

Consumer Service Fund

Background

The Consumer Service Fund (CSF) was established in 1992 following a recommendation from Virginia General Assembly Disability Commission. This program, commonly known as “the fund of last resort” was designed to help individuals with physical or sensory disabilities living in Virginia, access services, primarily assistive technology, that could not be funded through existing public or private programs. The annual CSF appropriations were administered by the NewWell Fund/Assistive Technology Loan Fund Authority who provided staffing and overall program delivery. Funds were used to purchase assistive technology devices and services including home accessibility modifications, vehicle modifications and vehicle purchases, hearing aids, etc.

The original FY 1993 appropriation was \$600,000. In FY 2004, budget cuts reduced the appropriation to \$473,394 which continued until elimination from the Governor’s budget in 2007. From 2003 – 2007, the CSF served over 400 individuals from over 1,000 application requests for funding.

Statement of Need

The CSF represents a public and private partnership which brings organizations together like Disability Service Agencies, Centers for Independent Living, Community Service Boards, Faith Based groups, United Way and other community service entities to assist those in desperate need of devices and services. Applicants to the CSF are often individuals without insurance, or whose insurance will not cover the device. Many are able to contribute towards part of the cost. It is estimated that the need has doubled since 2007 based upon loan applications received from the NewWell Fund and documented requests identified by the Centers for Independent Living.

Outcomes

2007:

219 applications received totaling \$1,266,706 in requests
102 applications funded totaling \$420,440.83 in actual awards

2006:

249 applications received totaling \$1,471,700 in requests
90 applications funded totaling \$409,447.44 in actual awards

Success Stories

An individual with a spinal cord injury from Hampton applied for a CSF grant for an accessible vehicle so she would be able to pursue her college education. The application was submitted by the Peninsula Center for Independent Living with funding for the modifications being paid by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services. The grant was awarded in the amount of \$11,500 to purchase the vehicle.

An 18 year old from Richlands was involved in a car accident, leaving him completely paralyzed from mid-chest down. He was a very independent person before the accident and wanted to attend college. After the accident he could not enter or exit his home because he uses a power wheelchair. The Center for Independent Living applied for a grant for home modifications. The grant was awarded for an entrance ramp, bathroom and bedroom modifications in the amount of \$9,295.

An individual with osteoarthritis and degenerative disc disease from Coeburn applied for grant assistance with bathroom modifications. He received grant funding from the US Department of

Agriculture in the amount of \$8,450, leaving a grant request in the amount of \$1,690. The grant was awarded to the consumer thereby allowing him to live independently without assistance from others.