

# LINK ASSOCIATES

## HANDBOOK FOR CONSUMERS, LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES, ADVOCATES, AND FAMILY MEMBERS

Also available in audio format and alternative languages upon request

### Mission

Providing people with intellectual disabilities opportunities to achieve their personal goals.

### Vision

Link Associates will be the recognized leader in providing quality services to persons with mental disabilities.

### Values:

Dignity & Respect  
Quality Services  
Caring Environments  
Personal Choice  
Long Term Commitment

### Dignity and Respect

We embrace an atmosphere of open communication and mutual respect where people are treated fairly, have fulfilling opportunities and challenges and are able to make a difference in our community.

We strive to:

- \* Be honest and fair in all our interactions
- \* Respect confidentiality and individual rights
- \* Empower individual choice
- \* Work together as a team

### Quality Services

We provide quality services to all consumers on a non-discriminatory basis.

We strive to:

- \* Comply with applicable federal, state and local laws
- \* Ensure safe programs
- \* Provide personalized and innovative services based on individual needs
- \* Support opportunities to achieve personal goals

### Caring Environments

We provide opportunities to live, work and socialize in caring and supportive environments.

We strive to:

- \* Establish safe, adaptive, and affordable living and work environments.
- \* Provide skilled and knowledgeable staff.
- \* Respect personal environments.
- \* Recognize and reward accomplishments.

### Personal Choice

We empower consumers and staff to make personal choices that meet their needs.

We strive to:

- \* Provide mutual learning opportunities.
- \* Opportunities to achieve personal goals.
- \* Support consumer's choice in all aspects of their life.

## WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE BOARD

On behalf of the consumers at Link Associates, the Board and the staff, we welcome you to our agency. We are all honored that you have chosen us to provide services to you and we will work together to make services here the best possible. As a member of this agency, your thoughts and feedback are important. We want to know how you and your family feel about the assistance we provide and welcome your ideas to help make Link Associates better.

This handbook has been prepared to tell you about our policies and a general description of our services. You will want to read and study this manual carefully and if you have any questions concerning any of the information, our employees are ready to assist you.

We hope that you will enjoy your time here and we look forward to working with you to develop the programs and services you want.

Linda Dunshee, Executive Director

### **Statement of Non-Discrimination:**

It is Link Associate's policy to provide services on a non-discriminatory basis. We believe that all persons who receive our services have the right to receive an appropriate level of guidance and training without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, veteran status, marital status, or political affiliation.

Our expectation is that all staff, consumers, consumers' legal representatives/advocates, and consumer family members abide by this policy of non-discrimination. When a person reports their belief that they have been discriminated against, the Executive Director or designee will immediately investigate the allegation. Persons who have been discriminated against will be offered the opportunity, and if requested, assistance in filing a complaint with the appropriate state or federal agency.

When it is determined that a staff person, a consumer, a legal representative/advocate, or a consumer family member has engaged in discrimination, counseling will be offered to change behavior. If the person continues to engage in discriminatory behavior, they will be subject to discharge from employment or from the agency's services.

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## I. BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

### A. Your Plan:

Every person we support has a Comprehensive Consumer Service Plan (CCSP). The purpose of this plan is to develop an understanding between you and Link Associates that describes how you want us to help you achieve your life goals. The plan covers the goals you want to work toward and the services to assist you in achieving those goals. It will identify what actions you will take to achieve the goals. Your plan will help you picture how you want to live and how to make that vision a reality. Your plan will help you build on your natural skills, talents, and gifts to create a more satisfying life and increase community participation. You and your team will address:

- Community resources and how to access them.
- Safety at all of the sites where you live and work.
- Access to emergency care.
- Healthcare procedures and techniques.
- Contingency planning if the providers you have chosen are unable to provide for all of your needs.
- How to deal with evacuations and emergencies.
- Transportation

The different sections on the CCSP include:

- Frequency of contact case manager will have with the consumer and provider agencies
- Living and working arrangements/justification on least restrictive services – benefits & insurance
- Services provided/funding source/amount of services/rate of services
- Chart outlining the total service costs

- Services/resources/supports needed but unavailable
- Rights restrictions/recommendations for guardianship, legal issues
- Meeting minutes from the annual meeting – includes a progress summary on goals
- On-going support goals
- Safety plan – specific to tornado, natural disaster, fire and medical needs
- Chart detailing emergency contacts and necessary phone numbers
- Chart of the consumer’s medical personnel
- Early Intervention Plan – triggers, coping strategies, interventions, natural supports
- Discharge Plan
- Goals

As a part of developing this plan, Link Associates will help you complete an assessment and will work with you to determine which staff from Link Associates or other providers will assist you. You have the right to choose whichever provider you wish and to refuse any or all parts of services, which are being offered. The assessment has information such as your name, address, phone number, birth date, provider agencies, and date of plan development and a summary of your abilities and needs in the areas of living, learning, socializing and working. The different sections of your assessment are:

- Accomplishments over the past year
- Needs/non-negotiable
- Hobbies/recreation/interests
- Health/safety
- Staff supports
- Communication
- Dislikes
- Goals for the upcoming year and future
- Supports specific to the goals
- Barriers in life/supports to address these barriers
- Restrictions on rights
- Work/church/school/volunteer work
- Important people/supports to maintain contact with these people
- Money

This information is reviewed with your team before your plan is developed. **It is important that your plan be meaningful to you throughout your services. You can request a plan revision at anytime by contacting any member of your team.**

## **B. Your Team:**

To decide what you want us to help you with, we will assist you develop a plan called the “Comprehensive Consumer Service Plan” (CCSP). You, and other people you choose, to help you as part of our team, develop this plan. Each consumer we work with has a person whose responsibility is to be your advocate in the development and implementation of your CCSP. This person is responsible to you and not to Link Associates or any other agency you may choose to provide you services. This person’s responsibility is to help you decide what you need and then to help you select the provider agencies that meet your needs. For more information see section II **Case Management Services (Case Management, Program Management & Service Coordination)**. In this handbook, we will refer to that person as your Case/Service/Program Manager. In addition to yourself, your team may include your parents, a legal representative, an advocate you choose, a representative staff who will work with you, and your Case/Service/Program Manager. A legal representative is an individual who has been appointed by the court and is given the legal responsibility and the power to make decisions on your behalf. An advocate is a person who speaks, writes and/or acts in support of you. The purpose of this plan is to help us understand how you want to live, things that you don’t want to change and those things you would like to change. The team will work with you on a regular basis to help you make the decisions that you believe are the best for you to grow and learn more at home, work, and in the community.

- Your team will work with you to assist you in identifying the goals you want to achieve, changes you want to make in your CCSP and generally support you in the decisions you make in life. Examples of things your team can help you with are; learning to do chores such as cleaning your room or doing laundry, to become self-sufficient, taking advantage of leisure activities to have a more enjoyable life, managing your money so you can purchase the things you need or want, and learning a new job skill to become more independent.
- All staff members of your team are Mandatory Reporters, have been CPR and First Aid certified, and have completed the following mandatory trainings as a condition of their employment at Link Associates. The classes include at least: Agency Orientation, Introduction to MR/DD, Life Plans/Forms, Positive Behavioral Supports, Universal Precautions, Confidentiality/Rights and Responsibilities, Respect, and Transportation and Safety. If applicable, staff is also trained in Medication Management.
- Staff members have all had their criminal backgrounds and driving records evaluated for your safety. Staff working with you will have a variety of educational qualifications and past experiences that we feel enhance the services provided. Specific jobs may require a Bachelors Degree by accrediting agencies (such as Case Management and Employment Training Specialists) while others do not require post high school education. At a minimum, Link prefers that all applicants have a high school diploma or equivalent. In limited circumstances, some people may become employed without a high school degree but a close review of the circumstances is completed by Link Associates before this is approved. Should you or your family want to know more about the qualifications of the people who work with you, please feel free to contact the Administrator or Director of those programs.

C. **Conflict of Interest**

When a real or potential conflict of interest arises between one of your family members or your Case/Service/Program Manager, Link Associates wants to make sure that your team is acting in your best interest. If one of your family members or your case/service manager wants to be an employee of Link, the Executive Director will have to review the application and make sure that employment would be in the best interest of the agency, consumers, and the employees. Your Link staff are paid employees and it is their job is to provide the supports you need. It is the policy of the agency that employees cannot accept gifts from consumers or their families unless the gift is given to the entire agency. If one of your family members wants to be your employer, your team will help you evaluate if that job is in your best interest.

