



ENRICHING EDUCATION:

Programs designed to help children and adults learn basic functions, master skills needed to develop and thrive, and be sharp and active as they age.

- Child Development Center serves children with and without disabilities in an integrated setting to learn and grow together.
- Coaching Des Moines Public high school students on “what’s next” following graduation.
- Supported Education for post-secondary degrees.
- Social skills coaching for adults with disabilities through adult day services.



ENHANCING HEALTH:

Hands on, comprehensive, vital therapies and services which ensure health and wellness so that children and adults can reach their full potential.

- Residential and Community Based Children’s Crisis Stabilization services to assist the child and family with building skills to manage future crisis, along with supporting the parent-child relationship.
- Brain health therapy for all ages individually, for families or in specialized groups.
- Supported Community Living programs are provided in the community – providing the right services at the right time help to prevent chronic illness.



EXPANDING EMPLOYMENT:

A range of training, placement and related services that help people prepare for or re-enter the workforce.

- Internship programs for young adults to build employment skills and gain experience.
- Supported Employment for seeking and maintaining employment.
- Rural Solutions to support Iowa farmers with disabilities



ELEVATING COMMUNITY:

Programs for children, adults, and caregivers to live, relax, connect, and thrive within their communities. These programs strengthen the local community overall and encourages individual engagement and participation in their local communities.

- Respite services provided all year round to give caregivers a much-needed break, while building skills and confidence for the clients attending.
- Adult Day services
- Summer camp for children and adults

MISSION

To lead the way to 100% equity, inclusion, and access for people with disabilities, families and communities.

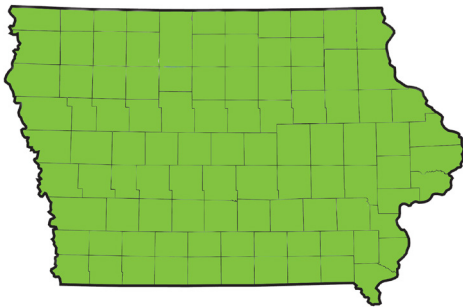


Served over **2,960** clients



Supported **97 INDIVIDUALS** with disabilities find and maintain employment

Serving individuals in Iowa's **99 COUNTIES**



90% of our clients utilize Medicaid

Easterseals Iowa's programming helps people with disabilities live stably in our community, resulting in optimized health outcomes.

OUR IMPACT

Easterseals Iowa's Supported Community Living Program helps people with disabilities live stably in our community, resulting in optimized health outcomes.

- Individuals placed in supportive housing spent, on average, 115 fewer days in homeless shelters, 75 fewer days in state-run psychiatric hospitals and almost 8 fewer days in prison or in jails, compared to a similar group without supportive housing.
- On average, people offered supportive housing spent 23 percent fewer days in hospitals, had 33 percent fewer emergency room visits, and spent 42 percent fewer days in nursing homes.
- Average annual cost of SCL: \$20,312 vs. annual cost of hospitalization: \$532,778
- Annual tax payer savings: \$512,446

Easterseals Iowa Brain Health Programming is bringing a much-needed service to the community.

- One in five children will experience a diagnosable mental health issue
- Since opening our doors in early September 2021 we have supported 219 children in Polk County experiencing crisis situations.

*As of November 22nd, 2021

Sources:

Children's Mental Health: <https://www.cdc.gov/childrensmentalhealth/features/kf-childrens-mental-health-report.html>

Housing: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/supportive-housing-helps-vulnerable-people-live-and-thrive-in-the-community>

Average Cost per Inpatient day: <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/finance/average-cost-per-inpatient-day-across-50-states.html>

Institutional Care: <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/government/costs-to-operate-iowa-dhs-institutions-drop-3-state-facilities-have-closed-since-2013-20171019>

» PRIORITY ISSUE 1: Workforce - Stabilize the Direct Support Professional (DSP) Workforce

- **Situation:** The average wage for a DSP in Iowa is \$13.18, well below the living wage for a two-working parent family with one child which is \$18.43. 94% of Iowa's disability service providers have DSP vacancies.
- **Background:** DSP providers serve over 160,000 Iowans with disabilities. These essential services allow individuals with disabilities to live in community-based settings, gain employment, and live life to their fullest potential at a lower cost than living in institutional settings. The current rate of inflation is 9.1%.
- **Assessment:** Without a strong and stable DSP workforce, individuals with disabilities will have to turn to institutional living, at a much higher cost to taxpayers.
- **Recommendation:** Stabilize the DSP Workforce by increasing Medicaid reimbursement rates to disability service providers. Increase rates for HCBS/ID, HCBS/BI, HCBS/CMH, and Habilitation 9%, and an annual increase to match inflation in the future.

» PRIORITY ISSUE 2 : Quality Childcare Accessible to All

- **Situation:** Iowa is short 350,000 child care slots for children younger than 12 years old.
- **Background:** For a family earning the median income with an infant in childcare they would pay 10% of their income before taxes if their child was in a registered home and 15% of their income before taxes if their child was in a licensed center. 7% is considered affordable according to a study from Child Care Aware of America.
- **Assessment:** In 2021, over 16,000 Iowa families used Child Care Assistance, which reimburses child care providers between 50%-75% of market rate for childcare, making it necessary for providers to compensate or fundraise to fill the gap for the cost of services.
- **Recommendation:** Increase the reimbursement rates to childcare providers to 100% of market rate to ensure providers can continue to offer childcare slots to families in need of financial assistance. Additionally, expand funding and access to the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Iowa program.

