

# RAMP DISABILITY

RESOURCES & SERVICES



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RAMP HERE](#)

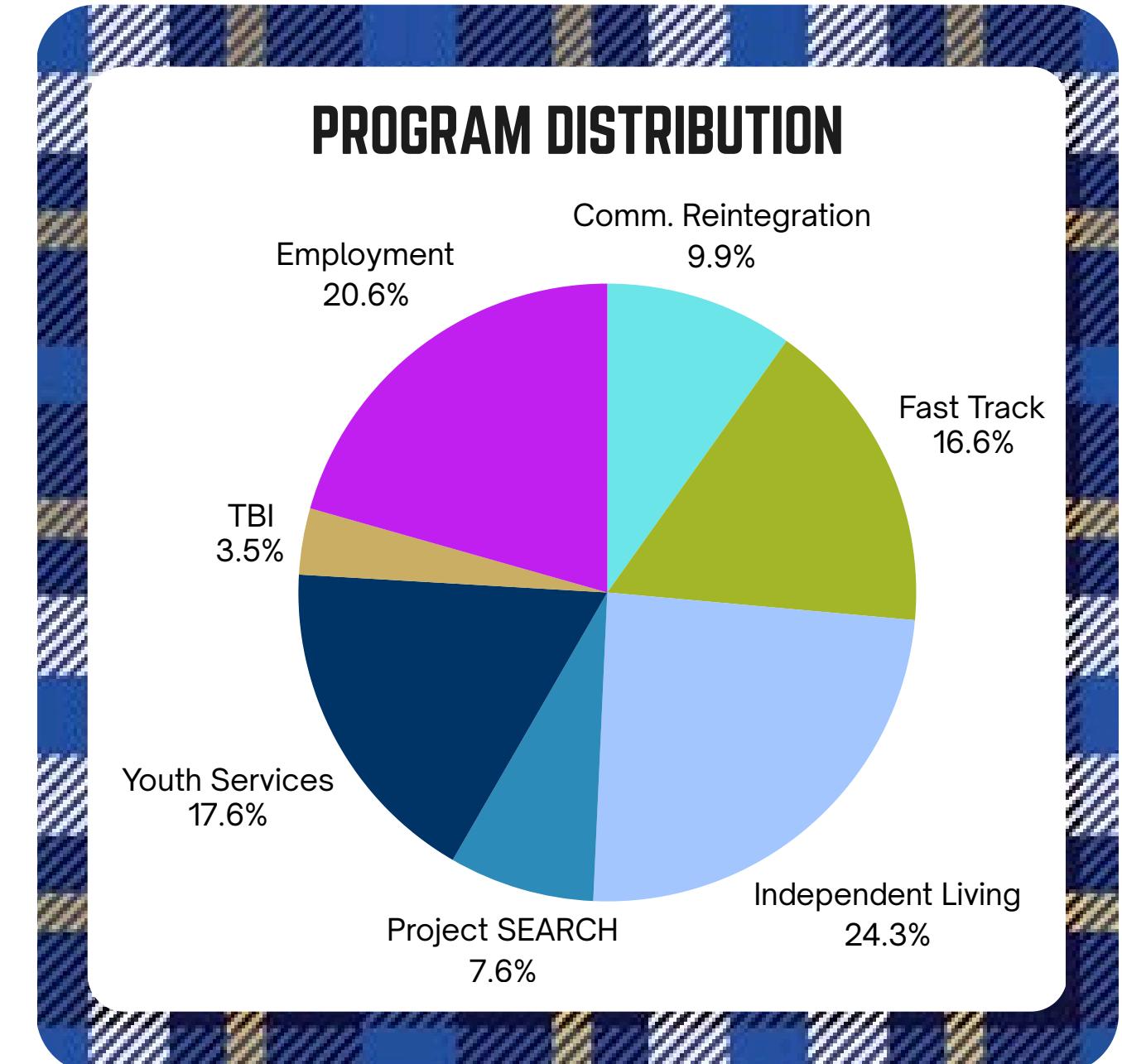


## RAMP'S ORIGIN AND HISTORY

- Founded: Established in 1980 by Ken Kerns.
- Significance: RAMP is the 2nd Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Illinois, and it is non-residential.
- Offices:
  - Freeport, Rockford, and DeKalb.
  - Serves Stephenson, Winnebago, Boone, DeKalb counties, and some rural areas.
  - Employment services also extend to the Chicagoland area.

## INDEPENDENT LIVING PHILOSOPHY

- Core Belief: Every person, regardless of disability, has the right to make their own choices and direct their own life.
- Promoting Self-Determination: RAMP's services focus on self-determination, ensuring that individuals with disabilities have the same choices and control over their lives as anyone else.





## RAMP OVERVIEW

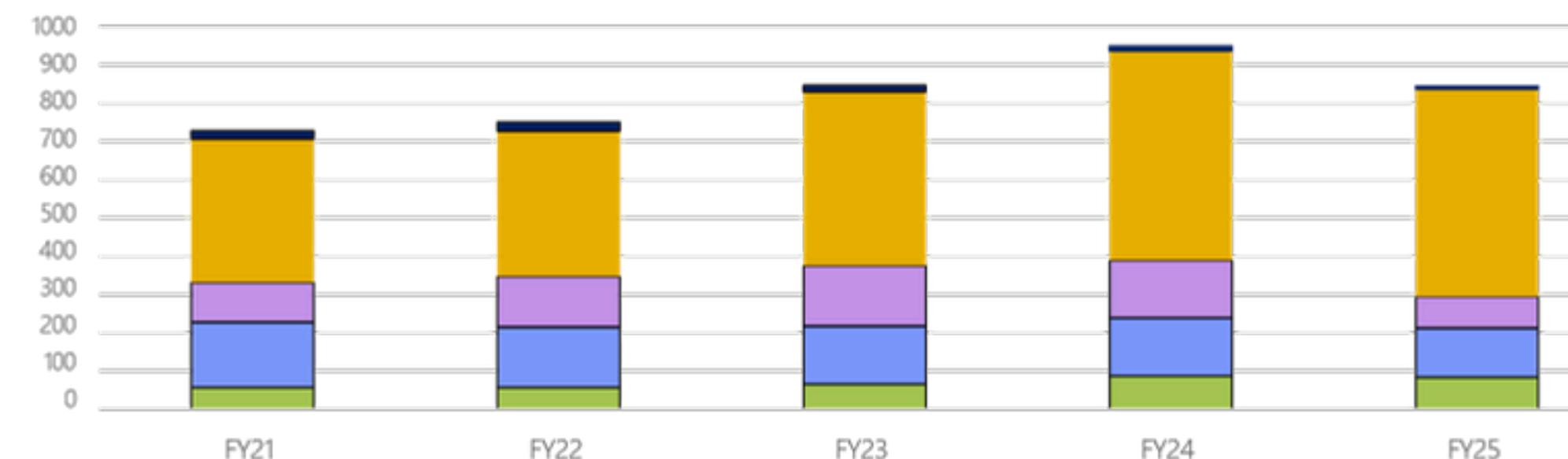
- Mission: To build an inclusive community that encourages individuals with disabilities to reach their full potential based on the Independent Living Philosophy.

