




# IM4Q: Independent Monitoring for Quality— Facts and Resources for People with Disabilities, Family Members, and Advocates

**A RESOURCE MANUAL** created by the  
Institute on Disabilities at Temple University  
with support from the Pennsylvania Office of  
Developmental Programs

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# What is IM4Q?

**IM4Q (Independent Monitoring for Quality) is a project of Pennsylvania's Office of Developmental Programs and the Institute on Disabilities at Temple University. IM4Q gathers information from people with disabilities in Pennsylvania who receive waiver-based services to understand how they live their lives and to make their lives better.**

The purpose of IM4Q is to understand how people with disabilities feel about their lives and the services they receive. This allows decision makers at the state and county levels and service providers to improve services for people with disabilities. The information shared in IM4Q reports helps achieve this goal by showing areas of strength and areas where improvement is possible. It also allows us to track changes in how people feel about their lives and the services they receive over time.



IM4Q also allows us to improve people's lives in a direct way. When IM4Q staff members interview a person with a disability, they write down any problems or needs the person has. We call these "considerations." These considerations are shared through the IM4Q system with someone who might be able to help, like a supports coordinator (SC), a service provider, or family members. The supports coordinator decides how to handle the problem or need, and talks with other staff at the state and county levels. People work to fix the problem or fill the needs of the person with the consideration until they or their family is satisfied. We call this "Closing the Loop."



# Voting

**Voting is an important way to make your voice heard and have a say in the policies that affect your life and the lives of people you care about.**

In 2023, 36% of people with disabilities who shared information with IM4Q reported that they vote in political elections. On the [USA.gov website](https://www.usa.gov), you will find many policies and laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities to vote on election day.

The first step to voting is being registered. If you aren't registered, you can register right now! It will take about 2 minutes. You need your name, date of birth, address, and an email address (if you need to, you can make a free email address right now at Google at the [Gmail Help website](https://www.google.com/help/101/101.html)).



- Ready? There is a [Commonwealth of Pennsylvania \(PA.gov\) webpage](https://www.pa.gov) where you can read about the four ways you can register to vote! If you want to register online, the application is on the [Pennsylvania Voter Services website](https://www.elections.pa.gov).
- If you need help with the voting process, you can fill out a [form from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania website](https://www.elections.pa.gov) to request assistance. The [website](https://www.elections.pa.gov) also has additional information about accessible voting.
- If you need more information on the process of voting, [the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative \(ASERT\) website](https://www.asert.org) offers an Election Day Survival Toolkit.
- The [website of Temple University's Institute on Disabilities](https://www.temple.edu/institute-on-disabilities) has many other helpful resources related to voting, including information about voter protection, voter assistance hotlines, voter ID requirements, and upcoming election dates.



# Participating in the Community

**Disability inclusion is the integration of people with disabilities as equal participants in their communities, social settings, and everyday activities.**

In 2023, 80% of people with disabilities who shared information with IM4Q had a lot of opportunities to visit their local community for entertainment, such as seeing a movie or visiting a bar or tavern. Only 29% of people with disabilities who shared information with IM4Q had a lot of opportunities to talk to and spend time with people in their community who do not have disabilities. You deserve opportunities to spend time in inclusive spaces and talk to people in your community who do not have disabilities.



- Developed by ASERT for ASDNext, [a resource guide on the ASERT website](#) provides tips and suggestions for places to find events or activities going on in your community.
- If you want to spend time outside, the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society's Park Finder app can help you find public parks that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Thinking about going to an event or participating in an activity in your community? The [Getting Ready for A Social Event Guide on ASERT's website](#) has some helpful tips about what you need to do to get ready.
- [ASERT's website also contains a resource bundle](#), designed for autistic people, that can help you know what to expect and how to deal with new people and situations.



# Transportation

**Having transportation you can rely on is important for meeting your needs and doing what you want to do with your life, such as working and spending time in the community.**

In 2023, 94% of people with disabilities who shared information with IM4Q had good transportation to get where they needed to go. Most people get to where they need to go by getting rides from family members or staff.

- [The Persons with Disabilities Half-Fare Program \(at PA.gov\)](#) allows Pennsylvanians with disabilities to ride for half-price on some kinds of public transportation during non-busy hours. If you want to use this program, you must show a Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Reduced Transit Fare Identification Card or Medicare Card when paying for the bus or train. Find the [Reduced Transit Fare ID application form on the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Agency \(SEPTA\) website](#). Find the [Medicare Card enrollment application on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service \(CMS\) website](#).
- [Find My Ride \(at PA.gov\)](#) helps people with disabilities in Pennsylvania travel by providing shared rides and information on accessible bus and train routes. You can plan and book your transportation using the [Find My Ride online application](#), which is available in many counties. You will need your Shared Ride number to book a ride.