» PRIORITY ISSUE 3 : Lack of Access to Licensed Mental Health Services in the State of Iowa

- **Situation:** In February 2021, 42.2% of adults in Iowa reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, of those 25.4% were unable to get needed counseling or therapy. 58.1% of Iowans age 12-17 who have depression did not receive any care in the last year.
- **Background:** Iowa's rankings are among the lowest for mental health professionals, ranking 47th in the country for psychiatrists and 44th in mental health workforce availability. Iowa's reimbursement rates are also significantly lower than all of our neighboring states. Iowa's reimbursement rate for a 1 hour therapy session is \$76.80, an average of \$64.64 dollars LESS than an averaged rate for all neighboring states.
- **Assessment:** Mental health therapy rates through Medicaid have not been increased in over a decade, therefore fewer and fewer providers will accept Medicaid patients. Additionally, to become a Mental Health Therapist, candidates must have between 700-1,000 hours of unpaid internship hours under a licensed therapist. These therapists cannot bill for this time, therefore fewer providers will take on these students and they are unable to complete their degree due to lack of internships. This requirement to work part-time for free also makes it difficult to recruit students into these programs.
- **Recommendation:** Increase mental health therapy rates to the same level as neighboring states. Require insurance companies and Managed Care Organizations to allow providers to bill at a reduced rate for mental health students to have paid internships so they are able to complete their required hours.

» PRIORITY ISSUE 4 : Rural Solutions Appropriation - Help for rural Iowans with disabilities to continue farming

Maintain level funding for the Rural Solutions Program at \$180,000 within the Agriculture and Natural Resources budget to continue providing support and services to Iowa farmers and farm family members with disabilities.

The appropriation in 2022 allowed the Rural Solutions Program to serve 112 number of participants across the state of Iowa.

\$24,915 cost savings to other state funded programs because farmers with disabilities accessed Durable Medical Equipment Loans or equipment modification.

The appropriation to Rural Solutions brought in approximately \$6,356,688 in wages to Iowa's economy.

In FY 2021/22 the program supported 112 people, the vast majority of whom are working-age adults. Assuming program participants earn Iowa's average weekly wage of \$1,002 the average participant would earn \$52,104. With 112 participants, it's reasonable to assume the Rural Solutions Program brings, at minimum, \$5,835,648 in wages to Iowa by empowering individuals that may not otherwise work. Without the Rural Solutions program, many participants may find themselves on Social Security Disability and Medicaid—a program supported heavily by the state's general fund.

THANK YOU

The Legislature's support of renovations at Easterseals Iowa Camp Sunnyside have transformed our campus – Independence Innovation Center, Respite House, Teen and Employment programming space, new Bob & Billie Ray Child Development Center, new Brain Health program and residential Children's Crisis Stabilization was able to move into the old Child Development Center, renovations to our pool and lodge and accessible cabins – all of these improvements made it possible to continue to serve our community throughout the Covid-19 pandemic and continue to provide needed, innovative programming to meet the needs of our community.

Because of the Iowa Legislature:

- We increased our capacity to provide quality, integrated child care from 60 children to 120 children.
- We were able to reopen our summer camp programs in an accessible environment.
- We opened our Children's Crisis Stabilization service, providing intensive therapy to children and families in crisis in a residential setting at Camp Sunnyside.
- Soon our respite house will provide transitional support to individuals and families experiencing a housing crisis.
- Soon individuals or families in crisis after losing housing will be eligible to stay in our on-site respite house.



ELI'S STORY

While in the midst of a brain health crisis, Eli Kraft and his parents did the right thing by seeking help at a local healthcare facility. Because Eli's concerns were not severe enough to meet hospital admission criteria, Eli and his family were left with nowhere to turn and no supports. Thankfully, they were able to find information about the Children's Crisis Stabilization program at Easterseals. Tracey called and was able to get Eli admitted to the residential program located at Camp Sunnyside. Over the next five days, Eli and his family received intensive brain health treatment and a plan to support Eli to continue his work when he returned home. Eli noted this about his progress, "Rome wasn't built in a day, but I'm doing better and I keep working to be better." Eli is an incredibly charismatic young man who has taken this experience and turned it into an opportunity to advocate for all young people dealing with mental health concerns, especially young men. He is working to help normalize discussions about brain health and the importance of seeking help when you need help. His mom Tracey praised team members in Crisis Stabilization, sharing that getting Eli into the program likely saved his life.

Resources:

https://www.iowaproviders.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=178:policy-priorities&catid=20:site-content&Itemid=269 and <https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/19>
<https://iowaccrr.org/resources/files/Data/FY21/FY21%201%20State%20of%20Iowa.pdf> <https://governor.iowa.gov/basic-page/confronting-iowa%E2%80%99s-child-care-crisis>
<https://iowacapitaldispatch.com/2022/05/02/iowaparents-receiving-child-care-assistance-may-pay-more/#~:text=Iowa%20offers%20child%20care%20assistance,no%20cost%20to%20the%20family,namiowa.org>



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