



Exceptional Persons, Inc. FY20 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 Senior Leadership 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.

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 <i>(Terry)</i>
	Community Services Department will seek out and secure accessible housing for persons served to rent/lease within the community.	Continuous <i>(Melissa)</i>
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 <i>(Teresa)</i>
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 2020 <i>(Nicole R)</i>

Progress:

Modifications made by the Maintenance Department:

Exterior Modifications:

- Repaired/replaced concrete to prevent tripping hazards in 3 locations.
- Added a concrete step to make access easier at one location
- Updates to ramps, steps and decks around several homes to improve safety for tenants, including:
 - Replacing deck board
 - Providing sand for traction on slick ramps
 - Replacing narrow steps with platform steps
 - Building and installing new ramps at 3 locations
 - Reducing the incline of a ramp by adding a section and railing at one location.
- Replaced handrail at front steps of one location

Interior Modifications:

- Remounted or tightened basement stairwell railing to improve full access of 2 homes.
- Installed grab bars to reduce risk of falls within the bathrooms of 6 locations
- Installed handrails around a toilet at one location
- Installed magnetic shower heads (replaced hard mounts) in 2 homes
- Installed a shower chair in one home
- Installed toilet riser in one home

- Lowered closet rod to accommodate independent access for a person who uses a wheelchair
- Replaced doorknobs with lever handles on bedroom doors of one home.
- Repaired the transition between rooms in a home to prevent tripping hazard

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, EPI focused heavily on transition to community integrated housing. This resulted in the closure of three (3) Residential Care Facilities. Through the year, nine (9) locations were opened, and an additional nine (9) sites closed. Most of these closures were in response to finding homes which better met the needs and desires of persons served.

Durable healthcare equipment:

Durable healthcare equipment loans continue to allow persons to remain or return to their homes. This program loaned out 112 pieces of accessibility equipment of the following type:

- Wheelchair (18)
- Wheelchair cushion (1)
- Walker (31)
- Seated walker (3)
- Cane (14)
- Crutches (2)
- Bath chair (18)
- Bath transfer bench (4)
- Grab bars (3)
- Transfer bench (1)
- Commode (12)
- Elevated toilet seat (4)
- Bed rail (1)

Sidewalk recommendations:

FY20 sidewalk recommendations made to the Waterloo ADA Compliance Commission focused on the same locations recommended in FY19 apart from University Avenue in Waterloo, which is currently being updated to include sidewalks. The committee continues to recommend sidewalk construction at 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.

Barrier	Solution	Due Date
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:

Modifications made by the Maintenance Department:

Exterior Modifications:

- Installed exterior lighting at 2 homes to improve lighting at driveway

Interior Modifications:

- Installed flashing doorbell for a person with hearing impairment
- Installed light in ceiling of entry of one home
- Added baseboard heat to 3 offices to improve experience of staff

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.

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.	9/30/2020 (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:

- HIPAA Security – October 2019
- Sexual Harassment for Employees – October 2019
- Defensive Driving: The Basics – November 2019
- EPI Employee Automobile Use at Exceptional Persons Inc. (Fall) – November 2019
- Handling Food Safely – November 2019
- Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls – November 2019
- Bloodborne Pathogens – January 2020
- EPI's Rights, Responsibilities, & Restrictions – January 2020
- Workplace Violence – February 2020
- Service Documentation and Incident Reporting – March 2020
- Medicaid Waste, Fraud, and Abuse – March 2020
- EPI Pandemic Contagious Illness Policies Review – April 2020
- Infection Control: Contact Precautions – April 2020
- Infection Control: Droplet Precautions – April 2020
- Infection Control: The Basics – April 2020
- Personal Protective Equipment – April 2020
- Cultural Competence – May 2020
- Emergency Management and Abuse Reporting Review – June 2020
- EPI Employee Automobile Use at Exceptional Persons Inc. (Spring) – August 2020
- Ethical Decision Making: The Basics – August 2020
- Got Bugs? Dealing with Infestation – August 2020
- People with Disabilities: Building Relationships and Community Membership – August 2020
- PPE Donning and Doffing; Medical Respirators N95 Fitting Instructions – August 2020
- Pulse Oximeter Use at EPI – August 2020
- Personal Protective Equipment – September 2020
- Voting Rights Advocacy – September 2020

