



William Winocur

Report on the Project to Establish a Wheelchair Repair Facility at the Center for Independent Living

[ca. 1975]

— 1 —

Report on the Project to Establish a Wheelchair Repair Facility at the Center for Independent Living

Report Written by William Winocur, Consultant Engineer on the project.

Time Period Covered is from March 1, 1974 to February 28, 1975.

The first business operation of C.I.L. has been established. As an active member of C.I.L. and as project consultant I am happy to report the rapid growth and success of the wheelchair Repair Facility. Our three repairmen and secretary are servicing 80 customers per month. Receipts for February were \$5000 and estimated receipts for March are \$6000. Business is expanding and could easily double in six months.

This operation demonstrates what we can do: establish and operate a successful service-oriented enterprise. The Wheelchair Repair Facility can be easily expanded to include other products and services or it can be used as a reference for other business ventures.

The WCR facility owes its success to the confidence extended by our customers, the disabled community, who enabled us to demonstrate our capabilities; the joint efforts of the staff of Lynn Tijerina, Gary Rowen, Tom Fussy, and Earl Jacobson; and the effective administration of C.I.L. Director Ed Roberts and Assistant Director Phil Draper. I feel that I've spent a useful and enjoyable year working on this project and it's a good feeling being able to use the shop to get my wheelchair repaired.

The following is a summary of accomplishments of the WCR facility as well as an evaluation of the operation and recommendations for the future.

1. Accomplishments

A. Repair Shop

1. Personnel

- a. Gary Rowen was hired and then trained at P.D.S.P.
- b. Tom Fussy, electrical engineering senior at U.C., was hired and trained at C.I.L.
- c. Earl Jacobson, electronics technician, was hired and trained at C.I.L., Everest and Jennings in Santa Monica, and Motorette in Tarzana.

2. Equipment and Supplies
 - a. Setting up work area with tables and shelves.
 - b. Purchase of tools, test equipment, and battery chargers.
 - c. Purchasing of replacement parts for wheelchairs.
3. Repairs
 - a. Developed expertise in mechanical and electrical repairs.
 - b. Developed expertise in rebuilding motors and gear boxes.
 - c. Developed expertise in rebuilding electronic circuits.
 - d. Adapted Davis fork for the Advanced chair.
 - e. Installing of safety equipment on chairs: lights, horns, and reflectors.
4. Wheelchair Related Work
 - a. Install tie-down systems.
 - b. Refer carpenters to build ramps.
5. Shop Procedures
 - a. Developed procedure for receiving work requests and scheduling work activities.
 - b. Developed work report forms and procedure for reporting work.
 - c. Developed procedure for periodic inventory and re-stocking of parts.

B. Billing Department

1. Personnel

Lynn Tijerina was hired and then trained at C.I.L. in Medi-Cal billing and prescription writing.

2. Billing

- a. Procedures developed in billing Medi-Cal, Medi-Care, CHAMPUS, Dept. of Rehabilitation, various other insurance companies, institutions, and individuals.
- b. Fee schedules were devised.
- c. Filing system set up to keep track of billing and correspondence.
- d. Filing cabinet, typewriter, desk, and supplies were purchased.

3. Book-Keeping

- a. Book-Keeping system set up to keep track of disbursements and receipts, bills payable, accounts receivable, and commissions anticipated.

- b. Separate checking account established.

- c. Payroll and sales tax collection coordinated with C.I.L. bookkeeper Bill McGregor.

4. Overall

Coordination of: writing prescriptions, obtaining signed prescriptions, Medi-Cal authorization, shop work done, billing sent out and payments received.

C. Governmental Regulations

1. Alameda County

- a. Resale license obtained.
- b. Sales tax collection and payment arranged.

2. City of Berkeley

- a. Business license obtained.
- b. Business tax exemption for non-profit organization obtained.

D. Supplies

1. Dealerships and accounts with Everest-Jennings, Stainless, Rolls, Advanced Wheelchair, Motorette, Motive Systems Engineering, Cargotrol, Pico Battery Mfg., and Battery Specialists.
2. Arrangements with R.B. Cooke and Thrifty Rents, who have both been very supportive of the W.C.R. facility.
3. Various suppliers who provide parts directly at lower prices than the wheelchair manufacturing companies.

