

The Role of Independent Living Centers in Bringing About Community and Systems Change 2013-2014

New York's 39 Independent Living Centers (ILCs) receive over \$12.3 million to provide an array of independent living services to individuals and to advocate for and lead change to systems affecting the lives of people with disabilities. "Systems Change", in the context of New York State's Independent Living Standards, Performance Measures and Data Collection Guide means, "Permanent change to policies, practices, decisions and environments in the public and/or private sector that control resources necessary to enhance integration, inclusion and independence of people with disabilities as a group".

Each of the 39 Independent Living Centers must achieve three results of community and systems change per year under contract with the NYS Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services-Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR). ACCES-VR has established six distinct domains of systems change in areas of Education, Employment, Health Care, Commerce, Social and Citizenship. Furthermore, tracking within categories is also done to group similar results together within each domain. For instance, within the Education domain, results are grouped if they have had an impact on A. transition services, B. receipt of funding for pre-Kindergarten through university or business programs, or C. if the result demonstrated integration of a new educational component into a curriculum. Under the Health Care domain, results are grouped if they addressed A. legislation/regulation, B. consumer directed personal assistance (CDPA) services or C. increased access to physician offices/clinics.

Since 2000, ACCES-VR has maintained a detailed analysis of results in a systems change inventory database to determine frequency of specific types of systems change in each domain and the number of results in subcategories of each domain. The total number of results is over 5,000 with the following total number of results in each of the six domains: Education over 800, Employment close to 600, Health Care close to 1,500, Commerce close to 1,700, Social close to 500, and Citizenship close to 600. Results are shared with the field on an annual basis to report on outcomes and provide opportunities for exchanges of best practices. Below is a sampling of results from the reporting period, **October 1, 2013 – September 30, 2014**. During this reporting period, the network of 39 ILCs served over 91,000 individuals with and without disabilities with direct services.

Close to 500 instances of results of community and systems change were accomplished by the New York State network of Independent Living Centers with close to 100 percent of ILCs achieving the required three or more outcomes. Seven ILCs achieved results in each of the six domains of systems change. These centers are: 1. Access to Independence of Cortland County in Cortland, 2. Capital District Center for Independence in Albany, 3. Resource Center for Independent Living-subsidiary in Herkimer, 4. Rockland Independent Living Center in New City, 5. Southern Adirondack Independent Living in Queensbury, 6. Southern Tier Independence Center in Binghamton, and 7. Westchester Independent Living Center in White Plains. The four ILCs with the highest number of occasions of systems change are: 1. Southern Tier Independence Center in Binghamton with 38, 2. Southern Adirondack Independent Living

Center in Queensbury with 30, 3. Capital District Center for Independence in Albany with 26, and 4. ARISE in Syracuse with 25.

The most frequently occurring outcomes of community and systems change are:

- Bringing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title III covered public and private entities into full compliance with accessibility standards under the law. There were 40 successful instances where ILCs worked with owners of such entities as supermarkets, banks, restaurants, malls, etc. to increase access to marketplace goods and services.
- Ensuring that hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, long-term care facilities, nursing homes physician offices and public and private clinics provide both accessible facilities and services. There were 36 instances of enhanced health care access.
- Bringing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II covered entities into full compliance with access standards under the law. There were 24 instances where ILCs worked with local town and county governments to address full access to buildings, programs and services such as libraries, courts, town halls, etc.
- Ensuring that parks and other places of public recreation are fully accessible. There were 18 instances where ILCs facilitated accessibility by working with local, county or state officials to make parks, playgrounds, fishing docks and piers, and other recreational sites accessible to all.
- Ensuring that schools pre-kindergarten through college including both public and private are accessible physically and programmatically. There were 16 instances of enhanced school access.
- Ensuring participation in civic activities through accessible polling sites, public meeting locations, public forums, emergency preparedness, and voting machines and materials. There were 13 instances of enhanced access to civic responsibilities and opportunities.
- Increasing the number of employment opportunities for people with disabilities. There were 7 instances where ILCs worked with local employers to improve physical accessibility and recruitment practices.