# Technology Resources

**Having access to technology can make the lives of people with disabilities better. Technology allows people with disabilities to communicate, travel, work, and participate in activities more easily.**

In 2023, 44% of people with disabilities who shared information with IM4Q had easy access to a cellphone, and 62% had easy access to a computer with internet. Technology that is used to help someone communicate is a human right. You have a right to access and use technology that makes your life easier and gives you access to opportunities.



- [The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network \(PaTTAN\) website](#) contains information about the Short Term Loan (STL) program, a library of assistive technology (AT) available to local educational agencies (LEA) for trial and assessment.
- Technology for Our Whole Lives (TechOWL), lends AT devices to all Pennsylvanians with disabilities. Details are on the [TechOWL website](#).
- Computer classes for people with disabilities are available through organizations like Adelante, which runs the Diverse IT program. Find details on the [Adelante website](#).



# Making Your Own Decisions

**People deserve to make choices about how they want to live their lives. Self-determination is the right of people with disabilities to make decisions about their own lives.**

People who shared information with IM4Q in 2023 participated in different activities during the day. Some people worked in a Community Integrated Employment setting, while others attended a day program or workshop. 83% of people who worked chose their workplace. 31% of people who attended a day program or workshop chose it without help. Overall, 89% of people choose their daily schedule without help.



- The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is an organization that fights for people's rights. [This ACLU website page has some resources about decision-making for people with disabilities.](#)
- If you feel that you need more help with self-advocacy, or speaking up for yourself, [The Speak-Up Guide from the Let's Get to Work website](#) is a great way to learn important skills and strategies.
- Once you feel ready to advocate for yourself, you can visit the [Disability Rights Pennsylvania webpage with a list of helpful self-advocacy guides](#) for a lot of different specific areas of your life.
- If you're interested in meeting other self-advocates like you in Pennsylvania, join a self-advocacy organization like Self-Advocates United as One (SAU1). [Check out the SAU1](#)





# Getting The Services You Want

**Self-directing services gives people more freedom to choose the services they want, hire their own service providers, and manage their own money.**

In 2023, 9% of people with disabilities who participated in IM4Q self-directed their own services.

- The webpage about [Person-Directed Services](#) from Temple University's [Institute on Disabilities](#) has stories of people who decided to direct their own services.
- If you are interested in learning more about directing your own services, [the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network \(ASAN\) website](#) features a guide that has a lot of [helpful information](#). It also lists different supports you can use for housing, employment, daily living, and accessing your community.



# Employment

**Community Integrated Employment, or CIE, is work for people with disabilities that is paid directly to you, provides at least minimum wage, and occurs in a work setting in the community where you can interact with coworkers with and without disabilities.**

In 2023, 19% of people with disabilities who shared information with IM4Q worked in a CIE setting. You deserve a job that pays you fairly and gives you an opportunity to interact with people from your community. Pennsylvania is an Employment First state, which means that it is important to them that all people with disabilities have a CIE job.



- If you are interested in finding a CIE job or learning job skills, the [PA.gov Employment First Pennsylvania webpage](#) has a list of resources to help you get started. [The PA.gov Find A Job webpage](#) lists places you can start looking for a job.
- The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) can offer individual supports for getting and keeping a job, including job coaching, goal setting, and job placement. Find information on the [PA.gov OVR webpage](#).
- It is important that you find a job where you can work without losing important benefits, such as your housing, healthcare, and community supports. The resources on [PA.gov's Work Without Losing Benefits webpage](#) can help you connect with a person called a benefits counselor who will help you make sure you can work without losing your benefits.
- Once you're ready to start applying for a job, you can find a [checklist on the ASERT website to guide you through the process](#). And if you are preparing for an interview (congrats!), [a ASERT webpage shows a video with ten helpful interview tips](#). Finally, if you need accommodations at work, [another ASERT webpage answers some important questions about accommodations](#).



## **Follow-up**

 **Are there other topics that you would like to know more about?**

 **Are you looking for other resources?**

**Let us know and we will try to include them in next year's resource guide.**

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**Thank you for reading!**

