



Performance Improvement Guide

Fiscal Year 2001

Purpose of the Guide: This instrument is used on an annual basis by the ICON Management Team to assess program accomplishments. Asking the same questions each year fosters consistency in our approach to data analysis and provides us with information on our program that may be compared over a long period of time. We share these program outcomes with our customers, our staff, our funders, and the general public. (This and related documents may be found on our website at <http://www.iconservices.org/pig.html> or requested by phone at 703-548-4048, ext. 101.) We also use this information internally as a part of our ongoing continuous quality improvement process.

Overview of ICON's Services

This section is intended to give the reader a basic understanding of the major activities of ICON and the source of funding for these services.

1. What sort of services does ICON deliver?

ICON was founded in 1985 to further the opportunities for people with disabilities to work in real jobs in the community, and until 1997 our services and other projects were primarily focused on employment.

In July of 1997, ICON acquired the assets of Shared Housing of Virginia, Inc., a provider of community living services. The acquisition of the community living program enabled ICON to expand its sphere of activities in pursuit of the long-term goal of full inclusion of people with disabilities in the life of the community.

During FY '99, ICON began its Life Skills Training program: an intensive, short-term service designed to provide survivors of brain injury with the

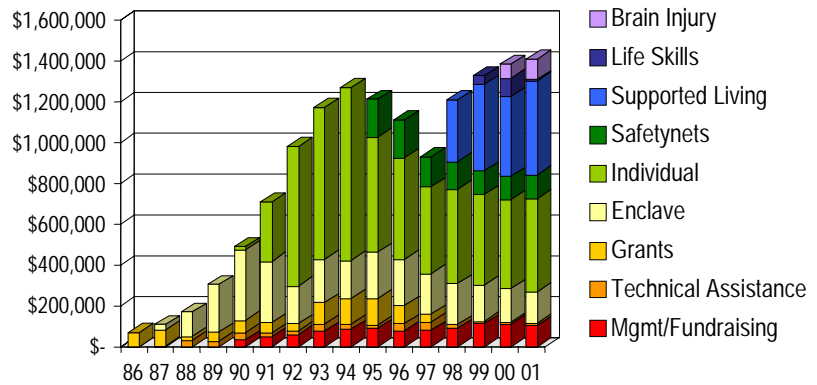
compensatory strategies they will need in order to meet the demands of the workplace.

In October, 1999, we began delivering a variety of services to survivors of brain injury in the four-county region around Fredericksburg, through funding provided by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS). We referred to this as the Fredericksburg Brain Injury Project (FBI). Funding for this project was terminated in June, 2001. Further information about the project may be found on page 18 of this document.

2. Who does ICON serve?

During FY '01, we served a total of 269 people: 69% received employment services, 16% received community living services, 3% received life skills training, and 11% received services through the Fredericksburg Brain Injury Project.

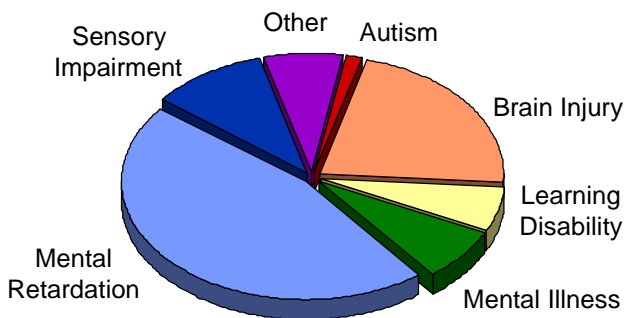
Fig. 1 – Program Expenditures by Type of Service



Of those receiving employment services, 57% were people who receive long-term support; the remainder received short-term 'place and train' services (40%) or other employment-related services such as assessment or travel training (3%). Long-term support is typically provided either through local Community Services Boards (for people with developmental disabilities) or through state-funded

Long Term Employment Support Services (LTESS), administered through DRS, for people who need ongoing support and have no other source of funding.

Fig. 2 – Primary Disability of ICON Consumers



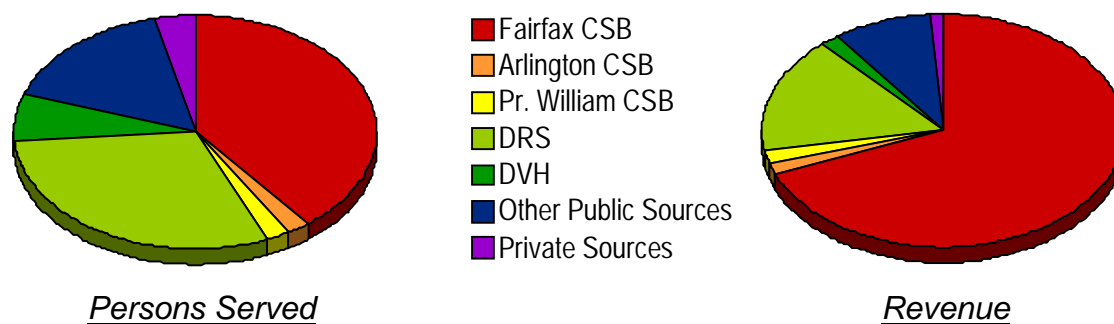
Approximately 54% of ICON's consumers have a developmental disability, 22% are survivors of brain injury, 7% have long-term mental illness,

and 10% experience one or more sensory impairments. The remaining 7% experience a variety of other disabilities such as epilepsy or mobility impairments. Almost 40% experience multiple disabilities.