## OUR IMPACT

- Reach: Serves over 1,000 people annually through advocacy and support.
- Target Audience: Assists people of all ages with any disabilities facing barriers to controlling and directing their own lives and goals.

■ Boone ■ DeKalb ■ Stephenson ■ Winnebago ■ Other

INTAKE CONSUMER 5-YR COMPARISON



## WHY WE DO IT

- Prevalence: 1 in 4 Americans live with a disability, and 29% of families are affected.
- Personal Mission: Many staff and board members have lived experience with disabilities, making RAMP's mission deeply personal.
- Empowerment: Helps individuals with disabilities live, learn, work, and play in their communities.



# ELIGIBILITY

- Has any type of disability – diagnosed or undiagnosed.
- Lives within one of the four counties RAMP serves.
- Individuals of any age
- Wants to work collaboratively with RAMP staff to achieve their personal goals.
- Anyone with a disability facing barriers to controlling and directing their own lives and goals.





## 5 CORE SERVICES

- Information & Referral
- Independent Living Skills
- Education & Advocacy
- Transition Services
- Peer Support



Our smiling staff that answer your calls.



## INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICES



### RAMP STAFF RESPONDS TO INQUIRIES FROM:

- People with disabilities
- Family members
- Service providers
- Business community
- General public

### WE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON:

- Programs and resources
- Accessible housing
- Transportation
- Employment services
- Accessibility requirements
- Other disability-related issues

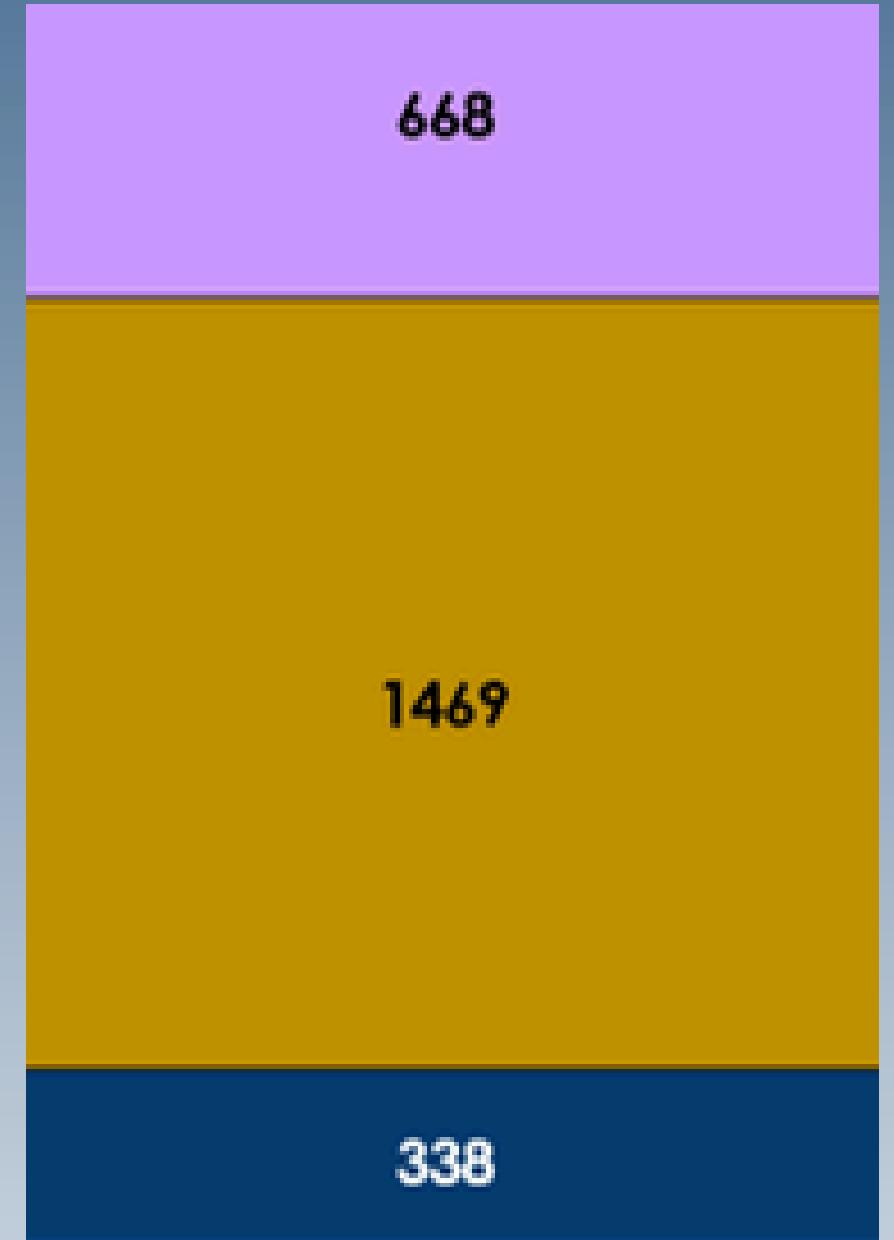
# INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS TRAINING