D. **Ethical Code of Conduct**

The board, management and staff of Link Associates, shall strive to provide the highest level of quality services. Together, the Board and staff of Link Associates pledge to protect and promote the interests and informed choices of those we serve. All board and staff are expected to interact with consumers in a kind and respectful manner including, but not limited to:

1. Taking time to understand your form of communication
2. Using your given name and avoiding the use of nick names
3. Avoid the use of any name or term that belittles your status as an adult
4. Engage in problem solving with you and avoids the use of a "scolding" approach or criticism in front of peers
5. Create a positive environment by refraining from gossip and negative attitude while working
6. Teach you the social/communication skills necessary for you to be an integrated part of the community
7. Document in a descriptive manner that avoids the use of judgment, labels, and opinions
8. During staffings and any other interactions, talk directly to you and encourage you to speak for yourself
9. Maintain appropriate interactions with adults, avoiding interaction typically used with children
10. Provide every opportunity for meaningful decision/choice making and then respect your choices
11. Respect your right to confidentiality at all times by not discussing programming and other personal needs in the presence of other uninvolved employees or consumers
12. Avoid using other consumer names during your meetings
13. Not using your name or discuss your matters with people outside the agency or your staffing team
14. Fulfill job requirements consistently and routinely

E. **Confidentiality:**

So we can best serve you, it will be necessary for you to share with us a lot of private or personal information about yourself. By law, we are required not to share this information with other persons without your consent. There are State laws that limit how we can share the information you have given us and there is a federal law called the Health Insurance

Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) that strictly limits what we can do with your personal information. If you wish, we can provide you with more detailed information about these laws.

To assure that we comply with these laws, we have a committee to oversee their implementation. Our agencies Directors make up this committee. Our Executive Director is our Privacy Officer. You may contact the committee or the Executive Director for information regarding the release of protected health care information, our policies on personal information, or other questions you might have related to compliance with federal or state laws. Our Finance Director is our Security Officer and is responsible for the enforcement and evaluation of our privacy policies and practices in relation to the federal law.

Any information about you or your program will be kept private. Link Associates must ask you or your legal representative/advocate to sign a Release of Information form if there is information that others must know to better assist you. Licensure and accreditation bodies have legal access to your records. Confidentiality laws also cover these bodies and they cannot release your information to anyone without your consent. You and your legal representatives have access to your records, unless the law determines otherwise. Your Case/Service/Program Manager can assist you to access these records.

**F. Consumer Council:**

Link Associates has a Consumer Council that meets regularly with management to discuss matters of mutual concern involving the consumers served by Link Associates. The purpose of the council is to receive suggestions and input from consumers on agency policy and procedure, to ask for cooperation to ensure efficient use of resources, inform consumers of agency plans for programs, assist consumers to develop plans, and answer questions posed by council members. Council members from each program are elected by consumers for a two-year term and are expected to attend scheduled meetings. Each year half of the members rotate off the council. The Consumer Council also helps review all policies regarding consumers. Their ideas and suggestions are shared with the Program Committee of the Board when the Program Committee is approving policies.

**G. Personal Transfer Devices (lifts):**

For the safety and dignity of both you and staff, Link Associates requires the use of an agency-approved lift for service to persons requiring physical transfers. Requesting staff to perform a personal lift is not an option. Link Associates will work with you and your family to find the financial resources to purchase a lift if required.

**H. Consumer Health:**

Your health and well-being are of great concern to Link Associates. So we can understand your health needs, you must have a physical annually. Should you have any financial hardship and need assistance with this cost, please be sure to contact your Case/Service/Program Manager.

**I. Discharge:**

Our goal is to serve you for as long as you wish. There may be a time when you, your legal representative/advocate, and/or your staffing team decide that it would be best for you to leave Link Associates services. Regardless of the type of discharge, Link Associates will provide you with assistance and support, including assistance with finding alternative services, to help you with the change.

If you initiate your discharge:

You have the right to discontinue any or all of the services Link Associates is providing you at any time. If you decide to discontinue services we ask that you notify us in writing 30 days prior to your last date of service.

If we initiate your discharge:

Conditions under which Link Associates may initiate a discharge are regulated to protect your rights (see each specific program area for a listing of the regulatory body). Some of the reasons why Link Associates may seek to discharge you from services are:

- a. If your behavior significantly disrupts or poses a threat to others (see disciplinary procedure section for process)

- b. If your physical or mental health, or if your service needs change requiring a different level of care that Link Associates does not provide
- c. If you no longer meet financial or program eligibility criteria
- d. If you are absent so often that it interferes with your ability to benefit from the program
- e. If your funding source is no longer able to pay for the service
- f. If you do not make payments for 3 months and have been given at least 2 notices of potential service cancellation for non-payment
- g. If you no longer need service and your discharge plan has been met
- h. If you move out of the area in which the specific Link Associate's service is provided
- i. If you refuse to participate in the services offered, or services designed to provide for your safety are not effective
- j. If you or your legal representative display or engage in unlawful discrimination or practices that promotes discrimination of Link Associate's employees or consumers

Unless an emergency situation exists, you will be given a thirty (30) day notice to discharge. You have the right to appeal any Link Associate's decision to discharge. See Appeal Section J.

**J. Grievance Procedure:**

Some time while we are providing services, you may become unhappy with what we are doing. Your concern may involve any service we are currently providing you. Your complaints are not regarded as a nuisance but as an opportunity to better understand how we can best serve you. We believe we can resolve most of your concerns informally.

If you or your legal representative/advocate have a complaint/or concern about your services, we encourage you to talk to the staff person with whom you are having the problem. This applies if you feel you are not being treated fairly, your rights have not been respected, or if you have had inappropriate restrictions placed on you.

If you are not able to satisfactorily resolve your concern with staff, you have the right to file a formal grievance with Link Associates. The objectives of this process are to provide you with a formal way to have your concerns recognized, have them promptly heard, and seek to solve the problem in a fair manner. The procedure may be difficult for you to understand and follow so you have the right to ask your legal representative/advocate, a friend, or a staff person of your choosing help you with the process.

The Grievance Procedure has three steps. You will have thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the complaint you are grieving and the start of the official process.

Step 1 Link Associates has a Grievance Form (C-36) to help you get all of the information. Any staff can help you get this form. In step one you describe the incident along with the date and the names of the involved people. The form is sent to the Department Head who will investigate the situation and give you a decision, in writing, within seven (7) working days. The Department Head will offer to meet with you and discuss the decision.

Step 2 If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Department Head, you may complete step 2 of the grievance form and send it to the Executive Director within seven (7) working days from the date you received the Department Head's decision. In this section you list the reasons the Department Head's decision is not satisfactory and any ideas you have. The Executive Director will review the grievance and make a decision, in writing, within seven (7) working days, and offer to meet with you to discuss the decision.

Step 3 If you are not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Director, you may complete step 3 and send it to the Program Committee of the Board within seven (7) working days from the date you received the decision. In this section you list the reasons the Executive Director's decision is not satisfactory and offer your ideas. The Program Committee will review the grievance and make a decision, in writing, within ten (10) working days.

The decision of the Program Committee of the Board is the final decision within the agency's authority.

If the grievance isn't mutually resolved through Link Associate's process you may have other avenues of appeal. Link Associates staff will assist you in identifying other avenues and will provide you with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of other persons or agencies with whom you may be able to pursue your appeal. As a citizen you also have the right to access any forms of complaint that all citizens have, including calling the police or other agencies to report a concern.

Link Associate's goal is to help you benefit from the services we provide and we will work together with you to eliminate all causes of legitimate complaints. No concerns/complaints brought to the attention of Link Associates will become barriers to receiving services or result in retaliatory actions by Link Associates. Further, any report of suspected wrong doing by agency employees which may include but are not limited to; fraud abuse, theft, harassment, waste or other wrongdoings are expected to be reported to us for immediate investigation. Any attempt at retribution will be investigated and could lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination/discharge. Any attempts may be reported to law enforcement for external investigation

**K. Appeal Process:**

When Link Associates makes the decision to deny service, discontinue service, or change the level of service, any consumer and their legal representative/advocate has the right to appeal this decision.

A written notice of decision is given whenever Link Associates is recommending that service be denied, discontinued, or that the level of service be changed. The notice identifies the reasons for the change, the effective date of the change, the consumer's right to appeal the decision, and the appeal process.

The procedure may be difficult for you to understand and follow so you have the right to ask your legal representative/advocate, a friend, or a staff person of your choosing to help you with the process.

- #1 The appeal must be filed in writing within 30 working days of receipt of the notice of decision with the Executive Director and should contain the following information:
  - a) The action and the date of the decision being appealed.
  - b) The reasons for not agreeing with the decision.
  - c) Copies of any documents relevant to the decision.
- #2 The Executive Director will notify the appropriate supervisor and request a report outlining the basis for the decision and a recommendation for the Executive Director's decision. The Executive Director has five (5) working days of receipt of the supervisors report to provide in writing their decision concerning the appeal.
- #3 To appeal the Executive Director's decision, a request can be made within five (5) working days to the Program Committee of the Board of Directors. The Program Committee will notify the President of the Board when and appeal has been made. The Program Committee, within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, will review the case with appropriate staff and issue a written decision to the consumer.

The decision of the Program Committee will be considered the final agency decision and this committee will notify the President of the Board of Directors with a copy of the committee's decision.

If the appeal isn't mutually resolved through Link Associate's process you may have other avenues of appeal. Your Case/Service/Program Manager can assist you in identifying other avenues and will provide you with the names, addresses, and phone numbers of other persons or agencies with whom you may be able to pursue your appeal.

