

ANCOR Links

March/April 2015

Columns

CEO Perspective: Demonstrating Skill -- Not Bluster

by Barbara Merrill, Esq.

Looking back 45 years — and while implementing the new HCBS community settings rule, looking forward to the future.



This is a big year for anniversaries — the ADA turns 25, and ANCOR turns 45! We have made enormous progress together, which is incredibly important to remember as states and ANCOR members prepare to implement the new HCBS community settings rule.

Let's look back 45 ago — to 1970. The ARC was the Association for Retarded Children and its principal mission was running small private schools. In 1970, most American citizens with developmental and intellectual disabilities were warehoused in huge state institutions. As history has proven, it was not uncommon for people to be restrained for extended periods of time, while the more "pliant" were often rented out to businesses to do dirty and difficult physical labor at a very low wage, most of which the worker would never see.

If you hold this in your mind's eye as a snapshot, it's certainly not a pretty picture. But if you see it as a documentary in which you're watching the passage of time, then you see the seeds that will give birth to a dramatic transformation.

In 1970, the voices of change were blowing in the wind. Family members were demanding that regular public school would open their doors to their children. And, state by state, handfuls of people and enterprises were developing alternatives to large state institutions. These new voices were demanding, through political and legal action, that people with developmental disabilities no longer be locked away. Those pioneers weren't usually referred to as entrepreneurs or innovators, but as troublemakers or do-gooders.

And in that year — 1970 — 45 years ago, those troublemakers formed ANCOR. And yet as farsighted as our founders were they might have had trouble imagining how far this cause would advance, or what a **constructive and stabilizing force their small organization would become.**

Advance to 1975. Just five years after the creation of ANCOR the United States Congress passed the **Education for All Handicapped Children Act**, which was later modified to strengthen protections to students with disabilities and renamed the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**. This was our *Brown v. Board of Education* with the same far reaching consequences, for when a child is guaranteed equal right to be educated beside every other child you produce a generation that sees inclusion as their natural right. Fairness, respect and inclusion are habit forming.

And sure enough about the time the first children to be mainstreamed were finishing high school, the **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)** was enacted by the U.S. Congress. Senator Tom Harkin authored the bill and was its chief sponsor in the Senate. The Senator delivered part of his introduction speech in sign language, explaining that it was so his deaf brother could understand. That will be 25 ago this July.

But some states continued to operate large institutions — despite mountains of evidence documenting the poor outcomes. It took the Supreme Court's 1999 landmark decision in *Olmstead*, and the Obama Administration's deep commitment to its enforcement, to greatly accelerate the pace in a number of states.

These changes in our national fabric represent real human progress, a significant step toward ensuring that the people we serve are afforded the same opportunities as people without disabilities.

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The closure and significant downsizing of state institutions has taken courage and perseverance, but as a question of best practice, it's been an easy call. But now we are at a stage of development where the issues are more nuanced and where people of equally good intentions can have real and profound differences. This makes ANCOR's role even more important than it was 45 years ago, because it falls uniquely on us to see to it that the forces of progress are not divided and set against each other.

Divided our progress can fall victim to neglect by public decision makers who are always looking for ways to cut spending for the weakest political players. United we can offer a steady hand to guide policy — divided we're a push over.

Since the final HCBS rule's release in January 2014, ANCOR has conveyed our support for the outcome oriented standard embodied in the final waiver rule. The definition was five years in the making, and final rule addressed many of the concerns we shared with CMS. Earlier versions of the rule had us extremely nervous about what the final rule would mandate — the final rule was frankly a relief. But it is no cake walk. And it is important to understand that CMS only set a floor — states are free to submit transition plans that go further than the federal rule requires — and some have.

We at ANCOR are fully cognizant that the rule presents states and providers with many challenges to ensure that services begin now to comply with the characteristics of community settings laid out by the rule. We are committed to conducting a thorough review of state plans and implementation, while providing our members with education, best practices, support for member service system transition and expanded collaboration on the rule with aging and mental health providers.

We support the spirit of the HCBS waiver rule to enhance the quality of an individual's experience and we recognize the historical value of the rule in moving the needle forward towards full community integration for people with disabilities. Ultimately, it is our aim to ensure that the right funding and policies are in place, so that the spirit of the rule is achieved and its implementation does not inadvertently cause harm to the people it serves, but enables more people with disabilities to successfully integrate into the community.

