

PRIDE PROVIDER/PEER MENTOR: MODULE 6

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CILs)



ACCESS
LIVING



MODULE OVERVIEW

- **Independent Living Case Example Part 1**
- **Defining independent living and centers for independent living (CILs)**
- **Access Living**
- **Core services offered by CILs**
- **How CILs can support job-seeking refugees with disabilities**
- **Eligibility for CIL services**
- **Independent Living Case Example Part 2**

INDEPENDENT LIVING CASE EXAMPLE: PART 1

Fahad is a 20-year old refugee from Iraq. He recently graduated from a Chicago high school and is currently enrolled in community college classes. He plans to transfer to a public university for undergraduate studies.

Fahad plans to rent an apartment closer to the university for easy access to and from classes. He has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair. He needs assistance with self-care activities such as bathing, dressing, and eating his meals. Fahad's mother is currently his main caregiver. Fahad will need to connect to independent living resources in preparation for living in his own apartment and for participating in college life.

WHAT DOES INDEPENDENT LIVING MEAN?

- Independent living refers to a new frame of reference for understanding disability and societal attitudes toward disability.
- The philosophy of independent living emphasizes equal opportunities in education, employment, and community living for people with disabilities.¹
 - Similar to “self-determination,” which means every person, regardless of disability, has the potential and the right to decide how he/she wants to live.
- The Independent Living Movement was associated with the Disability Rights Movement of the 1960s and emphasized that:
People with disabilities are entitled to the same rights and control over their lives as people without disabilities.
People with disabilities are the experts on their own lives, needs, and choices.
People with disabilities should be integrated into the community.²

WHAT ARE CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CILs)?

CILs:

- Are non-profit, community-based organizations.³
- Provide a variety of services to support independent living for people with disabilities.³
- Are consumer-controlled – at least 51% of staff are persons with disabilities and 51% of the Board of Directors are persons with significant disabilities.³
- Are cross-disability – they serve people with different kinds of disabilities across the lifespan.³

CIL IN CHICAGOLAND: ACCESS LIVING

- Access Living, one of PRIDE's partners, was established in 1980. It serves the metropolitan Chicago area.
- Access Living's mission is to "foster the dignity, pride, and self-esteem of people with disabilities and enhance the options available to them so they may choose and maintain individualized and satisfying lifestyles."⁴
- Access Living offers peer-oriented independent living services; public education, awareness and development; individualized and systemic advocacy; and enforcement of civil rights on behalf of people with disabilities.



CILs IN ILLINOIS

- There are more than 30 CILs serving the rest of Illinois.
- Complete listing of CILs on the Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) website

CORE SERVICES PROVIDED BY CILS

- Information and referrals
- Independent living skills training
- Individual and systems advocacy
- Peer support and mentoring
- Transition assistance from nursing homes and other institutions to community-based residences
- Assisting individuals to avoid institutional placement
- Transition of youth with significant disabilities after completion of secondary education to postsecondary life^{4,5}

HOW CAN CILS SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES?

Some CILs offer programs to prepare students with disabilities for college or employment.³

- For example, Access Living's Beatrice C. Mayer Realizing Education and Advancement for Disabled Youth (READY) Program offers training and consultation for young people with disabilities nearing high school graduation.
- Training and support focuses on skills that youth need to make a successful transition to employment or higher education.⁴



HOW CAN CILS SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES? (CONT'D)

- Some CILs also offer jobs and internships for people with disabilities.
 - Employment-related opportunities available at Access Living
- CILs can provide financial consultation to improve employment, credit, and homeownership opportunities for people with disabilities.
 - For example, Access Living has a training program called Financial Stability, which focuses on financial education and money management.⁴

HOW CAN CILS SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES? (CONT'D)

- CILs can help individuals find and train Personal Assistants to manage daily living and housekeeping.
 - Access Living keeps a database of Personal Assistants for people with disabilities who want to hire someone for home care services.⁴
 - Personal Assistance Services (PAS) in the workplace means assistance with performing activities of daily living that an individual would typically perform if he/she did not have a disability.⁶



HOW CAN CILS SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES? (CONT'D)

- **Personal Assistants can support people with disabilities at home or at work in the following ways:**
 - **Getting up and ready for work**
 - **Bathing, dressing, cooking, cleaning, running errands**
 - **Providing travel assistance**
 - **Reading printed materials for a Blind person**
 - **Ensuring a sign language interpreter is present for a Deaf person⁶**



HOW CAN CILS SUPPORT JOB-SEEKING REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES? (CONT'D)

- **Some CILs help people with disabilities find accessible and affordable housing.**
 - **For example, Access Living administers a Housing Counseling Program that trains people on tenant rights, landlord-tenant relations, and reasonable accommodations for tenants with disabilities.**
- **Advocacy is an important objective for all CILs.**
 - **For example, Access Living hosts a grassroots group called Power to the People that advocates for inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.**

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CIL SERVICES?

- All individuals with disabilities are eligible to receive CIL services.
- Specific requirements might vary based on the CIL.
 - Access Living DOES NOT require disability-related documentation or proof of citizenship or immigration from those seeking services.
 - Access Living only serves Chicago residents.

ACCESS LIVING CONTACT INFORMATION

**Access Living
115 West Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60654
312-640-2100 voice
312-640-2102 TTY**

HOW CAN WE CONNECT REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES TO ACCESS LIVING

Department/Service	Contact
Housing Intake Line	Phone: 312-640-2121
Independent Living Skills Coordinator	Phone: 312-640-2159
Personal Assistant Coordinator	Phone: 312-640-2193
READY (Realizing Education and Advancement for Disabled Youth) Program Manager	Phone: 312-640-2103
Director of Advocacy	Email: asmock@accessliving.org

INDEPENDENT LIVING CASE EXAMPLE: PART 2

Fahad qualifies for Personal Assistant services for 20 hours a week through Medicaid. However, he is unsure where to begin to find and hire an appropriate Personal Assistant.

Fahad's medical case manager connects him with the Personal Assistant Coordinator at Access Living. Through Access Living, Fahad receives training in interviewing and supervising Personal Assistants. He is also able to select a few candidates from Access Living's Personal Assistant Database.



SOURCES

1. Arnold, G. (2017). Disability Awareness Presentation. University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, February 28, 2017.
2. Mountain State Centers for Independent Living
www.mtscil.org
3. Independent Living Research Utilization
<http://www.ilru.org/home>
4. Access Living
<https://www.accessliving.org/>

SOURCES (CONT'D)

5. Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (INCIL)

<https://www.incil.org>

6. Office of Disability Employment Policy

<https://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/PersonalAssistanceServices.htm>