

## NWCCI SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

NWCCI's Sustainability Plan encompasses organizational, community, and financial stability and longevity. Our Sustainability Plan is our roadmap for achieving long-term goals and for continuing our programs, activities, and partnerships. This plan reflects and supports our values and our mission.

From an **organizational** perspective, NWCCI's Sustainability Plan is derived from and informed by our history and experience. NWCCI was founded in 1997 as the Independent Life Center. We are one of nine Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Colorado and over 400 CILs throughout the United States. In 2013, current Executive Director Ian Engle rebuilt and renamed the organization, implementing a complete overhaul to revitalize the organization, recruiting staff and board members to embrace a participant-driven model of success and shift the paradigm of how human services are delivered. Our strategic plan was developed with the Board of Directors in 2016, and was updated in June 2020 to address current circumstances and continue our sustainability and success. As of 2020 our budget, staff and number of people using our services has more than tripled since 2014, and we are now better able to avail our services in our entire five County catchment area (Summit, Grand, Routt, Moffat and Rio Blanco Counties). We have stabilized the number of staff and currently hire only for attrition or specific program enhancements. NWCCI has developed into a firmly rooted Center for Independent Living with systems in place for ensuring succession and operational and financial longevity.

We have shifted from a service provider organization to a movement of people with disabilities coming together to realize the shared value of our unique experiences. We use our lived experience to educate elected officials and key decision-makers about the well-intentioned pity and paternalism that would relegate us to passive observers of our own lives. The message carried by the people who use our services has resonated with elected officials. In 2016 the Colorado Congress passed a Joint Budget Committee sponsored bill that included a fiscal note, making funding for Independent Living a state law. This momentous and unprecedented act of state government acknowledged the valuable impact of Independent Living services in Colorado. Concurrent with the law that effectively increased the NWCCI budget by 300%, NWCCI created a strategic plan goal to reduce reliance on state contract revenue, which we have reduced from 95% in 2013 to 68% in our budget for our fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Understanding the importance of long-term **financial** sustainability, NWCCI's staff and board are constantly developing and implementing plans to diversify our funding, through a combination of several strategies, ensuring that the continuation of our programs does not solely rely on any one stream of revenue:

- **Fee for Service or Earned Income:** We continue to develop and enhance our fee-for-service revenues through billing Medicaid and as a vendor for employment services authorized through the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation as part of our effort to build capacity for supporting job-seekers with disabilities. We are applying some foundation grant funds as seed money to generate new and innovative program revenue, such as non-emergency medical transportation and nursing home transition services (both billable to Medicaid.) Our deaf Independent Living Coordinator regularly delivers American Sign Language trainings for which we are able to earn income.
- **Individual Contributions:** We are increasingly supported through the generosity of individuals and organizations in the communities we serve, including through online capabilities that include monthly giving from some donors.
- **Grants:** Our full-time Development Coordinator researches and applies to new, existing, and evolving funding sources. Our grants received and pending are intended to support our programs or boost capacity, to provide seed money for revenue-producing innovations, and to increase our sustainability. Some of our foundation

partners provide us multiple year funding, or repeated grant awards from long-time organizational supporters over several years. We continue to develop, build, and sustain relationships with foundations, and we have an immense amount of community support from local organizations and other grant making organizations.

- Government Contracts: We have continuing and long term contracts including with the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Colorado Department of Transportation, and School Districts within our communities.
- Annual Campaign Letter: This is evolving through innovative donor-centric communication to inform donors of our activities, successes and needs, and to identify, cultivate, and solicit new donors and partnerships with individuals, corporations, and local businesses.
- Annual Fundraising Event: Our event Hungry for Independence is in its third year, and is being innovated with regards to COVID-19, and it increases public awareness of NWCCI, relationship building, and the celebration of people with disabilities living well and independently. We cultivate individual, corporate, and local business sponsorships.
- We continue to develop our staff and board's ability to further diversify our revenues. We are exceedingly fortunate that our Executive Staff and Board possess an array of gifts and talents including diplomatic collaboration, accomplished fundraising, high-level entrepreneurship, innovative and creative solution seeking, partner level Certified Public Accountant guidance, and strong community involvement. Future funding strategies may include entrepreneurial business ventures, cause marketing, and employer-based fundraising, as well as an infinite expanse of other possible streams.