3. Who pays for this?

In most years, a small portion of ICON's programs are funded by research or demonstration grants, but in FY '01 nearly all of ICON's revenue came from fees for services delivered. The relative percentages of persons and dollars from the various funding sources are illustrated in Figure 3.

Fig. 3 -- Number of Persons Served and Revenue, by Funding Source



Customer Choice and Satisfaction

ICON is strongly committed to ensuring that our customers have the support and the tools they need to exercise real choice in all aspects of the services they receive, and that they are satisfied with the quality of the services. While ICON understands that employers, family members, and funders are also customers, the primary focus of this section is on individuals with disabilities.

4. How do customers participate in planning their services and supports?

All consumers referred to ICON begin their services with an initial meeting with ICON staff; other interested persons such as family, funder representatives, etc. may be included if the consumer desires. The outcome of this meeting is an individual service plan (ISP) outlining the consumer's preferences, strengths, and needs, and a plan of action for achieving the consumer's goals.

For those receiving short-term services such as life skills training or 'place and train' employment services, the ISP is the primary document which determines the form and extent of the services ICON will provide. It may be revised over the course of time to reflect changes in the individual's situation and the outcome of assessment or career development opportunities.

For those receiving long-term services, the ISP typically describes the services ICON will provide initially to help the consumer identify personal goals, strengths, and needs. Later a formal statement of goals and objectives is drafted, reviewed with the consumer, revised as necessary, and forwarded to the CSB or other funding agency. The individual's progress in meeting the objectives is monitored throughout the year and goals and objectives are revised if necessary based on the consumer's input. Quarterly reports on goals and objectives are reviewed with the consumer before being submitted to the funder.

In either case, constant informal feedback is solicited from consumers, funders, family members and others. This feedback is monitored, recorded, and acted upon as appropriate throughout the period of ICON's relationship with the consumer.

5. Describe ICON's system for assessing customer choice and satisfaction.

Over the years ICON has experimented with many different systems for assessing customer satisfaction. At present, our approach consists of various formal survey instruments combined with ongoing solicitation of customer opinion, comments, and suggestions for improvement, as well as a substantial database of outcome measures.

A formal survey was conducted in May and June, 2001, with consumers of employment services, safetynet services, and community living services, the families of these groups, and funding agents. At the same time, ICON conducted a survey of all Fairfax-Falls Church CSB consumers as requested by the CSB.

In addition to these surveys, our database captures many measures which can be used to judge customer satisfaction, such as length of time from referral to job placement and whether the person was placed in the type of job they had initially requested. These and other measures are presented later in this report.

6. What have we learned from this?

The fact that we now have a ten-year history of many different measures of our employment services lets us graphically see our progress and change over time. In addition, we can use this historical data to measure the effectiveness of our efforts to improve in specific areas. We are working to build a similarly useful set of measures for our other services.

We are still experimenting with an effective, useful survey of consumers' responses to our services. We believe fairly strongly that surveys should be anonymous so that responses will be honest, but the response to this year's mail-in surveys was again disappointingly small (less than 30% overall). However, we continue to feel strongly that a survey conducted by ICON staff cannot encourage a truly honest response. The ideal would be to hire an independent party to conduct the surveys. Our schedule and finances this year did not permit this option but we hope that we will be able to administer future surveys in this manner.

For the past two years, we have departed from the 'scale of 1 to 5' format we have used in years past, in the hope that a more free-form questionnaire would elicit more meaningful responses. We believe that it did, and that it was a positive move, even though it makes it more difficult to summarize and present the responses, which ranged from basic yes/no answers to comments which filled both sides of the page. Because of this, the results of our surveys for this fiscal year have been summarized in another document, *FY 2001 Stakeholder Satisfaction Surveys*. This document may be found on our website at <http://iconservices.org/pig.html> or requested by phone at 703-548-4048 ext. 101.

In addition, during FY '01 we established a database for recording individual, anecdotal feedback, although its use has not yet spread throughout the agency.

Employment Services

The desired outcome for these services is that individuals receiving employment or employment-related supports find and maintain jobs in integrated settings and earn a decent wage. The following questions are focused on assessing how well we are accomplishing this:

7. What percentage of supported employees work in integrated settings?

100%. ICON does not have a sheltered workshop or any other segregated facility. The three group employment sites supported by ICON are true enclaves – supported workers are employed by the host company, work side-by-side with non-disabled employees, receive the same benefits as other employees, and have their own individual jobs.

