



Testimony for Centers for Independent Living  
House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Human Services  
March 9, 2017

Chairman Romanchuk, Ranking Minority Member Sykes and distinguished committee members, my name Jeremy Morris and I am the Executive Director of the Access Center for Independent Living in Dayton, Ohio.

The Access Center has been serving people with disabilities in Montgomery, Greene, Clark, and Preble Counties since 1984. Since then, the Center has assisted hundreds of individuals with disabilities in achieving their goals of independence. These goals range in focus from such things as housing, transportation, relocation from nursing facilities, accessibility, and many other support areas.

I am writing to you today in support of the General Assembly of Ohio providing funding to the Centers for Independent Living. Centers for Independent Living play a crucial role in the lives of people with disabilities, and work tirelessly to ensure that people with disabilities have a real choice in where and how they live, work, and participate in the community. Additionally, CILs are an excellent service and a bargain for Ohio, keeping people engaged with their communities and saving taxpayer money. Please reinstate the CIL line item (415520) for the Centers for Independent Living: The CILs used to get GRF dollars directly. These funds were critical and opportunities for individuals with disabilities and the communities they live. The centers needs these state direct service funds to leverage additional federal opportunities to help individuals with disabilities to be independent. Some of these funds leverage \$3.69 for every state dollar. Some funds could be leveraged at the even higher level \$9 federal dollars for every \$1.00 spent. Please reinstate this line item and add \$1.7 million dollars to bring Ohio in line with other states in the region.

The Centers provide employment to people with disabilities for over half their staff. This gives the Centers the ability to provide a peer-to-peer level of support to the individuals we serve. This becomes a great resource for people with disabilities that need services from people that better understand the disabilities and barriers that people face.

The Centers provide a standard of services through the mandated core services being offered. The major benefit to the investment in the Centers is that they operate under federal mandates and requirements ensuring a standards are being met, but with the ability to be responsive to their local communities.

Centers also provide the highly cost effective service of transitioning individuals from institutions to the community. Each individual that has been transitioned provides a major cost savings to the federally funded long-term care programs. By investing more money

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*Serving: Clark, Greene, Montgomery, and Preble Counties*

into CILs, we can provide additional cost savings to the state and therefore is a wise investment of public dollars. Promoting community based living is a main component of CILs, and we can advance this much further if the program was adequately funded. It costs on average more than \$75,000 per year for a person to live in a semi-private nursing home room. A person can be provided IL services so he or she can live independently in a house or in an apartment, saving the state millions of dollars through the enhanced Medicaid match and in institutional care.

Centers are working daily to increase the independence of individuals and to make our communities more inclusive and removing barriers. We appreciate your support in making Ohio a more inclusive state with your investment in the Centers for Independent Living.

Some highlights of the Access Center from our 2016 operating year are:

- The transitioning of 12 individuals out of nursing homes into less restrictive environments, over 250 individuals since 2007.
- Providing over 4,400 individual services to people
- Providing over 600 services through our Recycled Equipment Donated for Independence Program
- Providing Disability Awareness Training to nearly 150 people through our Think This is Easy? Training Program.
- Spending over 900 hours in the community to promote inclusion, access, and education.

Ohio ranks at the very bottom in the amount of state dollars allocated to assist Centers for Independent Living in comparison to other states in our region. Please support the line item and adding the appropriate funding.

The Access Center is committed to our community and the people that we serve. I appreciate your time and consideration on an investment in independent Living in Ohio.

Thank you,



Jeremy Morris  
Executive Director  
Access Center for Independent Living

To Whom It May Concern:

When I was on my way from graduating high school and college the first time around, times were tough. My mom did not know what to do or where to turn to. I tried social security and was denied more than once, then tried the job center and could not get much help. Finally, one day at my church, I ran into one of my church members, Janene Pickens and sat down with her to see what she would suggest for help for me. That same day, she called me and told me to contact ACIL. Am I glad I did because without them, I would not be where I am today. I am now on my own and I am going for my bachelor's degree in Business Information Systems at Indiana Wesleyan University. I cannot thank ACIL enough for what they have done for me and I will stay with them for many years to come because they work with me step by step in order to be successful. I would recommend them to anyone with disabilities who are looking for assistance. No journey is easy but if they get you through it you will be successful in achieving your goals.

Shari R. Hicks  
ACIL Consumer