



CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING  
COMPLIANCE REVIEW REPORT

New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center,  
formerly known as

New Horizons Independent Living Center

Grant Award Number: H132A940021

Prescott Valley, AZ

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**REHABILITATION SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

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## **I. PURPOSE OF THE ON-SITE MONITORING REVIEW**

Sections 706(c) and 722 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended* (Rehabilitation Act) mandate that the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) conduct on-site reviews of centers for independent living (CILs) funded under Title VII, Part C, Section 722. The objectives of on-site reviews are to:

- assess compliance with the requirements of Section 725(b) and (c)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366.60-366.63;
- study program operations, organizational structure and administration of the CIL under Section 725(c)(1), (2), (5) and (6) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366.2 and 366.50;
- review documentation sufficient to verify the accuracy of the information submitted in the most recent 704 Annual Performance Report;
- verify that the CIL is managed in accordance with federal requirements in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR);
- assess CIL conformance with its work plan, developed in accordance with Section 725(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366.50(d)(2), conditions of the CIL's approved application, and consistency with the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL);
- identify areas of suggested or necessary improvements in the CIL's programmatic and fiscal operation and provide technical assistance resources available on the local, state, regional and national level;
- identify areas of exemplary work, projects and coordination efforts and make this information available to the larger CIL community; and
- provide an opportunity to share information with experienced nonfederal individuals involved in the operations of CILs and make available technical assistance to enhance CIL operations or to minimize or to eliminate problem areas.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The on-site review of New Horizons Independent Living Center (NHILC), located in Prescott Valley, Arizona, was conducted on May 14-17, 2013. The program review covered the independent living (IL) operations and activities of NHILC and the financial review examined the center's participation in Title VII, Part C, of the Rehabilitation Act. RSA used the On-Site Review Guide (ORG) to conduct the on-site review. During the review, interviews were conducted with the center's management, staff, consumers and members of the board of directors. In addition to the interviews, program and financial documents were reviewed in accordance with the protocol required by RSA's ORG, including written policies and procedures, a sample of consumer service records (CSRs), and other documents that verified compliance with standards and indicators. CSRs were selected for review on a random basis. The review team conducted an exit conference at the conclusion of the review to provide feedback on initial impressions from the review.

The RSA review team included the following individuals:

- Deborah A. Cotter, RSA Independent Living program specialist; and
- Dean Neilson, nonfederal reviewer.

The DSU and SILC were invited but did not participate.

### **III. MISSION AND DESCRIPTION**

NHILC's mission is to empower people with disabilities to live independently. NHILC's goals are to provide services and advocacy that empower people with disabilities to self-determine their goals and activities of their lives. Located in Prescott Valley, NHILC serves Yavapai, Chino, Apache, and Navajo counties. NHILC was first awarded a RSA grant under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act in 1994.

In addition to the four IL core services, NHILC is involved in the projects described below.

- **Transportation Services:** Through a grant with the Arizona Department of Transportation and four other contracts, NHILC provides accessible transportation to eligible individuals with disabilities with its eleven drivers and eight accessible vans. As a result, people with disabilities are able to participate in center and community programs and activities. The mayor of Prescott Valley reported that this service is especially important in an area of the state in which public funding for transportation is scarce.
- **Employment Services:** NHILC is an Employment Network under the Ticket to Work Program and offers resume writing and interview skills training to eligible individuals with disabilities.

### **IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS AND EMERGING PRACTICES**

- **Engaged Board of Directors:** Board members have participated in nonprofit management training and understand their roles and responsibilities to oversee NHILC. The board established an informal mentoring program to mentor new board members. The board plans to formalize the mentoring for recruiting and mentoring new board members. As a result, NHILC board members bring their professional experience to the table and are more engaged and invested in oversight of the center. For example, a new board member employed at a local bank was able use his expertise to assist in the reviewing and confirmation of budget information with staff. Additionally, the board and management staff reported meeting with staff individually to review the personnel development qualifications for each of the staff, a tool used by supervisory and management staff in evaluating employee performance. As a result, staff members reported increased staff morale, better understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and enhanced efforts to serve consumers.
- **Services to meet the needs of individuals with Multiple Chemical/Electrical Sensitivities (MC/ES):** NHILC staff provides information and referral services and educates the community about maintaining a fragrance-free and chemical-free environment for persons with MC/ES. For example, the MC/ES peer support group meets monthly in NHILC's office because it is a safe environment, and once a month, NHILC, working in collaboration with a local salon, offers chemical and fragrance free haircuts to people with MC/ES. As a result, many people with MC/ES who moved to Prescott for the clean air are able to maintain activities of daily living. Additionally, the local community is educated by the availability of and need for such services offered by

the hair salon. Many people with respiratory illnesses move to Arizona for the clean air and the center has become a resource to those moving to the state. As a result, staff at the center has become nationally and internationally recognized for their expertise in this issue.

## **V. FINDINGS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

NHILC did not have any compliance findings.