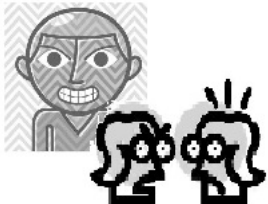
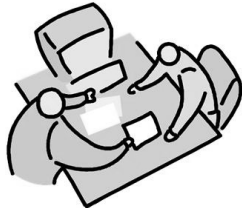


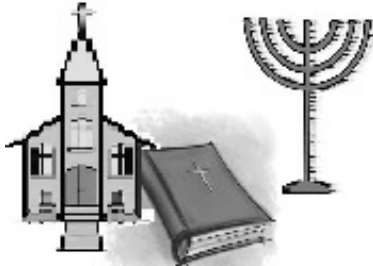

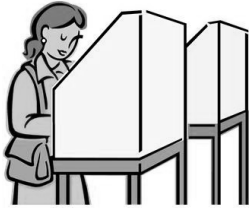



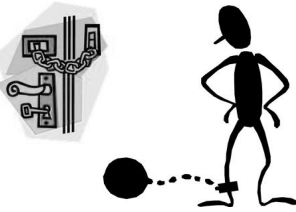

**L. Individual Rights:**



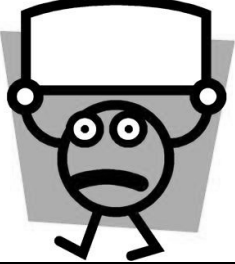





Everyone in the community has human and legal rights. Human rights include the right to make choices and to be treated with dignity and respect. Legal rights are those guaranteed by law. These include the right to treatment and services, independence, and freedom from restraint and the right to help plan the training and services you receive from Link Associates. Your Case/Service/Program Manager or Program Supervisor will talk to you about your rights when you begin receiving services. Individual rights include, but are not limited to:

1. The right to be treated with consideration, respect, and with full recognition of personal dignity and individuality.
2. The right to receive kind and considerate treatment at all times and be free from corporal punishment, emotional and physical abuse, neglect, humiliation and financial or other exploitation.
3. The right to receive a copy of the Link Associates rules and regulations governing the program, including the Individual Rights Statement, at intake.
4. The right to refuse treatment or services being offered by Link Associates.
5. The right to receive a program evaluation for each program within thirty (30) days following admission into a program.
6. The right to work with your team to choose which services best meets your individual needs.
7. The right to a current Comprehensive Consumer Case Plan of services, implemented through prompt treatment of identified goals. This includes:
  - a. Participation in the planning and decision-making processes.
  - b. Have regular reviews of your plan with a written report
  - c. Opportunity to request a plan change at any time
8. The right to be free of restrictive measures (see **Rights Limitations or Restrictions** below) unless a restriction is developed and authorized through Link Associate's Positive Behavioral Support policy.
9. The right to confidentiality of all personal information as well as information contained in records.
10. The right to examine all information contained in your record and secure copies of the record at reasonable cost upon request.
11. The right to practice whatever religion you choose, including the right to believe in any faith, attending a particular church or religious service or choosing not to attend any church or religious service.
12. The right to choose your own friends, neighborhood, and associates.
13. The right to register to vote and to vote within state law.
14. The right to own and dispose of property and the right to enter into contracts and purchase property.
15. The right to meet with or participate in activities of social or other community groups in or outside the facility, including the right to refuse to participate in such activities.
16. The right to decline to participate in research projects unless informed consent has been given.
17. The right to choose your own physician.
18. The right to perform age appropriate, meaningful work in a safe environment and be paid for work performed in compliance with wage and hour regulations.
19. The right to submit complaints to the agency as well as to any other department or organization available to all citizens without fear of retribution.
20. The right to freedom from unnecessary drugs or medications and the right to have medications administered only with your informed consent.
21. The right to freedom of choice in your living situation, choice of work, and choice in leisure activities.
22. The right to choose the agency to provide your personal services.
23. The right to meaningful and fair access to the courts, including legal representation.
24. The right to freedom from retaliation for making complaints about the services you receive.

# Know ... Your Rights!

## You have the right to:

<p>receive kind and considerate treatment free of emotional &amp; physical abuse, neglect and humiliation</p> 	<p>learn about Link's rules and regulations and have a program evaluation within 30 of admission</p> 	<p>Refuse treatment or services</p> 
<p>Work with your team to choose services, and participate in planning and decision making</p> 	<p>Practice the religion you choose or choosing not to attend services</p> 	<p>Choose your friends</p> 
<p>Register to vote and vote within state law</p> 	<p>Own and dispose property and enter into contracts</p> 	<p>Decline to participate in research projects and be free of unnecessary drugs or medication</p> 
<p>Choose where you live and work. Pick what you like to do in the community and who you want to live with</p> 	<p>Be free from restriction unless part of your plan</p> 	<p>see the information in your records following state &amp; federal law and have personal information confidential</p> 

<p>Choose your own doctors</p> 	<p>Perform age appropriate meaningful work and be paid fairly</p> 	<p>Submit complaints without fear of retaliation and appeal staff or agency action</p> 
<p>Choose the agency you want to provide your services</p> 	<p>Due process and access to courts and legal representative</p> 	<p>Meet with and participate in social activities outside Link and refuse the right to participate</p> 
<p>Send and receive phone calls and mail and to having private conversations</p> 	<p>Be treated with respect and addressed in an age appropriate manner</p> 	

**M. Rights Limitations or Restrictions:**












Some rights can be limited with your consent or the consent of your legal representative, or legal authorities. If rights are limited, the least restrictive and most appropriate method will be used. Limits will only be used to protect your health or safety, the health or safety of others, your financial affairs, or if needed as a part of your Comprehensive Consumer Service Plan to help you learn a social or behavioral skill and reduce or eliminate undesired behaviors. Any restrictions must be discussed with your team and specified in your Comprehensive Consumer Services Plan. Restrictions will not be used as a punishment, for the convenience of staff or as a substitute for a nonaversive program. This plan will also identify the outcome of other less restrictive approaches your team has used, what you will be learning, and the process to restore any limitations. You or your legal representative must give written permission and the limitation will be discussed on a regular basis to make sure it is still in your best interest. Rights that can be limited may include:

1. Managing personal financial affairs.
2. Selecting and participating in dietary preference.
3. Choosing and wearing clothing of your choice.
4. The freedom of movement, at reasonable times.
5. The freedom of speech and expression which includes the right to both send and receive uncensored phone calls and mail and to engage in private conversations.
6. Keeping medication in a locked container.

7. Keeping money in a locked container.
8. Not being allowed to use some appliances like a stove without staff support.
9. Ensuring psychotropic medications are ordered by a physician or psychiatrist.
10. Staff having a key to your home.
11. Restricting time without staff support.

## *Rights that may be restricted...*

### *your team may decide you need*

<p>Help paying your bills and making sure your money is spent safely</p> 	<p>Help picking the right food and the amounts that are healthy for you.</p> 	<p>Help choosing and wearing clothes that are right for the season and situation.</p> 
<p>Help deciding when and where you will be going</p> 	<p>Help sending and receiving phone calls and mail and having private conversations</p> 	<p>To have your medication in a locked container</p> 
<p>To keep your money locked in a safe container</p> 	<p>Help using some appliances like a stove without staff support</p> 	<p>Support to ensure psychotropic medications are ordered by a physician or psychiatrist</p> 
<p>Your staff to have a key to your home.</p> 	<p>To limit the time you have without staff support.</p> 	

#### **N. Individual Responsibilities:**






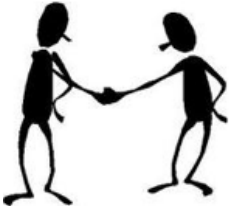




To help us serve you in the best way possible, you have some responsibilities. It is our goal that everyone, consumers and staff interact with one another with dignity and respect at all times. If you need help in any of these areas, your team will assist you to identify the best way to work on the skill.

You are responsible to:

1. Engage in positive problem solving/questioning.
2. Respond to constructive criticism in a productive, respectful manner.

3. Respect others right to confidentiality at all times by not discussing programming and personal issues in the presence of other uninvolved employees or consumers, family, or in public.
4. Actively participate with staff in the CCSP planning and cooperate with the plan after it is developed.
5. Work cooperatively with staff and other consumers.
6. Respect the rights of other consumers and staff.
7. Be responsible for your work at home and on the job and offer other consumers assistance as able.
8. Provide information needed to serve.
9. Make staff aware of concerns or problems.
10. Keep personal relationships away from the workplace as not to embarrass, distract or keep other consumers from performing job duties.
11. Follow Link Associates housing and workplace rules.

