

# Making a Difference in the Lives of People Supported by ODP



## Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) Program Considerations

January 2022

# **Introduction**

Each year, Independent Monitoring for Quality (IM4Q) monitoring teams across Pennsylvania interview a random sample of individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities who are living in a variety of settings.

## **What is the purpose of IM4Q?**

The IM4Q process gathers information used to improve the lives of these individuals and to ensure they are healthy and safe. This report focuses on “considerations” that emerged from IM4Q interviews during the 2018-2019 fiscal year.

## **What are “considerations”?**

Considerations are suggestions for change or improvement indicated by an individual, their family and/or staff, or the IM4Q monitoring team during the interview process.

## **Why are considerations important?**

Considerations may result in service changes or provide an opportunity to improve the quality of life of the individual who has been interviewed.

## **What happens after a consideration is recorded?**

Each consideration is written up by an IM4Q monitoring team, reviewed by their IM4Q Coordinator, and submitted into the Home and Community Service Information System (HCSIS). The Administrative Entity (AE) receives it and shares it with the Supports Coordination Organization (SCO), which assigns it to the appropriate support coordinator (SC) for follow-up. The SC enters the follow-up actions taken to address the consideration for

AE approval. This process continues until the AE and IM4Q are satisfied with the action to address the consideration.

### **What is in this report?**

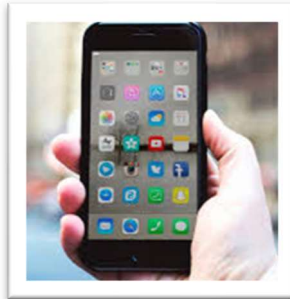
The following examples show how IM4Q has positively impacted the lives of individuals receiving ODP supports and why it is so important for individuals to participate in the IM4Q process. These successes are a result of the work, ingenuity, creativity, tenacity, and passion of SCs, providers, and others to make a positive difference in the daily lives of the people they serve.

**ODP thanks the individuals and those who support them to carry out this process that is so important to the work we do daily to improve the lives of Pennsylvanians with disabilities!**

*NOTE: The names of all individuals and some of the entities involved in the following closed considerations have been changed to protect confidentiality; however, the county in which the consideration took place is identified. Language has been edited for clarity.*

## Better Connected in Erie County

*"Jerry has never had a cell phone before and is satisfied."*



### Considerations

Jerry would like:

1. A cell phone
2. To learn how to use a cell phone
3. A bus pass
4. A CD player/radio
5. To move to an area that he used to live in in the past

### Responses

SC met with Jerry at his home to discuss these considerations. Then they called the Representative Payee to discuss them. The Representative Payee authorized the purchase of a basic cell phone with calling features only. Jerry has never had a cell phone before and was satisfied with this. Once Jerry received the phone, the SC assisted him with the initial phone set up. The Representative Payee agreed to send Jerry a bus pass in the mail each month for transportation. After Jerry shopped around to get a price for a portable CD player/radio, the Representative Payee authorized the payment.

Jerry also said he would like to live in the city of Erie, because he eats meals at local city churches and City Mission. After meeting with his SC, he has agreed to stay at his current apartment during the winter and begin searching for a different apartment in the spring.

## Major Exploration from Philadelphia County

*"Tim was extremely excited with this plan."*



### Consideration

Tim said he would like to visit his brother out west and that he would like to take a trip to China one day.

### Response

According to Tim's sister, Tim and his brother are about twenty years apart in age, have never lived together, and are not close. Tim's brother joined the air force before Tim was born and now retired and lives in Idaho. Tim has his address and sends him cards several times a year. Tim is satisfied with this.

SC also discussed taking a vacation to China with Tim's sister and she reported that she had never heard Tim express any interest in going to China. SC shared that Tim picked China because he likes the architecture, the culture, and the food. The team discussed exploring this request on a smaller, less costly scale. Tim worked with staff and planned a trip to Chinatown in Philadelphia. The architecture, atmosphere, museums, and restaurants there offered a look into the Chinese culture and Tim reported that he had an excellent day. He explored the shops, had lunch in a nice restaurant (tried to use chopsticks), and walked around and looked at the architecture and murals. Tim planned follow-up visits to the area.

