

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)



Q What is a developmental disability?

A developmental disability is a disability which occurs before an individual reaches 18 years of age, is expected to continue indefinitely and constitutes a substantial handicap. Developmental disabilities include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and disabling conditions closely related to mental retardation or requiring similar treatment to that required for individuals with mental retardation.

Q What is mental retardation?

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (American Psychiatric Association, fourth edition, 5/94) defines mental retardation in the following way: "This disorder is characterized by significantly sub-average intellectual functioning (an IQ of approximately 70 or below) with onset before age 18 years and concurrent deficits or impairments in adaptive functioning. Separate codes are provided for Mild, Moderate, Severe, and Profound Mental Retardation and for Mental Retardation, Severity Unspecified."

Q What services does Becoming Independent offer to people with developmental disabilities?

Becoming Independent offers five different programs: Community Living Supports, Continuing Adult Education, Supported Employment and Employment Services, Transportation Services and its newest program, The Family Resource and Advocacy Center.

Q How long has Becoming Independent been in operation?

Becoming Independent was established in 1967.

Q How old do you have to be to participate in Becoming Independent's programs?

The programs currently offered support adults over the age of 18. Our Family Resource and Advocacy Center (FRAC) provides information and assistance to families with children facing lifelong disability challenges. In early 2009 FRAC began offering a program to support teens transitioning into adulthood.

Q How many people are served by Becoming Independent?

Approximately 1,100 men, women and children are supported by Becoming Independent.

Q How is Becoming Independent funded?

Most of our funding is received from the State of California, through the North Bay Regional Center. Other funds result from fundraising activities, including events, grants and donation campaigns.

Q How does one apply for services with Becoming Independent?

Most of the individuals entering our programs are referred by the North Bay Regional Center and/or the Department of Rehabilitation. If individuals do not qualify for funding from these sources, and are able to private pay, they can arrange for an informational interview with the Director of Community Living Supports (CLS).

Q Where are the services offered?

Becoming Independent offers services in Sonoma, Napa and Solano Counties.

Q Who do we contact for more information?

Please see our website for contact information: www.becomingindependent.org