## *Responsibilities you have*

<p>Work on problems together</p> 	<p>When people try to help you be respectful and try their suggestion</p> 	<p>Don't talk about others programs and personal issues.</p> 
<p>Work with your team to develop your plan and work to implement it.</p> 	<p>Work cooperatively with staff and other consumers</p> 	<p>Respect the rights of other consumers and staff.</p> 
<p>Be responsible for your work at home and on the job and offer other consumers assistance as able.</p> 	<p>Provide information needed to serve.</p> 	<p>Make staff aware of concerns or problems.</p> 
<p>Not to embarrass, distract or keep other consumers from performing job duties.</p> 	<p>Follow home and work rules</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>LINK ASSOCIATES</p> <p>We Have a Mission... Providing people with intellectual disabilities opportunities to achieve their personal goals.</p> <p>HANDBOOK FOR CONSUMERS, LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES, ADVOCATES, AND FAMILY MEMBERS</p> </div>	

For the safety of consumers, Link employees are restricted from having a weapon on agency property or consumer residences and places of work. To equally ensure the safety of our staff we ask that any consumer who lives outside of his/her parents/legal guardian's home and owns any weapons, either for sport or collection, disclose this to Link Associates. Your team will coordinate requirements for the use, care, and storage of the weapons. At no time shall consumers possess any type of weaponry on Link Associates premises, vehicles, or individual job sites and shall not engage in criminal activities. Pocket knives may be kept on premises or carried by consumers, if it is of the utilitarian type. The consumer's team must evaluate the consumer's ability to consistently use the pocket knife in a responsible, non-threatening manner with staff and peers.

Consumers shall not use or possess on or off premise any type of controlled substances any type of prescription drug or over-the-counter medication, which has not been explicitly prescribed to them, and dispensed through customary Link Associates medication management policies.

If weapons or controlled substances are found, staff has the responsibility to secure these items and will work with the team to identify appropriate plans and notification to the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

**O. Mandatory Adult Abuse Reporter:**

All staff of Link Associates are mandatory adult abuse reporters. This means if we suspect you have been abused or neglected in any way (emotional, physical, verbal, financial, and/or sexual) we are required by law to report such incidents to the Department of Human Services or Department of Inspections and Appeals. If you feel you have been abused, (for example, someone has hurt you or said mean things to you) notify any staff right away. We will immediately investigate your concerns and take appropriate action.

**P. Photographs:**

There are times when Link Associates will take pictures or videos for use in brochures, displays, newspaper articles, etc. If you are asked to be in a picture or video your participation is strictly voluntary and will occur only if you or your legal representative gives informed consent.

## **II. LINK ASSOCIATES PROGRAMS AND SERVICE**

**A. Case Management Services (Case Management, Program Management & Service Coordination):**

The purpose of Case Management Services is to ensure the development and the implementation of consumer and family focused programs. These services also ensure consumers assistance to identify, secure, and sustain necessary resources. What is the difference?

1. Case Management – A Case Manager provides coordination of the Comprehensive Consumer Service Plan, crisis intervention, maintenance of consumer records, correspondence and all other required consumer data and the comprehensive advocacy and support for consumers eligible for Title XIX.
2. Program Management – A Program Manager assists consumers receiving day services from Link Associates, but have an external Case Manager in the development of the Comprehensive Consumer Service Plan, crisis intervention, maintenance of consumer records, correspondence and all other required consumer data and advocates for consumers.
3. Service Coordination – A Service Coordinator's job includes assessment of service needs, including assurance that a diagnosis and evaluation is obtained for each consumer; development, with an interdisciplinary team, of an appropriate individual program plan for each consumer; assisting the consumer in obtaining needed services; monitoring the provision of services and the consumer's progress; and, advocating on behalf of the consumer.

For each person Link Associates works with has one of the persons above, whose responsibility is to you, not to Link Associates or any other agency you may chose to provide you services. In this handbook, that person is called your Case/Service/Program Manager. Your Case/Service/Program Manager will meet with you on a regular basis to review your plan and your progress on the goals you have set. After you review your plan together they will write a quarterly report reflecting your goals progress. Your Case/Service/Program Manager is also available to help you secure specialized support or treatment services such as speech therapy, a hearing evaluation, physical, occupational,

psychological/psychiatric therapy, or with other medical specialists you may request. Your Case/Service/Program Manager will also make sure that you receive a current copy of this handbook that outlines all of your rights and responsibilities. You are encouraged to talk with your Case/Service/Program Manager anytime you have questions or concerns about your CCSP.

Your Case/Service/Program Managers' primary responsibilities are:

1. Developing and monitoring your individual case plan with you and your CCSP team.
2. Assisting you and advocating for you to ensure that you obtain appropriate services (such as medical, residential, vocational, and leisure).
3. Coordinating and facilitating the delivery of your services.
4. Monitoring the continued appropriateness of your services and living arrangements.

### **CASE MANAGEMENT/SERVICE COORDINATION APPEAL PROCEDURE**

If you disagree with your individual plan for services and supports developed by your case manager and your team you have the right to file an appeal. Many problems occur as the result of misunderstanding and can often be resolved by the directly affected people. You should try to solve problems with the staff and agency(s) involved. You have a right to use either the Link Associates appeal process or proceed directly to the state appeal process, which can be provided to you by your case manager.

#### APPEAL PROCEDURE:

Within 5 working days, write a letter to the Link Associates Case Manager Supervisor to tell us why you disagree with your individual service plan. The Case Manager Supervisor will schedule a meeting with you and your team as soon as possible, but within a time period not to exceed 5 working days.

The Case Manager Supervisor will meet with you and your team in an attempt to resolve the dispute. After reviewing all information, the Case Manager Supervisor will make a decision, which will be presented in writing by hand-delivered or first class registered mail to you and your team within 5 working days from the date of the grievance hearing.

If the Case Manager Supervisor's solution does not satisfy you, or the solution does not effectively resolve the grievance, the individual may appeal the decision to the Link Associates Executive Director. This appeal should be in writing and should be submitted within 5 days following the date of the previous response.

The Link Associates Executive Director will meet with you and any other person(s) whose presence the Executive Director deems necessary to the resolution of the grievance. A decision will be reached and returned to you in writing within 5 working days from the date of the meeting. If you are still dissatisfied, you may appeal to the Governing Board of the agency within 5 working days of the date of receipt of the previous response.

To file an appeal, letter should be sent to: Case Management Director  
Link Associates  
4301 NE 14<sup>th</sup> Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50313  
Phone: (515) 262-8888

#### **B. Leisure Services:**

The purpose of the Leisure Program is to provide leisure opportunities and education.

Leisure Services is a recreation program for individuals with special needs entitled Leisure Times. The Leisure Times program is a community-based, year round program designed for anyone in central Iowa who chooses to access services. Fees are charged for programs and activities. Financial assistance and scholarship monies are available. A brochure describing programs, activities, capacity limitations, participant requirements, and the registration process is distributed in March, July, and November each covering a four-month period. Each consumer will have access to a registration brochure. On going activities include:

1. Spinners: Social opportunities in the community (for example sports events, dinner theatres, civic center, etc.) for adults with mild mental and/or physical disabilities one-week night each week.
2. Club Travel: Social travel opportunities throughout Iowa and neighboring states for adults with mild mental retardation and/or physical disabilities.
3. Community Art Connection: Introduction and hands-on experience with various art forms. Activities are scheduled once every three weeks during the four-month period.
4. Fun and Fitness: Sports and fitness training in eleven seasonal sports. Year round swimming and weight lifting as well as participation for health and well-being or competition in Special Olympics, Iowa Games, Senior Games, etc.
5. Special Events: Dances once every four months along with special artist presentations, nature and outdoor programs, cultural awareness programs, cooking and many more!

**C. Representative Payee Program:**

The purpose of the Representative Payee Program is to help consumers manage their Social Security or SSI payments.

Link Associates has been approved by and is monitored by the Social Security Administration to provide a fee based Representative Payee service for those consumers and families who wish to participate. Our trained staff assists consumers to manage their funds and monitor their continued eligibility for entitlement programs such as; direct service, Case Management, Medicaid, rent subsidies, food stamps, and unearned income (Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, etc.).

In addition to the oversight of these funds and entitlements, our staff completes all the required paperwork to ensure continuity of these benefits. If you have interest in this service or have any questions, please contact your Case/Service/Program Manager who can help you with a referral to this program.

**D. Transportation:**

The purpose of the transportation program is to offer safe and affordable options to consumers accessing their day program and community sites. Link Associates provides transportation to our consumers in a number of different ways. Your staffing team will help you make the arrangements for the transportation assistance you need.

For your safety the drivers cannot leave a vehicle unattended. It is your responsibility to be ready for your pick up and meet the vehicle in front of your home. The drivers will wait no longer than 5 minutes. If you are not ready within the 5 minutes, the drivers have to go on to the next place and cannot come back to pick you up. Because some of our vehicles are big, the drivers will not pull into your driveway. It is your responsibility to call your driver no later than 6:45 AM if you are not riding the route. If you have to bring medication with you, it must be handed directly to the driver with instructions.

Link Associates has rules to make sure your trips are safe. If you do something that may cause injury to yourself or others in the vehicle, disciplinary action may become necessary and it is up to your CCSP team to develop a plan. The severity of the incident needs to be addressed and may result in you not being able to ride on the Link Associate' vehicles.