## **Home is Where the Heart is in Berks County**

*"Brittany and Malcolm were both able to move into the community home together and share a bedroom."*



### **Consideration**

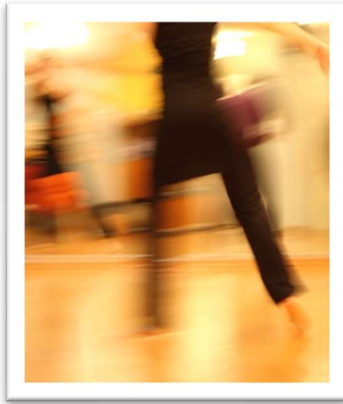
We interviewed Brittany, who lived on her own. She also had a boyfriend, Malcolm, and asked him to sit in on her survey. Brittany stated she wanted to be able to move into a community home with her boyfriend and he agreed that was also what he wanted. They both needed a little more assistance with managing their health, and they wanted to be able to live together.

### **Response**

One community home happened to be their provider of choice and had a bedroom licensed for two people. The couple was approved for Consolidated funding, and they were both able to move into the community home together and share a bedroom.

## **Zumba in Bradford-Sullivan Counties**

*"Kimberly is now employed at two locations to instruct Zumba classes."*



### **Consideration**

Kimberly stated she would like to work as a Zumba instructor.

### **Response**

Kimberly trained to be a Zumba instructor using services both from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and ODP. She obtained certification and is now employed at two locations to instruct Zumba classes.

## **Fossils in Bradford-Sullivan Counties**

*"Ken is now volunteering at a prehistoric museum and research center."*



### **Consideration**

Ken would like assistance in finding avenues to pursue his interest in drawing prehistoric animals, also known as paleoart.

### **Response**

SC spoke with Ken, his mother, and the Program Specialist about expanding Ken's Community Participation days to include a day that would focus on paleontology. They started with taking one of his Fridays to explore this. Ken visits a local paleontology museum and research center every Friday to explore. He also volunteers there and has drawings displayed in the building.



## **New Van in Bucks County**

*"SC assisted Paul's family in obtaining the funding to purchase [a lift and van]."*



### **Consideration**

Paul's family expressed that they need a Hoya lift and information about how to obtain an accessible van. Their son needs to be lifted everywhere. His father broke his leg over the summer as well, making this more challenging.

### **Response**

Adaptive equipment was discussed at a home monitoring with the family. SC assisted the family in receiving adaptations for a van, that the County AE approved. SC assisted the family in obtaining the funding to purchase these items.

## **New Community Job in Lancaster County**

*"Katie has done very well adjusting to this job and enjoys it."*



### **Consideration**

Katie and her father both mentioned her obtaining a community job.

### **Response**

Katie began the OVR assessment process. Since it was over 120 days after her intake, she was then able to get supported employment services through Excentia (Katie's choice of provider), where she received Job Finding and Development and Job Coaching and Support services. Katie began employment with a high-quality meat and cheese shop and now works 3 days per week, 6 hours per day. She continues to have check-ins from her job coach as needed. She and her team have reported that she enjoys the job and has done very well adjusting to it.

## **Self-Advocacy Groups in Lycoming-Clinton Counties**

*"Isaiah can choose whether he is interested."*



### **Consideration**

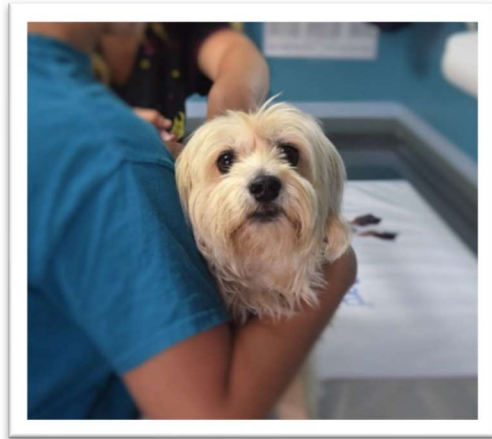
Isaiah expressed a desire to learn more about self-advocacy groups in his area.

### **Response**

Isaiah's team met and explained to him what self-advocacy groups are to ensure he really understood and wanted to participate. He stated that he would like to attend a self-advocacy group, so the team identified available groups, offered them to Isaiah, and the staff agreed to take him to meetings and provide any necessary support.

## **Animal Lover in Mercer County**

*"Lisa was set up as a volunteer at a local rescue."*



### **Consideration**

Lisa wanted to be a veterinarian but did not want to go to school.

### **Resolution**

Lisa was set up as a volunteer at a local rescue and goes there to play with the animals.