I began with a look back at our common history. Seen through that prism, the HCBS waiver rule is an important and vital step in an evolutionary process of policies and practices that was born out of the deinstitutionalization efforts in the mid-1900s. Meaningful, informed choice must be the foundation of any comprehensive plan for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, but we cannot let our community make common cause with those who would hide behind the banner of choice in order to halt all progress.

Finding the right course will require thought, not knee jerk reaction. It will require skill and not bluster, but ANCOR is perfectly positioned for the job. Our membership combines the diversity and the goodwill needed to find and stay on a middle course that all can follow. We have the respect and skills to have our voices heard in the councils of power. But our most important asset is one we inherited from our founders. We have our North Star to lead us through these tricky waters. Our lode star is embodied in the word community and community is ANCOR's middle name.

Author LINK: **Barbara Merrill** is CEO of ANCOR. She can be reached at bmerrill@ancor.org.



Public Policy: Reports from the Policy Front

by Katherine Berland, Esq.

Highlights from ANCOR's "Washington Insiders Club," a weekly round-up of top stories and headlines of the week distributed to ANCOR Members only.

Highlights from ANCOR's Washington Insiders Club (WICS)

ANCOR distributes WICS, a round-up of top stories and headlines of the week, to ANCOR Members only to keep them up to date on significant policy and political developments of note to the disability community. The following entries highlight the most significant reports of the last several months.

Allocated Money Will Finally Fund the National Housing Trust Fund

(April 6) On Thursday, the Department of Labor (DOL) announced a series of proposed rules that will implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) which was signed into law last summer. The announcement taken from the [WIOA website](#), which includes links to pre-publication previews of the rules follows. ANCOR has begun analysis on the rules and will submit comments on them as appropriate. Any member who would like to provide input on the comments ANCOR is developing should contact Katherine Berland at kberland@ancor.org.

From the WIOA Website:

DOL announces the release of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (joint NPRM with the Departments of Education and Labor) and the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Notice of Proposed Rulemaking](#) (Labor only) for preview on the Federal Register's [Public Inspection Web site](#). Read more [here](#).

CMS Releases Advance Copy of Revised ICF/IID Interpretive Guidelines

(April 6) On March 31, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its opinion in [Armstrong v. Exceptional Child Center, Inc.](#) (Docket No. 14-15), holding that the Supremacy Clause does not grant private providers the right to bring a private cause of action against a state. The case originated in Idaho, where a group of private service providers brought a case against the state alleging that the state set Medicaid rates too low to pay for services it required under its program, and that the state knew the rates were not adequate.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals had affirmed the providers' right to bring the case. The Supreme Court reversed the opinion of the Appeals court, leaving providers without recourse through the courts to enforce Medicaid rates. The opinion of the Court noted that Congress is empowered under the Supremacy Clause to determine enforcement mechanisms and there is no indication under the Medicaid Act that a private right of action is permitted. Instead, the Court advises providers to take up unfair and inadequate rates with the federal agency, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Secretary of its overarching federal agency, the Department of Health & Human Services.

ANCOR joined the American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living, the National Community Pharmacists Association, the American Pharmacists Association, and America's Essential Hospitals in filing an [amicus brief in support of the plaintiffs](#) in December, arguing that there are multiple ways that the Court could uphold the rights of providers in light of the Supremacy Clause. Read more [here](#).

DOL Secretary Tells States to Prepare to Implement Home Care Rule

(March 30) In a letter sent to governors dated March 20 (attached below), Secretary of Labor Secretary Thomas Perez advised states to "thoughtfully" prepare to comply with the Home Care Rule that was finalized in 2013, which was set to go into effect on January 1 of this year. The rule narrows the use of the companionship exemption and imposes additional timekeeping requirements. In the letter, Perez acknowledges ongoing litigation challenging the rule, and states strongly that states should be prepared to implement the rule promptly once the case is concluded. (See WICs article, "[ANCOR Releases Memorandum on Impact of Recent DOL Home Care Rule Court Decisions](#)," February 6, 2015, for a thorough analysis of the court ruling.) Read more [here](#).

HUD Awards \$150M to States for Housing for People with Disabilities

(March 9) On March 2, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that it is awarding \$150 million in rental assistance to 25 state housing agencies. The grant money will be used to provide permanent, affordable rental housing and needed supportive services to approximately 4,600 households who are extremely low-income persons with disabilities, many of whom are transitioning from institutional settings into the community. The grants were made as part of the Section 811 Project Rental Assistance (PRA) program. Read more [here](#).