Examples of behavior not allowed on Link Associates transportation:

- Fighting or attempting bodily injury to another at work or on agency property
- Physically threatening other consumers, staff or visitors
- Getting on a vehicle under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Stealing property from Link Associates or other consumer
- Intentional destruction of agency property, materials, or equipment (consumer will be responsible to pay for damage or replacement)
- Eating and drinking in the vehicle
- Violation of safety procedures
- Unexcused absence in excess of 5 days within a 3-month period (i.e. no call no show)
- Sexual contact/harassment
- Unprotected incontinence

You are responsible to behave with respect to the driver and other passengers and this includes being on time for the vehicle so everyone else does not have to wait. Should you not notify the driver that you will not be riding the vehicle 3

days in a row, your continued services may need to be evaluated. You will be responsible for calling Link by noon during the workweek to schedule your trip for the next day. You must call for 2 weeks straight before Link reactivates your transportation services. Also, if you are moving to a new home or apartment you must give Link a 3-week notice before your move.

During bad weather please have a clear path so you can get to the Link Associates vehicle safely. It is your responsibility to keep your driveway and sidewalk clear so the wheelchair lift can be lowered if needed.

### Delay/Closing

1. If Des Moines Public Schools are closed or delayed, Link Associates will automatically delay transportation and programming one (1) hour. This means your transportation pickup time will be at least 1-hour later and the programs located at Link will not begin before 9:45 a.m. This will allow Link the time to access the roads and make a determination whether to hold programs or not.
2. If you make the personal decision not to attend the day program or to venture outside, OR if you attend day program services from a provider other than Link and they have cancelled their programs, it is **your responsibility** to call your bus driver and notify them that you will not be riding. The call to your driver should be made as soon as possible.
3. Within that hour, should Link Associates decide to close for the day; an announcement will be made to the local TV and radio stations, stating, "Link Associates is closed for the day, no transportation or day services". You can also call Link Associates at 262-8888 and a recorded message will inform you of any delays or closings.

### Early Dismissal

If the weather conditions deteriorate during the day and force Link Associates day programs to close, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Someone from Link will contact your home, residential provider, and/or day program provider to coordinate when there will be coverage at the residential site.
2. If you attend a day program other than Link Associates and your provider is closing early for the day, it is **your responsibility** to contact Link Associates and inform us of the early closing. Once Link Associates is notified of your early dismissal, we will make arrangements to provide transportation for you as soon as possible.

### **E. Residential Services Program:**

The purpose of the residential program is to provide daily life skills training and support in your chosen living arrangement. Link Associate's Residential Services program is designed to provide support, opportunity, and experience to maximize your ability to be independent and to be part of the community you live in. Support is available to you in at least the following areas, as specifically outlined in your CCSP:

1. Basic self-care activities like eating, bathing, toileting, dressing, grooming, etc.
2. Menu planning and meal preparation.
3. Use of the telephone.
4. Housekeeping and home maintenance skills.
5. Communication skills such as oral, written, augmented and nonverbal.
6. Mobility and community transportation skills.
7. Recreational and leisure time activities.
8. Basic academic skills.
9. Health maintenance such as personal hygiene, exercise and fitness, nutrition and diet management, use of medical services and medicine.
10. Utilization of community services and resources like Laundromats, library, post office, consumer affairs office, etc.
11. Interpersonal relationships like significant others, family, and friends.
12. Human sexuality.
13. Financial management including techniques of consumer purchasing, banking, taxes, budgeting, and repaying debts.
14. Management of personal and legal affairs.
15. Work attitude and skills exploration.

16. Self-advocacy and assertiveness training.
17. Safety practices including dealing with injuries and life threatening emergencies.
18. Contingency planning, problem solving, and decision-making.
19. Consumer affairs and rights for things like familiarity with warranties, policies and procedures of governmental and community service agencies.

Link Associate's staff is responsible for assisting you in maintaining a safe, healthy environment for you to live. You have invited us into your home to provide services and are involved in the selection and on going evaluation of the staff assisting you. Our employees will respect your privacy and home. Due to the nature of our services, some records may need to be maintained at your home. For situations in which the living space is used, for example an extra bedroom is used; an agreement will be reached with you for compensation. Because our service requires us to be with you in your home, items used by staff such as utilities, phone, excluding long distance, are not subject to reimbursement. Food and beverages consumed by staff while providing direct support for meal preparation and dining skills will not be reimbursed, unless individual arrangements have been made.

Staff will also assist you in making appointments and arranging/providing transportation for medical or therapy needs. They will help you follow instructions you receive from doctors or other specialists. In addition, staff provides teaching according to your CCSP goals. They will help you manage your money by assisting you with purchases. Staff may also help establish a savings account for your use. On a regular basis, staff will schedule a meeting so that you and the other people you live with can talk about things you like or dislike about the place you live. This would be a good time to bring up problems or to plan special activities. Sometimes, you might review rules or consumer rights. You might also learn about ways to make decisions or communicate more effectively.

Link Associates offers two primary residential options:

- E1. Residential Care Facilities for the Mentally Retarded (RCF-MR)  
RCF-MR's are group home settings with up to 10 people residing together with 24-hour/day staff support. RCF-MR's are licensed and inspected by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. Many of the people living in the RCF-MR's have HCBS Waiver funding for services. Because there are two sets of program regulations many of the components of SCL in number E2 below also apply to people living in the group homes.

RCF-MR Group Home House Rules:

Your group home will have its own set of rules, which are written to help your home run as safely and smoothly as possible. These rules were written by residents, legal representatives, advocates and staff and are posted in your home so that you can read them at anytime. Your Link Associates Residential Supervisor will review these rules with you when you move in and they will be reviewed with you periodically.

Smoking:

All residential facilities will follow the smoke free policy of the agency. If you smoke or chew areas outside the facility are designated and you will be responsible for the clean up and maintenance of the smoking areas by making sure you dispose your cigarette butts properly.

Visitors at the Group Home:

If you live in a group home and share your house with many people, it is easier to respect everyone's privacy if visitors come during certain hours. Please ask your visitors to try and come between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday and between 8:00 a.m. and 11:00p.m. on Friday and Saturdays. These hours may be changed by the agreement of the residents of the home and the staff. You should also ask your visitors to call before they come over to make sure you are at home. The time before meals is a very busy time in the home and it may be harder to entertain. If you need any help to work around these hours, please talk with your Residential Supervisor.

Payment for Services:

There are two costs for RCF-MR service. One is room and board and the other is support service. You contribute to the room and board cost from your Social Security and/or SSI monies, other benefit checks, or

through other sources of income such as earnings. Generally, those monies are not sufficient to cover all costs so State Supplemental Assistance (SSA) pays the rest of the cost. When SSA and SSI funds are used, you automatically receive Title XIX Medicaid coverage and a monthly personal needs allowance that you may use to purchase personal items. Your service fee is paid by other sources. You will sign a contract when you move in that specifies rates and costs.

Absences:

An absence is defined when you are gone for more than a 24 period for things like vacations, camps, visits, or trips. In the RCF-MR Groups Homes, the Department of Human Services allow you 2.5 overnight visits per month or 30 total overnight visits every calendar year (an overnight taken on December 31 is counted against the old year's total, not the new year's total). In addition, you may spend up to 20 consecutive days in a hospital per month (whether or not the stay extends into a succeeding month). If you feel that you need additional overnights either for visits or hospitalization, you may contact your Link Associates Residential Supervisor or Link Advocate.

When you are planning to be away from our programs overnight, and will be gone for more than 24 hours, staff needs to know 72 hours before you plan to leave. This will allow them time to order medications you may need to take with you and for staff to assist with any other arrangements that may be necessary. If you are planning a visit away from the residence that will be less than 24 hours, you may check out your medications and take it with you. Please notify staff about visits as soon as possible because they have a number of individual schedules to coordinate.

E2. Supported Community Living Services (HCBS-SCL)

Link Associates HCBS supported community living provides one to twenty-four hours of support per day based on your individual needs. This service is designed to assist you with daily living needs. Assistance may include, but is not limited to: personal and home skills, community skills, personal needs, and transportation. You can receive services in a variety of typical community settings including houses, apartments, condominiums, and/or townhouses as long as the living arrangements are integrated into the community. The choices also include with whom and where you decide to live and choice of staff.

Smoking:

If you live in your own apartment you may smoke if smoking has not been identified as a risk or a specific danger in your CCSP, and if there are no objections from roommates.

Payment for Services:

In the HCBS program you are responsible for paying your own expenses (rent, phone, food, utilities, etc.) directly from your own money accounts. Staff may assist you with paying your bills and managing your money. The service you receive is paid for through a mix of State, County, and Federal dollars.

Overnights:

In the HCBS Program, there are currently no limits on the number of overnights you can be away from the program. If you are gone so much that your services are affected, your staffing team will address the issue with you.

When you are planning to be away from our programs overnight, and will be gone for more than 24 hours, staff needs to know 72 hours before you plan to leave. This will allow them time to order medications you may need to take with you and for staff to assist with any other arrangements that may be necessary. If you are planning a visit away from the residence that will be less than 24 hours, you may check out your medications and take it with you. Please notify staff about visits as soon as possible because they have a number of individual schedules to coordinate.

Visitors and Guests

This is your home and often you may share your home with other people. You are encouraged to have visitors and guests whenever you want in conjunction with your individual support plan and respect for others you may share your home with.

### E3 Information for all Living Arrangements:

#### Privacy

It is important that consumer's rights of privacy are maintained and you and your roommates will need to respect each other. When entertaining in your home, you, your roommates and visitors should show respect for each other, including making sure people can have private conversations and everyone needs to be appropriately dressed when in the common living areas of the home.

