



Project Fact Sheet:
Center for Independent Living Services and Their Effect on Community Participation: Measuring CIL Services

Our mission:
 To increase and enhance the interdependence and full participation in the community of people with disabilities through the use of scientifically sound, theoretically driven sustainable interventions and measures that lead to effective community living solutions and policy change.

Background

The federal government funds centers for independent living (CILs) to provide the four core services of peer counseling, information and referral, independent living skills training, and advocacy.

Centers have flexibility in how they deliver and emphasize services. More recently, some centers have been addressing deinstitutionalization as a fifth core service.

To date, there is little or no empirical evidence that shows how center services affect the community participation of their consumers.

Purpose

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

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

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How This Research Will Improve Community Participation for People with Disabilities

This project develops and tests a measurement tool for community participation. That tool provides CILs with a scientific method for measuring the effectiveness of their services to help consumers more fully participate in the community.

With the information provided by this new technology, CILs may enhance their services, modify staff training, and tailor programs to more fully increase community participation of their consumers.

CIL Participation Services Survey
(Preliminary Results as of June 22, 2009)

	Number of CILs Surveyed	Number of Surveys Sent	Number of Surveys Received	Number of Staff Responses	Number of Board Member Responses
NCIL Members	33	743	192	153	39
APRIL Members	38	941	232	192	40
Total	71	1684	424	345	79



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Translating
research into
enhanced
community
participation

CIL Participation Services Survey

The study uses a survey to construct a measure of CIL service delivery dimensions. (See chart on front for information on the survey process.)

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

CIL board members are also being surveyed about the importance of and their satisfaction with services provided.

Consumer Empowered Team

Consumers and independent living experts are involved in this investigation to help shape our research procedures and products. (See the box at right.)

Consumer Empowered Team Members

- **Jason Beloungy**, Independent Living Resources, La Crosse, WI
- **Michael H. Blatchford**, ASSIST! to Independence, Tuba City, AZ
- **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 (PILR), Hutchinson, KS

What We've Learned So Far

We conducted a *pilot test* of the survey in March 2009, with responses from 40 staff members at three CILs across the country.

Most Important CIL Services

1. Provides peer support that helps consumers network with other community partners.
2. Is sensitive to the readiness and confidence level of new consumers when planning services.
3. Promotes a positive portrayal of one's disability (e.g., disability pride).
4. Helps consumers find housing that facilitates community participation (e.g., near public transportation).
5. Makes referrals to other disability support service providers (e.g., Veterans Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Paralyzed Veterans of America).

Less Important CIL Services

1. Provides information to consumers about state-of-the-art assistive technology.
2. Provides accessible transportation services (e.g., voucher program, para transit, etc.).
3. Teaches consumers how to use social networking websites (e.g., Facebook, MySpace).
4. Maintains an assistive technology loan program.
5. Provides mental health counseling services.

Project Investigators

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