We benefit from an annual independent audit, strict government oversight of our financial systems, contractual requirements, and solid internal controls. We have created an operating reserve, a fundraising committee, and a finance committee to further guarantee our financial sustainability. We ensure important procedures and information are documented in case of staff turnover, and we remain flexible in our programs should changes be desired.

Our vision includes **communities** that thrive with resources and opportunities for people with disabilities to do for ourselves and establish and maintain our health and the ability to live independently in our communities. NWCCI highly values collaboration with partnering institutions. These relationships can be expected to continue to evolve indefinitely. Collaborating partners may help identify new funding streams or other resources to continue operations with alliances in place to support our communities together. Your investment in us has high value and will return ongoing increased social outputs. NWCCI continues to sustain outcomes from our programs, which have long-term impact and meet the community's needs beyond this grant. NWCCI is stable and will be viable well into the future. Our programs are adaptable, rely soundly on coalitions and partnerships, are supported by our organization's capacity, are regularly evaluated and adjusted where appropriate, and fit within our strategic planning model.

NWCCI's Sustainability Plan is encapsulated in our three-year Strategic Plan (available upon request). With support from one of our foundation partners, The Craig-Scheckman Family Foundation, NWCCI and its Board of Directors have worked with a strategic consultant to develop, implement, and update our Strategic Plan in June 2020, building upon our previous five-year Strategic Plan that has guided us until this year. Sustainability planning is conducted throughout our programs on a regular basis. Our Strategic Plan includes focus on three dominant goals, each of which have several sub-goals. Every sub-goal has multiple Annual Objectives and Outcome Indicators, and an assigned Responsible Person for each Objective. NWCCI's first goal is to strive to attain fiscal stability. This includes our established annual fundraising goal and delivering fundraising events and activities, completing necessary capital improvements to contribute to and assure the efficient and effective delivery of services, and

developing a programmatic evaluation methodology to assess the efficient use of available program dollars. NWCCI's second goal is to increase its public visibility, demonstrated by an increase in the number of individuals served, the number of referrals received, and census of the donor base. Sub-goals are to conduct a series of community education events designed to increase awareness of services and resources available, to create new marketing messages and materials aimed at distinctly different audiences, and to hold annual community forums to assess customer needs and expectations. NWCCI's third goal is that NWCCI Board, staff and consumers will confer and develop a mutually agreed upon "Culture Statement." The sub-goals are that NWCCI will invest in Board competence by delivering relevant learning experiences, will complete succession planning for key staff and board positions, will be thoughtful in its board recruitment, will be strategic in managing program growth, expansion and geographic placement, and will ensure an adequate and effective infrastructure to ensure timely and efficient delivery of services.

Today, NWCCI is thriving because we are on the front-line, working with people with disabilities to access health care and basic needs in the midst of COVID-19. NWCCI is uniquely equipped to address the challenges that have arisen for people with disabilities during this pandemic. As a designated essential service provider, we are directly supporting people with disabilities who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. We are proud that we are actually increasing our support of people who need us now. Another way we are thriving is that we have adapted very well in our five counties to remotely working together and meeting the diverse array of needs for those we serve. We thrive in that we are flexible in these incredibly challenging times, and we adjust, improvise, and accommodate those who use our services, as well as each other. We are thriving in that our diverse Board of Directors has risen remarkably to our situation and supports us immensely with strategic involvement and direction, including financial guidance. The silver lining in this pandemic for NWCCI is that we are built to meet challenges like this and we have been galvanized to perform and execute our mission.