



Volunteers of America: Intellectual Disability Services

Volunteers of America Programs and Philosophy

- Volunteers of America serves approximately **5,000** people with intellectual disabilities nationwide. About **50 percent** of those clients live in residential programs.
- Volunteers of America strives to empower people with intellectual disabilities to be independent and involved in their communities. Our services include in-home supports, case management, day programs and supportive employment, specialized residential services and supported living.
- We are strongly committed to the principles of person-centered planning and client choice. Our belief is that each individual, regardless of the severity of his or her disability, has the right to live and participate in the community. Our programs focus on the strengths of each individual and then build on those strengths, interests and desires to improve the individual's independence and community integration. We understand that individuals seldom have one presenting problem, but rather need supportive services aimed at addressing the multiple needs in their lives.
- Our specialized services include:
 - A nationally-recognized project on end-of-life care for people with intellectual disabilities called "Last Passages"
 - A nationally-recognized program for training and retaining direct support staff and their supervisors
 - Programs for people with autism, mental health concerns and/or medical and physical care needs
 - Supports for people with Prader-Willi syndrome
- We serve individuals in programs that range from supported-living homes to in-home supports; and we offer vocational programs, supported employment, case management and other related services. All of our programs are licensed or certified by state agencies and many have additional accreditations including the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), Council on Accreditation of Services for Families and Children, Inc (COA), and the Council on Quality and Leadership (CQL).

Volunteers of America Local Office Programs Serving the Intellectually Disabled

- Volunteers of America has a variety of services for MRDD (Mentally Retarded Developmentally Disabled) clients. Our programs range from those serving children 3-5 years old (New York) to providing housing for seniors with MRDD in Tennessee.
- Volunteers of America's local offices provide MRDD services in **14 states and the District of Columbia**.
- The biggest programs are in **Mobile, Ala.** serving **400** people, and **Oklahoma** serving **300** people. Local offices in **Tennessee, Texas and Washington State** also have fairly large programs, with each serving **150-200** people.

Volunteers of America's service to clients with intellectual disabilities following Hurricane Katrina

- In the weeks and months following Katrina, many of our direct support staff provided 24-hour assistance to the consumers they served, often living with them under difficult circumstances, helping them rebuild their lives in the city of New Orleans.
- Partnering with the University of Wisconsin, focus groups were conducted with these direct support professionals, which led to the development of a report and video. Titled *Higher Ground*, this magazine-like report and the video highlight the dedication and commitment of this often undervalued workforce. The report and the video tell the first-hand stories of staff members who are dedicated to the people with disabilities, who made enormous personnel sacrifices to ensure on-going care and who continue to work under extreme pressures as the city strives to recover from this catastrophic disaster.
- ANCOR, the national trade organization for mental developmental disabilities (MRDD) service providers contributed to the development of the video and are working with us to distribute these materials as widely as possible, using them to advocate for better wages, benefits and recognition for this valuable workforce.