Some unique results that span the range of domains include the following:

Education Advocacy

- Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID) in Brooklyn achieved systems change in Education Advocacy since the State University of New York (SUNY) Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn incorporated into its health care worker curriculum elective training on the impact of disabilities on racially and ethnically diverse communities and established an interactive student-led Disability Week program offered to all schools on the campus.

- ARISE in Syracuse achieved systems change in Education Advocacy since the Frederick Leighton Elementary School in the Oswego City School District changed its practices regarding special education services from only offering the services to kindergarteners and sending all other students needing such services to other schools within the district to offering the services to all students with disabilities at the student's regular school.
- Westchester Disabled on the Move (WDOM) in Yonkers achieved systems change in Education Advocacy since WDOM was actively involved in a 2013 complaint by two consumers to the US Department of Justice against the New Rochelle School District regarding its failure to evacuate disabled students who use wheelchairs from the New Rochelle High School during an incident that was successfully settled in 2014. Under the court ruling, the New Rochelle School District was required to establish an evacuation plan, to permit students with disabilities to regularly participate in evacuation drills, to provide training on Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to school personnel, and to provide reasonable accommodations, such as evacuation chairs.

Employment Advocacy

- Catskill Center for Independence (CCFI) in Oneonta achieved systems change in Employment Advocacy since the Schoharie County Department of Social Services changed its practices to routinely include in employment plans for individuals with disabilities information about the CCFI Assistive Competitive Employment Services (ACES) program. ACES is designed to assist Schoharie County residents with a mental health diagnosis to obtain competitive employment.
- Center for Independence of the Disabled of New York (CIDNY) in Manhattan and its subsidiary CIDNY-Queens in Kew Gardens achieved systems change in Employment Advocacy since the New York City Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services established a new employment program to serve Temporary Assistance (TA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applicants and recipients. The program encourages employment for people with disabilities, includes screening for and provision of reasonable accommodations, and assists in developing job supports and reasonable accommodations with employers.
- Rockland Independent Living Center (RILC) in New City achieved systems change in Employment Advocacy since RILC was awarded a grant by the Empire State Development to create small business opportunities for people with developmental disabilities that can be self-sustaining. The Center will develop three for-profit businesses: a Call Center, a sales kiosk at a county office, and a computer training center.

Health Care Advocacy

- Capital District Center for Independence (CDCI) in Albany achieved systems change in Health Care Advocacy since the Capital District Community Gardens (CDCG) at 40 River Street in Troy established a Memorandum of Understanding with CDCI for the Center and

CDCG to cooperatively develop and manage an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant section of the Garland Court Community Garden, adjacent to 43 Garland Court in Albany. CDCG is a not-for-profit private organization that helps area residents improve their neighborhoods through community gardening.

- Southern Adirondack Independent Living (SAIL) in Queensbury achieved systems change in Health Care Advocacy since the Evergreen Health Center at 13 Palmer Avenue in Corinth provided an accessible scale for people with mobility challenges.
- Resource Center for Accessible Living (RCAL) in Kingston achieved systems change in Health Care Advocacy since the Health Alliance Hospital Broadway Campus in Kingston established for the Emergency Department a new Autism Friendly Program for patients with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). The program incorporates sensory boxes, iPads that feature autism-specific apps, and a special hospital personnel training program that includes an online ASD training provided by RCAL.

Commerce Advocacy

- Harlem Independent Living Center (HILC) in Harlem achieved systems change in Commerce Advocacy since the Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. State Office Building on 125th street in Harlem installed a push button to open the front entrance to provide access for people with disabilities who use wheelchairs, service animals, etc. Previously, the building's front entrance only had revolving doors, and these individuals were directed to the back of the building.
- Regional Center for Independent Living (RCIL) in Rochester achieved systems change in Commerce Advocacy since the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and the City of Rochester Police Department in collaboration with RCIL created an online Educational Video Blog on how to better handle traffic stops between a police officer and a driver who is disabled.
- Resource Center for Independent Living (RCIL) in Utica achieved systems change in Commerce Advocacy since the Genesee Crossing apartment complex in Utica made 5 units for homeless veterans, with 3 of these units wheelchair accessible. The Genesee Crossing complex is private housing operated by Housing Visions (HV) developers in Utica.

