



Centers for Independent Living

What is a Center for Independent Living?

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are consumer-controlled, community-based, nonresidential, nonprofit grassroots agencies that provide an array of independent living services to people of any age with any disability. Centers are designed and operated by individuals with disabilities within a local area to help people live well at home and their communities with access to needed supports and services.ⁱ There are 10 state-certified CILs in Colorado that are required to perform five federally mandated core services:

- Information and referral
- Individual and systems advocacy
- Independent living skills training
- Peer mentorship
- Transition servicesⁱⁱ

Additional services may also include supportive counseling, assistance with obtaining affordable, accessible and integrated housing, mobility training, accessing interpreter and reader services, accessing transportation, finding physical rehabilitation, benefits counseling, nursing home to community transitions and group social and recreational services.ⁱⁱⁱ

State law requires each CIL to maintain an individual consumer service record. The record must include the consumer's choice of services, an individualized independent living plan or a written waiver of the plan, goals and progress made to achieve them.^{iv}

CILs were established under Title VII of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and every state has them.^v Previously, the Department of Education set the rules for CILs, including the requirement that every state has a Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC). However, under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014, rulemaking authority for CILs was transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services' Administration for Community Living (ACL). This transfer aligns with the ACL's mission of maximizing the independence, well-being and health of individuals with disabilities across the lifespan and their families and caregivers.^{vi} The ACL is also funding the No Wrong Door Planning Grant.



The Statewide Independent Living Council

The primary function of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is to develop and implement a three-year State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) that is currently submitted to the Secretary of Education, until the transfer of rulemaking authority to the ACL is complete. States must submit a SPIL to receive federal funding.

Members to the SILC are appointed by the governor. They must be a diverse group and the majority of members are people with disabilities from throughout the state. Besides developing and monitoring the SPIL, the SILC also functions to partner with the state's 10 CILs to provide training and technical assistance, to advocate for additional resources when necessary and to work together on common goals. The SILC also promotes systemic reform to remove barriers to independent living.^{vii}

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

In Colorado, the Department of Human Services' Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) serves as the designated state entity as the flow-through agent for independent living funding. DVR is responsible for distributing funds to the CILs and eligible vendors. DVR also monitors compliance with federal and state independent living rules, recertifies CILs and provides support to the SILC.^{viii}

Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind Program

The Independent Living Services for Older Individuals Who Are Blind (OIB) Program conducts activities to improve or expand services to individuals who are losing their eyesight or who are blind. Individuals 55 years of age or older with a visual impairment that makes obtaining competitive employment extremely difficult but have feasible independent living goals qualify for the program.^{ix} Extensive support is given to access resources and services to maintain their independence. Seven of the state's CILs and one vendor are currently under contract to provide OIB services in Colorado.

How are CILs funded?

At the federal level, the Office of Management and Budget determines the overall level of funding for independent living. The Department of Education (DOE) is the top level of administration for independent living. The DOE's Rehabilitation Services Administration oversees independent living programs and grants Title VII, Part C funds to CILs while directly monitoring the centers. They also grant Title VII, Part B independent living funds and OIB funds to DVR. DVR proceeds to distribute Part B funds to the CILs along with designated State General Fund revenue.^x

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The SPIL provides direction on the distribution of State General and federal Part B funds to the 10 CILs. The State General Funds are divided equally among the 10 CILs and the Part B funds are divided via an allocation formula based on a five-tier system developed to offset the disparities in Part C and local funding. According to the SPIL, General Fund allocations for each Center are approximately \$278,460.^{xi}

In addition to federal and state funding, each CIL must receive revenue from local sources, including private foundations, contributions from businesses and individuals, fees-for-service, United Way, local government and fundraising activities. These sources demonstrate funding diversity for the CIL and serve as the community's endorsement that the CIL is a vital and valuable resource.^{xii}

ⁱ 34.B.2.III CFR (364)(A)(4)(b)

ⁱⁱ Colorado Office of Community Access & Independence, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation website, http://www.dvrcolorado.com/ind_living_centers.php. Website has not been updated to indicate that transition services are a core service.

ⁱⁱⁱ 34.B.III CFR (364)(A)(4)(b)(1-20)

^{iv} 26-8.1-104, C.R.S.

^v Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council website, <http://coloradosilc.org/about-us/>

^{vi} Administration for Community Living website, http://www.acl.gov/NewsRoom/NewsInfo/2014/2014_09_29.aspx

^{vii} Colorado SILC website

^{viii} IL flow chart from SILC website, <http://coloradosilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/IL-flow-chart.pdf>

^{ix} 34.B.III CFR (367)(A)(1,5)

^x IL flow chart from SILC website

^{xi} Colorado State Plan for Independent Living, Sec. 1.3B(2)

^{xii} As per Nancy Jackson of Disabled Resource Services

