



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Since the publication of our last annual report, I’ve had the opportunity to spend focused time reflecting on how best to ensure that Becoming Independent’s business model is strong, relevant, and capable of ensuring the agency’s health and vitality for the next 50 years. This is critical, because the people we serve and their circles of support are counting on us. I’ve shared my thoughts in several publications over the last year, but I want to be sure that each of you, who comprise our core constituency, are aware of where we are headed, and why.

A universal truth that I’ve come to embrace is that change happens, and how we respond to that inevitability is precisely what determines our success and long-term viability. We must ensure that our business model is healthy and sustainable and that we remain relevant for a shifting customer base. In our case, that means providing wraparound supportive services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). We must keep our eyes focused

A Word From Luana Vaetoe Chief Executive Officer

on trends and respond to an ever-shifting environment with flexibility and innovation.

Two major changes occurred in the last decade, and both will impact how we do business and what service delivery will look like at BI in the decades to come.

First, California’s commitment to funding services for people with IDD faltered. For decades, California was considered the most progressive state in the nation when it came to funding services for people with IDD. Funding priorities were beginning to shift prior to the 2008 financial crisis, but soon across-the-board cuts arrived. BI engaged in legislative advocacy, established a fund development program, and tried to stem the flow. But it was never enough. The fact remains that BI has lost close to \$2 million per year in annual revenue from the state. Meanwhile, the statewide collaborative Family Voices of California reports that due to similarly dramatic cuts to funding, 28,000 programs providing IDD services across the state have made the excruciating decision to close their doors. We know we cannot let that same fate befall BI.

Funding has not been the only dramatic shift we’ve seen at BI. People with IDD began advocating for themselves and insisting that services be delivered in a very different way. Whereas previous generations felt affirmed when community-based programs like BI began replacing the institutional model, this new generation experienced inclusion from their first days of elementary school and presumed that it would continue. Their desires require us to think very differently about how — and where — to provide support.

Like many other businesses, we found ourselves in the crosscurrents of shifting trends. These two intersecting shifts forced us to re-imagine how we provide support and how we generate the revenue required to fuel our services. In order to meet these fundamental challenges, we determined that we would aim to live up to the meaning of our name: Becoming Independent.

As we watched our governmental revenue fall to levels that made our business unsustainable, we knew that we needed to blaze some new trails in order to survive. So, we took what was

a very modest social enterprise – drop off document shredding – and built it into a game changing Social Enterprise Division that has three clear objectives:

- 1. Create job training and employment opportunities where people with disabilities work with other community members while gaining valuable experience, income and skills.
- 2. Provide expanded visibility for BI, our programs and, most importantly, the people we support.
- 3. Generate stable sources of earned income that will underwrite BI programs, while also filling an unmet business need in the community.

Our Social Enterprise Division now includes the operation of all concessions on the SMART train as well as the Buzz Café inside Kaiser Permanente’s new Mercury Way Medical Office Building in Santa Rosa. We’ve added a mobile secured document destruction business and are beginning to reap the rewards of our contracts with the County of Sonoma, and others. Each of these enterprises create highly sought-after job training and employment opportunities for the people we serve, while simultaneously generating revenue to help fuel services.

As we welcomed the new decade, we announced a Capital Campaign that will launch BI’s largest social enterprise to-date and help to ensure the long-term health of the agency. This campaign will result in the

redevelopment of our “South Campus” building to include both program space and BI’s newest social enterprise initiative: a flexible workspace community that will produce the following benefits:

- New and varied employment opportunities for those we serve.
- Social and economic engagement between adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and workspace members, and an overall greater awareness of BI’s mission and services.
- A new working environment option for Sonoma County businesses and professionals that includes a strong humanitarian benefit.
- A new, predictable earned income stream to support BI’s services.
- A 10,000 sq. ft. flexible event space that will provide event related job opportunities for the people we serve, plus rental income. This space will also serve as a home for BI’s three annual signature events - our Dinner Under the Stars gala, Crab Feed, and Luau – saving significant amounts of money in space rentals.

Some renderings of this new space can be viewed to the right of this article.

BI is creating collaboration across industries through which assets can be leveraged between organizations in ways that are mutually beneficial. In the long run, it is organizations that make

themselves essential to the long-term economic and social health of the community that stand the greatest chance of not just surviving, but thriving. As an organization, we will thrive.

Turning challenges into opportunities has always been central to who we are as a Becoming Independent community. Whether it’s working with individuals to create adaptive devices that allow them to achieve their goal of living independently, or designing dynamic new business models, we are willing and able to think outside the box creatively and effectively. Often, those rewards are bigger and more profound than we could have even imagined.

BI began as a bold and risky response by a group of brave parents, and as a result, we have always been an organization that is willing to take risks in order to best serve our clients. As we launch the campaign to secure Becoming Independent’s future, I look forward to sharing updates and having you join us for the journey. Thank you for being an integral part of the BI family, and for standing alongside us as we lay the foundation for our next phenomenal 50 years.