Social Advocacy

- Massena Independent Living Center (MILC) in Massena achieved systems change in Social Advocacy since the Wounded Warriors Home-Town Heroes Muskie Challenge in Brasher Falls for soldiers from nearby Fort Drum (US Army 10th Mountain Division) made available a wheelchair accessible boat to provide access to veterans who use a wheelchair to participate in the event. The annual fishing event on the Deer River (St. Regis River) is sponsored by the American Legion Post 514 in Winthrop.
- North Country Center for Independence (NCCI) in Plattsburgh achieved systems change in Social Advocacy since the Village of Champlain created a fully accessible disc golf course

that is spread throughout downtown Champlain; in disc golf most courses are located in public parks. Disc golf is a disc game in which individual players throw a flying disc into a basket or at a target, and the object of the game is to traverse a course from beginning to end in the fewest number of throws of the disc.

- Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley (ILCHV) in Troy achieved systems change in Social Advocacy since the Theatre Institute at Sage College in Troy changed its practices to provide sign language interpreters for regular season performances. As a result of the NYS Theatre Institute (State mandated theatre/education program) in Troy no longer being able to sponsor interpreted performance due to budget constraints, the Theatre Institute at Sage established an arrangement with a local interpreter group to provide interpreted performances in exchange for classes, scripts, etc.

Citizenship Advocacy

- Southwestern Independent Living Center (SILC) in Jamestown achieved systems change in Citizenship Advocacy since the City of Jamestown posted on its website a statement that all content and documents on the site are available, upon request, in an alternate format that includes Braille, large print, and audio formats.
- Directions in Independent Living (DIL) in Olean achieved systems change in Citizenship Advocacy since the Advocates for Community Tolerance (ACT) in collaboration with DIL established a regularly scheduled voter registration event for students at Jamestown Community College to be held on campus for several days at the end of the semester. ACT is an Olean-area group that addresses bullying issues in the community.
- Taconic Resources for Independence (TRI) in Poughkeepsie achieved systems change in Citizenship Advocacy since NYS Senator Terry Gipson representing Senate District 41, which serves portions of Dutchess County and Putnam County, with a district office in Poughkeepsie provided sign language interpreter services for meetings and rallies.

**NYS INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
SYSTEMS CHANGE OUTCOMES**

**OCTOBER 1, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2014
STATEWIDE DATA REPORT**

SYSTEMS CHANGE CATEGORIES	OUTCOMES ACHIEVED			
	# of ILCs	% of 39 ILCs	# of OUTCOMES	% of TOTAL OUTCOMES
EDUCATION	33	85%	89	18%
EMPLOYMENT	21	54%	41	8%
HEALTH CARE	36	92%	154	31%
COMMERCE	34	87%	128	26%
SOCIAL	27	69%	50	10%
CITIZENSHIP	21	54%	31	7%
TOTAL	 	 	493	100%

NYS INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT SYSTEMS CHANGE OUTCOMES

