

Innovative **LIFE** Options 

# **LIFE and the CSW**

## **A Unique Partnership**



*Dawn, sister and support network member reflected:*

*“Our family found ourselves at a crossroads in spring 2019, when the traditional support of 45 years for Brenda was suddenly removed. At this time we were referred to In the Company of Friends. While the initial set up takes some time...the benefits and flexibility have added without doubt to the quality of Brenda’s life! Through ICOF, we have been able to implement support and programs based on what Brenda wants and needs, not what others want. To Brenda this is significant in that she feels she is part of something rather than being “told what to do!” We are still learning and we are still growing within the program, but with the support of ICOF, Brenda is enjoying a fuller life...and she deserves this! Thank you ICOF!”*

*Roseanne, Support network member reflected:*

*“Being on a network, I have great relief in knowing that there is always someone there to help navigate through ANY problems that come up.*

*From assisting with staff recruitment, sourcing supplies and education, to just being a shoulder to lean on.”*

*Aim for progress, not perfection.*

*Marlene, parent and support network member reflected:*

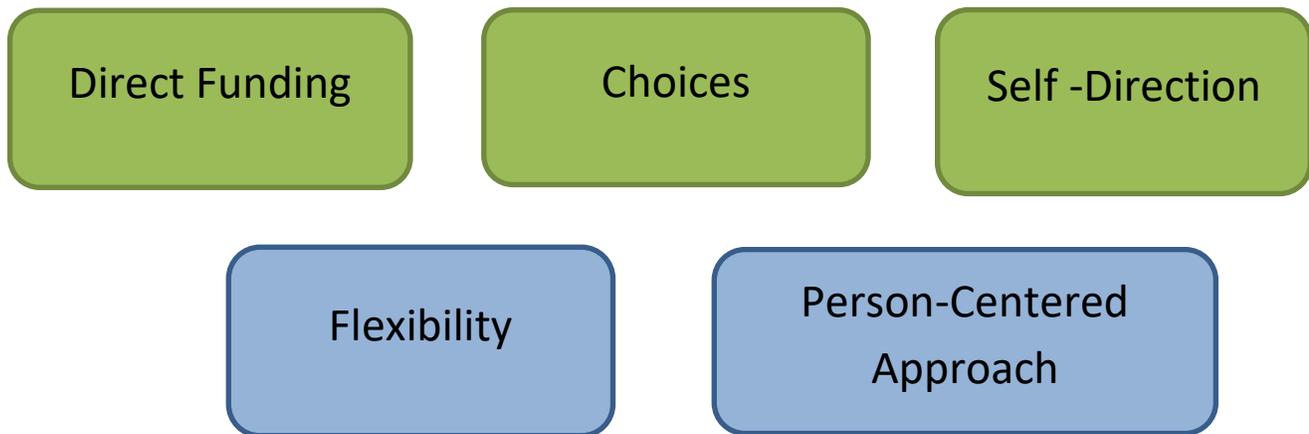
*“What’s great about ICOF; A life of choices, choosing your own place to live (within budget of course), choosing how you want your space to look, choosing what to buy, eat, wear, and do with your time. Mark would say, making your own coffee and going to McDonalds for ice coffee or chicken nuggets.”*

## *Introduction*

In the Company of Friends (ICOF) is a unique model of support which gives individuals labelled with an intellectual disability the opportunity to manage their lives with support from family and friends. It encourages self-respect and offers new ways to grow, learn, work and play. Most of all, each individual makes his/her own choices and decisions; takes risks and has opportunities to learn. Each individual also becomes an employer to their support staff, providing a whole new world of choice and responsibility.

ICOF is available throughout Manitoba.

## *In the Company of Friends provides:*



Innovative Life Options Inc. (LIFE) is the non-profit organization to support the In the Company of Friends model. The LIFE team are committed to providing excellent resources, guidance and information to ICOF employers and their support networks and are also committed to work in partnership with CSWs. This partnership benefits each individual who chooses In the Company of Friends (ICOF).

***This package is designed to help clarify these unique roles and responsibilities, and promote open communication.***

## *Community Service Worker and LIFE Resource Coordinator*

ICOF employers have a Community Services Worker (CSW) and a Resource Coordinator with Innovative Life Options.

