SELF ADVOCACY IN IOWA

• 25 + local advocacy organizations across Iowa but no list of them all
• Located in large and smaller communities
• Some meet socially
• Others focus on peer support, training, issues and advocacy.
• Includes 7 Independent Living Centers and at least 3 local People First organizations
RESOURCES FOR SELF ADVOCACY

• No single funding source for all of the self advocacy organizations.

• Independent Living Centers receive federal and state $, & support from the State Independent Living Council (SILC)

• Others receive support from local Arcs, DD Council, ID Action, provider organizations and local businesses; it varies widely.
WHAT HAS WORKED?

• IOWANS WITH DISABILITIES IN ACTION (ID ACTION)
  – A DD Council project intended to increase knowledge, skills and confidence
  – Grants for local organizing and change projects
  – Advocating Change Day at the Capitol
  – State Capitol Advocacy days for local groups
  – “Just in Time training” for caucuses, voting, and advocacy like meeting with decision-makers
CHALLENGES

• Transportation
• Youth Involvement
• Funding
• Top down approach to organizing self advocates hasn’t worked—need to start locally and grow first at the community level
• Reaching the “silent majority” of Iowans with disabilities who are inactive as self-advocates to support them to be more actively involved
WE ARE PROUD THAT

• Legislators have passed a bill to get rid of the word “retarded”. Finally!
• 800 people advocate for change at ID Action’s Advocating Change Day at the State Capitol.
• There are 2700 new voters with disabilities because of increased access, training and education.
• People with disabilities are providing training about community living choices for their peers.
• People with disabilities were included in the system redesign planning meetings last Fall.
DREAMS & GOALS

• Everyone should have the choice to be excited about living in the community
• Integrated community employment
• Leadership development
• See People First of Iowa back in action
• Statewide Self Advocacy Conference
• Youth involvement after the Youth Leadership Forum
• Supports to live & travel for example, personal assistance services
THE IOWA TEAM

- Jeremy Beavers, People First of Cerro Gordo County
- Tricia Cain, Arc of Story County
- Jeff Gitchel, Autistic Self Advocacy Network
- Becky Harker, Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council
- Mike Hoenig, Center for Disabilities & Development (UCEDD)
- Charlene Joens, Disability Rights Iowa (P&A)
- Todd Lange, Mental Health & Disability Services, Iowa Department of Human Services
- Koki Nakagawa, People First of Story County
- Mia Peterson, Self Advocates Becoming Empowered
- Rick Samson, Citizens Disability Consortium
- Rik Shannon, Iowa Developmental Disabilities Council/ID Action
- Sujit Singh, Access 2 Independence Center for Independent Living