NCD Releases Paper Examining Impact of Size, Other Characteristics of HCB Settings

(March 2) The National Council on Disability (NCD) has released a paper titled "[Home and Community-Based Services: Creating Systems for Success at Home, at Work and in the Community](#)." The report was authored by staff of the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services (NASDDDS), in collaboration with colleagues from the Center on Human Policy at Syracuse University, the Institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota (ICI/UMN), and the Human Services Research Institute (HSRI) Read more [here](#).

Author LINK: Katherine Berland is ANCOR's Director of Government Relations. She can be reached at kberland@ancor.org.



State Association View: Outcome Measures - Where Are They?

by Diane McComb

Whether your state is moving to managed long term services and supports or you are paid under fee for service, funders are increasingly looking to providers to demonstrate what they can do, so tracking meaningful outcomes is critical.

Tracking outcomes meaningful to people with disabilities is a critical function of service provision these days. Whether your state is moving to managed long term services and supports or you are paid under fee for service, funders are increasingly looking to providers to demonstrate what they can do.



The only way this can be accomplished is by measuring the impact of services to people with disabilities. Providers can choose from among many quality assurance packages on the market, including the Personal Outcome Measures by the Council on Quality and Leadership and the National Core Indicators from Human Services Resource Institute in addition to several for profit products that work well. Regardless of the tool used, it's what one does with the data that's critical.

Associations can assist their members in doing this in a variety of ways. In legislative advocacy, imagine how powerful data can be for a state association to be able to say 95% of their members are successful in getting people employed for 6 months or more; or that their care coordination efforts result in better health outcomes such as fewer readmissions to hospitals, or emergency room visits than individuals without that care coordination.

Collectively we need to hone in on quality measures important to people outside of the field of disabilities to market our services as having value to the larger systems our states look to measure. Take employment as an example - in states implementing Medicaid Buy-In programs, data show individuals who are employed have lower claims against Medicaid than when they were not working. Further, this is true whether an individual is working 40 hours a week or 2 hours a week. States using this data can justify paying more for employment services to incentivize this outcome.

We also know when people have individual budgets and are empowered to choose their supports and providers of services they are more satisfied than individuals who do not have control over their budget. There is validation in being able to "vote with their feet" by actively controlling the funding supporting them. Imagine a system without slots, but rather one that relies on data demonstrating desired outcomes meaningful to individuals and their families.

There is not one state in the country paying for meaningful outcomes right now. Nearly every state is paying for process outcomes such as a day of attendance or a fifteen minutes increment of service. No one is paying to get someone a job. No one is paying bonuses for people keeping a job for six months or a year. No one is paying for keeping people out of the emergency room or from being re-admitted to a hospital, despite our members providing care coordination.

And what of our workforce? Study after study shows lower turnover and higher retention in agencies where direct support professionals are certified in some fashion. Further, people with disabilities rate higher levels of quality in those agencies as well as higher levels of satisfaction. Why are states acknowledging these data and paying incentives to agencies supporting certification efforts?

It's time we market our members' services for the outcomes they achieve. It's time we measure the value of what we do in terms our funders can embrace.

Don't miss Diane McComb's session entitled, **"Building Capacity for Sustainability — Collecting and Using Outcome Measures Data,"** at [2015 ANCOR Conference: Ignite!](#) (May 3-5, 2015).

Author LINK: **Diane McComb** is ANCOR's Liaison to State Associations and can be reached at dmccomb@ancor.org.

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Wage & Hour: Location! Location! Location!

by *Joni Fritz, Labor Standards Specialist*

The first thing to look at in determining how to pay direct support staff is to ascertain the place where they are providing the supports.



The place people live usually dictates how staff are paid.

The first thing to look at in determining how to pay direct support staff is to ascertain the place where they are providing the supports. This is generally an indicator of the employee/employer relationship.

- People who work at a site owned or leased by the provider agency generally will be considered to be employees of the provider agency and therefore must be paid in accordance with minimum wage and overtime rules of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). If different rates of pay are used for employees who work in two or more positions for a provider, overtime pay must be based on a weighted average of those jobs, or the employee may agree in advance to be paid at the rate applicable to the overtime hours actually worked. (This latter example often applies to higher paid employees who may substitute for a direct support employee in a lower paying job at the end of their workweek.)
- People who provide supports in their own homes may be considered to be self-employed and working under a contract with the provider agency if they have set themselves up in the business of providing services in their own homes (e.g., host homes). Agencies must also be sure to comply with IRS requirements for form 1099 when contracting for services of this nature.
- People who provide services in the home of the person who needs supports may be considered to be employees of the agency who sends them into the home(s). In this case, all of the FLSA wage and hour rules apply. If such employees travel between two or more sites during a single work day, they also must be paid for travel time between the sites.