The assigning of a CSW maintains the individual's connection to your department, however, many CSWs find that their ICOF files move into a type of hibernation for the majority of the time as LIFE relieves regional staff of their usual 'CSW' related functions. The amount of time you will spend on each individual is minimal, freeing up your resources for other people receiving services through Community Living disABILITY Services.

## *Decision Making*

In Manitoba, legislation called the Vulnerable Persons Act (VPA) recognizes that individuals labelled with an intellectual disability have a right to make decisions about their lives.

ICOF employers are encouraged to be involved in making decisions and each individual will choose a support network of people whom he/she values and trusts to assist with the decision making process.

Support networks are the structure that helps the individual manage ICOF responsibilities. In doing so, supported decision making becomes an integral part of how support networks operate. The assistance support networks offer comes with many decisions whether helping with hiring a staff person or throwing a party.

Supported decision making is ensuring the individual is informed and involved with making decisions about his or her life. It is woven through conversations, planning and action. It does not take a back seat to convenience. It looks different for each person except that the structure is always made up of people who care.

## *Support Networks*

In the Company of Friends philosophy is based upon a foundation of respect as well as relationships and supports a person-centered approach.

LIFE will assist any individual interested in ICOF to create and sustain a support network, which is an integral feature of ICOF. A person does not need to have a support network in place to explore ICOF as an option for their life. LIFE will work with the person to ensure a support network is in place.

A support network is a group of people the ICOF employer chooses to assist in his/her life. Support network members may be family members, friends or acquaintances with whom the person is developing a relationship. Support networks can develop organically, intentionally or both ways. Each ICOF employer has his/her own unique support network.

Many ICOF employers have life-long friendships as a result of the commitment of network members. Support networks have shown to create positive outcomes for people such as expanded opportunities and increased self-esteem and self-worth.

### **Support networks offer assistance with:**

Relationship and  
Community  
Connections

Managing  
Finances

Managing Staff

Support Network  
Nurturing and  
Celebration

## *Benefits of ICOF*

The LIFE staff team is privileged to be connected with ICOF employers throughout the province of Manitoba. We have a front row seat to their experiences, decision making process and the relationships that make their lives full and complete. The benefits of ICOF to the person, to families and to the community are endless! ICOF is an excellent choice! The core benefits of ICOF include: self-determination, choice, full citizenship, inclusion, respect and value.

ICOF employers are contributing members in their communities and often lead rich, unique and fulfilling lives – they have full time or part-time employment or undertake entrepreneurship, they volunteer in their communities, they choose programs for their day time or hire their own staff and arrange their own daily activities. ICOF employers are active on sport teams, work out at the gym and keep healthy doing yard work, gardening or helping their neighbors. ICOF employers also come together with family and friends to celebrate holidays, share meals and spend leisure time together. With a unique support network each individual is surrounded by people that they choose to be part of their lives.

ICOF employers live in apartments, condos and houses – whatever suits their needs best in the community of their choice. ICOF employers choose and hire their own support staff too! They each have an individual budget based on Budget Guidelines that meets their staffing needs. Each person’s budget is reviewed regularly by the LIFE team and monitored for changing support needs.

*Rose, a parent and support network member reflected:*

*“ICOF employer’s lives reflect most accurately what it means to fully experience the guiding principles of the Vulnerable Persons Act. Employers who live such “normalized” lives not only contribute to the diversity in their community, they are acknowledged and validated for their part in its development. In doing so, they are the leaders in shifting the stereotypical thinking about disability by becoming the change they wish to see in the world.”*

*Rene, parent and support network member reflected*

*“The ICOF program has allowed me to be more trusting and patient with people. Also more importantly, ICOF has given my son a chance to experience independent living in the closest normal way possible within a safe environment”*

## *LIFE and CSW – Let's work together*

The following charts outline the responsibilities of this unique relationship, focusing on five important areas:

### **Inquiries**

#### **We are committed to:**

- ❖ LIFE is available to provide information to you or a family who may be exploring ICOF. Call LIFE's office for information and guidance on how to proceed.

#### **We ask that:**

- ❖ You promote the ICOF option within your region.

