



Testimonial of Lin Laing, Executive Director
Center for Independent Living Options, Inc.
Cincinnati, Ohio
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The Center for
Independent Living
Options, Inc is
funded in part by:

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U.S. Dept. of Health
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• Independent Living
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donations of many

Chairman Romanchuk and Distinguished Committee Members, as the Executive Director of the Center for Independent Living Options, Inc. (CILO) I am asking for your consideration to reinstate the CIL line item (415520) to the state budget.

CILO is one of 12 independent living centers across the state of Ohio. Since 1977 CILO has provided hope to over 35,000 people with disabilities in the seven counties of Greater Cincinnati. We serve people of all ages and backgrounds with physical, cognitive, sensory and psychological disabilities, many of them struggling just to meet their basic needs. We have learned that as individuals age they are more likely to acquire a disability. We anticipate that the growing number of aging Ohioans will increase the need for services provided by the CILs who are working with shrinking budgets.

Some of the individuals and families we serve have experienced homelessness. With funding received through our local HUD funded Continuum of Care, we have been able to help our homeless consumers attain housing and provide supportive services to enable them to successfully remain in permanent housing. We have changed as the needs of our consumers have changed, offering innovative programs that address the areas of employment training, computer training and consumer led support groups. We created an arts program for artists with disabilities who can exhibit and market their artwork at our art gallery, Art Beyond

Resources to, for and by the people with disabilities

Boundaries. Our Consumer Advisory Council is a diverse group of consumers who is the voice of people with disabilities in our service area. The Council provides valuable input that will impact the strategic direction of CILO in the future.

Empowering people with disabilities to lead independent and inclusive lives relies on a variety of funding sources. As the need for our programs and services grows, funding is declining. Providing services to assist people with disabilities live independently is a wise use of resources; our state resources can keep people out of nursing homes and institutions, and help them become stabilized and live independently.

It is our hope that the House Finance Committee will reinstate the CIL line item (415520) for Centers for Independent Living (CILs) so that people with disabilities in the state of Ohio can live their lives with pride and dignity. With this crucial funding, CILO along with other CILs in the state can continue to provide our core services of Advocacy, Independent Living Skills, Information & Referral, Peer Support, and Transition Services – specifically services for transition-aged youth who need support as they grow from high school to adulthood. Without these services, CILO will not be able to support many of our community's most vulnerable people who often have no other support system. With sufficient funding, we will be able to efficiently assist people to become job-ready, achieve competitive employment, and reduce their reliance on public benefits.

People with disabilities want the same opportunities as everyone else, a chance to demonstrate their abilities, be productive and add value to their communities. I respectfully ask for your support of reinstating funding for Centers for Independent Living.

Thank you for your consideration.