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 Manager, Bethany Jura represented EPI at UNI, presenting information regarding services available for persons with disabilities to the Special Education Teaching program.
- Courier article *EPI volunteers blazing safer Cedar Valley trails* recognized the partnership between participants at EPI's Day Habilitation services and the Cedar Trails Partnership and Waterloo Leisure Services on November 19.
- 2019 Giving Tree (November-December 2019) – EPI partnered with Discerning Wealth, PDCM Insurance, CBE, Nazareth Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waterloo Police Protective Association, CN Railway, Harrison Truck Centers, and Veridian Fiscal Solutions to meet the needs of those who otherwise wouldn't have gifts to open for the holidays. Through the support of our community, we were able to fill over 350 needs for those we serve.
- Program Director, Nicole Rand and Associate Program Director, Nicole Ericson met with representatives from the Schoitz Foundation to discuss employment services on November 7.
- The Supported Employment team began working to develop a partnership with Iowa Works to provide persons interested in community employment access to needed resources in January 2020. This facilitated an opportunity for Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht to present information on EPI's Day Habilitation and Supported Employment services to the Community Partners Committee at Iowa Works on February 20.
- Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with representatives from community partners, including Otis & Henry's at the Isle Casino and Hotel, VGM, Senior Connections Committee, and Nazareth Church to discuss EPI's Day Habilitation and Supported Employment services (January/February 2020).
- Business partnerships – EPI's signature fundraising event, More Than You See, brought in 18 sponsors including 2 new – Magee Construction and Hagarty Waychoff Graup Funeral Services. Even though the 2020 MTYS event was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all sponsors transitioned their sponsorship into a gift to the organization. (April 2020)
- Courier recognition of Direct Support Professional, Trang Conrad for receiving the ANCOR 2020 Iowa Direct Support Professional of the Year award on April 25.
- Courier Letter to the Editor by Executive Director, Chris Sparks regarding the work of DSP as invisible, essential workers on May 9.
- Executive Director, Chris Sparks, participated as a panelist at the ANCOR Congressional Briefing on May 14. The virtual briefing, titled Forgotten Faces: Understanding the Fiscal and Human Impact of COVID-19 on Disability Supports Virtual Congressional Briefing, featured panelists discussing the human toll of the virus from often overlooked perspectives, and connected those narratives to overall implications for services nationwide.
- Fox28: Iowa's News Now article *'Invisible' healthcare heroes go above the call*, raised awareness of the work of direct support professionals and the impact of COVID-19 on local persons with disabilities (August 2020)
- Business Developer, Tom Engelbrecht met with representatives from the River Plaza, facilitating a partnership with EPI Day Habilitation for a second service location (August 2020).
- September 2020 article in The Courier, "Employee development is key at Exceptional Persons" recognized the work done at EPI as a result of employees nominating EPI for the 2020 Employers of Choice award.
- Service Outcomes Manager, Bethany Jura spoke with residents at the Northeast Iowa Family Medicine Residency Program about services offered by EPI and how they can partner with agencies such as ours to get persons the supports they need.

Financial

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

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.

