

# **Independent Living Skills and Resources for Transition-Age Youth**

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# Overview

- Centers for Independent Living (CILS)
- Services Offered through CILS
- Youth Transition and CILS

\*Please feel free to ask questions as we go

# Centers for Independent Living

The term "**center for independent living**" means a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of **independent living** services.

# Benefit of Centers for Independent Living

We're all over the United States!

<http://www.ilru.org/projects/cil-net/cil-center-and-association-directory>

# The Philosophy of Independent Living

MT Centers for Independent Living believe in the Independent Living Philosophy as a basic foundation from which we provide both consumer and community services.

Independent living is based on the value that people with disabilities have the right to control their own lives and that disability is a natural part of the human experience.

# IL Philosophy (continued)

## Key elements of this philosophy are:

- **Consumer control** – We believe that the consumer should set their own goals and take the lead in achieving them
- **Self-help and self-advocacy** – We believe the importance of educating ourselves, asserting our rights and taking action on our own behalf.
- **Peer support** – We believe we can learn from and support one another through the bond of shared experience.

# IL Philosophy (continued)

- **Inclusion** – We believe each person has unique ideas, talents and contributions which are to be valued. We believe in equal access and participation for all.
- **Cross-disability** – We recognize the importance of including ALL people, regardless of disability.
- **Diverse cultural background** – We recognize that disability transcends race, gender, ethnicity, religion, economics and sexual orientation.
- **Social change** – We focus on changing society vs. “fixing” the individual. This movement, is at its core, one of human and civil rights.

# IL Philosophy (continued)

- **Leadership development**- We instill in each other the skills and confidence needed to grow as leaders and assume leadership roles within the independent living movement and society at large.
- **Rights and responsibilities** –We believe that personal power and independence come not only from the free exercise of human and civil rights but also from assuming responsibility for our needs and owning the consequences of our actions.

# CIL Core Services

There are 5 Core Services that CILs are required to provide.

# Information & Referral

- Centers provide information and referral for persons with disabilities seeking to meet such needs as affordable & accessible housing, energy assistance, Americans with Disabilities Act information, assistive devices/equipment, employment and transportation.
- Centers also assist consumers in navigating the process of applying for such government benefits as Food Stamps, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

# Self-Advocacy

CILs are committed to helping consumers take responsibility and become active participants in their own lives!

- Centers assist consumers in developing the skills necessary to advocate for themselves and their needs.
- Needs can include: housing, education, health care, benefits, income, employment, accommodation, disclosure and social acceptance.

# Peer Support

CILs are committed to creating a mutually supportive network among persons with disabilities in our service areas.

- Peers are individuals living successfully with their disabilities who have indicated a willingness to share their experience in order to educate others.
- Peer Support can include one-on-one as well as small and even large group interactions.

# Skills Training

CILs provide services to persons with disabilities to help them gain the skills they need to succeed in an independent living situation.

- Skills are taught either on an individual basis or in a group setting. Classes vary between centers and can include “Living Well With a Disability”, Soft Skills Training, Healthy Relationships, Self-Determination and others.
- Skills taught can range from learning to apply for Social Security, budgeting, discovering how to acquire a piece of equipment through Medicaid, to learning to discuss their disability with employers and many more.

# Community Services

Beyond providing resources for individual empowerment, CILs also work to promote acceptance and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the wider community.

Services fall under two categories:

- Social Action
- Systems Change

# Social Action

CILs promote inclusion, opportunity and diversity for people with disabilities locally, statewide, nationally and worldwide.

Centers advocate and partner with schools, businesses and community organizations.

# Social Action (continued)

Centers educate on a variety of issues such as:

- Creating an environment for persons with disabilities that is more accessible in its
  - Physical or design features
  - Program and organizational policies
  - Public attitude of acceptance

# Systems Change

- CILs work in a non-partisan manner with government at all levels to educate officials on the realities of life for persons with disabilities.
- Centers help to design and advocate for legislation and policies that produce a framework within which persons with disabilities can achieve self-determination.
- Centers also work to assure that once such legislation and policies are in place, they are properly enforced and administered.

# Systems Change (continued)

Other examples of systems change include:

- Attend conferences or symposiums
- Participate on task forces or committees
- Write letters to the editor, editorials and being available to discuss issues with media members
- Testify at hearings or other public meetings
- Send out and respond to Action Alerts
- Follow up with disability rights legislation

# Self-Directed Personal Care Assistance

\*Not available at all centers\*

Self-Directed Personal Care Assistance allows Montanans with disabilities who qualify under Medicaid guidelines, or their representative, to hire, train and supervise the personal assistants working in their homes, allowing them to stay in their own homes and communities.

# Transition Services

Montana Centers for IL offer guidance to persons with disabilities as they move through each stage of life; examples of transition services offered by centers include:

- Helping persons under the threat of institutionalization stay in their homes and communities (nursing home diversion).
- Helping institutionalized persons return to their homes and communities (nursing home transition).
- Helping youth with disabilities move from K-12 education to post-secondary education and the working world, and independent living.

# Youth Transition

- Montana CILs are working within the state and nationally to stay up on Youth Transitions ideas and approaches.
  - APRIL Youth
  - NCIL Youth
  - Montana Youth Transitions
    - Regional Transition Groups
  - MYLF
  - Local Youth Activities
    - Youth in Motion
    - YODA
    - BASE

# Youth Transition

- Youth Transitions begin as soon as a disability is identified.