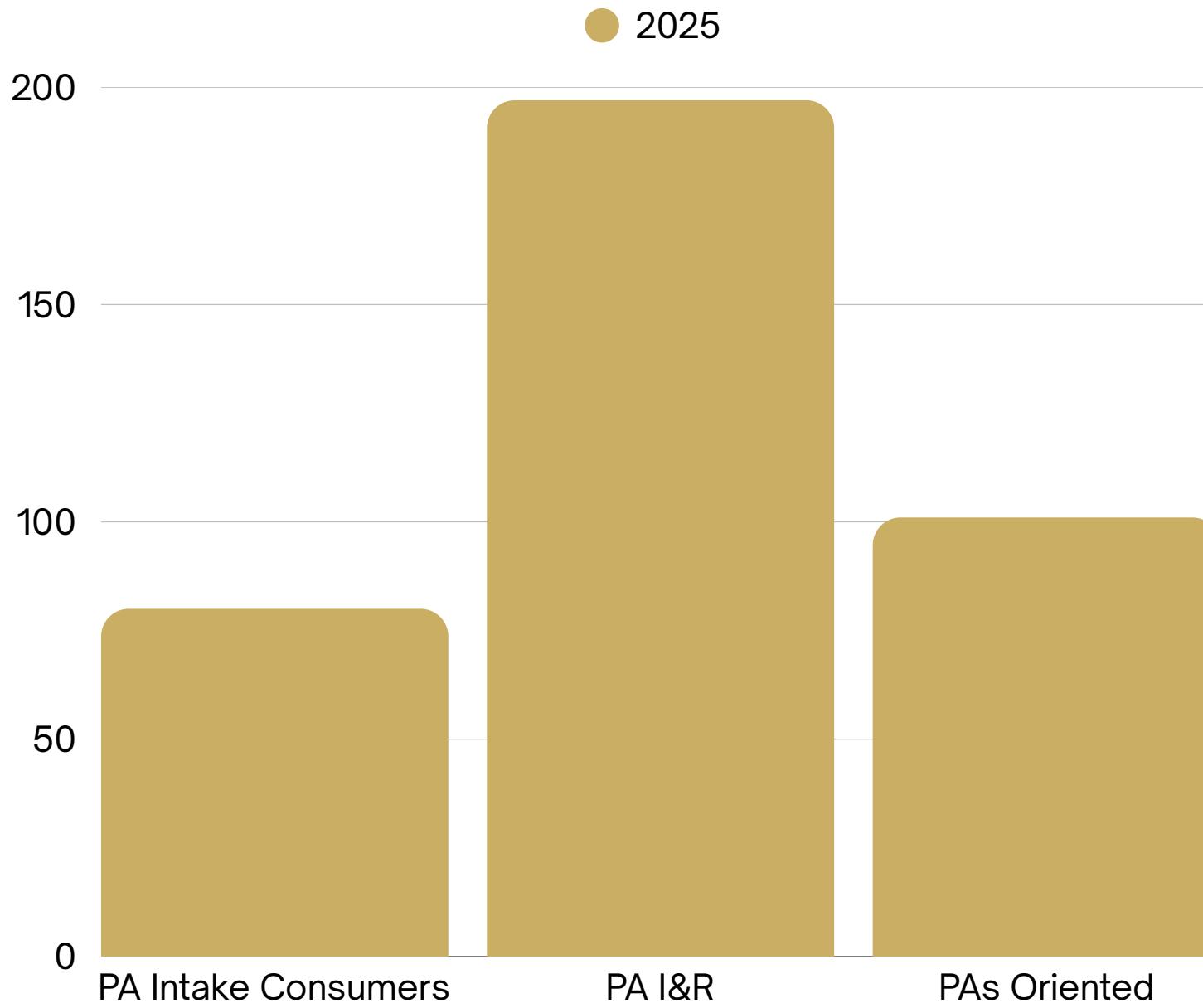
The heart of independent living is choice – the freedom to set your own path and the confidence to follow it. RAMP's Independent Living Skills Training empowers people with disabilities to gain independence through self-directed goals and practical skill-building, from budgeting and transportation to self-advocacy and daily living.

[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact](#)

## FY25 INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS GOAL



INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES



## Personal Assistant Program Totals FY25

## PERSONAL ASSISTANT REFERRAL SERVICES

Through our Personal Assistant program, RAMP recruits and trains dedicated individuals who help people with disabilities live independently in their communities. Because behind every story of independence is someone lending a hand. Learn how to become a Personal Assistant here:

**Become a  
Personal  
Assistant:**

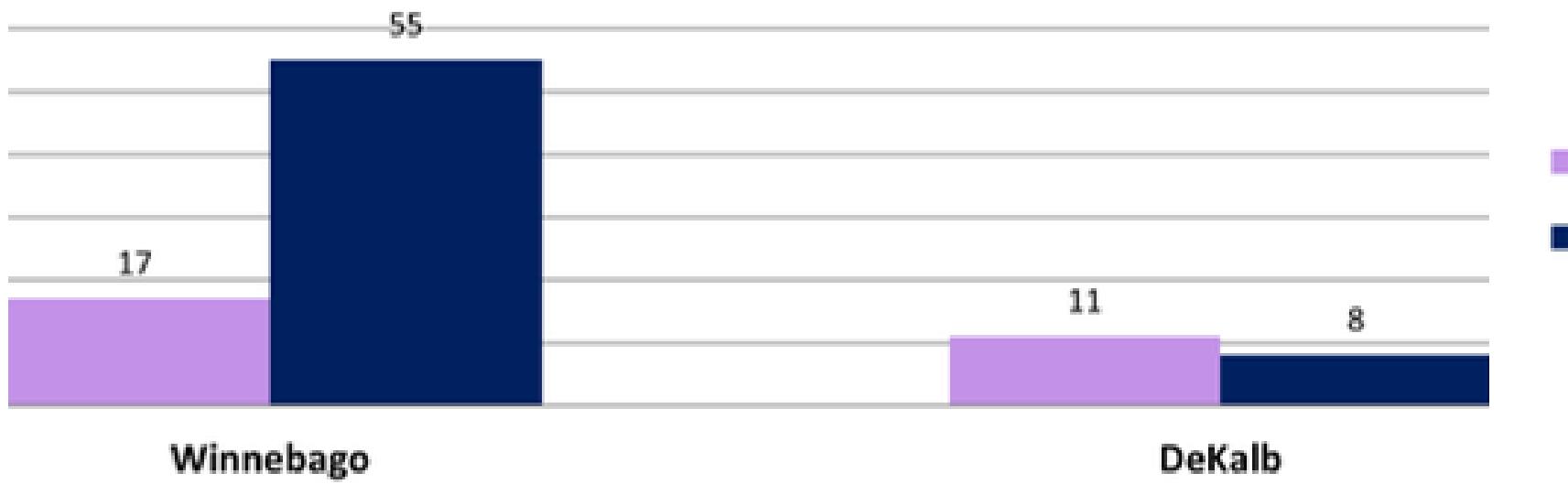




## BUS TRAINING

For many, taking the bus for the first time is a major step toward freedom. Funded by Rockford Mass Transition District (RMTD) and the City of DeKalb to provide individuals with the skills and knowledge to navigate public transportation systems safely and independently. RAMP also provides disability awareness & sensitivity training to drivers annually, and assists with appeals that RMTD receives from para-transit applicants/users.

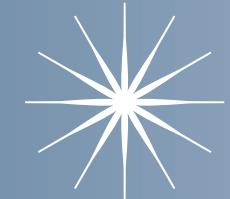
### Bus Training Services FY25



Dale learning how to ride the transit system.



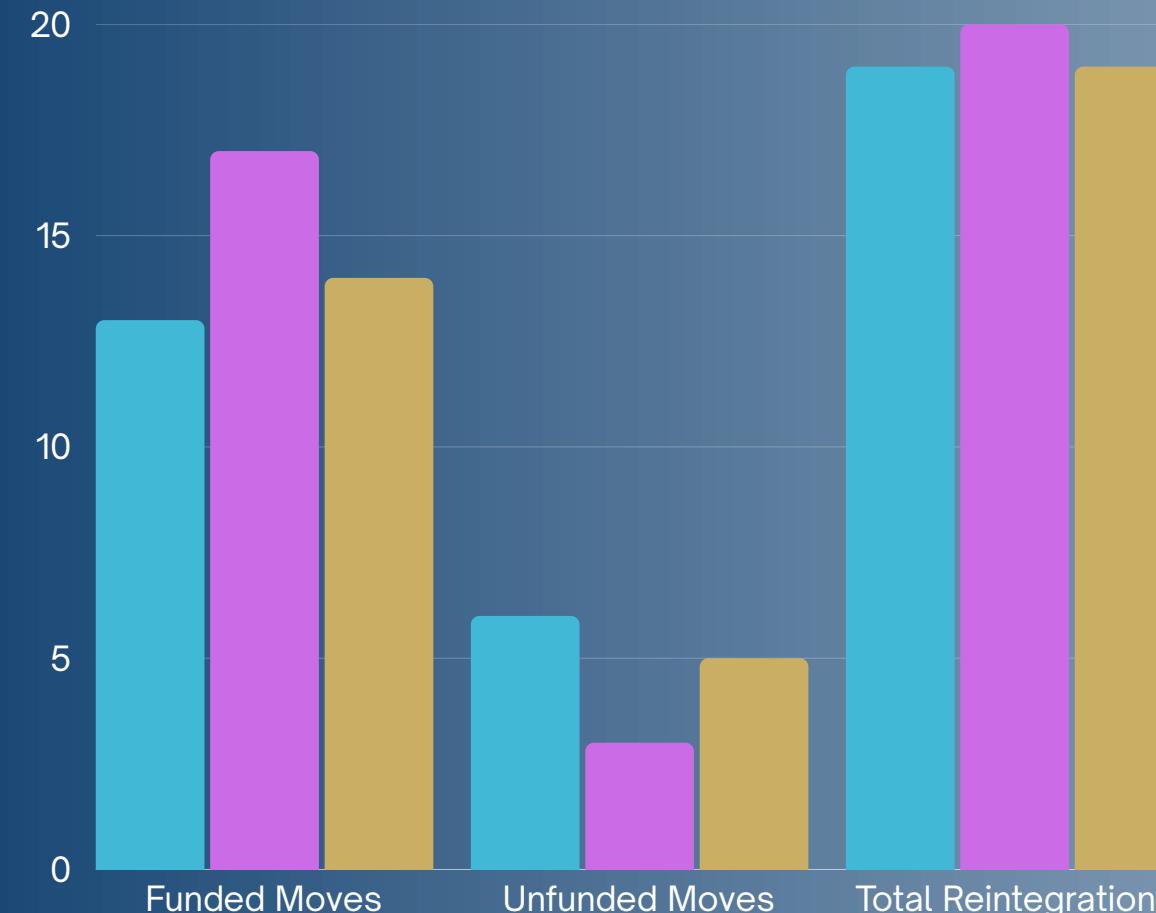
## COMMUNITY REINTEGRATION



Leaving a nursing home and returning home transforms lives. Funded by the State of Illinois, this program helps individuals transition from institutional care back into the community with the support they need to thrive at home.

### Community Reintegration Outcomes FY23-FY25

● 2023 ● 2024 ● 2025



**\$55,000**

the average amount that RAMP saves the State of Illinois ANNUALLY for each individual who moves from a nursing home back into the community!



**100%**

of consumers served by RAMP who moved out of a nursing home, remained in the community for more than 90 days.