Grant requests include (those funded are noted as well):

- Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa – EPI awarded \$15,000 for employment services
- CFNEIA – EPI awarded \$10,000 from Covid-19 disaster response fund
- Delta Dental Foundation of Iowa – EPI awarded \$2,500 for Covid-19 disaster response
- Wells Fargo – EPI awarded \$1,500 for Covid-19 disaster response
- Otto Schoitz Foundation – EPI awarded \$15,000 for employment services
- Waterloo Housing Trust Fund – EPI awarded \$9,747 for direct rent assistance for persons served
- NDI/Citi Bank – EPI awarded \$25,000 for Covid-19 disaster response
- Veridian Credit Union – EPI awarded \$5,000 to support greatest need
- US Bank – EPI awarded \$4,500 for critical housing updates
- Cedar Falls Housing Covid Relief – EPI applied for \$10,000 for rental assistance (status unknown)

The Exceptional Persons Foundation's annual appeal has raised over \$150,000 through 9/30/20. Funding supports FY20 budget gaps to support EPI's greatest need.

Our 7th annual More Than You See dueling pianos fundraising event was cancelled due to COVID-19. This fundraiser showcases and celebrates the value persons with disabilities contribute and serves as a major portion of our annual fundraising efforts. MTYS brought in over \$30,000 in net revenue even in the absence of an in-person event. This came in the form of business sponsorships and individual ticket sales that were donated to the organization in lieu of the event.

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.

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.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges and the need to expand advocacy efforts beyond those EPI characteristically is involved with each year. The financial impact of the pandemic has been significant due to the effects of reduced revenues in some programs and increased expenses in others. Advocacy efforts to gain attention to the role of EPI staff as essential workers and obtain financial support from state and federal proved fruitful. EPI received federal monies from the Public Health and Social Service Emergency Fund and state monies from the Iowa CARES act.

Chris Sparks, EPI's Executive Director, was appointed to serve on the national Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Technical Expert Panel. An initiative of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the Home and Community Based Services Technical Expert Panel (TEP) is a group of 15 thought-leaders from across the country who have been invited to help shape the direction of a set of HCBS quality measures.

Essential Needs Funds assistance:

Challenges to meet financial obligations continue to impact persons served. The Essential Needs Fund provided over \$15,540 in financial assistance. Funds used in the following capacity:

Category	# Funded
Personal Needs/ Milestones	9
Rent Assistance	19
Temporary Child Care Emergency	3
Home Furnishings	1
Stuff, Etc. Voucher	
Child Care Start Up/ Expansion	
Move In Packages	10
TOTAL	42

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. In addition, the rental assistance category was used to support deposits for new homes as EPI closed its remaining RCF sites.

Employment

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

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 (Sandy)
Retention of trained, effective staff.	Continued focus on staff appreciation/celebration to positively impact staff satisfaction and retention.	Continuous (Brittney, Stacey & Sandy)
	Provide front line supervisory staff with training regarding positive leadership practices	Continuous (Sandy)
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 teamwork related to this area includes two groups: Onboarding New Hires and Career Advancement Program. Both groups focused on DSP's and how we can improve the quality of the trainings, attract career-oriented employees, and retain while advancing skills in our current workforce.

Changes were made regarding new hire orientation:

- The first two weeks of onboarding for the DSP is for job shadowing and learning how to document. We have created a test site in Quantum that allows DSP's to practice documenting while a Trainer then reviews and discuss what is missing.
- 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.
- Connection with all colleges in the Cedar Valley area to associate with their Career Centers and join in on their career fairs. Even in the 2020 pandemic, EPI has participated in 8 college career fairs, held a virtual recruiting event and held recruiting events at Iowa Works and Upper Iowa.
- 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.
- Talent Recruiter & Retention Coordinator has reached out to all new hires through a 30 days evaluation to check in on their experience so far.
- Expanded the 70 hours of training to be completed within 90 days instead of 60 days.

Recruiting efforts:

- HR opened an account with Handshake, a college recruiting tool that reaches out to all colleges that have adopted this free site for their students. All area colleges around the Cedar Valley participate.
- Data is collected and reviewed quarterly for trends in recruitment. This information is used to prepare departments for anticipated turnover and staffing needs.