#### Pets:

Before you purchase or acquire a pet, plans must be discussed with your Residential Supervisor. If you have roommates, the consideration of having pets will be explored with them. In some cases, your landlord may have rules governing pets and your Residential Supervisor can help you review your lease for that type of information.

If you own a pet, you will be responsible for the pet's care and food and other monetary expenses. Staff can help you learn about the care of, feeding, cost, and cleaning of the pet. We will also work to ensure that the pet receives humane treatment and that you are adequately instructed to provide such care and treatment. If such care is not given, your staffing team will address with you the best solution for you and the pet. If your team feels you cannot manage the pet and you disagree, you may follow the steps in the grievance section of this handbook.

#### Personal Property:

You are encouraged and will be assisted to decorate your home and bedroom with personal items and belongings. You are encouraged to maintain your personal property in such a way as to avoid damage or theft (i.e. leaving doors unlocked, valuable items left in heavy traffic areas, etc.). Link Associates does not accept any financial obligation for such items and we encourage you to obtain renters/household insurance. If you need assistance with this, your Case/Service/Program Manager or program staff will be happy to help.

### F. **Vocational and Day Services Programs**

The purpose of the Vocational and Day Services programs is to provide you with a variety of options to meet your personal needs for guidance, support, instruction, and wage earning. You may utilize any of Link Associate's specialized vocational services as appropriate. The programs are designed to provide meaningful work experiences in a variety of environments along with the support necessary to ensure success. The programs operate under the following principles:

1. All programs are developed by consumers with assistance from their team to meet their individual needs.
2. All consumers have the capability to learn and develop greater vocational skills.
3. All consumers are adults and are to be provided an atmosphere that reflects the same.
4. Training outcomes will be designed by the consumer and their team to promote independence and functioning in the least restrictive environment.
5. Program transfers are available to meet your individual needs. You can request these through your Link Associates Case or Program Manager for review by the Link Associates Admissions Committee.
6. Payment for services: In most cases the cost of services is paid through a mix of state, county, and federal monies depending upon your eligibility. You are responsible for all meals, admission to special events, personal hygiene materials, medications, and items you may want for breaks. Private pay arrangements can also be made and your Case Manager will discuss your program eligibility with you.
7. Link Associates will work with you and your team to make sure you have access to the best combination of program options. Link Associates has both the HCBS Day habilitation and the HCBS Pre-Vocational programs and you may be in just one of the programs or a combination.

**F1. Supported Employment Program:** The focus of this program is to help you to achieve independence by aiding you in finding and keeping a job in a community business. Some consumers develop their working skills in other vocational programs at Link Associates before trying Supported Employment; while others may have a lot of vocational training already, and begin immediately. Once you and your staffing team decide that you are ready for a job on your own, Supported Employment personnel will be asked to help you find a job. Our staff will meet with you to do job exploration to help you decide what kind of job you would like to try.

You and an Employment Training Specialists (ETS) will then begin talking with area employers who have jobs available in the type of work you think you would enjoy. If a company has a position opening that you might be interested in, an ETS will take you to a job interview. Prior to an interview an ETS can go over questions with you that employers usually ask, how to dress for interviews, and even conduct a practice interview with you to help you feel more comfortable with the interviewing process. At the interview, you will complete an application and meet the employer. Because you are applying for a job at a business that is not a part of Link Associates, you will be responsible for meeting their job requirements, including but not limited to drug screenings, attendance and call in policies, attending trainings and other workplace rules.

Once you are offered a position, and you choose to accept it, your ETS and your new employer become very important. Your employer is your supervisor and your ETS is there to help you understand your new job and to learn what your supervisor expects of you while you are at work. If you have any concerns about your job, your ETS will try to solve the problem with your supervisor.

If your employer decides that a better job match should be found or if you are not interested in the type of work you are doing, the Supported Employment Program will help you find another job.

Once you get to the point in your job where you don't need any help from your ETS for one year, and you are satisfied with your job, you can be discharged from the Supported Employment Program and continue to work independently on your own. This is very much like graduating from school. It is just one more step for you in your own independence.

In Supported Employment you are compensated directly by your employer. Your employer will determine how your wages are calculated and how frequently you will be paid. All other benefits fall within the employer's standard hiring practices.

Link Associates will post for all open positions that we may have within the agency and we encourage any consumers in the Supported Employment program to apply for any vacancies that they may qualify for. Your ETS can assist you with this process.

**F2. Enclave Program:**

This program provides you work training in a small group in the community, with the direct guidance and support of a staff member. In the Enclave program you could work on mobile work crews at a variety of businesses throughout the community. Link Associates negotiates contracts with businesses to provide you the opportunity for integration into the community workforce. In an Enclave, you work alongside other business employees, but are supervised by staff from Link Associates. The types of jobs available in the Enclave program change from time to time, however, Enclave crews have worked in cleaning, packing, sorting, labeling, inserts, mailing and simple clerical, assembly, yard-garden, etc.

In these jobs you learn the proper use of the tools and equipment necessary to complete the work. Along with the specific job skills, there is also a strong focus on quality, safety, attendance, and efficiency. Your regular attendance is very important and your attendance will be evaluated for your continued placement in the Enclave.

**F3 HCBS Pre-Vocational (referred to as Vocational Work Services):**

The goal of this service is to help prepare you for paid or unpaid employment. It includes teaching you job skills that may include the following: work skill training, following directions, attending to task, task completion, problem solving, and safety and mobility training. You may also work on interpersonal and social skills development, interactions, community awareness and independence. In this program you may not earn more than 50% of the Iowa minimum wage. You can only earn money on days when there is contract work. You will not earn money on days that Link's day programs are closed and on days that you do not attend. Work is obtained through many businesses/industries, in involves a variety of contracts and job experiences. Along with learning employment skills, you and your peers will work on increasing endurance and on-task work skills, and interaction skills necessary in any work place.

#### **Monetary Incentives:**

For all consumers in the work services and Enclave programs you will receive a monetary incentive for productive contract tasks completed. When you complete contract tasks through the pre-vocational and Enclave programs you will receive your incentive check two times per month on the closest day to the 9<sup>th</sup> and the 24<sup>th</sup>. Incentive rates are determined by one of two methods.

1. Piece Rate- Each job is broken down into tasks and each task receives a particular amount. Your incentives are based on the amount of the task you produce.
2. Hourly Rate: When you are assigned a job to complete, the length of time you need to complete the job assignment is compared to predetermined time studies. Your hourly incentive is determined by the quality and quantity of contract work you produce.

3. Enclave: Currently the hourly monthly incentive is set at a fixed rate, which is the current minimum wage. For all new and current contract tasks, the piece rate and hourly rate is posted in the consumer work areas. The Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division has approved these methods of incentive and has issued a Labor Certificate authorizing their use. You will not earn a monetary incentive for training activities that are not part of a paid contract, including skill training resource class, field trips, safety training, social skills and leisure activities.

#### **F4. HCBS Day Habilitation**

The purposes of Day Habilitation services are to teach social, recreational, personal hygiene, academics, communication, mobility and other specific identified needs. This is an organized program of supportive care in a group environment. The care is provided if you need a degree of supervision and assistance on a regular or intermittent basis. The programs are designed to be flexible to meet your individual needs.

#### **G. Family Support Services**

The purpose of the Family Support Services Program is to provide supported community living and respite care for children and adults in the family's home. For your safety and to insure quality services, all Link Associates' consumer policies will be adhered to in conjunction with the following:

1. A staffing to review and update your plan and all relevant personal information will be completed annually. Maintenance of the following will be updated:
  - ◆ Your name, birth date, age, and address, telephone number for each parent, guardian or primary caregiver
  - ◆ Emergency medical care release
  - ◆ Your emergency contact telephone numbers such as your physician and parents, guardian or primary caregiver
  - ◆ Your medical issues and allergies
  - ◆ Your daily schedule which includes your preferences in activities or foods or other special concerns
  - ◆ Your safety plan for the threat of fire, tornado, flood and/or bomb threat
2. Parent, guardian or primary caregiver shall be required to verify by signature the receipt of notification of any injury or illness that occurred during respite or SCL provision
3. Care provider will be notified of any injury or illness that occurred prior to respite provision
4. Documentation of activities shall be made available to parent, guardian or primary care giver upon request

### III. LINK ASSOCIATES DAY PROGRAM & TRANSPORTATION RULES

#### A. **Dress Code:**

You are expected to dress appropriately for the work that you do. Clothing that is unsafe or detracts from a positive work atmosphere is not acceptable. If your work involves public contact you will be expected to dress in a way that presents a positive attitude toward working with the general public.

If you come to work and staff believes that you are not appropriately dressed they will:

- Discuss with you the reasons they believe it is inappropriate with the hope you will voluntarily change.
- If you are unwilling to change, staff concerns will be sent to your team for review and a determination as to what further action is needed.
- You may be restricted from your work program until your team has acted.
- In extreme cases, staff may stop your program for the day and send you home. If you are on an Enclave or in Supported Employment you will be expected to follow the dress code and work rules in the company in where you are employed.