E. Referrals

1. Goods and services not directly handled by C.I.L. are obtained for clients through other sources.
 - a. Involves C.I.L. in obtaining good quality services and equipment.
 - b. Provides income in the form of commissions.

F. Mail Order Business

1. Products

- a. Davis fork — extra strong wheelchair caster forks with shock absorbers.
- b. Tie Downs — Rail and belt system for a more flexible and stronger tie-down of wheelchairs inside vans.

— 4 —

2. Selling

- a. Information sheets including description, drawings, and instructions for installing units.
- b. Procedure for receiving payment and making shipment.
- c. Medi-Cal approval of both items.

G. Emergency Repair

1. Telephone answering system to take calls after hours and weekends.
2. Scheduling of repairmen to cover emergency calls.

H. Advertising

1. Services and products advertised

- a. Wheelchair repair at C.I.L. and in the field
- b. Emergency wheelchair repair

- c. Davis forks and tie-downs
- d. Referrals

2. Methods

- a. Posters and flyers
- b. Publications: The Independent, Paraplegia News
- c. Personal contact with businesses, organizations, individuals

2. II. Evaluation of the Facility

1. Employees are involved in their work and concerned about satisfying customers needs.
2. The repairmen are expert at their job and keep clients mobile.
3. The billing secretary is very efficient and organized in her effort.
4. The service is very effective in being responsive to customers needs as well as meeting Medi-Cal (our major bill payer) requirements.
5. The financial status is excellent. Cash receipts for February were \$5000, with \$6000 estimated for March.

Gary's salary and facility overhead are paid out of county funds.

\$1500/month covers salaries for Tom (½ time), Earl (½ time) and Lynn (full time).

\$5000 represents a parts cost of about \$2000 and sales tax of \$200.

Receipts less salaries and parts leaves \$1300 for operating capital. The bank balance on Feb. 28, 1975 was \$2650. This amount was sufficient to cover bi-monthly salaries of \$750, \$800 owed to C.I.L. and leave a reserve for parts on order.

We are out of debt and meeting our financial commitments.

— 5 —

3. III. Recommendations

1. The WCR facility should have a full or 3/4 time business director. He should be physically disabled and have business training. His job would be to take responsibility for the general operation of the facility, including the growing mail order business. He would write budgets as well as help plan the expansion of business.
2. Consumer response needs to be brought into the operation. This should be done in a formal way rather than through casual gossip. It is important for C.I.L. to concern itself with this since many of us have felt that the lack of effective consumer input has been a critical shortcoming of the established businesses that provide goods and services to the disabled.
3. A more sophisticated accounting system needs to be devised for the billing department in order to keep up with the expansion of business and provide important budgeting information.
4. The shop work area needs to be increased with additional space for batteries, parts storage, and a ventilating hood.
5. The shop needs power tools such as a drill press and a bench grinder.
6. The shop needs more hand tools to provide extra sets for out-calls.
7. The electronics bench needs to be expanded to include an oscilloscope and testing circuits so that electronic repairs can be done away from the chair being repaired.
8. Inventory and re-stocking should be done on a regular basis such as once a month.
9. The present procedure of hiring repairmen that are competent in electronics as well as having a good

mechanical aptitude should be continued.

— 6 —

10. The Wheelchair Repair Facility is the first business operation of C.I.L. Its structure can be easily expanded to include other products and services or it can be used as a reference for other business ventures.

Submitted to the Board of C.I.L. on March 31, 1975 by William Winocur

Copies to:

C.I.L. Director Ed Roberts

C.I.L. Board Chairman Phil Draper

C.I.L. Board Members:

Maria Albanesi

John Baker

Don Berry

Chuck Cole

Don Galloway

Debbie Kaplan

Jan McEwen

Michael Williams

Herb Willsmore

Hale Zukas

W.C.R. STAFF:

Lynn Tijerina

Gary Rowen

Tom Fussy

Earl Jacobson

Former W.C.R. Secretary:

Janice Krones

P.D.S.P. Director John Hessler.