## Region IV Timeline for Supporting an Individual through Transition

“Transition is the passage from one stage of development to another. For young adults with disabilities this transition stage is critical to the rest of their lives. It requires preparation.”

-J. Cobb (modified)

- Apply for Early Intervention Services (Part C) 0-3 years at Family Outreach
- Obtain diagnosis for child

- \*\*\*If student was not part of early intervention services speak with AWARE or Family Outreach to **obtain DD eligibility to be on 0208 wait list. This can happen as early as 8 years' old.**

- Participate in the planning, development, and implementation of your child's IEP

- Teach functional skills when developmentally appropriate in school and at home. (Examples: sorting items, social skills, taking turns, cooking, doing laundry)

- Support academic skills and identify academic strengths

- Learn to use assistive technology if appropriate

- Encourage involvement in age appropriate recreational activities

- Introduce and encourage self-advocacy skills

\*\*\*Note: Diagnosis can take place at any age. Since waiting lists for waiver and waiver service can extend for years, it is best to apply for the waiver as soon as diagnosis occurs, whether that happens at 2 or 17.

- Sign up for Vocational Rehabilitation. Student will qualify for Pre-Employment Transition Services

- Meet with Developmental Disabilities Case Management to discuss what supports might be available, if applicable

- Find opportunities for community involvement. (examples: volunteer positions, job shadowing, or extracurricular activities)

- Continue practicing functional social skills-work toward independence (examples: grocery shopping, taking public transit, menu planning, budgeting money, hygiene)

- Teach responsibility and self-advocacy for health care (taking medications, talking with a doctor, making and keeping appointments) and should be continued into adulthood.

- Meet with IEP team to create transition goals (in Montana team must be in place by age 16)

- Make sure case management services are in place through Family Outreach, AWARE, HI Case Management, ORI, or the State of Montana and student is on the waiting list for services (if appropriate)

- Keep all appointments with Vocational Rehabilitation (or sign up if you haven't already)

- Identify school programs or workplaces that are a good match for the student's goals and abilities

- Encourage independence and reduce prompting wherever possible

- Continue practicing social and functional skills during the school day and at home

- Family should begin discussing where the student wants to live after high school. (some housing has long waitlists)

- If appropriate, Parents should look into alternative forms of guardianship (limited guardianship or limited power of attorney; guardianship should be a last option as it removes all rights of the person)

- Promote financial literacy (review credit cards, debt, budgeting, etc)

- Obtain State ID or Driver's License

- Explore adult medical providers

- Register to vote

- If student was eligible for Supplemental Security Income under the definition of disability for children, you must have the eligibility redetermined upon age 18. Contact your local office SSA to make this appointment

- Make sure student is on the waiting list for the Developmental Disabilities Waiver (0208) and that case management services are in place (if appropriate)

- Apply for SSA in month they turn 18 or as soon as possible if they have never received the benefit, if appropriate.

- Keep appointments with Vocational Rehabilitation. Create employment plan based on strengths and interests

- Teach responsibility and self-advocacy for health care (taking medications, talking with a doctor, making and keeping appointments)

- Encourage independence when practicing social and functional skills

- Contact outside agencies such as Montana Independent Living Project for transition support

- Prepare for interviews and complete applications for employment or colleges/training programs

18 mo – 5 yrs old

6-14 years old

14-15 years old

15-17 years old

18-21 years old

# How can CILs help?

One-stop shop for:

- Answering questions (any questions you may have, we'll try to help find the answers)
- Getting help to navigate the different systems
- Attend meetings (e.g., IEP, VR, SSA)
- Help with paperwork
- Connect students with social opportunities
- Help students find their voice through group and individual learning (i.e., Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination)

# How can CILs help? (continued)

- Skills training (e.g., learning to ride the bus, cook, budget, soft skills)
- Understanding how working impacts SSA benefits and how to report wages
- Finding volunteer opportunities in the community
- ADVOCACY (sometimes you need a second set of ears and voice to get the right answers)
- If you have an idea, contact your local center to see how we can partner together and help

# Major Questions CILS Hear About Transitions

- Can my child.....
  - Work
  - Live on their own
- Guardianships
- Alternatives to Guardianships
  - Power of Attorney (durable, medical)
  - Limited Guardianships
  - Payee

# Who should contact CILS?

- Teachers
  - IEP Advocacy
  - Questions about adaptive technology
  - Helping families navigate the transition process
  - Partner for Pre-Employment Transition Services (VR) to offer self-determination education, Life Skills education, employment, etc.

# Who should contact CILS? (continued)

- Service Providers (Job Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Case Managers, etc.)
  - May help with a variety of things
  - Serve as an advocate
  - Assist with paperwork
  - Walk through the steps to reach a goal
  - Help answer questions about the Americans with Disabilities Act
  - Connect individuals with social connections
  - And much more....tailored to the individual's needs

# Who should contact CILS? (continued)

- Youth
  - Learn about what youth programs your local center offers
  - Assist you with goals of employment, living on your own, other goals you want to work on independently
  - Invite us to your IEP to serve as an advocate

# Who should contact CILS? (continued)

- Parents/Family Members
  - Learn about what youth programs are available
  - Have center staff help you navigate the various systems and find out what adult services are important for your student
  - Engage center staff with your student to build independence (sometimes we learn better when it's not our parent)
  - Understanding how to help your student be independent while not taking away their independence
  - Paperwork! (SSA, SNAP, Medicaid, etc.)
- Anyone! If you have any questions related to disability, call us. If we don't know we'll do our best to figure it out.

# Questions

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