### **Referrals**

#### **You can expect that:**

- ❖ LIFE has designed an informative process to guide interested parties through approval, acceptance and ongoing participation in ICOF. This is our *entrance process*. This process includes developing the support network, designing an ICOF budget, planning sessions, and reviewing the "functional" and "relationship" responsibilities of ICOF.
- ❖ LIFE has created a policy with respect to referrals (see Appendix A: Approval, Acceptance and Ongoing Participation).
- ❖ LIFE will meet with any individual and his/her family to review and discuss the ICOF entrance process. In this meeting the steps will be reviewed to ensure all involved are prepared for the journey ahead. (Appendix C).
- ❖ LIFE will work through the ICOF entrance process with the individual while they await funding approval.
- ❖ LIFE will help in preparing a budget based on the individual and his/her plans for the future. This budget, accompanying proposal and a request for LIFE administrative support will be submitted to you. The budget request is based on Budget Guidelines.

**We ask that:**

- ❖ You have an understanding of the ICOF Entrance and First Steps checklists as outlined in the entrance process. Although the LIFE team works through these pieces with each referral, it is important that the CSW be knowledgeable of the content and material covered.
- ❖ You familiarize yourself with LIFE policies.
- ❖ You meet with LIFE staff once an individual's ICOF budget is submitted. This is the time to discuss the budget, review the plan, re - confirm roles, and any other outstanding items.
- ❖ Your department approves the budget and a letter of approval be sent to the individual, and LIFE.

## ICOF Funding Approvals

**You can expect that:**

- ❖ A LIFE Resource Coordinator is assigned to the individual for ongoing support, guidance and resources, as well as overall monitoring.
- ❖ The Resource Coordinator will assist the individual and his/her support network to complete the ICOF First Steps Checklist (Appendix D). This checklist ensures any new employer responsibilities are complete, items such as payroll, Business Registration, etc.
- ❖ LIFE will provide each individual with *FSCA Vendor Request for Direct Deposit* form. The individual will forward the completed form to Manitoba Finance Accounts Payable.
- ❖ LIFE will assist individuals to contact EIA or CLdS for support accessing financial needs outside the person's budget when needed.
- ❖ LIFE will provide you with revised individual contact information for your INFAC system.

**We ask that:**

- ❖ You ensure the process for the direct deposit of the individual's ICOF funding is complete.
- ❖ You assist the Resource Coordinator for requests through CLdS or EIA.
- ❖ When you receive revised contact information, you update Family Services INFAC system.

## Reporting

### **You can expect that:**

- ❖ A Semi-Annual Report will be sent to you in May and November of each year. This report is prepared by LIFE, providing highlights with respect to each ICOF employer.
- ❖ You will receive written notice from LIFE if there is a change in Resource Coordinator.
- ❖ Should an incident or allegation of abuse or neglect occur, LIFE will ensure you receive an incident report within 24 hours of the incident, so that you can proceed with your investigation.
- ❖ LIFE has reviewed with each individual and his/her support network the VPA and reporting requirements with respect to abuse.
- ❖ LIFE will provide each individual with a template form, guidance and information on reporting incidents (Appendix E).
- ❖ LIFE is committed to clear communication.

### **We ask that:**

- ❖ You contact LIFE if you have any questions about the Semi-Annual Report.
- ❖ When there is a change in CSW that you provide written notice of this change to the individual receiving funding and LIFE.
- ❖ You acknowledge that you have received the incident report within the 24 hour period.
- ❖ You ensure that the LIFE team be copied on any correspondence related to individuals receiving ICOF funding to ensure clear and open communication.

## Finances and Requests

### **You can expect that:**

- ❖ LIFE will receive and monitor each individual's quarterly financial report.
- ❖ LIFE will request a holdback of funds when an individual has accumulated more than three months of funding. In order to ensure individual can meet their employer expenses, your department has approved this minimal accumulation. The LIFE Resource Coordinator will review the person's needs and assist in planning.
- ❖ If an individual requires an adjustment to his/her budget, additional funding or is in need of a crisis request, you will receive a request from LIFE which outlines the particulars associated with the request.

### **We ask that:**

- ❖ You will initiate a holdback of monthly funding as requested by LIFE to ensure the individual's funding falls within your department's ICOF guidelines.
- ❖ You acknowledge that the request was received, and follow up initiated.
- ❖ You copy LIFE on confirmation of funding requests, funding changes, or correspondence related to funding.

