

The Office of Independent Living Services and Our Partners

Overview: The Office of Independent Living Services (Office) is a unit within the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation created to oversee the State's contracts with Colorado's Centers for Independent Living (CILs). The Office resulted from the passage and implementation of SB 16-093. The Office aims to

- Increase the visibility and understanding of the services delivered by Colorado CILs
- Develop partnerships among federal agencies; state agencies; advisory councils; community-based service networks; and, CILs
- Partner with the CILs to build service capacity
- Serve as the fiscal sponsor for the Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)
- Work collaboratively to develop and monitor the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL)

"Centers for Independent Living" are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private, nonprofit agencies that are designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living services. Each CIL is a non-profit grassroots organization authorized by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. CILs operate a wide variety of programs to address local concerns and priorities for people with disabilities. CILs promote the Independent Living philosophy (IL philosophy) and provide, at minimum, five core services. One of the core values of CILs is that people with disabilities need and want to control their own lives, including making the decisions that affect their lives. By serving individuals with disabilities, CILs promote independence, productivity, and leadership.

Structure: There are nine CILs in Colorado collectively and collaboratively serving all 64 counties. Each CIL has a board of directors - 51 percent of CIL Board members must be people with significant disabilities. Additionally, 51% of CIL staff and 50% of leadership roles have disabilities. The Office oversees the federal pass through and state contract funding to ensure CILs follow compliance with funding requirements. The Office conducts CIL State certification reviews to ensure compliance with federal rules, adherence to the IL philosophy and delivery of the five core services. CILs also work in partnership with the Colorado SILC. The Colorado SILC (www.coloradosilc.org) is a governor appointed board that is responsible for writing and monitoring the SPIL. The SPIL is a federally required plan with goals and objectives that assists in bringing federal funding to Colorado.

Funding: CILs can receive state and federal funding. Additionally, CILs must be certified at least every three years for continued funding. CILs currently receive over \$6 million in state general fund dollars and \$300,000 in federal funds generated through the SPIL. CILs can receive additional federal funds through grants awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living.

Services: Each CIL provides an array of Independent Living services for people with disabling conditions affecting the ability to live independently in the community including but not limited to

people with a physical disability, deaf or hard of hearing, blind or low vision, psychiatric disability, traumatic brain injury, or an intellectual or developmental disability. CIL's serve thousands of Coloradans with disabilities annually.

CILs are mandated to provide the following five core services:

- Information Referral
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Peer Mentoring
- Advocacy Services – individual and systems
- Transition Services
 - Working with individuals to explore opportunities for moving out of nursing homes and back into the community
 - Supporting youth with disabilities to reach identified goals for successfully transitioning from school to adult life in the community
 - Providing assistance to individuals who are at risk of entering into institutions so that individuals may remain in the community

CILs may also provide additional services, such as:

- Assistance with finding and maintaining stable, affordable, accessible, integrated housing
- Assistance with accessing assistive technology and adaptive equipment
- Mobility training
- Interpreter and reader services
- Personal assistance services
- Community resource guides and directories
- Transportation

List of the nine Colorado CILs

1. Atlantis Community Inc., www.atlantiscommunity.org
2. Center for Disabilities, <http://www.ilcpueblo.org/>
3. Center for Independence, <http://cfigj.org/>
4. Center for People with Disabilities, <http://www.cpwd-ilc.org>
5. Connections for Independent Living, <http://www.connectionsforindependentliving.org>
6. Disabled Resource Services, <http://www.disabledresourceservices.org>
7. North West Colorado Center for Independence, <http://www.nwcci.org/>
8. Southwest Center for Independence, <https://swindependence.org/>
9. The Independence Center, <http://www.theindependencecenter.org/>

Key Partners: CILs work with community partners to be inclusive, accessible and accommodating in the provision of services that promote self-determination and self-sufficiency, including:

- Workforce Centers
- DVR
- Local schools,

- Federal, state, county and municipal governments
- Post-secondary education and training centers
- Human service organizations
- Boards and councils
- Civic partnerships
- The business community
- Arcs, Community Center Boards, Area Agencies on Aging, adaptive sports programs, emergency assistance providers, housing authorities, transportation providers, healthcare and medical providers, Single Entry Points, and more.

Opportunities: The Office of Independent Living Services works to expand and increase community awareness of CIL services and reach more people with disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, increasing coordination with the entities and partners listed above.

For more information on CILs visit:

www.colorado.gov/dvr/independent-living

www.accil.net

www.coloradosilc.org

www.april-rural.org

www.ilru.org

www.ncil.org