

TESTIMONY OF EILEEN M. HEALY
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE 3/3/21
INCREASE, DON'T CUT, FUNDING FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS

My name is Eileen Healy. I live in Woodbury. I am the President of the CT Association of Centers for Independent Living and the Executive Director of Independence Northwest, one of CT's five independent living centers. Thank you for your on-going support of the Independent Living Centers (ILCs) and ask that you restore the Governor's proposed cut of \$61,000. Furthermore, I am asking you to adequately fund the ILCs at a base level of \$550K each.

The ILCs currently receive \$312,972 in state funding which funds all 5 ILCs - **only \$62,594 per ILC***. This level of funding is the result of many years of funding cuts. The funding cuts have already forced layoffs and limits on services, including waiting lists up to 12 months. The centers have cut back on the towns we serve, laid-off staff and reduced salaries as well.

In 2020's COVID-19 pandemic, the ILCs experienced a 51% increase in requests for services, and we anticipate further increases in 2021 and beyond. The **non-residential** ILCs provide essential services for people with all types of disabilities and of all ages. We are qualified people with disabilities providing assistance for other people with disabilities. We are unique because we have life experiences to share and use those experiences to provide support and services. We assist people to obtain access to transportation, housing, education, employment, as well as many other activities that result in community-based independent living and self-sufficiency. State Independent Living dollars ensure that our services are free and that the ILCs serve the entire state, reducing yet another barrier to achieving independent living. The ILCs are the place where people with disabilities go when they can't afford or are found ineligible other programs, or their needs aren't addressed.

The Governor appointed State Independent Living Council commissioned a US Census and economic data-driven funding analysis developed by the Indiana Business Research Center. For the ILCs to adequately serve the disabled residents of the State of CT, the ILCs should be funded at \$5.5M. While that amount may be currently unrealistic, it is an amount to strive towards. During the pandemic, when we couldn't enter a nursing facility, the ILCs transitioned 93 people out of nursing facilities into the community, saving the state more than \$6M, and more importantly, **saving lives** and improving the quality of life for those individuals. Additionally, the ILCs helped hundreds avoid costly institutional placement. However, none of those savings are ever directed to the ILCs. Please consider that CT provides the lowest amount of state funding to its ILCs compared to our adjacent states:

New York - \$13,360,999 (for 40 ILCs)
Massachusetts - \$7,146,117 (for 10 ILCs)

Rhode Island - \$302,560 (for one ILC)
Connecticut - \$312,972 (for 5 ILCs)

I urge you to fund the ILCs at **\$550K each**. Thank you for your time, attention and consideration.

Eileen M. Healy
Woodbury, CT

*In addition, the ILCs each receive state funding of \$60K that is dedicated solely to deaf services.



Fund the 5 ILCs at \$550K each

Connecticut's 5 Independent Living Centers (ILCs) help people of all ages, with all types of disabilities, live independently in the community.

A 2016 report conducted by the Indiana Business Research Center concluded that \$5.5M is the true cost to fully fund CT's ILCs - permitting them to meet the needs in the state & identified a minimum base level of state funding of \$550K per ILC. To access the report:

cacil.net/il-funding-formula

The ILCs are currently receiving \$312,972 in state funding which funds all 5 ILCs. This level of funding is the result of many years of funding cuts.

CT provides the lowest amount of state funding to its ILCs compared to our adjacent states.

Funding Per ILC/Year:

Massachusetts - \$714,612
 New York - \$334,025
 Rhode Island - \$302,560
 Connecticut - \$62,594

In 2020, due to COVID-19, the ILCs had a 51% increase in requests for services & we anticipate further increases in 2021.

ILCs Save the State Money

In FY 19-20, the ILCs transitioned 93 people out of nursing facilities, **saving the state more than \$6M** & saving lives.

The ILCs helped hundreds avoid costly institutions.

Employment services help people get and keep jobs.

CT Association of Centers for Independent Living www.cacil.net

What are the Independent Living Centers?

ILCs are non-residential organizations that empower people with disabilities through information, counseling and support services:

- Develop lifelong independent living skills;
- Find and maintain housing in their community;
- Develop job readiness skills and accessing employment;
- Transition out of nursing facilities through Money Follows the Person (MFP) and other ILC programs;
- Gain access to services that prevent the need for placement in a nursing facility;
- Connect to appropriate technology to support independent living;
- Access health care & community supports, recreation, transportation and other resources, and services that promote independence;
- Get benefits counseling;
- Advocate for themselves and others.

Access Independence
 80 Ferry Blvd; Stratford

Center for Disability Rights
 369 Highland Street; West Haven

Disabilities Network of Eastern CT
 19 Ohio Avenue; Norwich

Independence Northwest
 1183 New Haven Road; Naugatuck

Independence Unlimited
 151 New Park Avenue; Hartford