



Alliance Core Value: Community Living

Community living is a core value for all Alliance members, and a central tenet of Alliance's vision that all Coloradans with intellectual and developmental disabilities achieve the highest quality of life they desire.

Just like everyone else, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) want to live quality, self-determined lives in communities of their choice. They deserve to experience the full range of life opportunities that communities offer, including personal relationships with family and friends, meaningful work, and activities that allow them to explore and fulfill their interests. The most current research in the field supports this belief. More importantly, though, people with IDD express these desires over and over again. Alliance members strive to offer services and supports that people with IDD need and want to be fully participating and contributing members of their communities.

As services for individuals with IDD have evolved the trend in Colorado and nationally has been toward home and community-based services rather than institutional services. A number of states have completely eliminated state-operated facilities for individuals with IDD, and the federal government has made community living a top priority. Colorado is working to reduce the census at its state-operated Regional Centers and transition their current residents to community service providers. In recent years, Alliance has successfully worked with the Department of Human Services to ensure the successful transition of a number of former Regional Center residents.

Alliance supports these efforts and believes that, with adequate resources, all people with IDD can be served in the communities of their choice. However, gaps exist in our current service system for people with both IDD and behavioral health needs. Alliance offers the following recommendations to build capacity to serve these individuals:

- Design services and supports that consider the holistic needs of the individual and his or her community-based support system. Existing payment structures incentivize providers to attempt to attribute an individual's symptoms to either their IDD or a behavioral health diagnosis, rather than recognize that such a distinction is often impossible.
- Move toward privately operated, community-based services for people with IDD and behavioral health needs. Private providers offer a cost-effective alternative to state-operated services, and are aligned with national trends as described above.
- Identify areas where the current service system needs to be redesigned to allow greater flexibility in providing supports to this population. For example, allowing more flexibility for HCBS providers to contract with behavioral health providers for services, and giving

HCBS providers more flexibility in administering PRN medications to prevent behavioral crises. An actuarial analysis of serving these individuals should be conducted to identify gaps in existing funding and payment structures.

- Support an environment of innovation at the state, service system, and local levels to close system gaps. This includes: innovative pilot programs to test new service delivery options; workforce development strategies to ensure access to providers who are well-trained in the behavioral health needs of people with IDD; and developing capacity among host home providers and family caregivers to manage complex medical and behavioral health needs.

Alliance welcomes collaboration with all stakeholders to make community living a reality for all Coloradans with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Alliance is a statewide association of Community-Centered Boards (CCBs) and Program-Approved Service Agencies (PASAs) who provide services and supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Alliance Contact: Emma Hudson, Alliance Legislative Liaison, ehudson@alliancecolorado.org
www.AllianceColorado.org