## Winter Swimming in Northampton County

*"Jayden can access swimming during the winter months."*



### Consideration

Staff informed the IM4Q team of Jayden's love for swimming. They shared that he may benefit from an activity or vacation centered around water activities for his enjoyment.

### Response

Jayden enjoys visiting local lakes and pools, during day program hours, in the summer months. His Community Living Arrangements provider purchased a membership to the YMCA so he can access swimming during the winter months. The YMCA has an indoor pool that he can enjoy a few times per week.

## **New iPad in Carbon-Monroe-Pike Counties**

*"Evan was assisted to purchase an iPad for himself."*



### **Consideration**

Evan would like a new iPad to improve his communication. He has been borrowing one from a local provide, but it needs to be returned and he uses it all the time, everywhere he goes.

### **Response**

Evan was assisted to purchase an iPad for himself. SC and SC Supervisor assisted with locating appropriate applications that his waiver could provide for him, for the iPad.

## New Voter in Carbon-Monroe-Pike Counties

*"Christina is now a registered voter."*



### **"Consideration**

Christina would like to learn how to vote.

### **Response**

SC worked with Christina and her family to complete the process for voter registration. Christina is now a registered voter which has had a positive impact on her personal growth.



## Cross Country Trip from Franklin-Fulton Counties

*"Mia made the trip...and all went smoothly."*



### Consideration

Mia mentioned that she would like to see her family (who live in Florida) more often. Could SC provide resources and information as appropriate?

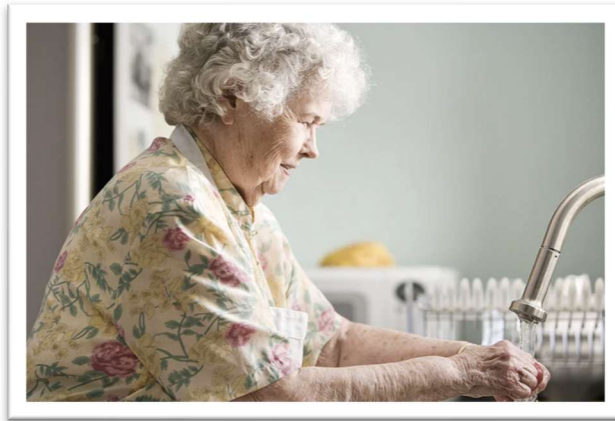
### Response

Mia planned a trip to Florida for a week, flew out of Hagerstown airport, and her sister picked her up from the airport in Florida. She was very excited. Mia made the trip and with coordination between the sister, provider, SC, and airport personnel, all went smoothly. She would like to go again.



## Weekly Visits in Crawford County

*"Ashley can see her mother once per week."*



### Consideration

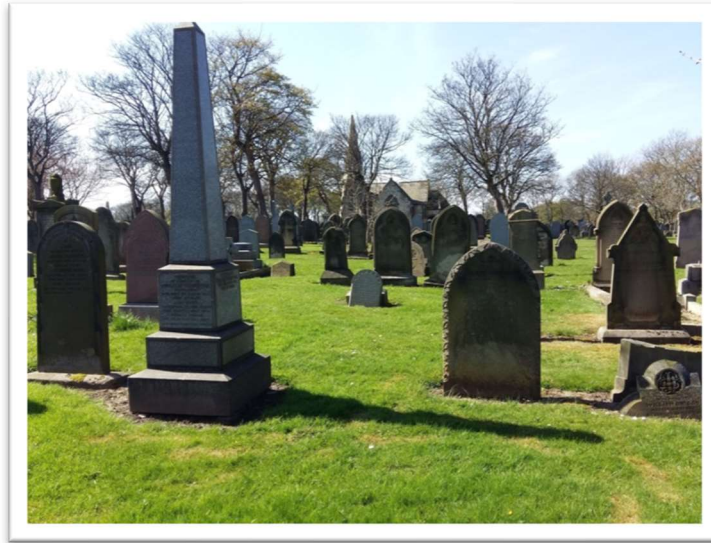
Ashley would like to find funding for transportation to see her mother in her nursing home.