#### B. **Work Environment:**

A positive work/program environment is important and everyone is asked to make sure that they are not distracting others by using loud voices and making disruptive noises. Your work/program area is to be kept neat and clean and you are expected to help with clean up at the end of the day. If you need assistance on these areas, your staff can help you identify ways to work on them.

The loaning of money or borrowing of personal items such as radios, make-up, cigarettes, etc. is not permitted. Using a personal radio at your place of employment is not permitted without your supervisor's approval. If your employer has no objections you may use your radio, but you will have to follow the rules about its use. Consumers are requested to remain in their areas at the end of the day and keep their voice volume to a minimum so everyone can hear when buses are called. Be courteous, polite and treat one another with dignity and respect; no name-calling. Fighting is not permitted but if it occurs, let staff handle the situation. Work towards getting along with one another.

#### C. **Property Damage:**

Intentional damage to other's property may result in you making some form of restitution, which will be determined based upon the circumstances and the amount of damage.

#### D. **Personal Items Lost or Damaged:**

Link Associates or another employer is not responsible for the loss or damage to personal items brought to work (i.e. radios, money, lunch boxes, coat, gloves, hat, etc.). If you have lost personal items, you may contact your staff and they will assist you in checking with your employer or with Link Associate's lost and found. Staff will support all consumers if they feel they have had personal items stolen and theft is covered in the disciplinary process.

#### E. **Use of Telephones:**

Telephones may not be used for personal business at work unless it is an emergency. If that is the case, ask your employer or supervisor for permission to use the phone. Likewise, you should not receive personal phone calls unless it is an emergency. If you have specific questions about the telephone in your day program area ask the supervisor for clarification.

#### F. **Smoking:**

The Link Associates' building is a smoke-free environment. Smoking is only allowed in designated areas during lunch and breaks. Enclave and Supported Employment consumers must follow the smoking rules of their place of employment.

#### G. **Safety:**

Link Associates is very concerned about the safety of each consumer. Staff will help you practice for all evacuations. During practices we will actually leave the building to make sure you are ready in case of a real emergency. The safety rules for day programs include:

1. Walk at all times. Do not run!
2. Do not block the aisles with cartons or work materials.
3. Take extra care in handling hot coffee and other beverages.
4. Safety equipment must be worn when required for the job.
5. Do not use equipment unless you have been properly trained.
6. Fire drills are held once a month. You will be instructed where to go for safety.
7. Tornado drills are held monthly from March to October. You will be instructed on where to be for safety.
8. Bomb drills may be held as necessary. You will be instructed on where to go for safety.

If you are in an Enclave or a Supported Employment location, you will be expected to follow the safety rules and practices of the business where you are located.

**H. Visitors:**

In the event you have visitors come to the Day Program areas, these visitors must check in at the front desk. All visitors will be given a visitor badge to wear while at Link Associates. Visitors are encouraged to inform consumers and staff before coming to the day programs and it is recommended that all visitors call ahead to make sure the consumer is at the program site.

Enclave and Supported Employment consumers must follow their employer's guidelines for visitors.

**I. Checking in and Out of the Center:**

All consumers must check out and back in at the front desk if you leave the center during the day.

**J. Illness/Injury:**

It is very important that you notify your supervisor should you ever become ill or injured. By informing these individuals, you will be able to get the help you need. Link Associates' Workers Compensation does not cover you.

Should you get ill while you are at a day program it is important that you leave the program site as quickly as possible to make sure you are in a comfortable location to feel better and also to prevent illness from being given to others. Link staff will contact your residential facility, parent, or legal representative/advocate and it will be their responsibility to help you to leave the program site within one hour of report of illness and/or transport you to the doctor. If they do not arrive in a timely manner, we will send notice outlining the importance of a back-up system. Should the problem occur again, the team would discuss our ability to continue to serve you. If they cannot be reached or are unavailable, a Link Associates staff person will transport you. For life-threatening emergencies, an ambulance will be called. Any medical bills are your responsibility.

All consumers must follow the rules of the place where they are employed, but you probably would not be able to work if you have any of the following symptoms:

1. Communicable disease. (Flu, severe cold, lice, virus infections, etc.)
2. Any elevated temperature.
3. Vomiting with symptoms of irritability, restlessness, lethargy, loss of appetite, temperature elevation, and vomiting more than once.
4. Diarrhea (a sudden change in the usual consistency of the stool) with symptoms of irritability, restlessness, lethargy, loss of appetite, temperature elevation, and signs of dehydration.
5. Rashes that are draining.
6. Other communicable symptoms.

## IV. LINK ASSOCIATES GENERAL GUIDELINES

### A. Hours of Operation:

The Pre-Vocational and Day Habilitation Programs and administrative office are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Day programs are conducted from 8:45 a.m. to 2:50 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Enclave crews and Supported Employment placement consumers work the hours set by their employer, this could include some weekend and evening hours depending on what type of work you want to do and what hours are required by the employer.

### B. Breaks

For consumers in the Pre vocational and Day Habilitation programs, there are three - lunch periods (11:00 a.m. to 11:30, 11:30-noon, and 12:00 noon – 12:30). Your lunchtime will depend on the area in which you are enrolled.

If you are working at an Enclave or in a Supported Employment placement you will follow the lunch and break schedule for that place of employment.

### C. Lunches:

If you attend the Pre-Vocational and Day Habilitation Programs, you are encouraged to bring your own drinks. Ice is provided at no charge during lunch. You are encouraged to bring your own plastic cups for beverages. Glass containers are not allowed because of safety considerations. You are required to provide your own lunch. Refrigerators are available for proper storage of lunches. Microwave and conventional ovens are available for heating your lunch. Trading, asking for food or giving away food to others is not permitted as some people may have special diet considerations.

Vending machines are available in the lunchroom area. Soft drinks, milk, meal items, and various snacks can be purchased. Prices range from \$.75 to \$2.50.

### D. Medical Services:

If you have a medical emergency at the Pre-Vocational and Day Habilitation Programs, staff are trained to assist you until medical services arrive. Link Associates staff are not licensed medical professionals and as a result cannot comply with Do No Resuscitate orders. Those orders, should they exist will be provided to the professionals who take over your care. If you get hurt while at a Link Associates program, your personal health care coverage must be used. Worker's Compensation only covers Link Associates employees.

If you are on medication that needs to be administered while you are at program/work, Link Associates has Medication Managers trained to administer medication. Medications can only be given if a current written order, signed by your doctor, is available and only if the medication is in a properly labeled bottle or tube from the pharmacy. This includes all over the counter medications as well. Link Associate's Medication Managers will not give medications without a written order or without a current, proper label. They will not give medications that come in an envelope, unlabeled bottle, out of date labeled bottles, pillboxes or plastic bags.

### E. Consumer Recognition:

Consumers in Day Programs are all eligible for the Consumer Recognition award. Life Coaches, Developmental Instructors and Vocational Instructors submit nominations for consumers based on attributes such as productivity, work habits, work behavior, progress on program plan, and other special achievements. You can inform your staff of peers that you feel would be good nominees. Recipients of the award are recognized at the consumer meeting held on the last Friday of each month. Consumers can recognize one another by completing a FISH card, which are read at the consumer meetings, your staff can assist you with this,

### F. Attendance:

Regular and punctual attendance is very important for you to receive maximum benefit from the programs you are in. Good attendance is also an important skill to have for work opportunities. If an absence is unavoidable, or is because of

illness, please call your supervisor at 262-8888 before your scheduled program time. If you forget whom you need to talk to, the staff at the office will help you. If you use Link's transportation services you must notify your driver by 6:45 AM. If you know ahead of time that you will be absent or late for programming, you need to notify your supervisor at least one week in advance. Absences include medical conditions, planned, and approved time off. Unexcused absences are incidents where a scheduling conflict could have been avoided. Whenever possible, schedule appointments so they do not conflict with your services.

If you miss more than eight days due to illness, camps, vacations, or other reasons your team will address your attendance with you. Should you need to be gone more days, please discuss your situation with your Case/Service/Program Manager for coordination. Because Link Associates receives payment for your services only for days you are present. Excessive absenteeism can result in Link Associates not being able to continue to provide you services.

If you are in Supported Employment you need to contact your Employment Training Specialist and Employer.

**G. Holiday Schedule:**

The Pre-Vocational and Day Habilitation Programs and administrative offices are closed for the following holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Day

If the holiday falls on a Saturday, it is observed the preceding Friday. Should the holiday fall on Sunday, it is observed on the following Monday. Notices will be sent home to remind you of any planned closing. Please consult your staff, Employment Training Specialist, or the Vocational Supervisor or Administrator if you have any questions.

Enclave crews and Supported Employment may be required to work on certain holidays or receive other holidays depending on the employer's holiday and work schedule.

**H. Inclement Weather:**

During times of weather emergencies, the Pre-Vocational and Day Habilitation Programs may be closed for your safety. If the Des Moines Schools close, Link Associates Day Program and transportation will be delayed for one hour. Additional information will be on local radio and TV stations or you may call: 262-8888 to check our recorded message.