***“When my things were being moved out, that’s when my whole outlook on life changed.”***

*-RAMP CRP Consumer*



## PEER SUPPORT

- A Core Service for all Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- Provides assistance from individuals who have faced similar barriers and achieved their goals
- Offers real-life experience, not meant to replace professional counseling, but as an additional support
- At RAMP, 51% or more of our staff and board are individuals with disabilities, bringing a positive, personal perspective to support.





## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



RAMP helps individuals strengthen their mental health and independence through community partnerships. With funding from the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board (WCCMHB) RAMP provides independent living services, youth education and advocacy, accessibility audits, and alternative therapies. The purpose of the WCCMHB is to plan, implement, and monitor a system of mental health and addiction services for Winnebago County residents living with serious mental illness and addictions. As a funded partner, RAMP is part of a network dedicated to quality mental health and substance use services for Winnebago County residents. WCCMHB is supported by a voter-approved half-cent sales tax.

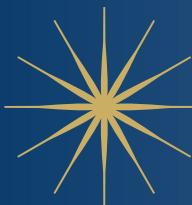
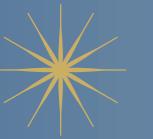


Project SEARCH interns took part in a mental health awareness event funded by the Winnebago County Community Mental Health Board. Activities included mindfulness and creative expression, promoting well-being and self-care.



Learn more here:



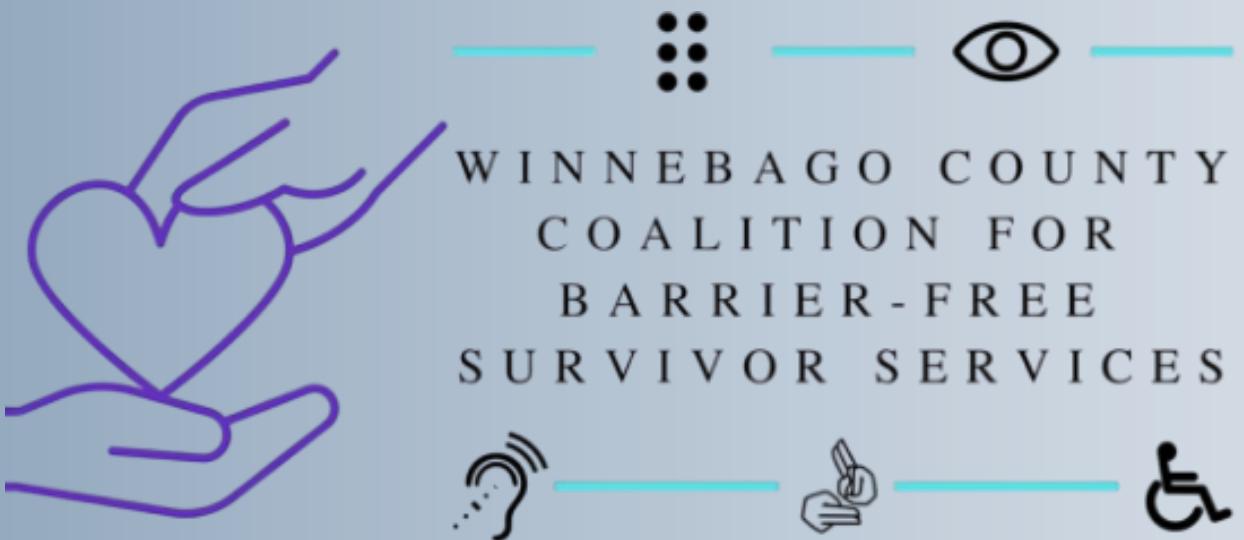


## WINNEBAGO COUNTY COALITION FOR BARRIER-FREE SURVIVOR SERVICES

Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported.

RAMP recently completed a three-year grant initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). Through this, RAMP led the Winnebago County Coalition for Barrier-Free Survivor Services, in partnership with Adult Protective Services, Remedies Renewing Lives, Rockford Sexual Assault Counseling, and the Mayor's Office of Domestic and Community Violence Prevention.

Our coalition's collaborative efforts successfully identified and removed barriers for survivors with disabilities and Deaf survivors of domestic and sexual violence. The result is enhanced safety, improved access, and more welcoming services across partner agencies, with key policy and practice updates implemented to ensure community services are more inclusive and accessible.



On October 17<sup>th</sup> staff wore purple for Purple Thursday in order to show our support for survivors of domestic violence.



## SYSTEMS ADVOCACY



Over the past year, RAMP's systems advocacy focused on protecting disability rights amid funding uncertainty and policy challenges. Efforts included preventing harmful changes, promoting accessibility, and participating in task forces on crisis response, safety, and patient rights. RAMP also provided accessibility assessments, technical assistance, and education across schools, transit, and community groups—working to uphold laws, push for improvements, and combat barriers to equal access.

**Accessibility Assessments:** Reviewed 5 schools, service providers, and historic venues to support inclusive, compliant spaces.

**Technical Assistance:** Supported 6 organizations—libraries, museums, parks, and more—to improve community access.



In February Dane Johnson, Autumn Gabriel and Lisa Lynch visited Springfield to advocate for bills supporting increased state contracts, equal wages, and student loan forgiveness. They met with Reps. Maurice West (67th), Amy Murri Briel (76th), and Jeff Keicher (70th).





## ADA ASSESSMENTS



- Businesses concerned about ADA compliance or wishing to improve accessibility can contact RAMP for free technical assistance.
- RAMP staff can conduct an onsite Accessibility Assessment and provide written suggestions for modifications, if desired, based on the Illinois Accessibility Code and the ADA (fee-based service).
- Total access to customers is not only required by law, but it's also good business.





# TRAININGS

AVAILABLE  
Online  
NOW

ONRAMP's trainings empower your school, business, and community with the knowledge to create inclusive spaces. We help your teams understand and apply inclusion by building disability awareness, promoting belonging and accessibility, and ensuring ADA compliance. This year, ONRAMP offered over 30 interactive community trainings available in-person or virtually for a wide range of organizations. Access our friendly and helpful online video trainings anytime, anywhere perfect for flexible, self-paced learning. See the QR code to begin your journey toward a more inclusive environment.