Sincerely,

Luana Vaetoe

Luana Vaetoe
Chief Executive Officer
Becoming Independent

Renderings of Redeveloped South Campus

Vision of BI program, co-working and flexible event space



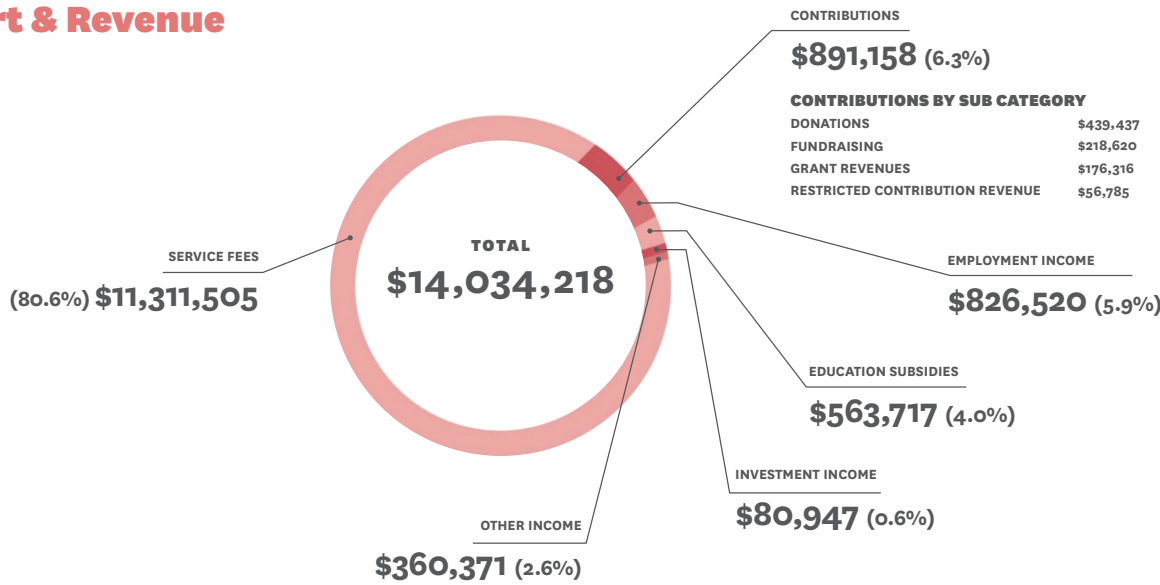
2018–2019 Outcomes of Becoming Independent Services

Success and progress experienced by individuals served by Becoming Independent are measured in real terms. BI tracks the number of people served, how many hours of service they received from staff, the number of hours of work they performed and wages they earned, and their level of inclusion in mainstream community activities. BI also gauges overall satisfaction with the Becoming Independent experience.

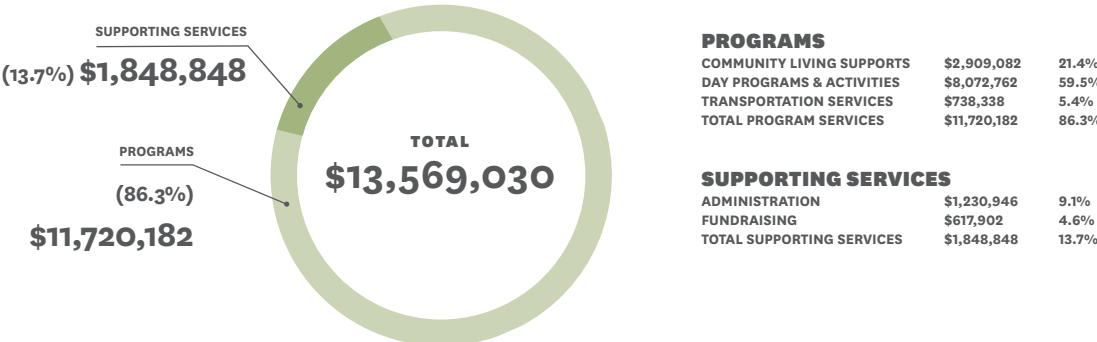
People Served	Hours of Service
1,386*	557,234**
Wages	Hours on Inclusion
\$1,103,513	443,807
Hours of Work	Rate of Satisfaction
89,566	95%

*Includes an average of 154 attendees per month during this fiscal year served at community dances hosted by Becoming Independent at Steele Lane Community Center and The Flamingo (50% of which are counted as non-BI).
**Includes 6,714 hours of service during this fiscal year for service through community dances.

Support & Revenue



Expenses



Becoming Independent’s most recent audited financial statements and tax returns are available at becomingindependent.org



Many Thanks

Becoming Independent thanks the following for their support and generous donations throughout the 2018–2019 fiscal year.

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Please forgive us if we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name. Call Becoming Independent at (707)524-6606 with any corrections, omissions or preferences.

Very Special Thanks to

The June Waite Legacy Circle...

Many thanks to the following individuals who have included Becoming Independent with a legacy gift in their estate plans, most often through a bequest in a will:

Anonymous (4), Eileen Adams, Tony Apolloni & Maria Mar, Norman Chalmers*, Shiah Cherney, Geneva Scheihing Folsom*, Lisa Folsom-Ernst & Richard Ernst, Michael Haddad & Julia Sherwin, Jayne & Peter Hamel, Cami Kahl, Sandy Madsen, Lucia Milburn & Joseph Como, Jack T. Morris*, William Morris*, Lené & John Prior, Ed Rimbaugh, June Waite*

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Our Purpose

Elevating human abilities for the mutual benefit of our Community.

Our Vision

Becoming Independent is a community of innovative partnerships, fostering authentic human connections.

Who We Are

Leading innovators in the field of human services.

Our Values

Human Dignity
Empowerment
Integrity
Community
Innovation

Becoming Independent™

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Annual Report
2018 - 2019

Becoming Independent™