- Career fairs have transitioned to a virtual format. EPI representatives continue to attend all available opportunities in the area.
- Recruitment team increased paid presence on social media sites including Facebook, Spotify, LinkedIn and Twitter to reach targeted audiences.

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 2019

- Annual Soup day potluck was available for all staff. Staff voted on their favorite soups, with a prize for the top three winners.
- All staff and persons served were invited to take part in SimplyH2O, a program to encourage hydration. Those who participated were grouped in teams. The team with the highest water intake received a prize.
- A free flu shot clinic was available to staff, held at the Ansborough Ave. office.
- Staff Referral Bonus increased to up to \$800 for each new hire referred who stays 12 months
- An employee engagement survey was put out to staff via AJB Research Services

November 2019

- 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 for a bike, a \$50 gym membership credit, or a Yeti water bottle.
- 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.
- 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.

December 2019

- Celebration of the role of DSP occurred during our annual holiday meeting, all staff were given \$100 instead of the traditional holiday meal.
- The EPI Update included years of service recognition for staff celebrating work anniversaries for the first time, a practice that now occurs each month.
- 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.

January 2020

- EPI staff were offered a 50% discount on tickets to the More Than You See (MTYS) event.
- 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.
- EPI staff were able to purchase furniture, appliances, printers, and other items as agency storage was cleared out.
- Staff were made aware that leaving a review about EPI on Indeed, Glassdoor, Facebook, etc. are additional ways to support the HR Department agency with recruitment via as Social Sharing (entry into \$100 monthly drawing).

February 2020

- Persons served and the staff attending with them were offered free tickets to the MTYS event.
- Results of the Employee Engagement survey were shared at the EPI Update. Staff were invited to provide additional input and generate ideas with their teams to seek solutions to areas with below average ratings which are important to employees.

March 2020.

- Benefits-eligible employees (those regularly scheduled 30+ hours per week) were invited to attend virtual Open Enrollment meetings to hear about the range of benefits available at EPI.
- As Day Habilitation services were closed by Governor Proclamation, all staff in the Day Habilitation program were offered temporary positions supporting residential services.

April 2020

- Temporary pandemic pay increase of \$3.00 per hour for DSPs and Hawkeye Child Development Staff.
- Emails came out to staff to communicate COVID concerns and additional PPE was deployed to support staff onsite. This included a cloth face covering for all Community Service and HCDC staff.
- Microsoft teams was made available to agency to communicate internally and externally during the pandemic.

May 2020

- Online ANCOR ceremony for Chu Conrad, Iowa's state DSP of the year - ANCOR's Virtual Direct Support Professional of the Year Awards Ceremony on May 6.

June 2020

- Virtual "walk in" interviews started
- PPE became more available to DPS and supervisors
- Pandemic pay was adjusted to reflect local case status, where \$3.00 increase per hour was offered only for DSP and HCDC staff working with COVID-19 positive persons.

July 2020

- All agency meetings, trainings, etc.
- Staff working directly with persons served or children were provided a face shield to wear in addition to their mask to further prevent the spread of illness.

August 2020

- PPE was more available, and DSPs started wearing disposable surgical masks in daily services.

September 2020

- The EPI Foundation Kickoff announced virtual Bingo in lieu of an in-person event. Prizes were awarded for individuals who received a Bingo.
- Celebration of Direct Support Professionals Week (September 13-19), where EPI DSPs were invited to a virtual celebration. At this event, 12 DSPs were recognized for their exceptional services in the community and all DSPs were presented a thank you video from the agency, expressing appreciation for all they do for persons served. Staff were also provided an appreciation gift of an EPI shirt.
- Staff were made aware that DSP recognition for the work they do will occur with a monthly announcement of a DSP winner to be entered into the Five Star Club.
- Kim Bumgardner-Bergman was a recipient of the 2020 MITC Direct Support Professional Awards, which recognized DSPs who went above and beyond to provide exemplary service during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Career Advancement Program (CAP) was introduced to DSPs. This program offers DSP's an opportunity to build skills and advance through 5 levels. (DSP Registered, DSP Certified, DSP Advanced, DSP Specialist, and Mentor).