8. What is the general response of people receiving ICON's services with respect to the quality of the services?

In answer to the question “Are you satisfied with ICON's services, overall?” 86% of those receiving employment services responded with an unequivocal "yes"; the remaining people said they are satisfied "most of the time". Over 90% of the family members of those receiving employment services indicated they are satisfied with ICON's services. Detail on this and other direct measures of our consumers' response to services may be found in *FY 2001 Stakeholder Satisfaction Surveys* (see p. 5 for information on obtaining this document).

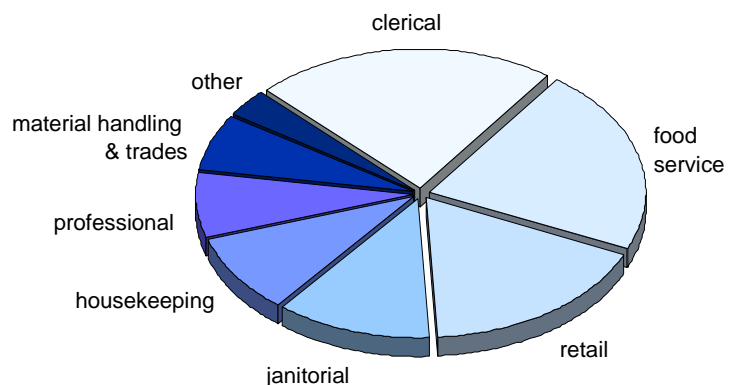
9. How many jobs were obtained in FY '01?

Forty-one consumers entered new positions this fiscal year – 31 of these positions were regular paid employment, nine were volunteer positions in our Safetynet services, and one was an unpaid internship with the U.S Department of Education. Of those starting paid employment, 15 were recipients of short-term ‘place and train’ services, ten were people who will receive long-term support, four are employees at ICON enclaves (also receiving long-term support), and two were persons who had obtained jobs without ICON’s help but turned to ICON for on-the-job training.

10. What sorts of jobs have been obtained?

Of the 120 paid jobs supported by ICON in FY '01, the most common were clerical (27), food service (26), and retail (21). Fourteen people were working in janitorial jobs, eleven in housekeeping, nine in professional jobs, four in the trades and four in

Fig. 4 -- Types of Jobs Supported



materials handling, three in human services, and one as a elevator operator on Capitol Hill.

11. Do job seekers obtain the type of job they indicated that they wanted in their service plan?

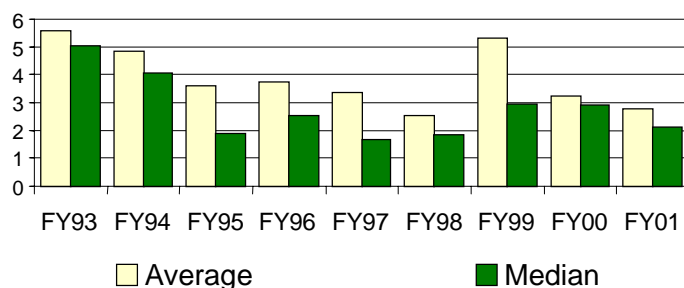
Of the 20 persons placed in FY '01 who indicated a clear preference, 19 (95%) got the type of job they initially said they wanted. The one person who did not wound up taking a job which she found on her own.

12. How many FY '01 jobseekers were separated from ICON without getting a job, and why?

Of 85 jobseekers in FY '01, 29 separated from services during the fiscal year without having obtained a job. The reasons for separation varied widely, and of course most people had more than one reason for deciding to separate from services. Of the primary reasons, some 70% are factors outside ICON's control, such as medical complications and funding issues. The remaining 30% are situations that ICON might have been able to avoid: in one case, what we have termed 'unrealistic expectations' about the job market, as well as insufficient staff to provide services in a timely manner (see page 20 below for a discussion of our staffing problems during FY '01).

13. How long does it take for people to obtain a job?

Fig. 5 -- Months in Job Development



For jobs obtained during FY '01, the average length of time from referral to placement was 2.77 months, the median was 2.14, the low was a little less than two weeks, and the high was just under ten months. It should be noted that just one person's experience in

job development can have a significant effect on the average for a fiscal year; the median is a more accurate measure of our efficiency in this area. It must also be noted, of course, that each individual has different circumstances; aggregate figures cannot predict what any one person's experience may be.

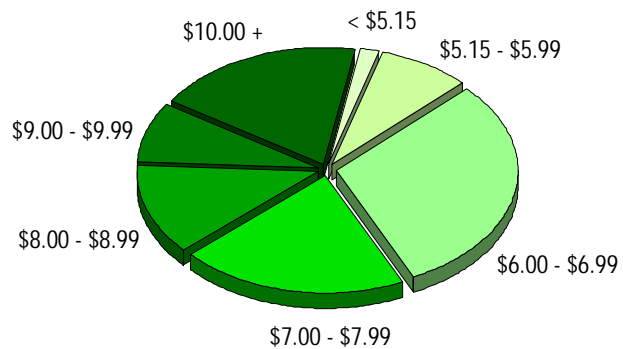
14. What are the percentages of people who earn above and below the minimum wage?