Other agencies contract with individuals to work in the homes of people who are disabled or elderly. Care must be taken to assure that these contractors meet conditions expected by both the DOL and IRS for contractual arrangements.

At this writing, Federal Courts are examining the minimum wage and overtime exemptions extended under the companionship exemption when direct supports are provided by employees of a third party agency.

ANCOR has a sample contract which may be used — in conjunction with state law — to help assure that DOL and IRS conditions are met when a provider agency wishes to contract with employees who support people with disabilities in their own homes or in the homes of the person(s) who require supports.

This guidance substitutes for information contained in Chapter 6 of the ANCOR Wage & Hour Handbook for those who have copies of the handbook.

Author LINK: *Joni Fritz is a Labor Standards Specialist whose guidance is free to ANCOR members and to those who attend a Wage and Hour Workshop or participate in a teleconference she that has conducted. Any ANCOR member who wishes to make arrangements for consultation or workshops with Joni must first contact Esmé Grant, ANCOR Senior Director of Government Relations, for a referral at (703) 535-7850, ext. 105 or egrant@ancor.org.*



Articles

ANCOR Weighs In on New York Times Asylum Op-Ed

ANCOR Responds to a NYT Asylum Op-Ed

In March 2015, the *New York Times* published an op-ed article titled, "The Modern Asylum," (February 18, 2015). The piece endorsed views in an article that had been published a month prior in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* titled, "Improving Long-term Psychiatric Care: Bring Back the Asylum," (January 20, 2015). Additionally, the NYT piece advocated for the institutionalization of people with developmental disabilities. Many experts have rebutted the JAMA article, and dozens of disability rights and advocacy groups (including ANCOR) wrote letters to the NYT in response, several of which were published.

The Judge David L. Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law has compiled many of the letters written in response to the article, and included links to them on a news release available here. ANCOR's letter of response follows (it is also available for download [here](#)).

Response to the New York Times Editorial Board from the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) regarding the Op-Ed, "The Modern Asylum," by Dr. Christine Montross (published February 15, 2015):

Dr. Montross' assertion that returning to large institutions is the solution for individuals with significant behavioral and/or developmental challenges is misdirected. The solution lies instead in strengthening the policies and funding sources supporting these individuals so they can achieve full lives in communities where they live.

After 25 years of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), perhaps our greatest lesson is that the largest barrier to integration is the persistent belief that it is not possible. The American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR) has for decades represented hundreds of organizations around the country that provide community services to almost half a million individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, that enable them to work, live, and thrive alongside their fellow Americans.

Research tells us placing individuals with challenging behavior in large institutions exacerbates that behavior and does little to mitigate the circumstances prompting it in the first place. People with disabilities and their families need and yearn for the secure presence of a responsive health care system to assist them and their loved ones when intensive behavioral interventions are warranted. While it is easy to assume a return to larger, institutional settings would resolve the complex issues Dr. Montross references, it is a misguided approach. As the calls to reinstitutionalize remain, the ADA, one of America's greatest legislative achievements that is now replicated around the world, reminds us that the most important thing about people with disabilities is that they are people first and foremost and should not have to live their lives as patients behind the walls of exclusion.

The solution we should be discussing now, with Dr. Montross and others, is how to identify more psychiatrists and other

community providers who can work with disability service providers as crises occur and how to direct adequate resources to proven solutions and trusted community partners rather than returning to the large state-run institutions of the past. Moving forward, it is crucial to elevate the dialogue on this topic to increasing the capacity of all community providers and their staffs so that we may honor and uphold the inalienable rights of people with disabilities to live in the community.



Blast from The Past: President Awards Freedom Medal to Disability Advocate

To commemorate ANCOR's 45th anniversary, this year we're publishing articles from *LINKS* issues of the past.

To commemorate ANCOR's 45th anniversary, this year we're publishing articles from some LINKS issues of the past. The following posting is an excerpt from the March 1998 issue of ANCOR LINKS (Volume XXVIII, No. 03). Please note that the photograph below did not appear as part of the original LINKS article.

President Awards Freedom Medal to Disability Advocate

President Clinton awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom to 15 distinguished Americans in late January. Among those receiving the Nation's highest civilian honor at a ceremony in the East Room of the White House ceremony was a well-known disability advocate — Justin Dart.

