

How do we start a CIL?

The way most Centers for Independent Living are created is through the efforts of local people with disabilities, their family members, friends, and other interested persons. As these people become organized, they can begin to assess the level of local interest and support for the establishment of a Center for Independent Living. Getting started involves several actions:

- Begin providing support services without funds by involving people with disabilities as peer counselors and role models and using other volunteers.
- Begin to gather information on resources and share the information.
- Approach local governments, businesses, and foundations to assess the availability of funding and support.
- Establish a board of directors, the majority of whom are people with disabilities and establish bylaws.
- Apply for nonprofit status and incorporate so funds can be utilized.
- Contact state and local legislators regarding the need for a CIL.
- Be prepared to act should new state or federal funds be allocated.

What is the History of the Independent Living Movement?

The Independent Living movement as we know it began in the 1960's, as people with disabilities asserted their right to full inclusion into the mainstream of American society. A group of people with disabilities, including the late Ed Roberts and Judy Heumann (Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education under the Clinton Administration), founded the first Center for Independent Living (CIL) in Berkeley, California.

Through the efforts of independent living advocates, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 included funds for independent living services. Amendments in 1978 added funds for Centers for Independent Living (CILs). The Endependence (end dependence!) Center in Norfolk, which opened in 1981, was the first Virginia CIL. In Virginia, there are now 16 Centers for Independent Living, and 2 satellite Centers for Independent Living. Virginia CILs receive a combination of federal, state, and local funds.

For More Information on Virginia CILs:

Department of Rehabilitative Services
Independent Living Office
8004 Franklin Farms Drive, P. O. Box K-300
Richmond, Virginia 23288-0300
(804) 662-7078 VOICE
(804) 662-7122 FAX
(800) 552-5019 Toll Free

To see complete CIL listing: www.vadrs.org/cbs/cils.htm



Centers for Independent Living In Virginia

How to Get Started

An overview on starting a Center for Independent Living in your community

Centers for Independent Living

What is a CIL?

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) aren't places where people live. Instead, they are centers of action and coalition. CILs work to empower people to take charge of their own lives and lifestyles. CILs are designed and operated by people with disabilities. A Center for Independent Living provides services which promote the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of people with disabilities. CILs work with individuals as well as with the community to remove barriers to independence.

In Virginia, most CILs serve a planning district comprised of several counties. Since funding is limited, four Planning Districts in the Commonwealth are not yet served by a CIL, although CILs do provide outreach to those areas.

What Services do CILs provide?

CILs provide the following core services:

- Advocacy
- Peer Counseling
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Information and Referral

CILs also provide services to respond to local issues, such as:

- Housing and community living options
- Personal Assistance Services
- Access to employment opportunities
- Services responding to the needs of specific consumer groups such as persons who are deaf and hard of hearing, persons who are blind, persons who have head injuries.

What Happens when funds do become available?

The Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services is the agent through which State and some Federal funds are granted to CILs.

The Virginia General Assembly determines how state dollars are allocated for continuation funding and determines when funds for new Centers for Independent Living will be awarded.

A "Request for Proposals" is then issued by the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS), advertised in newspapers and mailing lists. Groups submit proposals for the establishment of a CIL, which are reviewed and funded based on adherence to the guidelines.