Two people (2.3%) made less than the minimum wage in FY '01; both were supported employees at ICON's Fairfax Hospital enclave who are paid on the basis of their productivity. The remaining 97.7% earned at or above minimum wage during FY '01.

15. What are the hourly wages of the people who have received ICON's Employment Services?

Hourly wages in the 120 jobs supported by ICON in FY '01 ranged from \$3.10 to \$22.00; the average was \$8.14. The median wage of \$7.25 represents a better than 9% increase compared with the median in FY '00.

Fig. 6 -- Hourly Wages Earned in FY '01



16. What percentage of persons employed one year or more received a raise in this year?

According to our database, 30% of people who have been employed for more than a year received a raise during FY '01 – the average was 66¢ per hour. Another 5% moved to a new job at higher pay. This may be a good place to state that our wage data is not 100% reliable. We try to deliver the minimum level of support based on each individual's need, to maximize both funding dollars and individual independence. For this reason we often aren't aware that an individual has received a raise in pay unless we specifically ask. We do make a point of asking at the end of the fiscal year, but both the employee and the employer tend to forget that a raise has occurred, and both are frequently unsure of the current wage.

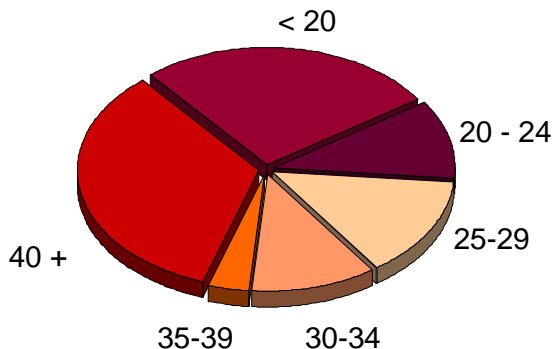
17. How many people received promotions within the same work site, or through changing employers or job sites?

One person received a promotion within the same work site this year, and another converted an unpaid work experience into a paying job. Four people left their jobs to go to another, better job, and three experienced an increase in the number of hours they work each week.

18. What is the percentage of jobholders who are working the number of hours they initially asked for?

Of fifteen jobseekers placed in FY '01 who expressed a clear preference, twelve (80%) got the number of hours they had initially requested, a great improvement over the previous year. Of the remaining three, two are working fewer hours than they had requested and one is working more.

Fig. 7 -- Hours Worked Per Week



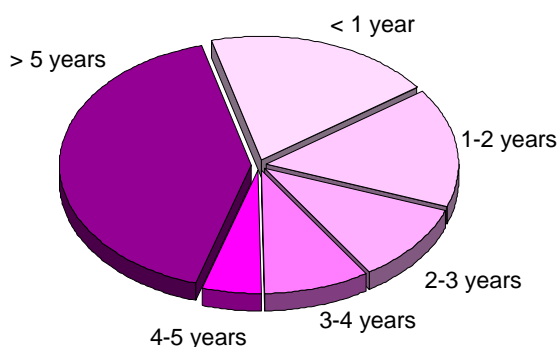
In ICON's Consumer Satisfaction Survey, 85% of respondents said they are happy with their current hours; 7% would prefer to be working up to ten more hours per week; and an additional 7% would prefer to be working between 10 and 20 hours more per week.

Average hours worked per week by employees supported by ICON is just over 27.5, with individual employees working from 4 to 48 hours per week.

19. What is the length of current employment for those individuals receiving long term support?

The average length of employment for the 78 individuals with long-term support working at 6/30/01 was 4.3 years. Seven individuals have been employed in the same job for over ten years and over 40% have been employed five years or more; at the opposite end of the scale, the most recently hired individual in this category started work on June 11, 2001.

Fig. 8 -- Length of Time in Employment for Those Working at 6/30/01



20. How many people have left their jobs and why? What percentage was due to employee issues and what percentage was due to employer issues?

Thirty-four people left a job in FY '01; of these, nine were volunteer positions and one was an unpaid work experience which converted into paid employment. Of the 24 individuals who left paid employment, three resigned in order to take a better job elsewhere and one was on a temporary assignment which ended when expected. Ten left for reasons beyond their control, including economic factors and relocation. Four were terminated for behavioral issues, in one case exacerbated by excessive family interference at the job site. The remaining six lost or left their jobs for various reasons including personal choice and a poor job match; one of these individuals found another position within a week of his termination.

Overall, it seems that 29% of the reasons for job loss were employer related, 48% were employee related, and 24% were due to factors unrelated to the workplace (moving away, or moving to a place from which transportation could not be arranged). Of the employee-related terminations, half were positive (accepting a better job, or personal choice to quit working) and half were negative (involuntary termination).