### Response

Ashley and her team discussed this consideration at her quarterly meeting. Ashley's payee assisted with contacting Crawford Area Transportation Authority to see about setting up Share-A-Ride drives to visit her mother, who lives more than 15 miles away from Ashley's home. Crawford Area Transportation Authority informed them that they would not go that far. After learning that Share-A-Ride was not an option, Ashley's team put plans in place so she can see her mother once per week. Ashley's life sharing provider takes her every other Saturday afternoon and The Arc adjusted Ashley's mileage cap for day program services so her day provider can take her every other Thursday, during day program, on the weeks she does not go with her life sharing provider. Ashley agreed with this plan and decided that once per week was satisfactory.

## **Paying Respects in Crawford County**

*"Andrew was excited and agreed to go with staff on Memorial Day."*



### **Consideration**

Andrew identified, "I would like to visit my grandfather's grave to pay my respects."

### **Response**

A team meeting was held and Andrew was asked where his grandfather was buried. He was not sure, but he said it was in a cemetery outside the village of Kane. His team named the cemeteries and he said he thought it was Forest Lawn Cemetery. Andrew was very close to his grandparents who raised him. His staff said that they could take him to the grave site and suggested they go on Memorial Day. Staff also suggested that a flower could be planted at that time. The team agreed that Andrew could also work on coping skills during the site visit. Andrew was excited and agreed to go with staff on Memorial Day.

## Healthy Eating in Lawrence County

*"Tyler feels much better."*



### Consideration

Tyler's sister requested assistance for Tyler to learn to cook simple meals.

### Response

Tyler was able to get family to come over every other Saturday so he could learn to cook new and easy meals. He was doing so well that he gained more weight than was healthy. This led to educating him on healthy choices and enrolling him in an exercise program. Tyler lost 10 pounds and feels much better.

## More Communication in White Haven Center

*"White Haven has obtained a second device and has been working on this device with Pat."*



## Consideration

Staff suggests Pat might benefit from finding ways to assist her in communicating more. Perhaps a professional assessment could help her communicate.

## Response

SC met with a White Haven Qualified Intellectual Disability Professional and Pat to review consideration. Based on an assessment completed by a Speech Pathologist, White Haven obtained a communication device for her that announces her name in a conversation. White Haven has since obtained a more advanced, second device and has been working on it with Pat. The new device can assist her in choosing preferred activities, by giving her choices to choose from. Her team plans to continue to work on this device with her and to test other devices, as necessary. Pat agrees with this plan.

## **A Family Affair in Montgomery County**

*"Nic was able to dine and shop in the community, which resulted in development of natural friendships."*



### **Consideration**

Nic's parents requested assistance with changing his approved private school placement and understanding the criteria for his health coverage.

### **Response**

The IM4Q team visited Nic, a school-aged individual. Over the years, the parents tried to act as advocates for their children, but as the children got older their medical and school related issues multiplied to the point that the parents were physically and emotionally exhausted and unable to effectively manage day-to-day tasks, much less manage the more complex issues of Transition Planning. Both parents acquired chronic health conditions and suffered loss and reduction of their employment status and wages.

The SC supervisor and the Director of Special Education from their home district met within 5 days to address the Approved Private School placement. With the help of the team, the family visited various placement options and selected a full-time residential option for one of their children. The family also contacted an advocate to help them understand the protocol and guide them through the process for resolving health care coverage and eligibility.

## **Outcome of Closed Consideration**

Since the initial IM4Q team visit, Nic's family has been able to avoid foreclosure on their house, improve their health and gain employment. Most importantly, they believe that the residential placement for their child was an important step to give their child the best chance at a self-determined life. Their other child has benefited from their increased attention. They are thankful that the IM4Q Team visit and Considerations resulted in restoring manageability to their family unit and their confidence to parent their children. They were satisfied that the specific health related issues were fully resolved, especially regarding the criteria for health care coverage.

## **Additional Outcomes of the Closed Consideration**

First, the Social Security Income (SSI) and Medical Assistance (MA) issues were resolved to Nic's benefit emotionally and financially. Nic became knowledgeable about SSI and MA issues and regularly shares the experience and process with others in a local advocacy group he joined.

Nic's parents developed additional skills in self-advocating with their employer(s) on the issue of benefits. The family felt confident in their circle of support comprised of the SC, family, neighbors, and their employer.

More disposable income in the family unit increased Nic's choices and willingness to participate in community activities. Nic was able to dine and shop in the community, which resulted in development of natural friendships and an enriched life.

There has been an improved relationship between the family and Nic. They spend time together doing typical activities like meals out, movies and community activities. Previously, everyone was so frustrated over the financial issues that each avoided spending time together.