Considered the father of the historic **Americans with Disabilities Act**, Justin Dart has worked from his wheelchair for more than 40 years to expand the rights of others. From his days at the University of Houston organizing a civil rights initiative to his government service as U.S. Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration during the Reagan Administration to his trailblazing work on behalf of people with disabilities. As the White House stated in its press release: *Dart has profoundly influenced the public policy of this Nation.*

In presenting the Medal of Freedom to Dart, President Clinton said, "Justin Dart literally opened the doors of opportunities to millions of our citizens by securing passage of one of the nation's landmark civil rights laws: The American with Disabilities Act. Throughout his career, he has worn many hats, and he's wearing one of them today."

The allusion to hats refers to the stock trademark of this vigorous, but gentle advocate. Spotted easily in Washington, D.C. and throughout the nation over the years by his characteristic Texas



President Bush with Justin Dart, February 14, 1990. (photo credit: The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities)

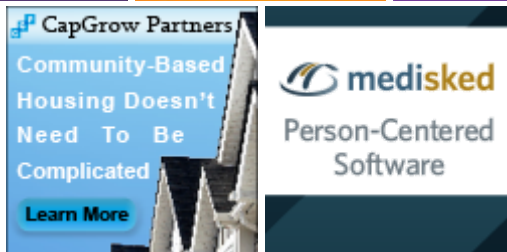
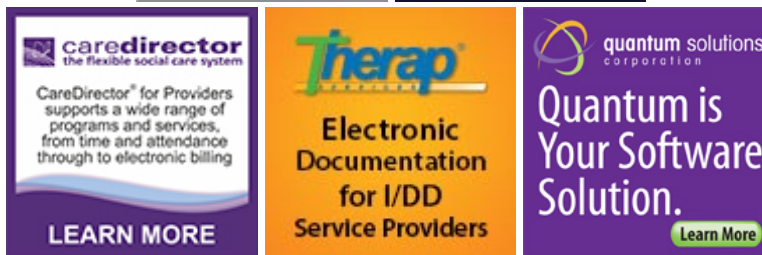
Stetson hat, Dart has earned the reputation of lawmakers, government officials, people with disabilities, families, and others as both a *dealmaker* and a *peacemaker*. Always encouraging the troops to press on to gain justice and freedom for people with disabilities, he also buoys the spirits of everyone.

When - at any single point during the many legislative skirmishes over the years - advocates appear to lose heart, Dart utters a *call to arms* that signals the battle is not over and rallies forth the strength and resolve of everyone who hears his stirring words. Justin Dart always reminds everyone of the ultimate goal, the progress achieved, and the will and the way toward victory.

The following is the formal citation recognizing Justin Dart for this honor:

"The purpose of human society,' Justin Dart has said, 'is to empower every individual to live life to his or her God-given potential.' He has made that purpose his own. Since contracting polio as a young man, he has worked for the independence, inclusion and empowerment of people with disabilities. A leading architect of the Americans with Disabilities Act and a driving force behind its passage, he has had a profound impact on the public policy of this Nation. Justin Dart has earned our thanks for helping us recognize the possibility within each individual and for tenaciously advocating equal access to the American Dream for all our people."

Hats off to Justin Dart!



New Horizons Resources Welcomes Samuel Laganaro as Executive Director

New Horizons Resources, Inc. welcomes a new Executive Director.

New Horizons Resources, Inc. recently announced that **Samuel “Sam” Laganaro** has taken the helm as its 4th Executive Director, since its incorporation over 40 years ago. He succeeds William Beattie in this position.



An attorney by training, Laganaro worked to support disability rights for the New York City Commission on Human Rights earlier in his career. From 1998 to 2013, Sam served as NHR's Director of Human Resources, and returned in 2015 as Associate Executive Director after having served as Deputy Executive Director of Organizational Development at Crystal Run Village from 2013 to 2015.

Laganaro is a graduate of the Leadership at the University of Delaware's National Leadership Consortium on Development Disabilities.

About New Horizons Resources, Inc.

New Horizons Resources, Inc. is a not-for-profit agency that provides services to over 400 children and adults who have developmental disabilities and live in the Hudson Valley region of New York State. The agency was founded in 1974 by a group of parents seeking alternatives to institutionalized care for their sons and daughters. In 1981, the agency opened its first residences for adults with developmental disabilities and today operates 36 residences in Dutchess and Ulster counties.



Community Access Unlimited Honors Community Partners, Members and Staff

Advocates for people with disabilities honored at Annual Awards Celebration.