RAMP presented at Harlem District #122's Teacher Inservice Day on disability awareness, ableism, and talking to kids about disability.

## Trainings: ONRAMP

- ABLEISM AWARENESS
- DISABILITY AWARENESS
- SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY
- INDEPENDENT LIVING PHILOSOPHY
- SERVICE ANIMAL AWARENESS
- TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT DISABILITY
- INTERSECTION OF RACE & DISABILITY
- DISABILITY AWARENESS FOR THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM
- UNDERSTANDING EXCLUSIONARY BEHAVIORS
- LEADING MULTIPLE GENERATIONS
- HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS & ASSAULT AWARENESS
- POVERTY RESPONSE
- ADA COMPLIANCE

Online Trainings:





FREE amplified land line, cell phones and accessories for people who are hard-of-hearing in the counties we serve.

**Basic Requirements:**

- Resident of IL
- Certification of hearing loss
- A working phone service





## RAMP LOANING



- Provides accessible equipment for individuals with disabilities.
- Offers short-term loans of durable medical equipment, including wheelchairs, walkers, and more.
- Available to individuals who meet eligibility requirements.



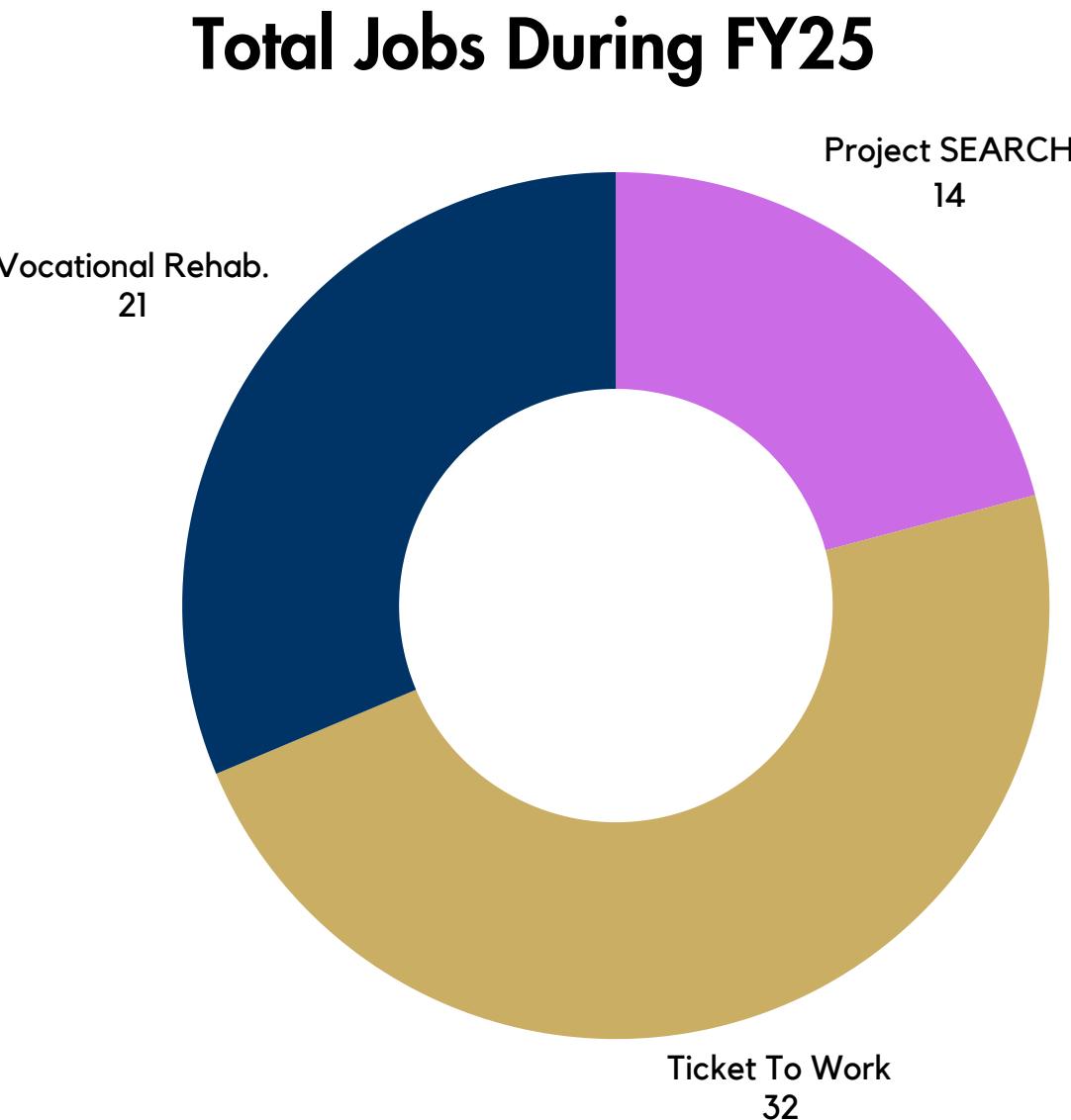


## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Meaningful work builds confidence and independence. RAMP's Employment Services help individuals with disabilities find and secure meaningful employment through career readiness support, resume building, and job placement services.



Employment Services consumer at his place of employment.



## BENEFITS OF HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

- Receive federal tax credits such as the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Disabled Access Credit, or Barrier Removal Tax Deduction.
- Employees with disabilities often have higher retention rates, lowering turnover costs.
- About 92% of U.S. consumers prefer to support businesses that hire individuals with disabilities.
- Hiring people with disabilities does not increase insurance rates.
- Many workplace accommodations cost little to nothing, making inclusion affordable and beneficial.



