

'21-
'22



WASHTENAW | MONROE | LIVINGSTON
Center *for* Independent Living

IMPACT REPORT
2021 - 2022





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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the first of 15 CILs in Michigan, The Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living (CIL) has been advocating for and empowering people with disabilities living in Washtenaw, Livingston, and Monroe counties since 1976. This is based on the belief that all people can live with dignity, choice, and full participation.

OUR MISSION

Empower the lives of people with disabilities and advocate for a more inclusive community for all.

Independent Living means many different things to many people. Our work is tailored to the wants, needs, and expressed desires of our communities. We provide **Peer Support**, teach **Independent Living Skills**, provide support and direction with **Employment Navigation** and **Benefits Counseling**, along with assistance accessing Information and Resources in our communities. Our virtual **Social, Arts, and Recreation** classes and support groups are some of the best! We provide **Disability Awareness Trainings (DATs)** and advocacy to employers and, through schools, we provide **Disability Awareness Workshops (DAWs)**. We conduct **Community Outreach and Advocate** with and on behalf of people with disabilities, participating in commissions and networks to promote inclusion throughout our communities.

Many times, people with disabilities get to a crossroads in life where it is decision time. We provide support with **Youth Transitioning** to adulthood, connecting young people with guidance and access to services and support for which they may be eligible. In partnership with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, we support Medicaid-eligible nursing facility residents to transition or return to community living, if that is their choice.

We invite you to let your voice be heard through participation in our **Disability Community Action Lab (DCAL) and other advocacy efforts**. We educate people on how to advocate for **full inclusion and participation**, regardless of ability, in every facet of our communities.

As a private, non-profit organization, we rely on contributions from donors to provide excellence in our services and support to the disability community. We are excited by all we have accomplished.

If you would like to contribute financially to our efforts, please see our website or contact us at (734) 971-0277 or info@aacil.org. Thank you in advance.

WE ARE YOUR CIL.



Alex Gossage
Executive Director

IMPACT AT A GLANCE

We provide numerous services for our participants: advocacy to make our community more accessible, friendlier, and livable, assistance accessing community resources, career services, disability training for businesses and organizations,

Total Number of People Served in Washtenaw, Livingston, and Monroe Counties in 2021-2022: 1340

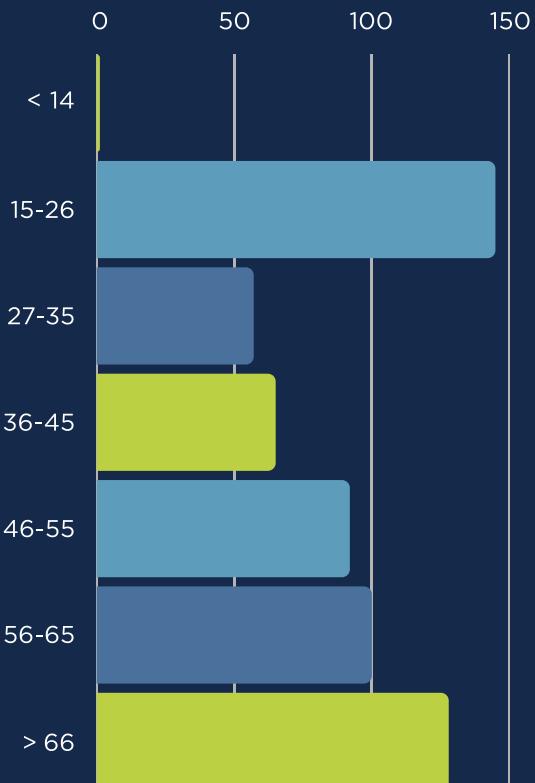
independent living coaching, peer support, recreation and arts programming, transitions from nursing facilities back into the community, and volunteer and training opportunities.

AGES SERVED Less than 14-years-old: 1. From 15- to 26-years-old: 145. From 27- to 35-years-old: 57. From 36- to 45-years-old: 65. From 46- to 55-years-old: 92. From 56- to 65-years-old: 100. Over 66: 128.

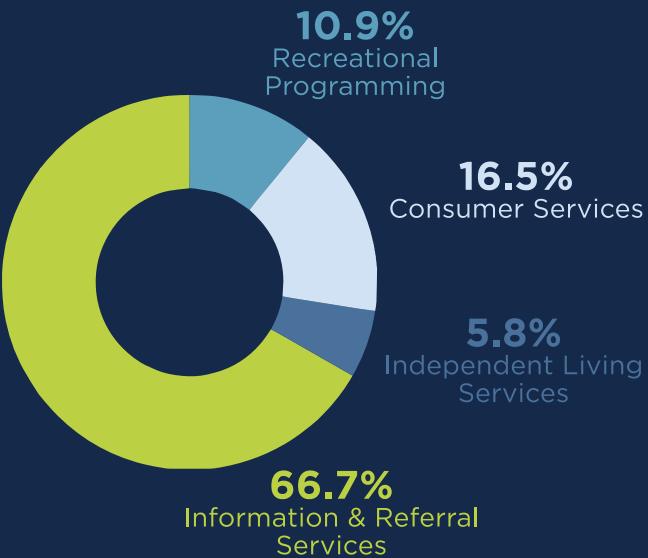
SERVICES UTILIZED Recreational Programming: 10.9%. Consumer Services: 16.5%. Independent Living Services: 5.8%. Information & Referral Services: 66.7%.

