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Independent Living Centers

Federal Fiscal Year 19 Activities Report to House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means
1/18/21

Ten Independent Living Centers (ILCs) receive state funding through appropriation 4120-0200. In Federal Fiscal Year 19 (FFY19) ILCs continued their important work in Massachusetts in assisting people with disabilities to maximize their independence and self-determination in all of life's activities. This includes a focus on helping people to move from institutions into the community, and to set and attain personal goals related to independence and self-sufficiency. As consumer-directed organizations, this work is done through a wide range of services which are based on a peer role modeling approach.

Federal law dictates the composition and activities of ILCs, and requires all ILCs to provide five "core services," which include peer counseling, skills training, information and referral, advocacy, and transition services. Many ILCs provide other services, including Personal Care Attendant (PCA) services under MassHealth, Transition to Adulthood services, Transitional Internship Programs, and Options Counseling. Some ILCs provide Long Term Services and Support Coordination under the MassHealth OneCare program, and others are members of Community Partner consortia under the auspices of the MassHealth payment reform initiative.

The ILCs are core partners of the eleven Aging and Disability Resource Consortia. Through this model, they work closely with their local Aging Service Access Points as well as other community providers to provide access to services for people with disabilities and elders through a "No Wrong Door" approach, creating a coordinated system of information and access to community based long term services and supports, as well as coordinating efforts to address local community needs.

The core Independent Living services are:

Peer Counseling – the opportunity to learn from the experience of other people with disabilities who are leading productive and meaningful lives in their communities. Areas addressed through peer counseling typically include: personal growth, problem solving, disclosure, socializing or other issues faced specifically by persons with disabilities.

Skills Training – the acquisition of skills needed for living independently, such as how to find housing, manage Personal Care Attendant services, budgeting, self-advocacy or managing entitlements or benefits.

Information and Referral – providing information and referrals related to disability such as where to look for accessible housing, adaptive equipment, medical providers, legal assistance and a large number of other programs and resources.

Advocacy – helping persons with disabilities to know and assert their rights with, for example, the health care system, landlords, accessing financial benefits, and in the community in general.

Transition services – This core service for ILCs was established under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act in December 2015. Transition services include:

1. Assisting individuals with disabilities to transition from institutions to the community
2. Assisting individuals who are at risk of entering institutions so that they may remain in the community
3. Facilitating the transition of youth with disabilities from special education to postsecondary life

Information on the services and achievements of the Independent Living Centers in federal FY19 (FFY19) is provided below. This information is based on reports filed by the ILCs for the federal fiscal year (10/1/18 – 9/30/19), the last 12-month period of ILC performance available.

FFY19 Independent Living Center activity

Approximately 32,233 consumers requested and received services from the ILCs in FFY19. The specific services requested and received were:

Services	Consumers Requesting Services	Consumers Receiving Services
Advocacy/Legal Services	2,167	2,152
Assistive Technology	666	463
Communication Services	90	46
Family Services	4	4
Housing, Home Modifications	611	608
Independent Living Skills Training	9,767	9,709
Information and Referral	15,154	15,051
Mobility Training	6	6
Peer Counseling Services	961	955
Personal Assistance Services	12,980	12,831
Recreational Services	14	14
Transportation Services	173	171
Youth Transition Services	1,239	1,229
Vocational Services	100	29
Other – Service Coordination, Options Counseling, etc.	9,051	8,978

Assisting individuals to transition from institutions to the community is an integral element of the ILCs' mission. Of the 660 consumers who set the goal of relocating from a nursing home or institution to community-based living, 226 achieved their goal and 286 are in progress. Not all individuals achieve this goal, and some consumers may decide not to move to the community or pass away before they are able to move to the community.

The Independent Living Centers assist individuals with identifying and working towards other personal goals, which are identified in their Independent Living Plan. The types of goals and achievements during FFY19 are described below. Many goals take time to achieve, so consumers may still be working on their goals at the end of the year. Consumers may abandon or change goals as well, so they are not counted as either 'achieved' or 'in progress'.

Significant Life Area	Goals Set	Goals Achieved	In Progress
Self-Advocacy/Self-Empowerment	1,580	420	1,147
Communication	321	87	213
Mobility/Transportation	994	332	537
Community-Based Living	1,169	1,194	1,178
Educational	1,278	202	410
Vocational	973	351	521
Self-care	16,134	9,110	14,661
Information Access/Technology	646	190	420
Personal Resource Management	1,456	477	844
Community/Social Participation	1,982	486	1,282

The ten Independent Living Centers continue to assist people with disabilities achieve independence and self-determination in their lives and communities. Their work includes short-term help with accessing community resources, longer-term skills training and peer counseling to help people develop the skills to achieve their goals, and advocacy at the individual and community level to ensure people with disabilities have equal access to community resources. Their work allows individuals of all ages, with any disability, to achieve greater independence.