney Montross accessed the Cedar Falls Rec Center and at the 10/17 Committee Meeting reported the automatic door buttons had been repaired and were working on all entries. No further follow up needed with business. | 10/17/2019 |

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| **Barrier** | **Solution** | **Completed** |
| 8/15/19  Physical Barrier in community (EPI Ansborough office) – Gender neutral bathrooms unavailable:  Bathrooms at the Ansborough office do no not offer a gender neutral option. | The Committee reviewed this request on 8/15/19. The issue was transitioned to EPI Leadership for their review and management by Nicole Rand. | 8/20/2018 |