PROJECT REPORT

Promising Practices of Carbondale
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Promising Practices of Carbondale (PPOC) project began in 2003. During the over two years of operation, the project has moved beyond the initial needs assessment and strategic plan to more concrete development of project, and refinement of programs and services provided by various community agencies. During the first year respondents with a disability who were victims of crime participated in a needs assessment and identified several significant barriers to providing services: law enforcement and service providers’ lack of knowledge in dealing with issues of persons with disability; conversely, persons with disability’s lack of knowledge about police procedures. Other barriers identified were lack of established protocols for screening and hiring care attendants; accessible transportation; safety and empowerment issues; and poor community perceptions about persons with disability. In order to address these issues several development projects, programs and services were initiated by the Carbondale Police Department (CPD), Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development (CRHSSD) and several key community agencies.

A law enforcement training manual entitled Protect & Serve: Persons with disability who are victims of Crime was developed to provide basic education to law officers about working with persons with disabilities. This training program was pilot tested and then implemented with officers from the Carbondale Police Department and Southern Illinois University Department of Public Safety. The manual has been approved by Austin SafePlace and is available upon request.

A functional and accessible interactive website (www.sippoc.org) was developed for all users, including those with disabilities. One significant feature of this site is the online Personal Assistant (PA) search capability that helps employers find a personal assistant by matching specific needs and preferences. The list is regularly updated and PAs are carefully screened through nationwide background checks, face-to-face interviews, and references before adding them to the list.

PPOC grant has also enabled Carbondale Police Department to purchase a wheelchair accessible van, assistive devices, and computers to better serve crime victims with disabilities. Crime victims are not charged for the services provided through Carbondale Police Department. Crime victims frequently need transportation to be able to follow-through with legal proceedings resulting from crime.

Peer Meetings are forums that enhance community perceptions about people with disability and allow the general public to have opportunities to meet new people, learn, brainstorm, and network with local agencies such as the Carbondale Police, Fire Department, and the SIU Law Clinic among others, on issues of safety, self-defense, power of attorney wills, living wills, financial and health wills, health and much more. The Peer Meeting audience decides on topics and guest speakers. Peer Meetings are scheduled every second and fourth Wednesday.

Other activities/services planned or implemented include: Advocates at the Women’s Center and CPD now have laptops with magnifiers and speech features at their disposal to better serve clients with low vision. Laptops make advocates more accessible in terms of meeting clients in comfortable spaces other than their respective agencies. Four more computers will be purchased and housed at the Carbondale Towers, Southern Illinois Center for Independent living and two other locations. Brochures and refrigerator magnets will also be made available as resources guide specific to the needs of crime victims with disabilities. Persons with disabilities who have been victims of crime may request residence safety checks. These residence safety checks are conducted twice a week by a civilian CPD staff and CPD officer.

In its final year, PPOC project team members are developing training manual, titled Let’s Play It Safe (LPIS). This training manual will be used by advocates, service providers or agencies to educate persons with disabilities on issues of safety, crime prevention and exploitation. LPIS includes information on: crime prevention, home security, consumer protection, travel safety, personal safety, relationships and communication, hiring personal assistants, and seeking help. A multi-agency approach in developing LPIS makes it unique. A diverse and dedicated team in the field of social services and law enforcement such as the SIUC Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development, Southern Illinois Center for Independent Living, Specialized Training for Adult Rehabilitation, and the City of Carbondale Police Department participated in developing the content of the training manual. Two activity games were exclusively developed for this training program. Talking on Purpose was created by Gary Phelps from the Southern Illinois Center for Independent Living. This game activity helps participants identify assertive communication and develop
Dedicated Partner Agencies

- Austin SafePlace
- Carbondale Towers
- SI Center for Comprehensive Services
- Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development
- City of Carbondale Police Department
- Illinois Department of Human Services (Home Services)
- Shawnee Alliance for Seniors
- SIUC Department of Public Safety
- SIUC Disability Support Services
- SI Center for Independent Living
- Southern Illinois Regional Social Services
- The Women’s Center
- Specialized Training for Adult Rehabilitation

Your agency is welcome to join!

The Carbondale Police Department (CPD) was awarded a sub-grant by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs through the SafePlace Foundation in Austin, Texas. CRHSSD received a contractual grant through CPD.

Any questions regarding the CRHSSD Center Briefs should be addressed to the Editor, Aimon N. Mizan, at 618-453-4283 or aimon@siu.edu