

## 2016 ASSET LIAISON REPORT

### Mainstream Living, Inc.

Date of Agency Visit: October 14, 2016

Date of Agency Board Meeting Attended: September 21, 2016

ASSET Liaisons: Melonie Stall and Judy Meierkord, CICS Volunteers

**Need for Program.** Mainstream Living, Inc. (Mainstream or Agency) was founded on July 1, 1975, by a group of parents who wanted community living options for their children with intellectual disabilities. In 1976, the Agency opened its first home, serving six children with intellectual disabilities. Today Mainstream provides services to more than 550 individuals with disabilities daily and employs 600 workers in four counties – Story, Polk, Dallas and Boone – with an annual budget of \$20.3 million (FY17-18).

Mainstream serves an increasing targeted population of adults with intellectual disabilities, physical disabilities, brain injuries, mental health diagnosis and substance abuse issues or are medically fragile through a variety of programs, all of which maintain a long waiting list. Mainstream is requesting ASSET funding for four Story County services – Enclave Services, Full Day and ¼ Hour Day Habilitation Services and ¼ Hour Supported Community Living Services. This will allow the Agency to continue to serve persons who utilize these services but do not qualify for Medicaid funding. A description of these services is as follows:

1. **Enclave Services [Service Code 1.05]** consist of a small group of people with disabilities (generally 5-8) who are trained and supervised among employees who are not disabled at the host company's work site. Enclave services are meant to build employment skills which assist members in a transition to a job in the community. The Agency currently has enclave groups at Sauer Danfoss and Hach Chemicals in Ames. Two individuals are currently served by this program through ASSET.
2. **Day Habilitation (Day Hab) Services [Service Code 3.20]** provide a variety of activities for members to be more involved in the community. Day Hab members volunteer for a number of programs including delivering Meals on Wheels, preparing meals for Food at First, assembling folders for McFarland Clinic, making toys and treats for the Animal Rescue League or spending time at local nursing homes. All activities are based on choice - members choose what they are interested in participating in and can work on building socialization and self-advocacy skills at their own pace. Six individuals are currently served by this program through ASSET.
3. **Supported Community Living (SCL) Services [Service Code 3.18]** support persons with an Intellectual Disabilities waiver (HSBC/ID) or Brain Injury Waiver (HCBS/BI) to live as independently as possible. Services are provided in the member's own home or in the home of a parent/guardian. Mainstream works with each of their members to assess goals, interests and needs, in order to assist them in areas such as identification of appropriate goals support or treatment services, assistance with housing and living arrangements, crisis intervention, arrangement for personal environmental, family and community supports, community skills training and personal advocacy development. Three individuals are currently served by this program through ASSET.

The Agency's Snoezelen Program has been incorporated into their Day Habilitation Services and Mainstream's Full Day Supporting Community Living Services program was not being utilized by individuals eligible for ASSET funding, so they are no longer seeking funding through the ASSET process for these two programs.

Mainstream also conducts a member-driven program for individuals with high levels of independence in Ames – the Advocacy, Connections and Empowerment (ACE) Program, operates three Homes for the Medically Fragile who live with a serious ongoing illness or chronic health condition, operates Supported Living Apartments for persons with a psychiatric disability, operates an eleven-bed Residential Care Facility for persons with chronic mental illness, operates a Transition Age Youth (TAY) program for persons aged 18 to 25 and operates a Unity Home for low-income single women, with just under 20% of their overall operations occurring in Story County.

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If the services ceased to exist, the needs of the individuals with disabilities could fall back onto the family or could cause the individuals to be placed in a more restrictive, higher level of care environment.

There are several other providers of services to individuals with intellectual disabilities in Story County, including (not necessarily all-inclusive) Friendship Ark, Inc., Lutheran Services in Iowa, Mosaic of Central Iowa and Optima LifeServices. Most of these providers offer similar services to Mainstream, albeit generally on a smaller scale and with less diversity of program offerings.