## PROJECT SEARCH

Project SEARCH is a unique, business-led, school-to-work program that takes place entirely at a healthcare, government, or business setting. Selected students work in three internships over the course of the year in combination with classroom instruction, goal setting, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. Each student works with a team that includes their family, an instructor, a department mentor, rehabilitation counselor, and skills trainers to create their employment goal and to support the student during their transition from school to work.

RAMP has three Project SEARCH locations: two in Rockford at Mercyhealth and Embassy Suites downtown, as well as one in DeKalb at Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital.

**100%**  
of 2024 graduates have obtained employment in the community AND are more satisfied with where their life is and their financial stability now that they have obtained employment.



Project SEARCH interns at Northwestern Medicine Kishwaukee Hospital took part in Employment Prep Day, practicing skills like resume building, phone calls, and interviewing to prepare for future employment.



At the Project SEARCH conference, Embassy Suites was the only Illinois site to earn the 2023-2024 100% Employment Outcomes Award!

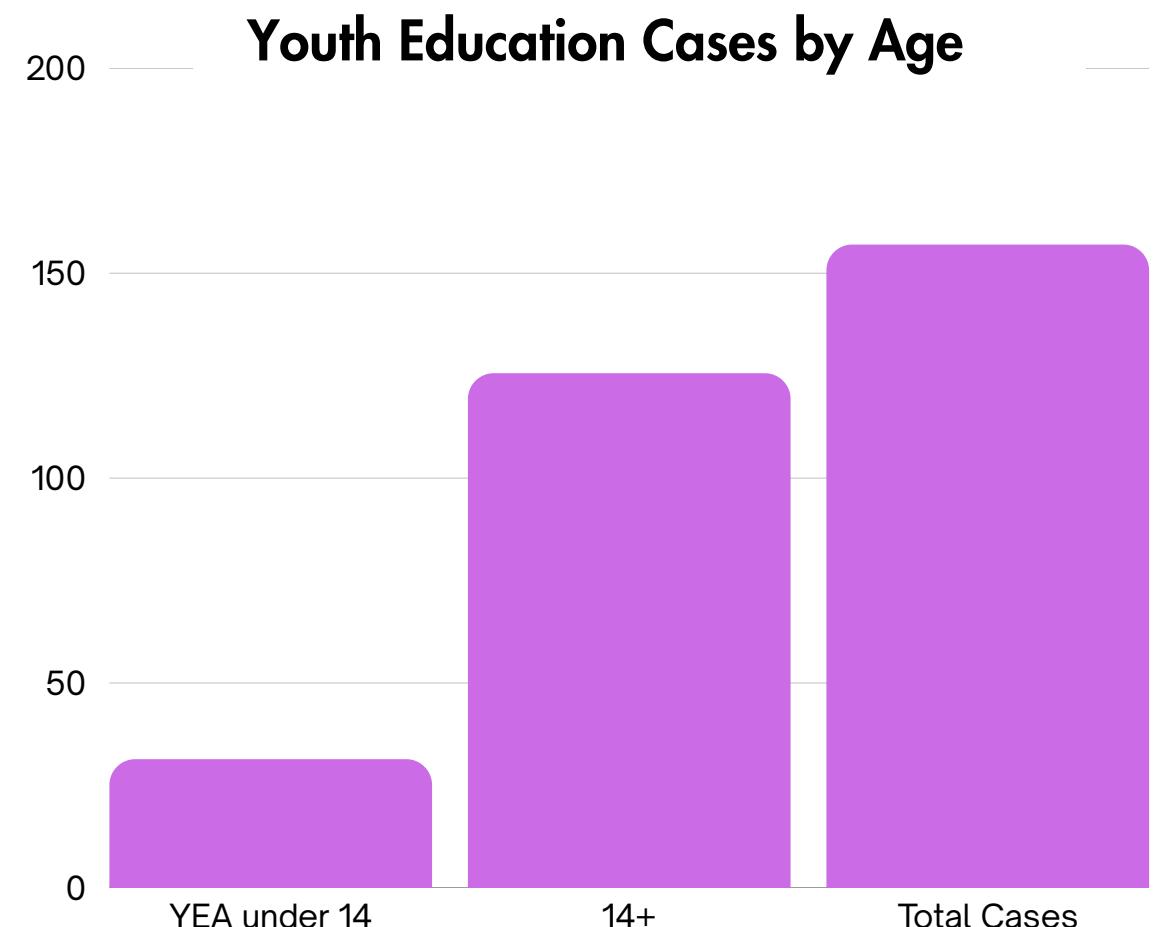
### BENEFITS OF PROJECT SEARCH TO THE HOST BUSINESS

- Access to diverse talent: tap into a skilled, diverse workforce that meets labor needs.
- Role models for customers: employees with disabilities can inspire and positively influence customers.
- Reach a valuable market: people with disabilities represent a rapidly growing, high-purchasing power demographic.
- Enhanced recognition: gain regional and national visibility through program promotion.
- Improved performance & retention: strengthen performance and reduce turnover in entry-level roles.



## YOUTH EDUCATION ADVOCACY

RAMP's support helps students and families gain clarity and confidence. We guide you through understanding the legal rights of students with disabilities, simplify the process of accessing key community services, and focus on skill development so every student can successfully pursue their goals.



### SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Educating students and their families on their rights within the school system.
- Training families on disability laws and the special education process.
- Attending IEP/504 meetings with families as requested.

**100%**  
of parents surveyed  
reported a better  
understanding of the special  
education process, law, and  
their rights, and found  
RAMP's self-advocacy  
training effective.



## FAST TRACK //

RAMP is dedicated to empowering students with disabilities to dream big and design their own future. Our program provides youth aged 14-22 with focused guidance on career exploration, employment skills training, and hands-on internships. Whether through supportive group settings or dedicated individual instruction, our core goal is to give every student the tools they need for a successful and confident transition to further education or employment.