For additional information, please refer to the Family Services document

### **Procedural Guidelines for the Regional Delivery of In The Company of Friends**

- updated spring 2010.

*We look forward to connecting with you, and those within your region to explore the ICOF funding option for interested individuals and families.*

*Our intention is to provide resources within this unique partnership which are based on open communication, the spirit of community, and the value of relationships.*

# *Listing of Appendices*

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For the purposes of this document all appendices are copies of original documents.  
If you require original documents, please call the LIFE office.

## **Preamble: LIFE Policies for ICOF**

Over the years individuals receiving funding through ICOF have engaged in many celebrations and successes, some struggles and challenges. In response to a few common themes that have created barriers to success, the LIFE Board of Directors has developed two policies. The hope is to help provide guidance based on lessons learned.

LIFE does not create or write policies for those funded through ICOF. The whole funding model is based on the notion that each individual and his/her Support Network provide that level of self - managed leadership. It is up to each individual and those who care about him/her to decide if and when policies are necessary.

There are two areas only that require some focus and direction to ensure the integrity and essence of the ICOF funding model remain pure, strong, and relationship based. The following information is offered for your information. If you have questions about the policies listed below, please discuss them with LIFE staff during the entrance process.

## **Appendix A**

### **Approval, Acceptance and Ongoing Participation in ICOF**

#### **A. Preamble**

In the Company of Friends (ICOF) was established in the mid 90's to provide another program service option for men and women with disabilities in Manitoba. It is based on the principle that all participants are competent and able to self - direct their own lives with support. That support comes first and foremost from a Support Network comprised of family, friends and others *chosen* and/or approved by the participant. Healthy, caring, non - paid adult relationships are at the core of the functioning support network. The success of individuals in the ICOF funding model is based on a thorough and comprehensive understanding and acceptance of this philosophy and these principles.

#### **B. Purpose**

The ICOF model is not for everyone. It is a narrowly defined model that is based solely on the principles stated in the preamble. This Approval and Ongoing Participation Policy is intended to provide information to those individuals who are presently participants or those individuals who might be interested in exploring this funding model.

## **C. Definitions**

Employer: An adult man or woman with an intellectual disability who has been approved and funded to self-direct and manage his/her life as part of ICOF.

Support Network: These are non - paid people, including family members, who the participant has chosen (and/or approved) to provide assistance as they self - direct and manage day to day life. Having a functioning support network is a prerequisite for acceptance in ICOF.

Entrance Process: A lengthy process where the individual exploring the ICOF funding model and his/her family, friends, etc. work closely with a member of the LIFE Resource Team in two distinct steps. First the group will explore whether or not this funding model is appropriate and 'a fit' for the individual. Second, the group may choose to enter into a process of building a support network, providing training and information, and finally a budget is prepared for submission to the Department of Families.

Innovative LIFE Options Inc. (LIFE): The organization contracted by the Department of Families to provide support, resources, training and monitoring of employers to ensure that the principles of the ICOF model are upheld.

## **D. The Policy**

LIFE accepts applications from any individual who is defined within the Department of Families Supported Living Program definition. The individual and his/her family and friends enter into a formal Entrance Process. Often it is decided early in the process by either or both parties that the ICOF funding model will not be workable. This is an important decision making time for both the LIFE staff and the individual. The crucial and deciding factor in this process is the individual's (and his/her family and friends) understanding of the philosophy and principles of the ICOF model and the acceptance of expectations related to participating. At any time during the Entrance Process, either party (the individual or LIFE staff) can terminate activities.

At the conclusion of a successful Entrance Process and the approval by the Department of Families of the request for funding, the individual will be accepted into ICOF. (An Entrance Process is deemed successful when each step is completed and approved by both the individual and LIFE staff, funding has been approved and when a functioning support network is in place). A LIFE Resource Coordinator will be assigned to work with the ICOF employer and his/her support network to provide ongoing resources, training, information, counselling, and referral to other resources. In addition, the LIFE Staff will monitor the activities of the support network and the employer's budget on behalf of the Department of Families. Every effort will be made to assist ICOF employers in whatever way is needed to maintain healthy functioning support networks, focused on protecting the individual's rights to manage their own lives with support.