Community Access Unlimited (CAU) recently honored the community partners that help make the agency so effective in enabling its members to live fully integrated lives. CAU honored 10 community partners at the agency's Annual Awards Night Celebration on April 8. The agency also honored its members who have thrived during the year and staff who have excelled at supporting their members.

Each year CAU honors individuals and organizations that help the agency fulfill its mission of enabling members to: integrate into and live independently within the community; enjoy the rewards of employment; achieve full educational opportunities; advocate; worship in an embracing environment; and live healthy lives.

The award winners were:

- **Reverend Dr. Erika Crawford:** *Citizen of the Year Award* for her support of the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Committee, which has been spearheaded by CAU.
- **Walmart of Union:** *Employer of the Year Award* for employing several CAU members.

- **Elizabeth Pharmacy:** *Healthcare Professional of the Year Award* for assisting CAU members with their medical needs.
- **The Westfield Area Y:** *Community Service Award* for their commitment to supporting CAU members, including sponsoring a holiday giving partnership matching members of the Westfield community with CAU members.
- **Marc Rosenthal,** Division of Developmental Disabilities: *Distinguished Social Service Award* for his exceptional dedication to and care of CAU members as the Union County director for the Division of Developmental Disabilities.
- **Sahas and Sangeeta Varadkar of Ias Accent:** *Community Partnership Award* support of CAU's Academy for Continuing Education program.
- **John Fig:** *PASP Advocate of the Year Award* for his work in advocating for the rights of people in the PASP, or Personal Assistance Service Program.
- **Elizabeth Manley,** Children's System of Care: *Youth Advocate of the Year* for her advocacy for youth in the community.
- **Dr. Philip Smith,** Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities: *Educator of the Year Award* for his help ensuring that CAU members have the highest level of training and can reach their full potential.

CAU also honored the accomplishments of its members at the dinner, including independent living, recreation, education and employment. The agency recognized 59 employed members marking a combined 685 years of employment service. Staff members from CAU's various support areas were honored, as well, as were those marking anniversaries with the agency, a combined 450 years of service.

About Community Access Unlimited

CAU is a statewide nonprofit providing support programs and services to more than 6,000 adults with disabilities, as well as youth served under the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to enable them to live independently in the community, in areas including vocational and life-skills training, education, advocacy and recreation and in-home services.



From Our Partners

Learn What You Love & Live What You Learn

by Jeanine D'Alusio, Manager of Learning & Development, Relias Learning

Applying the Principles of Adult Learning.

Imagine a company that focuses on the art and science of adult learning so that you don't have to fall into the habit of "checking off boxes" when training your staff. Imagine a fully engaged workforce that actually looks forward to training!

It's no surprise that work is where we spend the majority of our time. I recently read a quote that caught my attention: "There's no way I was born to just pay bills and die". Think about that. If you anonymously surveyed your staff today, would the majority respond that this is exactly how they felt?

Unfortunately, no one has created a system in which we don't have to pay bills (wouldn't *that* be nice?), but what if I asked you to replace that quote with "Learn what you love and live what you learn"? Think about the potential that phrase could have on your staff and your organization. Is that just a feel good phrase, or is it really possible?

It is possible. Based on Malcolm Knowles' principles of adult learning, the following needs must be met to effectively accomplish "learning what you love and living what you learn." Take a look. Are you currently addressing these needs when you train your staff?

Build on prior knowledge

People attach meaning to learning by drawing from prior experiences. They have various levels of experience and require different launching points. They need to know that the new information makes sense and has personal meaning. The most effective connects learning to the learner's life experiences. Structure your curriculum and content appropriately.

Strive for goal-oriented learning

When people need to learn something specific to accomplish a goal, they are more motivated to learn. Provide learning experiences that include explicit goals for their practical experience. Incorporate real-life scenarios into your content and ask questions that encourage reflection to clearly show the relevance of the information to their work.

Make training practical

People need to recognize how the information they learn relates to their lives and their work by means of practical application. Practical does *not* equal boring! Keep them engaged. Use video, audio, audience participation and interaction. Use emotion and gamification. Be original and creative. Make sure they understand that the information is useful and applicable.

Answer the question: "What's in it for me?"

Why learn something without gain? People need to know that if they put in the time and effort to learn new information, they'll gain something of value in return, whether that's a new skill, a new outlook or a new understanding. Use course objectives to explain what will be gained. Explain the applicability and relevance.