Enclave crews or consumers in Supported Employment placements may need to report to work regardless of weather conditions depending on their employer's inclement weather policies. Please contact your staff, Employment Training Specialist, or program administrator if you have any questions.

**I. Leave of Absence:**

When medical or other circumstances make it necessary for you to be away from vocational services for longer than eight days, a leave of absence can be requested. The Case/Service/Program Manager will assist you and/or your legal representative in this process. This action is based on the approval of the staffing team. If approved, the Case/Service/Program Manager will maintain contact with you and/or legal representative on a monthly basis. At the end of three months the staffing team will evaluate the continuation of the leave or the option of program discharge.

During a leave of absence, you are not guaranteed to return to the same position that you had. To re-enter from a leave, you and/or your legal representative needs to contact the Case/Service/Program Manager who will coordinate efforts to return. If a position is not available at this time, you will be placed at the top of the list for entry into the first available position.

Consumers in Supported Employment must additionally work with their Employment Training Specialist to determine leave of absence guidelines from their place of employment.

## **J. Disciplinary Procedures**

### **1. Link Associates Services Disciplinary Procedures:**

Link Associates serves people with a variety of disabilities, including behavioral. Link Associates works hard to ensure a safe, productive environment. If you do something that may cause injury to yourself or others in the area, disciplinary action may become necessary. If you violate work or safety rules it is up to your CCSP team to develop a plan. The objective of this process is for you to learn to follow safety rules and to provide you every opportunity for success. If you disagree with any level of disciplinary process, you may follow the steps in the grievance section. While working at other business locations or in Supported Employment Services it is important that you and others represent Link Associates in a positive manner.

The severity of the incidents listed below and whether they meet the need to be addressed within the disciplinary procedures will be determined by the appropriate team staff including but not limited to: Instructor, Work Services Supervisor, and Vocational Administrator, Facilities & Fleet staff, unless otherwise specified in the procedures. In the event the frequency or severity of the event warrants special consideration the team may also dictate the progression of the steps taken, listed below. Link Associates staff will provide every opportunity for programming and positive reinforcement, prior to the implementation of disciplinary procedure. Examples of such behavior would include:

- Fighting or attempting bodily injury to another at work or on agency property.
- Physically threatening other consumers, staff or visitors on agency property.
- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Stealing property from Link Associates or other consumer.
- Intentional destruction of agency property, materials, or equipment (consumer will be responsible to pay for damage or replacement).
- Violation of safety procedures.
- Unexcused absence in excess of five days within a three-month period.
- Sexual contact/harassment.

The consumer, legal representative/advocate, and Case/Service/Program Manager will be informed at each step of this process. Unexcused absences will be addressed at least quarterly.

#### First Incident:

You will receive a verbal warning and will be removed from the immediate area to a designated location away from others, if necessary. A review of programming will also occur. The warning will be issued by the Instructor and documented in your file.

#### Second Incident:

Written warning and staffing team will schedule a meeting to discuss the problem and possible solutions the same day of the incident, as deemed necessary (i.e. Comprehensive Consumer Services Plan change, new program, etc.) At a minimum, a goal will be implemented to include consequences for further incidents. The appropriate Link Supervisor will issue the written warning, or if deemed necessary, the staffing team. This document will be placed in your file.

#### Additional Incidents:

A review of the incident and the previous history will occur, including programming to address the reoccurrence of the incident. Your team will determine if stricter disciplinary action is warranted. Additional action could include written warnings, program suspensions and or discharge.

#### Immediate Dismissal:

When a situation arises that is of great danger to you or others around you, you may be subject to immediate dismissal and/or suspension from the Link's Services. The Disciplinary Review Committee, which consists of your Case Coordinator, Program Supervisor, Program Department Head and the Executive Director, will meet to determine the severity and the outcome of such an incident.

It is the role of the committee to assure not only the intent of this procedure is served, but also that those decisions reflect the values of this program in providing meaningful learning experiences. It is understood that there will be times when extenuating circumstances will require exceptions to this procedure, which will be the shared responsibility of the Disciplinary Review Committee. The outcome of this meeting will be documented and placed in your file.

**2. Supported Employment/Enclave Disciplinary Procedures:**

Consumers are subject to the Personnel Policies of their employers. Your Employment Training Specialist or Enclave Instructor will review all applicable work rules with you and support you in any disciplinary procedures the employer may initiate. This can include drug testing.

## Abbreviations

CCSP	Comprehensive Consumer Services Plan
CM	Case Management
Day Hab.	Day Habilitation Services
DHS	Department of Human Services
DIA	Department of Inspections and Appeals
ETS	Employment Training Specialist
HCBS/ID	Home and Community Based Services/Intellectual Disabilities
HCBS/SCL	Home and Community Based Services/Supported Community Living
HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
IACP	Iowa Association of Community Providers – state association for providers of mental health and mental retardation services
ISAC	Iowa State Association of Counties
MH/ID/DD/BI	Mental Health/Intellectually Disabled/Developmental Disabilities/Brain Injury
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Act
P & A	Protection and Advocacy
PCHS	Polk County Health Services
Pre-Voc	Pre Vocational Services
RCF/MR	Residential Care Facility/Mental Retarded
SE	Supported Employment
TEACCH	Treatment Education of Autism and related Communication in Handicapped Children
TTY	Telecommunication Device for the Deaf
UW	United Way

LINK ASSOCIATES  
CONSUMER GRIEVANCE FORM (page 1)  
STEP ONE

CONSUMER: \_\_\_\_\_

GREIVANT: \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIBE INCIDENT (S), WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE GRIEVANCE. INCLUDE DATES AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED AND RECOMMENDED SOLUTION.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date sent to Department Head or Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received/Signature of Department Head or Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Dept. Head or Director Notified: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Dept. Head or Director: \_\_\_\_\_

WRITTEN DECISION BY DEPARTMENT HEAD OR DIRECTOR:

Signature of Department Head or Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Sent to Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional: Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance by Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Grievant/Date of Acceptance: \_\_\_\_\_

**LINK ASSOCIATES  
CONSUMER GRIEVANCE (C-36) - PAGE 2  
STEP TWO**

**LIST REASON (S) THE DECISION OF THE DEPARTMENT HEAD IS UNSATISFACTORY, AND RECOMMENDED SOLUTION:**

Signature of Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Sent to Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Received/Signature of Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN DECISION BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:**

Signature of Director: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Sent to Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Optional: Conference Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Acceptance by Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Grievant/Date of Acceptance: \_\_\_\_\_

**LINK ASSOCIATES  
CONSUMER GRIEVANCE FORM (C-36) - PAGE 3  
STEP THREE**

**LIST REASON (S) THE DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS UNSATISFACTORY AND RECOMMENDED SOLUTION:**

Signature of Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date sent to President, Board of Directors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Received/Signature of President, Board of Directors: \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN DECISION BY BOARD OF DIRECTORS GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE:**

**SIGNATURES OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE:**

Signature of President, Board of Directors: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Sent to Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Copy Sent to Executive Director: \_\_\_\_\_

Acceptance by Grievant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Grievant/Date of Acceptance: \_\_\_\_\_

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Created: 6/12/89 Revised 5/31/95; 01/00

## Changes to the “Handbook for consumers, legal representatives, advocates, and family members”

June 2011

1. Page 2: Included the full mission, vision and values statements
2. Changed approved dates throughout the book
3. Changed term “Consumer of the Month” to “Consumer Recognition” throughout the whole book
4. Changed the term Essential Lifestyle Plan (ELP) to assessment throughout the whole book
5. Page 11 - Individual rights section
  - a. #1 included corporal punishment and financial or other forms of exploitation
  - b. #9 included personal information and
6. Pages 12 – added in photo descriptions to rights section
7. Page 13 – Rights Limitations or Restrictions Section;
  - a. Added not for use to reduce or eliminate undesired behaviors
  - b. Restrictions are not for punishment, staff convenience or programming substitute
  - c. Plan will clarify the outcome of other less restrictive approaches, what to be learned and process to restore limitations.
8. Page 14 – added in photo descriptions to restrictions section
9. Page 15 – added in photo descriptions to responsibilities section
10. Page 18 – Leisure services – added each consumer will have access to registration brochures
11. Page 20 – included consumer’s are involved in the selection and on going evaluation of staff
12. Page 21 – added consumers choose where and with whom they want to live and choose staff
13. Page 22 – Added section on visitors and guests.
14. Page 23 – changed term “employment” to “work training”
15. Page 24 – Enclave section – added that current hourly incentives is a fixed rate which is current minimum wage
16. Page 24 – added Family Support Services section
17. Page 25 – in Work Environment section – added consumers are to remain in work area as businesses are called, and to be polite to one another
18. Page 25 – to Personal Items Lost or Damaged – added staff will assist consumers if they have personal items stolen
19. Changed terms Day Programs to Pre vocational and Day Habilitation throughout the book
20. Page 27 – added consumers not asking each other for food.
21. Page 27 – in Medical Services section added in Do not resuscitate orders
22. Page 28 – added consumer can give one another FISH cards
23. Page 28 – Attendance section – added to schedule appointments without conflict as much as possible
24. Page 29 – Disciplinary Procedure – added that the severity of an event may dictate the progression of disciplinary steps