21. What are the barriers to employment for the people we serve?

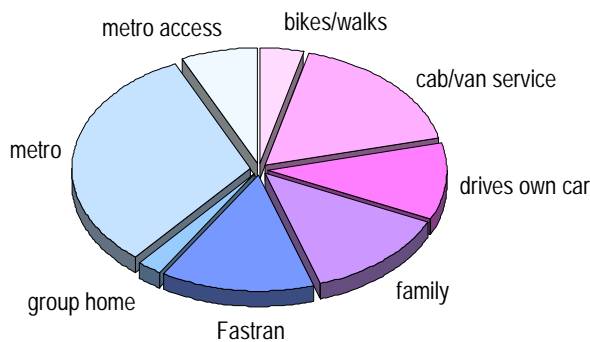
We survey our employment specialists periodically to document what types of barriers they face when pursuing community employment opportunities.

Last year it seemed that attitudinal barriers among the general population were falling, but it appears the trend has not continued. This year's respondents indicate that between 15% and 50% of potential employers are perceptibly unwilling to hire a person with a disability, and job coaches spend between 30% and 50% of their time after a person has been hired addressing the attitudinal issues of co-workers and supervisors toward people with disabilities. Usually, problems arise when the hiring manager moves on and is replaced, particularly with managers who are young and inexperienced, who often feel they don't have time to invest in the employee. Sometimes we find that upper management can help in these situations, but several people lost their jobs in FY '01 because of attitudinal issues in management which could not be resolved.

Architectural barriers are rated 'fairly common', ranging from completely inaccessible workplaces to small things such as a lack of automatic doors which can render an otherwise accessible worksite impossible to navigate for some of our consumers. We have experienced some success in convincing employers to make the workplace more physically accessible, but progress in actual construction is always slow. No one lost a job for architectural reasons in this fiscal year, but there was a good deal of 'interview loss' in the sense that many places of employment aren't even considered as possibilities because of lack of accessibility.

Somewhat less than half of our consumers experience some difficulty with verbal communication; virtually none are using any type of assistive technology or structured compensatory strategies when they are referred to us. In rare cases we have been able to assist the consumer in obtaining assistive technology. More often, we have helped by introducing compensatory strategies. In a more general sense, the biggest communication problem our job coaches encounter is getting employers to talk directly with the consumer, rather than through the job coach. This problem works the other way too, in that many of our consumers initially don't know how to initiate interactions with co-workers, and as a result can remain isolated from the life of the company.

Fig. 9 -- Transportation To Work



Without question, transportation is a major barrier for our consumers. The rise of paratransit opportunities has helped, but Metro Access in particular is unreliable and their procedures are difficult for people with cognitive disabilities to follow. We have found that employers are generally tolerant up to a point since they understand that individuals are dependent upon a service which

is outside their control. Still, several individuals lost jobs this year because of transportation issues, and transportation factors can place a severe restriction on the number of employment opportunities available to a given individual. One job coach noted that if we were to track the number of potential opportunities which are never even considered due to lack of transportation, the result would be staggering.

Other barriers noted were:

- Increased utilization of 'multi-tasking' – as businesses in our area tighten their belts, employees are expected to perform several tasks: a file clerk may be required to answer phones, or a stock person may also have to operate a forklift, making it more difficult to place people whose skill sets are limited.
- Funding – the unstable funding climate has caused disruption for a number of consumers, especially during the critical initial phase of on-the-job training. Increasing numbers of consumers are also being denied funding for a variety of reasons, some but not all related to continually shrinking allocations at the state level, particularly for individualized services (as opposed to congregate models).

- Vocational training opportunities, particularly at the state vocational rehabilitation center in Staunton, where a number of ICON consumers have been sent for vocational training, aren't targeted toward the types of jobs currently available in the Northern Virginia area. Individuals spend months in programs which fail to give them marketable skills.
- Language and cultural differences are a significant barrier for the many individuals we serve who are recent immigrants to the United States. This is particularly evident among young people, but can be a significant factor at any age.

22. Independent Assessment of ICON's Employment Services

In FY '00 ICON's employment programs were surveyed by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF). CARF certification is now required of all programs which are funded by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitation Services, and FY '00 was the first year we had participated in this process. The outcome of the process was a full, three-year CARF certification for Employment Planning Services and Community Employment Services. Recommendations were made in only three areas; all addressed administrative rather than program issues.

Safetynet Services

ICON's Safetynet service was developed in 1995 as an option for people who are between jobs, so that they will have an opportunity to maintain their job skills and interpersonal skills during periods of unemployment. As initially conceived, the program was to provide participants with substantial individualized support so that they could pursue a variety of activities in the community. Such an individualized program required a lot of one-on-one support, which made it expensive, and few people were referred. And because of the cost, those who were referred were largely those whose disability required that they receive one-on-one support, most often for behavioral reasons – not those who would simply benefit from that support. In subsequent years the one-to-one support component was curtailed; at present the service primarily consists of support in performing volunteer work at a Fairfax County recreation center, and taking advantage of the use of RECenter facilities which is afforded to those who volunteer.

Perhaps because of the 'expensive' label (which we heard for many years after the rate was lowered), or perhaps for other reasons, we never received enough referrals to fill all the available positions (initially conceived of as twelve "full time volunteers" at three of the Fairfax County RECenters). At the beginning of FY '01, only five people were participating in Safetynets, and three of them

participated only on certain days of the week. Five additional individuals were referred for services over the course of the year, but three decided against participating after having an opportunity to give it a try. By the end of the fiscal year, only three were left; one attending five days per week, one four, and one three (it requires four people attending five days a week to cover our costs).