Respect your learners

Imagine assigning required training to your entire staff on a regular basis. They don't know why the training is assigned or how it pertains to them individually. They complete assessments but never know if they passed or failed. Respect your learners by providing personalized, constructive feedback. They bring considerable life experiences to their roles and have a part in directing their own learning. Take interest in their individual development. How are they doing? Where do they need to improve? Encourage ideas. Provide prompt feedback after exams. Supervisory assessments and skills checklists can also be used as feedback and development tools.

Promote self-direction and internal motivation

People tend to resist learning if they feel that information is being forced on them. Facilitate an approach that fosters internal motivation. Invite them to ask questions and then actively listen to what they say. Create courses using the "test, then tell" method, which lead the employee to inquiry. Encourage self-motivation by providing links to available resources or downloadable documents within courses.

Focusing on the value that training provides to your staff is definitely important, but try keeping the opposite in mind, too. The value that your staff provides to your training can exponentially increase that value and have a much greater impact on learning.

Do you want your staff to learn what they love and live what they learn? To learn more, please [visit this link](#).

Author LINK: Jeanine D'Alusio is Manager of Learning & Development at Relias Learning. She can be contacted at jdalusio@reliaslearning.com.



Selecting Enterprise Software is a Very Big Deal!

by Doug Nafziger, CEO, Solana

Here's a guide to help navigate through the software purchasing process.

Learn how to navigate and simplify the software purchasing process by:

- Identifying your agency's objectives
- Comparing software solutions
- Making a confident decision

Introduction

The software purchasing process can be overwhelming and confusing. I know the importance of the decision that you are considering and this article will guide you and your agency to the best decision, helping to navigate the complex evaluation process.

Establish Expectations & Objectives

The timeline for choosing software, from start to finish, can take up to six months. The best way to start the evaluation process is to establish clear expectations and objectives. By knowing your specific objectives, you can more effectively compare solutions. Some common examples of what an agency's objectives for a new software solution might be are eliminating the need to maintain two or more different software packages with the same information, sharing relevant information among departments without sacrificing sensitive information and having easy-to-understand process flow. Plus, in today's world, security of your data is vital!

Once you know what your objectives are, you can take that list and compare it to the potential software solutions that you will identify. Depending on what your main goals are, you may come across several solutions. I recommend the use of a spreadsheet to help you weight and prioritize your requirements and see how they compare with the software that you are evaluating.

Initial Research

When you are looking for software companies you can find them through multiple sources. Ask other agencies in your area what software they are using, reach out to your state provider association to see if they offer a vendor purchase program or use Google or other search engine to search for keywords like "I/DD Financial Management software" and "I/DD Specific Billing Software."

When you contact a software company, make sure you clearly share your objectives. The software representative should tell you how the features of their software would meet your requirements. Next, ask the representative to set up a software demo and to gather pricing information for you. In order to get the most accurate pricing, the representative may ask questions like "How many individuals are you serving?" or "How many employees do you have?" or "How many users would access the software?" In most situations, these numbers do not have to be exact, but the closer you can get to the actual number, the more accurate your quote will be.

Demo and Pricing

Before the software demo make sure you pass along any information you have gathered about the software to the other members of your team who will be attending the demo. This gives them a chance to start thinking about questions that they need answered. Key members that you should invite and be in attendance are your agency's Executive Director, Finance Director, IT Director as well as any day-to-day users and their managers.

During the demo, take advantage of the one-on-one attention you are receiving from the software representative. Let the presenter know how you are currently doing things along with the problems you are having with your processes.

Ask to see how the software would handle those specific tasks and issues. Some other great questions to ask could be:

- How is security handled in the software?
- How can the software be customized to my agency's specific business processes?
- What does the implementation and initial training process look like?
- How long does it typically take?
- What types of resources are needed from the end-users of the agency?
- How is the software updated and maintained? Does it cost extra?
- What does support look like?
- If it is a cloud-based/hosted solution, how is your data protected?
- If hosted (commonly a SaaS or subscription-model), is a SOC1 in place?
- What are the ongoing costs of the software?
- Do you have any customer references that we can talk with?
- How is the software licensed/sold?

Narrow Your Options and Make the Decision

The demo should provide a wealth of useful information. Take time to talk with your team after the meeting and forward any follow-up questions to your software representative. Some agencies find it helpful to have a second meeting with the representative to clarify your understanding or to talk through other concerns. You can also learn about affordability options and financing plans.

Finally, consolidate all of the information you gathered to make a highly-qualified and confident selection!

