

All about CIL FAQ



MIDWESTERN COLLABORATIVE

Designed and operated by individuals with disabilities, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) provide independent living services for people with disabilities.

Q. What does CIL stand for?

Centers for Independent Living

Q. What is Independent Living?

Independent living can be considered a movement, a philosophy, or specific programs.

Q. What are the basic views of independent living philosophy on which CILs operate?

1. Consumer Control – decision-making, service delivery, management, and establishment of the policy and direction of the center. Individuals with disabilities must comprise at least 51% of the governing board and staff.
2. Cross-Disability – equal access to services regardless of type of disability or age.
3. Self-Help & Self-Advocacy – empowering others to achieve their goals; not “do for”.
4. Peer Role Models – foundation on which services are provided.

Q. Why are CILs important?

CILs work to support community living and independence for people with disabilities across the nation based on the belief that all people can live with dignity, make their own choices and participate fully in society.

Q. What are the Core Services offered by all CILs?

CILs provide the following core services:

1. Information and referral
2. Independent living skills training,
3. Peer counseling,
4. Individual and systems advocacy and
5. Transition services.

Q. How do I contact my local CIL and/or find my state CIL plan?

Each state establishes a Designated State Unit to oversee fiscal and programmatic aspects of CILs, often it is within the State office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. A list of Centers for Independent Living in all U.S. states and territories can be found at <https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/centers-independent-living>

Q. Is there only one CIL office in the state?

Each state designates a Designated State Unit (DSU) to oversee fiscal and programmatic aspects, however, each state has a number of CIL offices.

Q. What age can a person start working with a CIL?

CILs work with individuals with disabilities throughout a person's lifespan.

Q. How can a student access support from CILs?

There are many ways. Many CILs provide services to assist youth and young adults with disabilities in transitioning from school to post-secondary education, employment, and independent living. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) added a requirement for all CILs to assist youth with significant disabilities who have completed their secondary education.

Q. How does someone apply for services through a CIL?

Contact your local CILs to inquire about the services they prioritize.

Q. What is the cost of services and support through CILs?

Costs are minimal to no cost, related to services and support provided through CILs.

Q. Where can I learn more about CILs and the independent living movement?

National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) <https://ncil.org/>

Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) <https://www.ilru.org/>



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