DISABILITY DEMOGRAPHICS AD/HD: 26. ALS: 1. Alzheimer's: 6. Amputation: 13. Arthritis: 19. Asthma/Emphysema: 4. Autism/Asperger's: 38. Autoimmune Disorder: 6. Back Injury: 20. Blind/Visually Impaired: 33. Bone/Joint Disorder: 23. Brain Disorder: 2. Brain Injury: 23. Cancer: 23. Cardiovascular Disorder: 8. Carpal Tunnel: 2. Cerebral Palsy: 29. Cognitive Impairment: 15. Deaf/Hearing Impaired: 9. Dementia: 8. Depression: 12. Developmentally Disabled: 24. Diabetes: 19. Emotional Impairment: 11. Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder: 4. Fibromyalgia: 1. HIV/AIDS: 1. Kidney Disease: 9. Learning Disability: 14. Mental Health: 74. Morbid Obesity: 1. Multiple Disability: 40. Multiple Sclerosis: 20. Muscular Dystrophy: 3. Parkinson's Disease: 1. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: 9. Pulmonary Disease: 11. Spinal Cord Injury/Disorder: 25. Stroke: 23. Substance Abuse: 5. Other/Not Specified: 356.

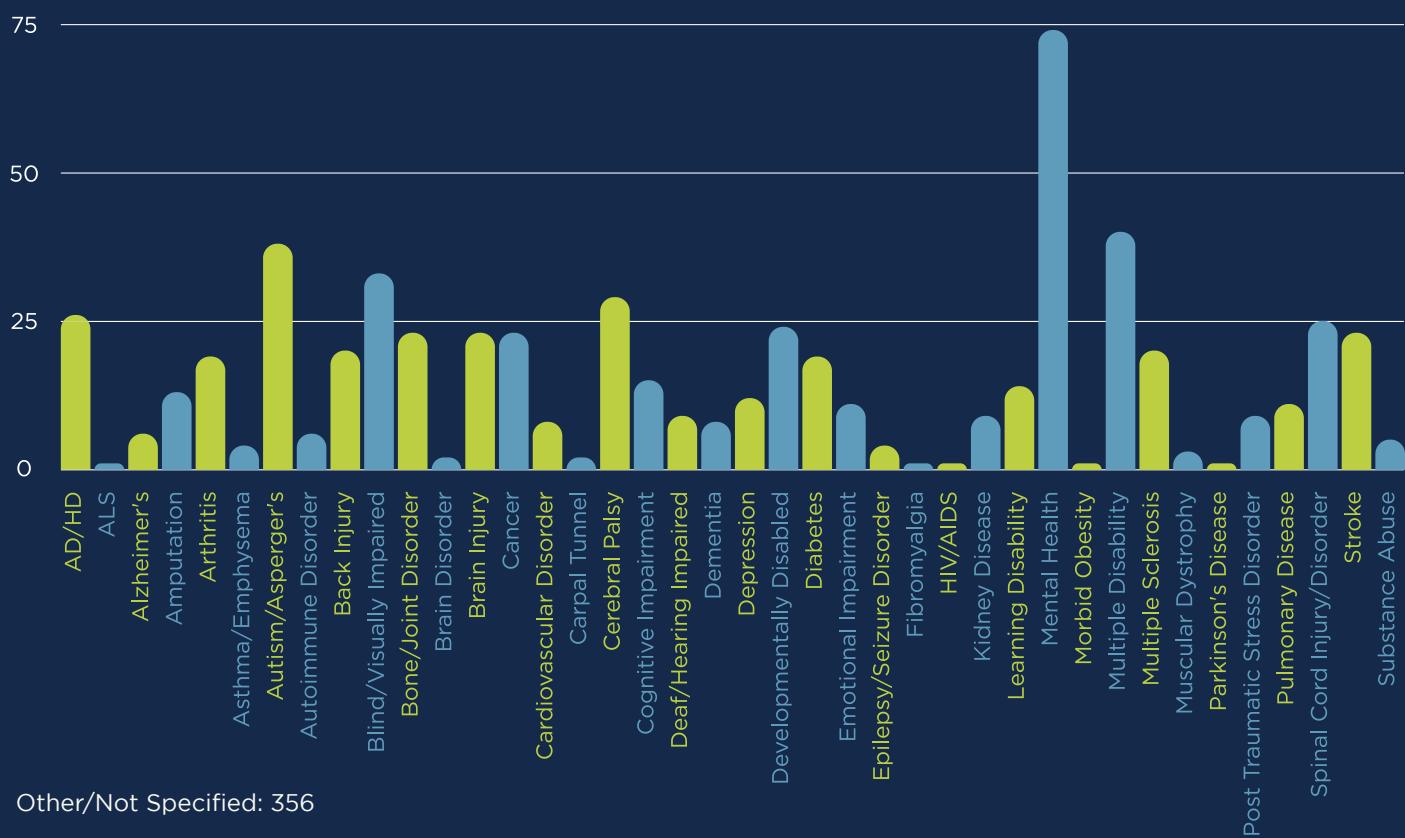
AGES SERVED



SERVICES UTILIZED



DISABILITY DEMOGRAPHICS



Other/Not Specified: 356

OUR WORK

Whether you want to find housing that works for you, look for a career, or connect with others to add meaning and enjoyment to your life, we help you develop a plan to achieve your goals and work with you to help you get there. We also advocate within the community to make our region more inclusive for people with disabilities.



CAREER SERVICES

The CIL provides consumer driven employment programming and services that allow people with disabilities to make informed choices about working while disabled. Our programs include tools and assistance which guide consumers to reach their employment goals.



ACCESSING RESOURCES

The Information and Referral team (I & R) assist consumers in getting access to the resources that their community offers. Whether it is receiving assistance applying for a door to door transportation service, accessing a walker from our loan closet, or finding out how to access emergency shelter, our team is ready with the resources you need or to use their partnerships in the community to get you connected to the tools necessary to reach your independent living goals.

VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENT

The CIL is utilizing new technology and experience gained throughout the pandemic to offer a different type of accessible option for our participants.

DISABILITY AWARENESS WORKSHOPS

The Disability Awareness Workshop, or DAW, is a one-day program to teach school-age students an empathetic understanding of physical, developmental, and learning disabilities. The hands-on activity-based workshop is designed to help the students learn how difficult and complex daily living can be for individuals with disabilities and how innovative and resourceful they are at finding solutions. Approximately 500 students participated during the last year.

RECREATION & ARTS PROGRAMMING

The CIL offers a wide variety of recreational activities and experiences. Participants can learn new things with friends in a relaxed environment.

We're always thinking of interesting opportunities for engagement.

