

# Independent Living Centers

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Wisconsin Coalition for Advocacy

## Introduction

In keeping with the national Independent Living movement that began in the 1970's, Wisconsin's eight regional Independent Living Centers (ILC's) promote the rights of people with disabilities to establish and maintain integrated lives in the community. **The Independent Living philosophy is based on the fundamental belief that important decisions in an individual's life must be made by the person, not by a medical or rehabilitation professional.** Core principles of the philosophy include consumer control, peer support, self-help, and self determination. In keeping with that philosophy, ILC's are governed and operated by a board, staff and volunteers primarily composed of people with disabilities.

Each ILC is a not-for-profit community based, non-residential organization serving persons of any age with any disabilities. Centers are located in Green Bay, LaCrosse, Madison, Menomonie, Milwaukee, Racine, Stevens Point, and Superior. Several of the Centers have branch offices in other cities as well. Each center belongs to the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers (WCILC), which is organized to promote systems change, increase awareness of independent living, and support the activities of the centers. (*See end of chapter.*)

ILCs are authorized under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Rehabilitation Act became Title IV of the Workforce Investment Partnership Act when it was reauthorized in 1998. The State agency responsible for overseeing the program is the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services, Office for Persons with Physical Disabilities. The Centers are funded through a mix of federal and state funds. The three federally funded Centers are in Milwaukee, Madison, and Menomonie. There is also state legislation that established base funding for all eight Centers.

## Eligibility for Services

There are no strict eligibility guidelines in the law for this program. Services may be provided to any individual with a severe disability, defined in the Rehabilitation Act as a person with a severe mental or physical impairment:

- which seriously limits one or more functional capacities such as self-care, mobility, communication, or work skills, and;
- whose ability to function in the family, community, or workplace is substantially limited.

### The Independent living philosophy

### ILC locations

The Rehabilitation Act  
PL 105-220

Sec. 46.96, Wis.Stats.

Most ILCs interpret these criteria flexibly and provide services to persons of any disability as self disclosed. Few people with disabilities are turned away because they are “not disabled enough.”

## Services Provided

**Core services** All ILCs are required to provide four core services, which include:

1. **Peer support** - staff and trained volunteers provide support, encouragement and guidance for persons with disabilities.
2. **Information and referral** - related to disability or services for individuals with disabilities, families, employers and the community.
3. **Independent living skills training** - assessment and training to people with disabilities in areas such as money management, housekeeping, communication, mobility, self-advocacy, pre-vocational skills and socialization.
4. **Individual and systems advocacy** - persons with disabilities are taught to advocate for themselves. ILCs also engage in activities designed to effect positive change in local, state and federal systems affecting persons with disabilities.

**Additional services** Each ILC offers unique activities and services to meet the needs of their local population. Examples of other services offered by ILCs include: disability awareness training; recreation and leisure activities; interpreter coordination; assistance related to housing and transportation; personal care services; the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504, and IDEA assessments; and personal computer evaluations. Most ILCs offer information about Assistive Technology and a loan closet to provide training on using this equipment.



*ILCs are conscientious about making their assistance and materials available in alternative formats to accommodate people with sensory or communication-related disabilities. If you are unable to conveniently communicate with an ILC, you should attempt to convey that to the Executive Director of the ILC or to WCILC.*

## Complaints and Appeals

Courses of action available to ILC consumers are similar to those available to clients in a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program. If a person with a disability is not satisfied with the quality or timeliness of the response s/he gets from an ILC, the person can contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP). Specific appeals rights, however, may vary somewhat depending on whether the Center involved is funded by state or federal money. *(See Vocational Rehabilitation chapter, pg. 230.)*

## **Independent Living Centers**

### **Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers**

106 E. Doty St., Suite 3A  
Madison, WI 53703  
608-251-9151 (V/TTY)  
800-690-6665

### **Access to Independence**

2345 Atwood Ave.  
Madison, WI 53704  
608-242-8484 (V)  
608-248485 (TTY)  
800-362-9877

### **Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin**

2920 Schneider Ave. E  
Menomonie, WI 54751  
715-233-1070 (V/TTY)  
800-228-3287

### **Great Rivers Independent Living Services**

4328 Mormon Coulee Rd.  
LaCrosse, WI 54601  
608-787-1111 (V)  
608-787-1148 (TTY)

149 East Mill Street  
Richland Center, WI 53581  
608-647-8053 (V/TTY)  
877-471-2095

### **Midstate Independent Living**

201-CW Clark  
Stevens Point, WI 54481  
800-382-8484 (V/TTY)

PO Box 369  
Rhineland, WI 54501  
800-311-5044 (V/TTY)

### **North Country Independent Living**

2231 Catlin Ave.  
P.O. Box 1245  
Superior, WI 54880  
715-392-9118 (V/TTY)

201 W. Main Street  
Ashland, WI 54806  
715-682-5676 (V/TTY)  
800-924-1220

### **Options for Independent Living**

555 Country Club Rd  
P. O. Box 11967  
Green Bay, WI 54307  
920-490-0500 (V/TTY)  
888-465-1515

1506 S. Oneida Street  
Appleton, WI 54916  
920-738-2644 (V/TTY)

### **Society's Assets**

5200 Washington Ave, Suite 225  
Racine, WI 53406  
414-637-9128 (V/TTY)  
800-378-9128

5727 6th Avenue  
Kenosha, WI 53140  
262-657-3999 (V/TTY)

35 S. Wisconsin Street  
Elkorn, WI 53121  
262-723-8181 (V/TTY)

### **Independence First**

600 W. Virginia St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53204-1516  
414-291-7520 (V)  
414-291-7525 (TTY)