



Research and Training Center on Measurement and Interdependence in Community Living

FACT SHEET

Which Center for Independent Living Services Improve Community Participation?



Background

The federal government funds centers for independent living (CILs) to provide four core services for people with disabilities: peer counseling, information and referral, independent living (IL) skills training, and advocacy.

However, there has been little or no empirical evidence that shows how center services affect the community participation of their consumers.

Purpose

In this study, we surveyed national consumer organizations and consumers with disabilities to identify exemplary practices for increasing community participation of people with disabilities.

The study also identifies characteristics of CILs that emphasize consumer participation in the community and CILs that do not.

CIL Participation Services Survey

The study uses a survey to construct a measure of CIL services and how they are delivered (“process dimensions”).

We are interested in how CIL staff members and board members view the services offered by their organization and their ability to help consumers more fully participate in the community. They rank the importance of the services and their satisfaction with them.

The next phase of the project will survey consumers for their perspectives to refine the measurement tool.

(over)

The Bottom Line

This project develops and tests a measurement tool for community participation. This tool will provide centers for independent living (CILs), which serve people with disabilities, with a scientific method for measuring the effectiveness of their services.

With the information provided by this new tool, CILs may enhance their services, modify staff training, and tailor programs to help their consumers participate more fully in the community.

Consumer Empowered Team

These consumers and independent living experts are helping shape our research procedures and products.

- **Jason Beloungy**, Independent Living Resources, La Crosse, WI
- **Peggy Cosner** and **Tom Elmore**, Heart of Central Texas ILC, Belton
- **Ann Ford**, Illinois Network for Centers for Independent Living, Springfield
- **Rahnee Patrick**, Access Living Chicago
- **Virginia Harris** and **Julie Harrell**, BAIN, Inc. for Center for Independent Living, Bainbridge, GA
- **Roger Frischenmeyer**, Prairie Independent Living Resource Center, Hutchinson, KS

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CIL Participation Services Survey
Final Count

	Number of CILs Surveyed	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Received	Number of Staff Responses	Number of Board Member Responses
NCIL Members	28	648	248	191	57
APRIL Members	36	693	279	229	50
Total	64	1341	527	420	107

Top 10 Most Important CIL Services

420 staff members at 61 CILs across the country identified these services as most important.

Independent living (IL) philosophy was heavily reflected in the Importance results, and how the CIL services were delivered (process dimensions) is as important as which services a CIL offers to increase community participation of their consumers.

1. Provides services in a way that empowers consumers to make their own choices.
2. Advises consumers about benefits they are eligible for (e.g., Medicaid, Social Security, housing).
3. Provides services in a way that encourages consumers to advocate for their own rights.
4. Works for the rights of people with all types of disabilities/chronic health

- concerns (e.g., sensory, mental health).
5. Uses partnerships with other agencies in the community to help consumers meet IL needs (e.g., transportation providers, housing authority).
6. Provides services to help integrate consumers into the community once emancipated from nursing homes (e.g., peer support, IL skills training).
7. Helps people with disabilities find the types and amounts of personal assistance service they need.
8. Is sensitive to the readiness and confidence level of new consumers when planning services.
9. Increases the community's sensitivity concerning attitudes about people with disabilities.
10. Encourages community partners to provide services that are consistent with IL philosophy (e.g., consumer choice and empowerment).



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Anticipated Products

We anticipate this research project will potentially increase community participation of consumers who receive CIL services by developing new knowledge about differences between CIL service dimensions and the effects those dimensions have on

community participation outcomes among consumers.

This new knowledge may then be used by CILs to change their service dimensions, provide staff training, and tailor programs to the specific needs of consumer subgroups.