Mainstream's programs in Story County that are seeking ASSET funding address the following priorities established by ASSET Funders for fiscal year 2016-17:

1. **City of Ames** – None.
2. **Story County** – Services are available and accessible county-wide, with an emphasis on services promoting self-sufficiency and for the safety, health and well-being of adults.
3. **Central Iowa Community Services** – Core Service Domains – Treatment designed to improve a person's condition and support for employment and Core-Plus Service Domains – Sub acute services provided in a community-based setting supported by evidence-based practices.
4. **United Way of Story County** – Education: Individual advocacy services and Income: Individuals have basic and emergency needs met and move toward self-sufficiency.
5. **ISU Government of the Student Body** – None.

**Program Strengths.** Mainstream last received its Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitative Facilities (CARF) three-year accreditation in March 2015. This is the highest possible level of accreditation CARF can award. In September 2015, evening and weekend services were added to Mainstream's SCL services, thus increasing availability of services to its members. The Agency's program strengths also include its variety of activities offered in their services where community integration is part of the program. In addition, the Agency is the only provider of Enclave services in Story County. Per Mainstream leadership, staff turnover is around 30%, about half of the state and national averages, with many key staff positions serving in excess of 20 years.

**Program Weaknesses.** To improve accessibility to the Agency's Ames Center, Mainstream added additional sidewalk space, created a better walkway approach to the Center and added additional parking behind the Center this past year. A United Way grant and a City of Ames Community Development Block Grant were sought by Mainstream to fund their Center Building Accessibility Improvement project, which is nearly two-thirds complete. Mainstream is continually looking for talented staff and improving staff retention and has a difficult time staffing nurses in some of their non-ASSET funded services.

**Financial Outlook.** The Agency's biggest challenge for the year was the switch to Managed Care Organizations (MCO). Because of Mainstream's proactive approach to the change (they requested to be a test site for the MCO's), the transition went rather smoothly and the Agency only had to draw slightly on their line of credit and the level of member care was not affected.

The Agency will be closing its Supported Living Apartments for persons with a psychiatric disability in Des Moines sometime before February 1, 2019 due to changes in compliance requirements for certain waivers that require providers to assure that the members they serve have the same rights and opportunities as non-Medicaid recipients. Mainstream's Supported Living Apartments programs do not meet these requirements and a decision was made in August 2016 to sell the apartments and they are currently seeking a buyer.

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The Agency expects an increase for their SCL services for the 57 individuals this affects. Mainstream plans to open two 4-bed transitional habilitation homes to help with the closing of the apartments as well.

Mainstream is projecting \$20.3 million in gross revenues for the 17-18 fiscal year. The amount of services requested for ASSET funding of \$26,491 is less than 1% of this amount, but quite necessary as no other funding is readily available for these services for persons not covered by Medicaid. This request is lower than previous years due to two services no longer a part of the ASSET funding process as described previously. The Agency's main source of income is Medicaid at approximately 94%. Mainstream does have a few private pay clients.

**Internal Management Practices.** The Agency has good Board representation from the counties it serves and includes persons with family members utilizing Mainstream services for many years. Two long-term employees were given new leadership roles this past fiscal year – Jon Zellweger, a 29 year employee, became the Chief Operating Officer, a new position at Mainstream, and Stuart Ambrose became the Chief Financial Officer after serving nearly four years as the Agency's Director of Finance.

**Agency Suggestions/Comments.** Mainstream chose not to ask for continued ASSET funding for their Daily Supported Community Living Services because they have not had anyone eligible to participate in the program (ie not qualifying for Medicaid) for the last couple of years and would like to free those funds up to be used by other ASSET agencies.

**General Assessment.** Mainstream is one of the major service providers in Story County of persons with disabilities (78 in FY15-16) effectively offering a full spectrum of services to many individuals and, thus, their families. Their CARF accreditation is evidence that they care about the quality of their programs and level of service to their members. Per the Ames Economic Development Commission's website, Mainstream is also one of the top 45 employers in Ames. The Agency has stable, seasoned management and staff and a diverse Board.