Because of the declining participation, we made the decision to close one of the two remaining sites in June, 2001. The future of the one remaining site is in doubt. The 'group' nature of this service isn't what we'd choose to provide; we believe that everyone deserves a chance to participate in his community as an individual. However, given the realities of Virginia's funding stream, we believe that the Safetynet still has a lot to offer those who enjoy the RECenter environment, and we hope that we will not be forced to close the door on the people we're serving there now.

23. What percentage of the day do participants spend in integrated settings in the community?

All participants in ICON's safetynet services are volunteers in community locations; most perform their volunteer service at Fairfax County RECenters. All activities are fully integrated.

24. How many individual objectives were met on service plans, and what percentage is this of the whole?

The seven consumers supported in Safetynet sites at some time during the year collectively achieved 46 of 73 possible objectives; this represents an achievement rate of 63%. Individual rates ranged from 0% to 100%.

25. What are the new skills which individuals are demonstrating that are being used in everyday life?

Since four of the seven consumers served in FY '01 have been with Safetynets for several years, not many new skills were learned this year. However, one of these men learned new custodial skills when he moved from one Safetynet site to another, and has learned the value of following a routine and using self-management techniques; he has also improved his comfort level with initiating interactions with RECenter staff and patrons.

One of the new individuals had been labeled 'noncompliant' in previous placements, and her living situation was in disarray when we first met her. Receiving services both in the Safetynet and through ICON's Community Living program, she was able to achieve some stability in her home life. That led to her being able to attend Safetynets on a regular basis and be active and productive, which in turn enabled her to experience pride in a job well done, possibly for the first time in her life.

26. What sorts of jobs have been obtained for individuals in safetynet services?

Two of the participants in the safetynet program during FY '01 were looking for a job for at least part of the year. Two others would like to find a job but do not have the support of their interdisciplinary team for that goal. Of the two who were actively looking, one was offered a job in June, but before it could start the hotel laid off workers and the offer was rescinded. The other, who had been attending the Safetynet program for several years, was never able to indicate a clear desire to leave the RECenter for a paying job, and dropped out of Safetynets rather than move to a different location when the site in which she was volunteering was closed.

27. What proportion of people have made friends with people at the RECenter other than those who are paid to work with them?

All of the individuals who participate in the safetynet program have made friends among the RECenter staff, patrons, and other non-disabled volunteers.

28. To what extent have we helped people to expand their horizons? Consider the kinds of individual goals that have been chosen and the activities in which people are engaged.

The horizons of the woman mentioned earlier, who has learned to take pride in her work, have been expanded by that experience: she now believes that she can do real work and be appreciated for it. We have also advocated for the two men who want to work but are being held back – especially for the younger man whose disabilities have been characterized as "too severe". We intend to continue working with both these individuals to help their horizons expand to include the opportunity to work for pay in the community.

Community Living Services

The desired outcome for these services is that individuals with disabilities will be supported in developing satisfying lifestyles. This is individually defined and can certainly be difficult to measure. We therefore assist people in developing and accomplishing specific goals that help them to gain competence in conducting their daily lives, choose where to live and who to live with, participate as independently as possible in both necessary and preferred activities in their community, and spend time with friends. We then look to see if individuals are accomplishing their goals.

29. What proportion of people make choices about their important life decisions? When answering this question, consider decisions such as where they will live, with whom they will live, how they will spend their time, and how they will spend their money.

This is an area which is very difficult to measure objectively, yet it is central to our mission. This year, it appears that 86% of the people we serve have chosen where to live and 81% have chosen who to live with. Those who exercise choice in how to spend their leisure time is high, at 92%, and 83% choose how to spend their money.

30. What types of activities are supported?

As mentioned, all consumers of community living services set goals and objectives for themselves each year, which serve to determine the types of service they will receive. Activities relating to these goals appear in the following table, as do other activities such as working on personal finances / budgeting, which may not rate as a goal, but is nevertheless an essential part of independent living.

help with personal finances	68%	special olympics	8%
shopping	54%	physical recreation	8%
talk (counseling)	49%	safety in the community	5%
housekeeping	38%	cultural activities	5%
basic living skills	32%	group social activities	5%
cooking	24%	learning new things	5%
individual social activities	24%	academics (reading/math)	5%
health care	19%	in-home activities	3%
behavior (manners)	19%	deciding goals	3%
community access	19%	eating out	3%
computer skills	11%	parenting skills	3%
help with housing	8%		

31. Are customers satisfied with the supports provided?

Yes -- according to the responses we received to a survey conducted in June, 2001, in which 100% of those responding indicated that they are satisfied. All consumers said they like working with ICON staff, and 87.5% indicated that ICON staff treat them with respect. Fifty percent of respondents agreed that ICON staff are responsive to them always; the other 50% indicated that staff are responsive most of the time. Half also indicated that they are getting the support they need; the other half feel they could use more support.