OCTOBER 1, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

No.	ILC	SYSTEMS CHANGE CATEGORIES						Total Categories Achieved *			Outcomes Achieved
		Edu- cation	Employ- ment	Health Care	Com- merce	Social	Citizen- ship	Total	S	U	
1	Access to Independence of Cortland County	2	3	3	7	2	1	6	X		18
2	AIM Independent Living Center	1	1	2	3	1		5	X		8
3	ARISE-Syracuse	5		8	8	3	1	5	X		25
4	ARISE-Auburn subsidiary			1	2	1		3	X		4
5	Bronx Independent Living Services	3	1	1	4		1	5	X		10
6	Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled	2		3	3	1	1	5	X		10
7	Capital District Center for Independence	4	5	9	1	2	5	6	X		26
8	Catskill Center For Independence	2	2	1		1		4	X		6
9	Center for Independence of the Disabled of New York-Manhattan		1	5	4		1	4	X		11
10	Center for Independence of the Disabled of New York-Queens subsidiary	1	1	5	4		1	5	X		12
11	Directions in Independent Living	3			3	2	2	4	X		10
12	Finger Lakes Independence Center	2		3	4	1		4	X		10
13	Harlem Independent Living Center	2		2	1			3	X		5
14	Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley	1	2	2	2	1		5	X		8
15	Independent Living, Inc.-Newburgh	2	1	15				3	X		18
16	Independent Living, Inc.-Middletown subsidiary	1	1	13	2			4	X		17
17	Independent Living, Inc.-Sullivan subsidiary	4	1	2				3	X		7
18	Long Island Center For Independent Living	1		2	2	2		4	X		7
19	Massena Independent Living Center		1	5	4	2	1	5	X		13
20	North Country Center for Independence			5	1	2	1	4	X		9
21	Northern Regional Center for Independent Living	6	5	1	2			4	X		14
22	Regional Center for Independent Living	2		1	6	3		4	X		12
23	Resource Center for Accessible Living	1		6	6	1	2	5	X		16

NYS INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTERS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT SYSTEMS CHANGE OUTCOMES

OCTOBER 1, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2014

No.	ILC	SYSTEMS CHANGE CATEGORIES						Total Categories Achieved *			Outcomes Achieved
		Edu- cation	Employ- ment	Health Care	Com- merce	Social	Citizen- ship	Total	S	U	
24	Resource Center for Independent Living-Utica		1	3	3	1	2	5	X	Total	10
25	Resource Center for Independent Living- Amsterdam subsidiary	2		3		2	1	4	X		8
26	Resource Center for Independent Living- Herkimer subsidiary	3	1	1	2	3	1	6	X		11
27	Rockland Independent Living Center	3	4	2	4	1	1	6	X		15
28	Southern Adirondack Independent Living	2	2	9	8	7	2	6	X		30
29	Southern Tier Independence Center	5	2	19	8	3	1	6	X		38
30	Southwestern Independent Living Center	1		2	1	1	1	5	X		6
31	Suffolk Independent Living Organization	1			2			2		X	3
32	Staten Island Center for Independent Living	3		5	6	1		4	X		15
33	Taconic Resources for Independence	5		6	3	2	1	5	X		17
34	Westchester Disabled On the Move	2	1	2	4			4	X		9
35	Westchester Independent Living Center (WILC)-White Plains	6	2	3	9	1	2	6	X		23
36	Putnam Independent Living Services-WILC subsidiary	9	3	1	6		2	5	X		21
37	Western New York Independent Living (WNYIL)-Buffalo	1		2	2	1		4	X		6
38	Independent Living of Genesee Region-WNYIL subsidiary							0		X	0
39	Independent Living of Niagara County-WNYIL subsidiary	1		1	1	2		4	X		5
	TOTAL ILCs ACHIEVING OUTCOMES	33	21	36	34	27	21	X	37	2	X
	% of TOTAL ILCs ACHIEVING OUTCOMES	85%	54%	92%	87%	69%	54%	X	X	X	X
	TOTAL OUTCOMES ACHIEVED	89	41	154	128	50	31	X	X	X	493

OCTOBER 1, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2014					
* EXPLANATION OF CATEGORIES ACHIEVED	# ILC	/	Total ILC	=	% Achieved
S - Successful = 3 or more	37		39		95%
U - Unsuccessful = less than 3	2		39		5%
Total	39		39		100%

OCTOBER 1, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2014					
BREAKDOWN OF CATEGORIES ACHIEVED	# ILC	/	Total ILC	=	% Achieved
0	1		39		3%
1	0		39		0%
2	1		39		3%
3	4		39		9%
4	14		39		36%
5	12		39		31%
6	7		39		18%
Total	39		39		100%