



# **Advocacy: Working Together for Change**

**Tuesday, July 2, 2019**

- Sierra Royster – APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living)
- Ketra Crosson – Alpha One and Maine AgrAbility
- Emily Freudenburg – Easterseals Nebraska and Nebraska AgrAbility

# Basic Webinar Instructions

- Audio available through computer or phone.
- Check sound via Communicate menu at top left
- Closed captions: use arrow to expand or contact the Media Viewer window. You may have to enter some log-in information.
- Expand/contract any of the windows in the right-hand column with the arrows. May need to do this to see video of presenter.
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# Basic Webinar Instructions

## Questions and comments

- Go to the Chat option in the right-hand column. Please send to “All Panelists”. Enter message in box below TO and hit return. You may enter questions about the presentation at any time.
- In addition, during the Q & A period, if you have a web microphone, click the “Raise Hand” icon to indicate that you have a question. We will enable your microphone or phone connection.

# Basic Webinar Instructions

- Please let me know if more than one person is viewing at your computer
- 4 quick survey questions + opportunity to share comments
- Session recorded and archived with PowerPoint files at [www.agrability.org/Online-Training](http://www.agrability.org/Online-Training)
- Problems: use chat window or email [jonesp@purdue.edu](mailto:jonesp@purdue.edu)



**AgrAbility:** USDA–sponsored program that assists farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities.

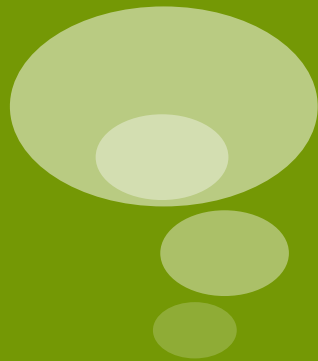
- Partners land–grant universities with disability services organizations. Currently 20 state projects
- National AgrAbility Project: Led by Purdue’s Breaking New Ground Resource Center. Partners include:
  - Goodwill of the Finger Lakes
  - APRIL (Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living)
  - Colorado State University
  - Washington State University
- More information available at [www.agrability.org](http://www.agrability.org)



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# Advocacy: Working Together for Change

Ketra S. Crosson, OTR/L



# Alpha One - Who we are

- Alpha One is Maine's Center for Independent Living
  - Directed by and for people with disabilities
  - Statewide with offices in S. Portland, Bangor and Presque Isle
  - Providing the disabled community in Maine with
    - Information
    - Services
    - Products
  - To create opportunities for people with disabilities to live independently



Information and Referral line 800-760-7200 or  
[www.alphaonenow.org](http://www.alphaonenow.org)



## Individual Advocacy

Independent Living Specialist role for all services



-assist the consumer to be in the “drivers seat”

-where they are going in life

-making choices

-making decisions



# Individual Advocacy

For any of us –

We want to be the driver



But we are not always sure where we need to go to meet our needs



. . . or how to get there.



## Individual Advocacy

So another part of our role as Independent Living Specialists



-is to provide tools and information to the consumer

-so they can make the choices as to where to go

-and how to get there

In essence we are helping the person *advocate* for themselves.

# Individual Advocacy – Information & Referral

At Alpha One, this advocacy begins with the first contact through

## Information & Referral



-The consumer calls with a need or question but they are not sure where to head.

-Our role is to be aware of the vast amount of disability, information, services, and products that are out there to help answer questions.

-We ask questions to help us narrow down what might be the best resources to provide.



# Individual Advocacy – Information & Referral

## Providing Information & Referral

-We believe in transparency and work to help explain steps or the process to access a resource.



-Bureaucracy creates a number of hoops and rules, that can be as much a barrier to accessing that service as stairs at an entrance to a business.

It may be as simple as giving the key words that are needed to say when contacting a resource.

# Individual Advocacy – Information & Referral

Some Examples

- how to access services through VR
- navigating the steps to get long term care



personal care services

- finding funding for home access or a piece of assistive



technology



- the process for getting a new wheelchair



## Individual Advocacy – Independent Living Skills Training

For many individuals, once they have information or tools, they are “good to go”, and can follow through.

Others may not have the experience or confidence to follow through.



Remembering who we feel should be in the driver’s seat we prefer not to call on someone’s behalf or make a referral.

Instead we like to do this side by side with the consumer as an aspect of independent living skills training.

This means they are taking an active role in the process and we are teaching the individual skills to be able to do this themselves.

## Individual Advocacy – Independent Living Skills Training

For example, a consumer may want to get applications for public housing. Sometimes these are available online and sometimes you need to call the apartment management companies to get applications.