Ninety-nine percent of those responding to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's FY 2001 Consumer Survey indicated that they are satisfied with ICON's services.

Further detail on the responses to the FY '01 consumer surveys may be found in the *FY 2001 Stakeholder Satisfaction Surveys* report (see p. 5 for information on obtaining this document).

32. How many individual objectives were met on service plans, and what percentage is this of the whole?

The 36 consumers supported in Community Living Services at 6/30/00 had collectively achieved 241 of 368 possible objectives; this represents an overall achievement rate of 53%. Individual rates ranged from 12.5% to 100%.

33. To what extent have we helped people to expand their horizons? Consider the kinds of individual goals that have been chosen and the activities in which people are engaged.

In some ways we feel fortunate this year just to have helped people keep their horizons from contracting. A substantial amount of our effort was spent helping keep five people from being removed from their homes for placement in a more restrictive environment such as a nursing home or group home. We were also able to help three of our consumers through periods of homelessness and enabled them to become established in their own apartments again.

One of these three was a man who had a poor employment record and a long history of chaotic residential situations. When he was able to settle down in a stable living arrangement, he began to take his medications on a regular basis, and discovered vocational opportunities beyond fast food. He was able to hold a job for most of the year, and learned to feel good about himself.

Another man was thrust into a situation of independence when his family found an apartment for him and moved him in there over a weekend. The stress of trying to live on his own with only a minimum of independent living skills nearly cost him his job, but with support he was able to make the change and now enjoys the satisfaction of making it on his own.

An older woman who virtually never left her house except to go to work now is meeting people in the community, going out to eat, making choices about where to go, and shopping at the mall. She has recently asked to learn how money works so that she can make her own purchases.

Several people have increased their stock of coping skills this year ... they're now able to deal reasonably with incidents that a year ago would have caused them to explode or react in other unprofitable ways.

For all these people, a little extra support from ICON has meant that they have been able to take a big step toward becoming fully integrated members of their communities.

Life Skills Training Program

ICON's Life Skills Training program entered its third year in FY '01. We continue to find that there is a good deal of confusion among funding agencies over just what this program is and how it may be used. Only nine people received Life Skills services in FY '01 (of those, only three received more than 20 hours of the service). Only two were survivors of brain injury funded by the Department of Rehabilitative Services, toward whom the service was initially directed.

As a result, we still have few statistics to gauge its effectiveness. In concept, each person receiving this service has the same major goal: to develop personal strategies to overcome the effects of their disability which impact their ability to get or maintain a job. Thus a primary measure of the program's success will be the number of people who go on from the program to get and keep the job of their choice or are able to maintain their present employment. Two of the three people who received more than 20 hours of service were employed when referred, and have maintained their positions. The third has not found employment but is supplementing her income with home-based cosmetic sales. Of course, individual differences obscure any general trends in such a small population. We will continue to track this and other measures, as well as initiating an education program with funders in the coming year.

ICON recently entered into contracts with two local employment services providers to provide Life Skills Training to participants in their Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) projects. It has been a new challenge to provide life skills training to people who do not necessarily have an identified disability (although many are discovered to have undiagnosed disabilities), but do experience a variety of social, environmental and lifestyle challenges. We have actively served three individuals to date under this contract. In addition to the more traditional life skills training we have been providing, it has been necessary to add a module on parenting skills to our repertoire, as this is a salient issue for two of the individuals served.

Fredericksburg Brain Injury Project

In October, 1999, ICON began to deliver services to survivors of brain injury in the four-county area surrounding Fredericksburg, Virginia. The project was funded through a contract with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services and provided a variety of services including facilitating community integration and providing service coordination, advocacy, skills training, and community education and outreach. The project employed a Service Coordination Specialist and a Community Integration Specialist who worked out of their homes; all of the activities of the project take place in the community. An Advisory Committee made up of stakeholders and businesspeople in the area was brought together and met on a regular basis.

In May, 2001, we were notified that funding for the project would not be continued past 6/30/01. Despite repeated requests, we have not been advised of the reasons for this termination. We, and many of the people we served, were very disappointed by this action, particularly because several of the community education and outreach projects we had initiated were beginning to bear fruit.

During FY 2001, 30 people received services; 23 were still active at 6/30/01. Nearly everyone served received assistance with strategies to help them compensate for the effects of their brain injury, typically including difficulty with planning and organization, and often with memory loss as well. Initially it was assumed that a large part of the services we would provide would center around employment. While we did assist a few individuals with finding or keeping a job, for most people the greatest need was simple connecting with their communities. ICON has provided assistance with a wide variety of issues including: gaining confidence in interacting independently with people; participating at a local gym (for several people, this has served as a replacement when reimbursement for physical therapy was terminated); accessing the services of the Department of Rehabilitative Services and the Community Services Board, in some cases after a history of being denied access to such services; preparing for the GED and attending college courses and short-term computer instruction, which in one case led to an opportunity to learn web site development on a volunteer basis; accessing transportation; securing housing; and assistance with financial matters;

ICON's final report on the project is available upon request, or online at <http://iconservices.org/pig.html>.