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 childcare spots.
- ANCOR Shared Resources Purchasing Network – as a long-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 more.

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:

On a monthly basis FLS participate in a professional development opportunity focused on a summarized version of the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, by Steven Covey and The 5 Levels of Leadership by John Maxwell. Between trainings, supervisors receive regular reminders of things to work on to improve their leadership skills and to build a cohesive team environment.

Increase opportunities for integrated employment:

Within Employment services, focus continues to be on increasing opportunities for community employment for persons with disabilities within individual community jobs. EPI moved away from small group employment services through enclave, officially ending this service option in March 2020. Partnership development with businesses throughout the Cedar Valley resulted in community employment for 46 persons served with the following employers:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ○ Little Ceasar's | ○ Midwest Janitorial |
| ○ Pinnacle Specialty Care (3) | ○ Ross Dress for Less |
| ○ Pizza Ranch | ○ Brown Bottle (2) |
| ○ JoAnn Fabrics | ○ Exceptional Persons Inc. |
| ○ Firehouse Subs | ○ Fleet Farm (2) |
| ○ Marcus Crossroads Theater (2) | ○ Five Sullivan Brothers Center |
| ○ Burger King (2) | ○ Carlos O'Kelly's (2) |
| ○ Jiffy Lube (2) | ○ Maple Lanes |

- TJ Maxx
- Sunnyside Golf Course & Country Club (2)
- Walmart (2)
- Texas Roadhouse (3)
- Long John Silver's/KFC
- Pizza Ranch
- Applebee's
- Peppers
- Whiskey Road
- Goodwill Industries of NE Iowa (2)
- Sam's Club
- Lowe's
- Montage (2)
- Hy-Vee
- Hurts Donuts
- Papa Murphy's

EPI Supported Employment Service's partnership with the American Dream Network as an EN provider has expanded to include virtual employment supports nationwide.

Communication

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

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 <i>(Melanie)</i>
	In order to improve interdepartmental communication, research and explore opportunities to expand communication avenues across agency departments.	Continuous <i>(Brittney & Dawn)</i>

Progress:

Consistent communication with employees:

EPI communicates with employees on a regular basis through the EPIcenter including communication among departments. Human Resources continued using the EPIcenter to house Fillable Health Enrollment forms as well as information regarding Open Enrollment. Labor Laws for remote worker have been added to the EPIcenter as well.

The EPIcenter has become essential when communicating accurate and up to date information surrounding COVID-19. In March, a page on the EPIcenter was dedicated to providing staff information on the virus. This site includes agency status relating to active cases, deaths and recovery of staff and persons supported, COVID-19 response and action taken to ensure safety of employees and persons served, as well as procedural changes and updates.

Weekly communication continues to be sent to all staff via email referencing the EPIcenter for further information. A history of email communication is stored and available to all staff.

In addition to the EPIcenter, Microsoft Teams was downloaded and implemented on EPI computers. This has played an important role in staying contact with employee's agency wide.

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.

EPI Updates transitioned to a virtual format via Microsoft Teams and increased in frequency in March to help communicate information related to the COVID-19 to staff. From March-June these updates were provided every other week, transitioning to a monthly virtual event from July forward.

Technology

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

Barrier	Solution	Due Date
Increase accessibility of agency internal communication mechanisms and technology	EPI will provide training to supervisors and staff as appropriate.	Continuous <i>(Jaclyn)</i>
	Continue to update agency technology to improve the experience of the end-user and positively impact the quality of service	Continuous <i>(Melissa)</i>
Lack of relevant assistive technology for persons served	Explore and implement use of assistive technologies to allow persons served to access information and improve quality of life and independence.	Continuous <i>(Melissa & Brittney)</i>

Progress:

Training to Supervisors & Staff

Ongoing training for Quantum continued throughout FY20. The Staff Development Assistants continue to meet 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 for new hires.

