NEW YORK ASSOCIATION ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

Open Doors

Peer Outreach and Referral Program

A project of NYS Money Follows the Person

Engaging Veteran Peer Advocates and Their Loved Ones in the Transition Process

Peer Outreach and Referral Program

- **Goal:** Provide one-on-one peer support to individuals and families interested in transitioning to community living.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the Veterans' Administration Peer Program.
- Understand the mission of the NYS Division of Veterans Affairs.
- Learn about the purpose of Veterans Benefits Advisors.
- Learn about and be able to explain the Veterans Peer Advocate component of the Open Doors Peer Program.
- Receive materials to effectively recruit veterans to the program.
- Work with your ILC to recruit, hire, train and deploy Peer Advocate Veterans.

Demographics

- Approximately 900,000 veterans in NYS
- More than 270,000 from Vietnam Era alone
- Largely an “older” veterans population currently in NYS (WWII, Korea, Vietnam era).
- NYS has the fifth-largest Veterans population of any state in the USA.

State Veterans Nursing Homes

- Five state veterans nursing homes – Location: Montrose, Oxford, St. Albans, Batavia and Stony Brook
- Governed by Article 26-A of the NYS Public Health Law
- Provides skilled nursing care (both short-term and long-term) for Veterans and their spouses.
- Significantly less expensive than private nursing home.
- 70% service-connected disability rating = skilled nursing care provided free of charge (VA reimburses facility).

Why Should We Hire Veteran Peer Advocates?

- Improved outcomes for veterans.
  - Peer support provides a wide variety of improved outcomes for Veterans. Research and experiences have shown how Veteran Peer Advocates can improve problems in the nursing facility and systemic problems related to the overall treatment system.

Incorporating This Information Into Your Work

- Start by asking the question:
  - "Have you ever served in the military?"
  - "Did someone in your immediate family ever serve in the military?"
- If the answer is yes, then connect this individual to the right services:
  - Division of Veterans Affairs
    - DVA has benefits advisors for people in nursing homes.
  - Open Doors Peer and Transition programs

A Veteran Peer Advocate Example:

We are hiring vets!

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Calling All Veterans with Disabilities!

WE WANT YOU! APPLY NOW

Do you want to get paid to use your personal experience as a veteran with a disability to empower other veterans and people with disabilities who are living in nursing facilities and other institutional settings move back home to the community?

Then apply to be a peer for the Open Doors Peer Program today!

Opportunities are available at Independent Living Centers across the state.

GAIN VALUABLE JOB SKILLS:

You will be required to complete an initial eight-hour web-based training. You will learn about a number of topics including:

- ✓ *Why the peer model?*
- ✓ *Database, required reports and documentation*
- ✓ *Styles of peer support/peer mentoring*
- ✓ *Group facilitation*
- ✓ *Boundary setting*
- ✓ *Active listening*
- ✓ *Motivational interviewing and empowerment strategies*

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

You will also have the opportunity to participate in ongoing education to enhance your skillsets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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Learn more about the New York Association on Independent Living: www.ilny.org and on Facebook: /NYAIndependentLiving

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) is a not-for-profit, statewide, cross-disability, consumer controlled membership association of Independent Living Centers (ILCs) in existence since 2002. NYAIL's mission is improving the quality of life, safeguarding the rights and ensuring equal opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as promoting the Independent Living (IL) philosophy both within the disability community and to the public. NYAIL seeks in all its activities to remove barriers to the independence, inclusion and integration of people with disabilities in New York. The Open Doors program is funded through a grant from the New York State Department of Health as part of the federal Money Follows the Person Demonstration.

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Visit www.ilny.org for more information about Open Doors and independent living in New York State.

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