- we model the first call with the consumer

- we role play before the second call

- the consumer takes the lead on this call and we are in the background for support.

- eventually the consumer may be able to make additional calls on their own.

- the consumer has a new skill that carries over to other calls they may need to do for other services.



# Individual Advocacy – Other Programs

## CIL Transition

Homeward Bound (Money Follows the Person) – assist individuals to move out of nursing homes back to community life. We help coordinate a team (consumer, family/friends, NF staff, community services) to develop a move home plan. This may include housing, home access needs, personal care, AT, DME, and other supports.



Pre-ETS (Pre-Employment Transition Services) - . Working with teens with disabilities in local schools with lessons and activities around health & hygiene; how to speak up for yourself; budgeting; how and when to disclose your disability; and job readiness skills. In conjunction with Maine's Bureau of Rehabilitation help with summer job placement which includes job coaches..

# Systems Advocacy - Legislative



- National Level – National Council on Independent Living keeps CILs informed about legislation that would be helpful to or support individuals with disabilities. Our CIL along with the SILC works with our state Congressional leaders to encourage them to support this legislation.
- State Level
  - Monitor legislation around the needs of individuals with disabilities – speak up when needed on proposed legislation.
  - Initiate legislation – develop a low interest assistive technology lending program, increase pay rates for personal assistants.

# Systems Advocacy - Partnerships

- Seek funding partners to develop services
  - Critical Ramp Access Program
  - Rink Link
  - Open Waters
  - Job Trek
  - Home Retro
  
- Work with existing partners to continue to advocate for independent living goals, strive for transparency, and reduce the barriers to access services.
  - State programs for personal assistance services
  - Bureau of Rehabilitation – Youth in Transition, Title 7 Part B funding



Thank you.



Ketra S. Crosson, OTR/L

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Nebraska



# AgrAbility

Cultivating Accessible Agriculture



## Nebraska AgrAbility & CILs

Emily Freudenburg



## Nebraska AgrAbility & CILs

- Nebraska AgrAbility is a program run by both Easterseals Nebraska and Nebraska Extension.
- Easterseals Nebraska has collaborated with CIL's for
  - Financial Assistance Needs
  - Waiver Services
  - Medicaid Eligibility
  - Disability Benefits Planning
- Have worked together on the implementation of Nebraska's Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC)



## Nebraska AgrAbility

- AgrAbility has not worked a lot with CILs in Nebraska
- We currently have a few cases that would possibly work well within our CIL's.



## Client 1

- Female, Ag Worker, in SW Nebraska. Is trying to find a position in Agronomy field. Disability: PTSD, Sensory Processing Disorder, High Functioning Autism, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, & Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.
- Client has been turned away from several jobs as an Agronomist.
- Client has an Associates Degree Animal Science ; Is 17 Credits away from receiving Bachelors Degree in Animal Science & Minor in Agronomy
- Problem Areas: Interview Skills, Determining Body Language, Sensory Issues, Panic Attacks, and Disclosure of Disability during the interview
- How would you help her?





## Client 1 & How We Helped

- Referred to Workforce Development for Interview Skills (Client is 2 hours away from local center, and cannot make this work)
- Referred to JAN (Job Accommodation Network; has gotten information on disclosure of disability during the interviews)
- Referred to VR (At this time client is on waiting list)
- Our CIL did give us a worksheet on how finding work can be stressful and some tips on Interviewing (The closest to our client is almost 4 hours away, client referred to CIL and hoping to obtain interview skills and how to disclose of disability in interviews.)



## Client 2

- Female Rancher in Central Nebraska. Has severe arthritis. Husband was recently diagnosed with Huntington's. He at this point is unsafe to be left alone. Cannot access homecare at their location due to very expensive & very rural area.
- Wife is struggling to advocate for her husband.
- AgrAbility referred her to VR for services, but she is on a wait list at this time. Needs assistance with a tractor & pickup.
- What would you do?



## Client 2 & How We Helped



- Referred to Easterseals Nebraska's Loan program for assistance with tractor and pickup.
- Referred to South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging to assist with finding services for Husband
- Referred to CIL to help with Advocating for her husbands rights and need for assistance.

# FUTURE

- We look forward to learning more about our CILs here in Nebraska to be able to assist our farmers and ranchers with disabilities!
- Nebraska AgrAbility
  - 800-471-6425
  - [neagrability@ne.easterseals.com](mailto:neagrability@ne.easterseals.com)
  - [agrability.unl.edu](http://agrability.unl.edu)



## More Information

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