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.

Staff were provided training in the new electronic MAR system, QuickMar. Supervisors were provided training for both the staff and supervisor experience with this software.

Staff were provided information to help them protect data at home and in the workplace via announcements from the Information Technology department found in agency All Staff Communication emails. As remote work became more regular for office staff, instructions related to forwarding phone calls and other tips for managing connectivity and handling computers in a remote environment were shared by the IT department.

16 Office Employees, 9 of which are Supervisors, were trained to conduct Personal Outcome Measures® (POMs) Interviews with persons served. 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

The electronic MAR system was rolled out in phases between March and August. This system is aimed at increasing accuracy of medication administration.

Due to COVID-19, when in person activities were not possible, technological barriers were reduced while maintaining the security of PS information. Web addresses for on-line grocery shopping, zoom meetings and other events were allowed so that persons served, and staff could participate as much as possible.

In April, the organization initiated COVID symptom checks for all staff entering persons served homes, office areas or other sites. Staff enter data on the EPIcenter, with follow up by supervisors as necessary.

The Company Portal was rolled out in June. This Mobile Device Management application is an adds an additional level of security for all EPI-owned mobile devices and staff personal devices used to access EPI Data.

Assistive Technology:

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many technological mechanisms came into play in quick succession. When in person activities were not possible the IT team removed some technological barriers while maintaining data security. Web addresses for on-line grocery shopping, zoom meetings and other online events were allowed so persons served, and staff could participate as much as possible. As Microsoft Teams became available, persons served were able to use this platform as well to connect with family, friends, and their planning teams.

To better accommodate non-English speaking stakeholders (including ASL), EPI updated agency after-hours answering services to include multilingual messages. Partnership with Affordable Language Solutions continues, a service where staff can access experienced linguists in hundreds of languages (including ASL).

Transportation

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

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 <i>(Shannon)</i>
	EPI's transportation company will continue to provide accessible transportation services within the community.	Continuous <i>(Tammy & Bob)</i>

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:

- EPI transportation services ended, and EPI purchased a fleet of vans to support with transporting individuals.
- MET provides EPI bus passes free of charge in order to support persons served with transportation training.

EPI transportation services:

Changes to ID Waiver transportation funding in 2017 continued to have significant impact on EPI's internal transportation company. This, in conjunction with extended program closures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, lead to EPI's route-based transportation program closing. While field trip services remain via bus, residence-based vehicles are now used to provide transportation to locations previously addressed by EPI route-based transportation. The transportation garage now serves as an auto repair service for the public. Services include, but are not limited to, oil changes, tire repair needs, brake pad replacement, exhaust repair and more.

Community Integration

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

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 capital within the community.	Continuous <i>(Melanie)</i>
	Maximize the availability of time in the community for persons served.	Continuous <i>(Melissa)</i>

Progress:

Access to volunteer opportunities:

Additional considerations surrounding the health and safety impact of non-essential community access has come with the presence of COVID-19; however, persons served do continue to maintain involvement within integrated activities, as they are available in the community.

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. The program was closed due by governor proclamation from March 17, 2020 to June 17, 2020. Upon reopening, additional precautions and limited community volunteer opportunities resulted in increased use of outdoor spaces. As a result, EPI Day Habilitation expanded its community partnership with the Cedar Valley Trail System where persons served volunteer to maintain or clear trails. Day Habilitation staff came up with several ways to continue living the program's mission while also promoting safety. One of the ways persons served especially enjoyed was playing a role in of The Kindness Rocks Project.

Maximize time in community:

Focus continues to remain primarily on those who participate in "daily" residential services, where access to time spent alone, outside of staff supervision has historically been less prevalent than persons accessing other service types. The percent of persons who can access unsupervised time in

the community in some capacity has increased by 5% in FY 20 (41%), when compared to FY19 (36%). There has also been an increase in the average length of community unsupervised time available to persons served with such limits from 3.56 hours per day in FY19 to 4.05 hours per day in FY20.