### Fast Track Authorizations FY22-FY25



**85%**  
of Fast Track consumers stated their desired career/ and or education path!  
(Target 85%).



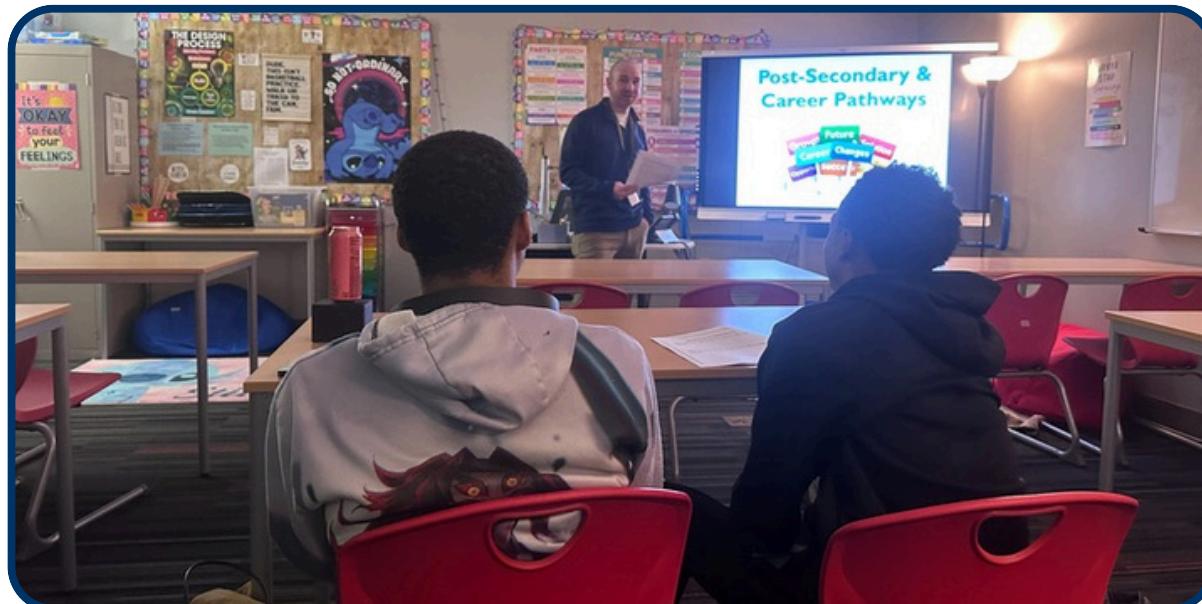
Fast Track student prepares for future employment with skills training and career exploration.



## PATHWAYS TO PARTNERSHIPS



RAMP is proud to join the new Pathways to Partnerships (PTP) pilot program in Illinois! Through PTP, RAMP staff are partnering with the Illinois Department of Human Services and Rockford Public Schools to help students with disabilities prepare for adulthood - including valuable real-world job experience. What makes this program especially exciting compared to RAMP's other transition initiatives is its employment component - students will have the opportunity to gain real work experience through jobs in the community.



Alex Swedberg,  
Youth Services  
Manager, teaching  
Career Pathways to  
students.

## Pathways TO PARTNERSHIPS

ILLINOIS



RAMP's Amy Morris and Alex Swedberg accept a donation from the Cherry Valley Rotary Club and District 6420 to support our new Pathways to Partnership program.

Participation is limited to RPS-selected students, but others can contact RAMP to explore additional transition supports.



## CURRICULUM



OnRAMP's curriculum is age-appropriate, cross-disability, and flexible enough for ease of implementation. The curriculum meet mandated standards including Common Core, Indicator 13 Transition Plan requirements set forth in the IDEA 2004, and 5th Core requirements for Centers for Independent Living (CILs).



Over spring break, YEA Janet led a week-long iBelong session at Amity in Freeport, teaching 35 kids (ages 5-12) about disability awareness, inclusion, and acceptance.

### T'NT

designed to teach high school students (ages 16-22) with high-incidence disabilities the skills and knowledge needed for independent living, employment, and post-secondary education or training.

**95%**

# of students increased motivation for employment

### Ignite

designed to teach middle school students with high-incidence disabilities actively participate in their IEP and Transition Plan meetings.

**100%**

of students who indicate they have practiced self-advocacy skills in 2 or more settings

### iBelong

is a disability awareness curriculum for Pre-K-6th grade, focusing on acceptance, self-belief, and the impact of actions and attitudes.

**100%**

of teachers surveyed stated this program increased awareness and acceptance of individual differences.



- Standards-based and age-appropriate
- Cross-disability and flexible for ease of implementation
- Meets mandated standards including:
- Indicator 13 and Transition Plan requirements (IDEA 2004)
- 5th Core requirements for Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

## T'NT

designed to teach high school students (ages 16-22) with high incidence disabilities essential knowledge and skills in order to prepare to live independently, obtain employment, and choose post-secondary education and training goals.

**140**

students served through T'NT

**36**

students served through Ignite

**530**

students served through iBelong



iBelong students learning about disabilities from RAMP staff.



## WAYS TO SUPPORT RAMP DISABILITY RESOURCES & SERVICES

- **Volunteer:**  
Contact RAMP for Opportunities

- **Donate:**  
[www.rampcil.org](http://www.rampcil.org)



- **Participate:** RAMP Events





## EVENTS



**Sip & Sample**  
**TBA**  
**Venue TBA**



**Bad Pants Golf Open**  
**TBA**  
**Timber Pointe Golf Club**



**River Run**  
Half Marathon, 5K Run,  
3K Walk/Wheel  
**August 15, 2026**  
Rockford City Market  
Pavilion



**Changing Attitudes**  
**Breaking Barriers**  
**Annual Luncheon**  
**TBA**  
**Venue TBA**





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## CONTACT US



[www.RAMPcil.org](http://www.RAMPcil.org)



### Winnebago & Boone Counties

 202 Market Street  
Rockford IL 61107  
  
 815-968-7467



### Stephenson County

 2155 W. Galena Avenue  
Freeport IL 61032  
  
 815-233-1128



### DeKalb County

 115 N. First Street  
DeKalb IL 60115  
  
 815-756-3202