There may be times that an ICOF employer and/or his/her support network run into difficulties that severely inhibit the participant's ability to live his/her life. LIFE staff will make every effort possible to facilitate, support, and provide information, training, and mediation services to assist in any challenging or potentially vulnerable situations. If and when a situation becomes irreparably damaged, it may be in the best interest of the participant to pursue another service model. LIFE will assist in the facilitation of this transition.

#### **E. Appeal**

An individual or approved ICOF employer being asked to pursue other service options may submit a letter of appeal to the Executive Director of LIFE. This will be presented to a special Committee of the Board of Directors of LIFE to review and provide opinion and final judgment.

### **Service Provision by Family Members**

#### **A. Preamble**

Families are a crucial part of each ICOF employer who self - manages his/her own daily life as part of In the Company of Friends (ICOF). They provide the history, the consistency, and the unconditional love that only a loving family can provide. They are often the foundation of the support network that is the infrastructure that ensures each individual's support as he/she lives each day. As part of each ICOF employer's support network they assist in the hiring and supervision of direct paid staff. They provide advocacy as needed. The role of the family in ICOF is clear within this context.

#### **B. Purpose**

ICOF protects each individual's right to make individual choices in the selection of paid supports. It is critical that each ICOF employer is supported in his/her day to day life as a competent, independent adult. Hiring objective, external non - related service providers who have no conflict of interest or conflict of roles is integral to the ICOF philosophy.

Immediate family members are therefore excluded from the menu of options that are available for staffing positions. This policy outlines the terms relating to service provision by family members.

#### **C. Definitions**

Immediate Family Member: Parent, step - parent, child, spouse, partner, or sibling of ICOF employer.

Family Member: Anyone else who is related by blood, marriage, or adoption.

ICOF Employer: An individual who has been approved and funded to participate as a part of In the Company of Friends.

Support Network: The non - paid people, including family members, who the participant has chosen and/or approved to provide assistance, as they self - direct and manage day to day life. Having a functioning support network is a prerequisite for approval in ICOF.

Innovative LIFE Options Inc (LIFE): The organization contracted by the Department of Families to provide support, resources, training and monitoring of ICOF employers to ensure that the principles of the ICOF model are upheld.

#### **D. The Policy**

LIFE supports each ICOF employer in the contracting of service providers who assist in his/her daily living functions as independent, competent adults living in their chosen communities. Immediate family members may not be paid to provide these services as this is seen as a direct conflict of interest in both practice and theory. All family members are strongly encouraged to maintain an involvement in each individual's ICOF life as either a family member and/or more formal support network member. A family member (not immediate family) may be paid in the following circumstances:

- ❖ ICOF employer consents to this plan, LIFE Resource Coordinator is aware of the arrangement and the Resource Coordinator confirms the individual's consent.

It is understood that some families and ICOF employers may not agree with this policy. In those situations the LIFE Resource Coordinator will work with the Department of Families Community Service Worker to assist in whatever way possible to redirect the individual to another service option in the community of their choice.

# Appendix B

## REFERRAL FORM

Application for eligible individuals to participate in the program In the Company of Friends (ICOF)

Resources provided by Innovative LIFE Options (LIFE)

### PART 1 – REFERRED BY:

Name:	
Office/Agency:	
Complete Address:	
Telephone No:	E-mail:
Relation to Individual (if any):	Fax:

### PART 2 – INDIVIDUAL/PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name:	Sex:
DOB:	Age:
Complete Address:	Contact Person:
Current Living Situation:	Current daytime activity:
<b>Does the individual have a Community Services Worker or Social Services Staff assigned?</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

### Part 3 – FUNDING

This section identifies funds that the Department has previously committed to the individual:

Employment & Income Assistance	\$	Respite	\$
<b>Day Program</b>	<b>Basic \$</b>	Residential	\$
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX	<b>Special Rate \$</b>	Other (Admin, etc.)	\$

Submitted by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The Regional Office or Social Service Department should forward all application forms to:

**Innovative LIFE Options Inc.**  
 4-120 Maryland Street Winnipeg, MB R3G 1L1  
 Fax # 1-204-784-4816

## Appendix C

<b>ICOF Entrance Checklist</b> <b>(all steps with Individual and their Network)</b>	<b>LIFE Signature</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1. Referral Form submitted by CSW to LIFE		
2. Bring together initial support network - (Identify and Recruit)		
3. Review ICOF and LIFE information with individual and his/her support network		
4. Review Learn More about ICOF		
5. Provide ICOF Starter Kit to individual and support network; review checklist		
6. Review ICOF Acceptance Policy (see booklet Page 10-11-12)		
7. Review the Vulnerable Persons Act		
8. Review ICOF Protection Booklet, Incident Reporting procedure and provide Incident Reporting Template		
9. Design "My Expectations Statement" and Policy around abuse for employees.		
10. Planning Evening for Individual - PATH, POM or other celebration! Dream!		
11. Review Policy of Service Provision by Family Members (see page 12-13)		
12. Planning session for support network		
13. Complete ICOF Budget based on planning sessions. Include Start up Funding * Refer to FSCA Budget guidelines		
14. ICOF Budget Proposal, Covering Letter and LIFE Admin Letter submitted to the Department of Families		
15. Create a plan to support - Supported Decision Making		
16. Develop initial Staffing Profile & complete Employee Job Descriptions		
17. Have individual complete Release of Information & Photo Consent form if needed		
18. Provide and review the ICOF Guidebook		
19. Meeting between CSW and LIFE (Provide LIFE and the CSW booklet)		
20. Receive Letter of Approval		
21. Provide the Department of Families Form-Vendor Direct Deposit Form. Confirm receipt with the Department of Families.		
22. Request Letter of Confirmation for Housing Search Department of Families – as needed		
23. Entrance Process Completed! LIFE Coordinator Signature and Date. Forward all completed Documentation to LIFE Office		

## Appendix D

ICOF First Steps	Date Complete
<b>LIFE Resource Coordinator To:</b>	
1. Complete Letter of Introduction for CSW	
2. Complete INFACT Form and submit form to CSW	
3. Complete Employer Profile and submit to LIFE administration office for filing	
4. Confirm with CSW Direct Deposit is complete	
5. Offer Photo Consent Form for completion	
<b>Individual and Support Network To:</b>	
1. Open Bank Account – obtain Survivorship clause as needed	
2. Apply for Revenue Canada Business Number	
3. Apply for Workers Compensation Coverage	
4. Review Manitoba Employment Standards	
5. Set Up Payroll	
6. Design Process for ICOF Quarterly Report Submissions - Designate someone to do the accounting or better yet consider hiring an Accountant or Bookkeeper	
7. Design Job Descriptions and Hire staff	
8. Review Protection Booklet with ICOF staff and create guidelines	
9. Design Individualized Guidelines and Procedures for ICOF Staff - if needed	
10. Work with LIFE Resource Coordinator to complete application to the Department of Families for Pension and Benefit Funding for full time staff	
11. Discuss Succession Planning	

# Appendix E

## Incident Report - TEMPLATE

<b>NAME of INDIVIDUAL FUNDED THROUGH ICOF:</b> _____
<b>DATE</b> _____
<b>NAME(S) OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED:</b> 1) _____ 2) _____

**1. DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED.**

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

**2. DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE INCIDENT.**

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

**3. DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE INCIDENT.**

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

**4. FOLLOW UP: INCLUDE MEASURES TAKEN OR PLANNED TO PREVENT SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE.**

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

**SIGNATURE OF PERSON WRITING REPORT:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Is the Support Network Aware of this report?** Yes No

**Please submit this report to your LIFE Resource Coordinator as soon as possible. The LIFE Fax # (204) 784-4816 or connect with your Resource Coordinator for alternate forwarding information. Your Resource Coordinator will ensure the CSW receives the information within 24 hours.**

## **Where To Find Us?**

**Innovative LIFE Options Inc.  
4-120 Maryland Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3G 1L1**

**Phone: (204) 772-3557 Fax: (204) 784-4816**

**Toll Free Outside of Winnipeg 1-866-516-5445**

**Email: [info@icof-life.ca](mailto:info@icof-life.ca)**

**Website: [www.innovativelifeoptions.ca](http://www.innovativelifeoptions.ca)**

## **Other Publications:**

In the Company of Friends

Learn More about LIFE

ICOF Entrance Process and First Steps

ICOF Support Network Planning

ICOF Protection Book – A Guide to Reporting Abuse and Neglect

Thinking about Life after Graduation

*Thank you*

*We look forward to a positive partnership*