Fifteen percent of all current persons served have no limit on the time they spend alone in the community.

EPI is developing a Human Rights Committee which will review rights restrictions, including those for time spent alone. This committee, which is scheduled to commence in January 2021, will focus on applying due process procedures when limitations on personal freedoms or rights have occurred or are contemplated. Future review of unsupervised time will transition to that committee.

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.

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

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>1/16/2019 Physical Barrier in community (Marcus Theater, Waterloo) – Lack of accessible entrance</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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</p> <p>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. Follow up by Shannon Henson was completed in March, when Assistant Manager (Dayton) indicated signage would be ordered.</p>	3/5/2020

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>12/14/2019 Attitudinal Barrier in community (Kentucky Fried Chicken, Waterloo) – limit of two separate drive through orders per vehicle</p> <p>Limiting orders in drive through to two does not allow for all persons in a home to access this method to order food.</p>	<p>This rule applies to all persons in the community; a disability specific exception to this business rule was not pursued.</p>	12/27/2019

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>12/18/2019 Environmental Barrier (EPI PDM office, Waterloo) – Cold office spaces</p> <p>Offices with windows at PDM become very cold in winter months.</p>	<p>Terry Conrad indicated the type of window framing used in the building is the problem and recommended baseboard heat be installed under the windows to alleviate the problem.</p> <p>Baseboard heat was added to the office spaces of concern on 1/29/2020.</p>	1/29/2020

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>12/30/2019 Physical Barrier in community (Lakeview Lodge, Waterloo) – Lack of accessible entrance</p> <p>The entrance used by volunteers at this location cannot be easily opened without an able-bodied person's assistance.</p>	<p>Nicole Rand contacted EPI's internal contact related to volunteer work at Lakeview Lodge – Bobbie Schmidt. Bobbie reported that external doors do have an accessible button for entry, but internal doors do not. A secure system is used in the building which requires guests to be buzzed in. The receptionist who grants access is available to open the door for anyone in need of assistance. Posted signage explains this process as a safety procedure for residents.</p> <p>Committee agreed in February meeting that no further follow up is needed. The building security measures allow for support needed to enter.</p>	2/20/2020

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>1/2/2020 Physical Barrier (EPI Ansborough office, Waterloo) – Lack of accessible hygiene products in restroom.</p> <p>The layout of the sink area within the restroom available for public use was not accessible for a person using a wheelchair.</p>	<p>Nicole Rand presented this barrier to the agency Senior Leadership Team (SLT). SLT requested clarification regarding the type of chair and if moving the trash can or changing the placement of the soap dispenser would remove the barrier. Follow up with the staff who made the initial report clarified the following: the chair was manual and repositioning the soap dispenser would make the biggest impact.</p> <p>The soap dispenser was moved to allow easier access for persons using a wheelchair. No change was made to the sink area; cutouts and counter depth meet ADA requirements.</p>	3/1/2020

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>2/16/2020 Physical Barrier in community (Marcus Theater, Waterloo) – Lack of accessible entrance</p> <p>The accessible button at the theater entrance is not working.</p>	<p>Shannon Henson spoke with management at the theater. The accessible button was repaired as of 3/5/2020.</p>	3/5/2020

Barrier	Solution	Completed
<p>5/8/2020</p> <p>Physical Barrier in community (1716 Rainbow Dr, Waterloo) – Lack of accessible entrance</p> <p>Handrails are not present at this home in the community, creating a fall risk for tenants.</p>	<p>Nicole Rand reached out to Rachel Moses, Program Manager for persons living at this location. Rachel followed up with landlord, Mark Pregler, who agreed to add a railing.</p>	<p>6/23/2020</p>