

Transforming Communities: The Economic and Quality of Life Impact of CILs

Background: Typical funding for not-for-profit centers for independent living programs and services comes through grants from a variety of sources, including, in part, from the U.S. Rehabilitation Services Administration. The State Independent Living Council of Kansas in its educational efforts with state and federal officials to expand availability of independent living services and the resources needed to support centers in the delivery of those services has relied on 704 reports, state budget documents, and center staff and consumer testimony. To further impact advocacy efforts, center staff, board members, and consumers have suggested the provision of center for independent living key impacts in their communities.

Purpose and anticipated benefits: By creating a process to measure and document the ways centers for independent living make lasting impressions and impacts on their communities and their consumers, centers can use this information for the advocacy and funding efforts.



Who: University of Kansas researchers under the direction of Martha Hodgesmith, J.D. (as viewed in photograph to left), surveyed 135 center for independent living staff and 200 personal care assistants working for two representative centers — Prairie Independent Living Resource Center and Southeast Kansas Independent Living. Key information gathered included hours worked per week, hourly wages, health insurance benefits, salary contribution to household income, and vendor type and location analysis over a one-year period.

When: 2005

Method: Key information gathered included hours worked per week, hourly wages, health insurance benefits, salary contribution to household income, and vendor type and location analysis over a one-year period.

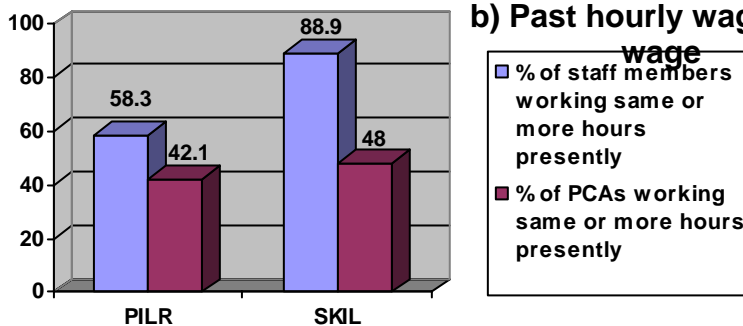
Results: These two centers impacted more than 507 local businesses through their purchases of goods, building space, and services. As for center monies spent in the local community, for example, Southeast Kansas Independent Living (SKIL) in Parsons spent 21.4% of its budget with 382 local vendors; 4.1% was spent with 85 regional vendors and 15.6% with 59 local vendors affiliated with national companies. Prairie Independent Living Resource Center (PILR) in Hutchinson spent 54% of its budget with 125 local vendors; 8% was spent with 22 regional vendors, and 3% with 20 local vendors affiliated with national companies.

Center payrolls also impacted the local economy through their payrolls — 7% of SKIL (Parsons) 2004 payroll (center staff and personal care assistants for consumers) was spent in federal and state income taxes; 14% of the total payroll was spent in federal and state income taxes, workers compensation insurance, and unemployment insurance. And, 13% of the payroll for center staff (who get paid insurance through the center) was spent on health insurance.

AT PILR, 7% again was the amount spent of the total payroll — in 2005 — for center staff and personal care assistants for consumers in federal and state income taxes; 9% of the total payroll was spent in federal and state income taxes, workers compensation insurance, and unemployment insurance. Twenty-two percent of the payroll went to health insurance for the center staff who get paid insurance through the center. Of the centers' employees, 78% reported that their salary contributed more than 50% of their household income.

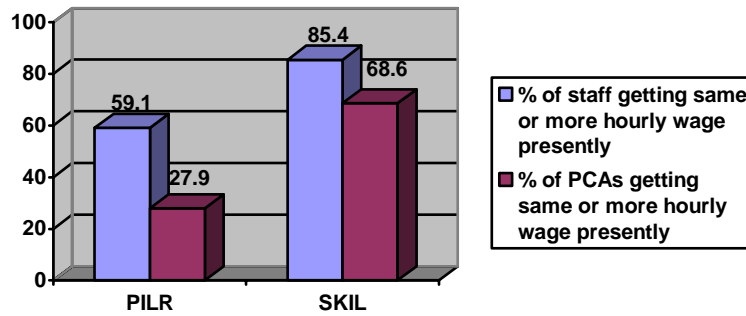
a) Average hours worked at last job versus average working hours presently at CIL

| | <i>PILR</i> | <i>SKIL</i> |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| % of CIL staff members working same or more hours (average) presently | 58.3% | 88.9% |
| % of CIL personal care assistants working same or more hours (average) presently | 42.1% | 48% |



b) Past hourly wage versus present hourly wage

| | <i>PILR</i> | <i>SKIL</i> |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| % of CIL staff members getting same or more hourly wage presently | 59.1% | 85.4% |
| % of CIL personal care assistants getting same or more hourly wage presently | 27.9% | 68.4% |



c) Past health insurance coverage versus present health insurance coverage

| | <i>PILR</i> | <i>SKIL</i> |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| % of CIL staff members who are on same or better health insurance benefits | 50% | 61.5% |
| % of CIL personal care assistants who are on same or better health insurance benefits | 84.1% | 78.4% |

Conclusion: Kansas CILs generate significant local economy impact. They create and retain job opportunities for citizens, provide wages, benefits, and taxes to support families and communities, in addition to purchasing goods, services, and property.

Project output: Centers for independent living can use this study's survey instrument to replicate an impact assessment study in their area similarly to business and community organizations that justify support needs through reporting data. Hodgesmith has presented these findings at the 2005 Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living conference and worked with the Kansas statewide organization of centers for independent living to ensure funding (for example, March 9, 2006 in Kansas Legislature).