Organizational Management

The desired outcome here is that ICON maintain an organizational structure that supports its mission and is financially solvent.

34. Do the organizational structure, accomplishments, and strategies support the mission of the organization?

Our core mission is to promote the integration of people with disabilities into the life of the community. That goal is a primary factor in every decision we make.

As ICON matures, we continue to refine our organizational structure to ensure that high-quality services are delivered in the most cost-effective manner possible. We continue to believe that a very flat structure is best as it tends to keep those with the most experience and most highly-developed skills closest to the consumer. We also have attempted to keep overhead to a minimum so that we can maximize the salaries of direct service staff and as a result attract and keep quality staff.

35. What is the relationship with public funders?

Generally the feedback received from CSB and DRS personnel is positive. All but one of the funders who responded to our survey (94%) are satisfied at least “most of the time”, though only 41% responded with an unequivocal “yes”. More detail on the survey may be found in *FY 2001 Stakeholder Satisfaction Surveys* (see p. 5 for information on obtaining this document).

36. How are opportunities for staff job enhancement and advancement promoted by the organization?

ICON believes strongly in enhancing the skills and the horizons of staff. While this has been difficult in recent years due to financial constraints, the easing of these constraints in the last two years has meant that more staff have had the opportunity to attend training and conferences.

In FY '01, none of our staff took advantage of our limited tuition reimbursement program for job-related courses. We were able to help two individuals to expand their computer literacy through our no-interest loan program for the purchase of computer equipment, and we were able to provide four of our staff with refurbished computers from among those donated to ICON by local businesses and individuals.

In FY '01, we implemented a training plan for new employment services staff which we have discussed for several years. This training consumes the

better part of the employee's first month on the job and includes formal seminars and workshops offered both by ICON and through the Fairfax-Falls Church CSB; informal one-on-one training and orientation with an experienced 'mentor', opportunities to meet many of the people ICON supports and learn from them many different approaches to community-based employment support. A training manual was developed by some of ICON's most senior employment staff; this manual is an evolving document which will be added to over time; the content has been made available to all staff through our internal website.

We continue to develop and improve the internal website, which provides a source of information and education for staff who are rarely in the office but can connect online. We also maintain a number of electronic mailing lists for information sharing between staff members.

37. Are staff satisfied with job roles, opportunities, and input into the strategies of the organization?

Comments on the occasion of performance reviews and exit interviews indicate that staff are very satisfied with their position in the ICON team. Nearly all feel that they have a voice in shaping the organization and appreciate the autonomy they experience in the workplace.

38. How do ICON staff rate the management staff?

Generally speaking, people seem to be happy with the current management. In a survey conducted in May, staff rated each of the five members of the management team on a list of 23 measures of effectiveness, management practices, and leadership. Overall average ratings were 4.26 out of 5. Management staff on average scored 4 or higher on all but one question: the one about returning phone calls in a timely manner (two of the management team barely reached 50% on this one, and have improvement in this area as a major personal goal). Average individual rankings ranged from 3.83 to 4.60.

39. What has been the effect of funding cuts and the general economic situation on ICON's ability to attract and retain qualified staff?

Funding cuts and restrictions have made it impossible for regional service providers to compete with the salaries being offered by state and local governments. Many who choose to leave ICON do so to accept positions offering significantly higher salaries, especially public schools, which offer salaries that are 66-75% higher with summers off and substantial benefits. DRS too lured staff away with higher salaries and richer benefit plans which include tuition assistance. Several ICON staff either 'moonlight' part time

with other service providers or are 'moonlighting' with ICON in order to pay their bills.

According to exit interviews, the primary reason for leaving has been financial in nature. One person left because he really wanted to work with troubled youth while others left due to relocation (spouse and high cost of living), new family additions, graduate school opportunities. We had two staff return to our employ and the lower pay because of ICON's philosophy, practice and how they were treated as staff.

ICON has been very involved with the local Employment Service Organizations coalition, the local Alliance of Residential Providers and vaACCSES to address the issue of funding and low wages for direct service staff. ICON has provided data for three regional staffing surveys to help identify and document the degree that staffing shortages are affecting our agencies and our ability to provide quality services. The results of these surveys show that ICON's direct service wages are among the highest in the region, and management and administrative staff wages are among the lowest.

40. What are the outcomes of our financial analysis?

We have not yet received our independent audit for FY '01 but the unaudited financial statement at 6/30/01 shows a year-end excess of \$2,710 on revenues of \$1.4 million.

Fig. 10 -- Fund Balance and Annual Excess (Loss)

FY	Fund Balance	Excess (Loss)
86	10,021	9,680
87	20,889	10,868
88	30,192	9,303
89	80,228	50,037
90	84,582	4,354
91	195,256	110,674
92	209,682	14,426
93	243,918	34,236
94	220,416	(23,502)
95	209,003	(21,860)
96	192,221	(16,782)
97	183,653	(8,568)
98	268,306	10,819
99	324,450	52,537
00	325,792	6,406
01	326,327	2,710