*Author LINK: **Doug Nafziger** is CEO of Solana, an enterprise technology and business services firm that serves agencies in the intellectual and developmental disability segment throughout the United States. Doug can be contacted at doug@solanapro.com.*



Home Modifications

by Alexis Budge, Director of Business Development, CapGrow

Because the need for appropriate and affordable community-based housing is increasing, a strategic leasing partnership is a good option.

There is an increased need for appropriate and affordable community-based housing across the country. Providers in every state are being faced with changing regulations and rising costs. In some areas, new government mandates have significantly altered the requirements for operating a community-based home. Such changes to compliance standards often demand that additional capital be invested in order to bring each home up to "code."

To use one example, many states and local governing authorities now require that new or upgraded life-safety systems be integrated into each home. Commercial grade fire suppression systems not only require an investment of as much as \$20,000, per home, but can also place stress on an already tight operating budget.

Often, providers must ask themselves what options they have available to better manage or offset such costs. Listed below are just a few possible solutions providers can consider:

- Redirecting capital from existing funding streams
- Applying for bank financing
- Using outside investors/ donations
- Working with a Strategic Leasing Partner

Many of these strategies have been used for years, but accessing capital through a strategic leasing partner is one possible solution many providers may not have thought of as being available or even considered. It's important to know that the right strategic leasing partner has the necessary capital available to fund 100% of the modification costs. As an added benefit, many strategic leasing providers can also assist with portfolio acquisitions, M&A transactions, and even purchasing new or replacement homes. The right leasing partner can move quickly to handle the heavy upfront costs and time involved in the real estate process. This allows organizations to focus on what they do best — provide quality care to the individuals they serve.

A strategic leasing partner can give complete control of the property to the provider, allowing them to make modifications as necessary for the individuals living in the home. The right partner can also cover the full cost of any modifications and associated installation fees. The cost can often times be built into the monthly lease payment.

Providers face new challenges every day. Balancing a strict budget while bringing the highest level of care can be complicated. Don't let capital required to meet licensing standards and adaptability needs be a barrier to providing exceptional care in your community-based homes.

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Member Benefits

Did You Know: Sprint and BeneStream!

Check out these special offers for ANCOR members!

"Did You Knows" feature vendors in the ANCOR **Services Corp.'s Shared Resources Purchasing Network!**



Mobility Solutions
Provider

Did You know that your **Company** can receive up to 26% discount on most Sprint/Nextel wireless products and service plans? [Click here](#) for more information? Also, did you know that your **Employees** can receive up to 25% discount on most Sprint/Nextel wireless products and service plans? [Click here](#) for more information.



Did You know that BeneStream can save providers up to 90% of the cost of insuring your low-income workers? [Click here](#) to find out more information.



SRPN: What Members Are Saying...

The Shared Resources Purchasing Network (SRPN) partners with national companies to provide significant savings to ANCOR Members.

The **Shared Resources Purchasing Network (SRPN)**, administered by the *ANCOR Services Corporation*, partners with national companies to provide significant savings to ANCOR Members and supports ANCOR programs. Members who use the SRPN enjoy savings and leading purchasing practices, and can rededicate their savings to needed programs. The SRPN discounts with selected vendors also apply to Members' employees, persons served by the organization and their families. Here's what some ANCOR Members are saying about SRPN.

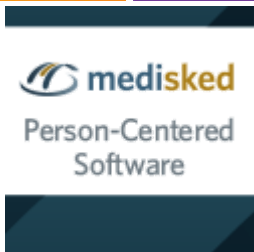
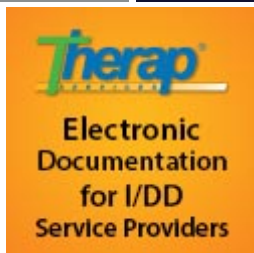
"Office Depot has provided us with the best value, pricing and selection for our office supplies. This is especially important because now we don't have to negotiate every time we purchase. We also appreciate their genuine customer service. Thanks to ASC's Shared Resources Purchasing Network we look forward to the discounts on Office Depot's supplies and services!"

National Children's Center

"ANCOR Services Corp's Shared Resources Purchasing Network has not only saved us money but, because our staff can also participate, it allows us to extend this discount opportunity to our employees."

Charlie Hooker, Keystone Human Services

For more information, including a list of SRPN vendor partners, visit [ANCOR Services Corporation](http://www.ancor.org) or contact Marsha Patrick at mpatrick@ancor.org.



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