We recently were honored as Agency Partner of the Month for Spirit Club, a nationwide virtual inclusive fitness program. Trivia Tuesdays is a fun and challenging way to socialize. Our Virtual Movie Club allows participants to watch a movie on their own time and meet with friends to discuss it. The CIL Art Program has expanded to virtual and in-person options and is opening an on-site gallery space.

PHOTO ON RIGHT

Megan, a woman with fair skin, chin-length wavy brown hair, and purple glasses, stands outside on a summer day. She is presenting a painted self-portrait to the camera.



PROGRAMS

ADVOCACY GROUPS

Disability Community Action Lab, or DCAL, is a group where like-minded community members come together to identify issues, seek out information, and take action to make a difference. We also can educate and guide individual citizens to take action on an issue they feel is important to them.



PEER SUPPORT

Peer Support is connecting with others who share similar life experiences and gain strategies to manage every day challenges. With peer support, you can feel less alone in your disability experience. At the CIL, you can join in on a social group to have fun and connect with peers in recreational opportunities or specific support groups such as SCI meet-up, "Your World," a support group for those who are blind or low vision, or "Caring Connections," a support group for parents with disabilities.

VOLUNTEER & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering and training opportunities include student internships with area universities in a variety of programs. Serving as a site for on-the-job trainings, the CIL hosts collaborative events, presentation, and focus groups with community organizations and members who want to offer their time and talent.

WHY WE DO IT

INDEPENDENT LIVING COACHING

Independent Living is the ability to make personal choices about every day activities such as how you're going to spend your day, where you want to live, and with whom you choose to spend time. We can provide group-based and individual skill development in the following areas to promote personal independence: Budgeting, time management, personal assistant management, self-advocacy, and more.

NURSING FACILITY TRANSITIONS

The Nursing Facility Transition Services Program, or NFT, is a Medicaid program that assists nursing facility residents that would like to explore community-based living options. Services are offered to assist in securing housing and facilitate a successful discharge to the community.



Simply put, the CIL is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. We prove that what you want for your life is possible. Since 1976, we have worked

hand-in-hand with you to help you live the life you want to live. In addition to providing individualized services, community advocacy, and group workshops for your self-

improvement, we are a dynamic community enrichment and recreation center filled with events and activities to help you connect with people and your passions.





OUR COMMUNITY

We work with people of diverse abilities and disabilities to help you solve problems and achieve your goals. We also work throughout the community to expand awareness about people with disabilities and promote full inclusion.

We are YOUR CIL.

NICHOLAS

My experience being a part of the Sterling State Park DNR + CIL Program was great. The kids and the leaders that I worked with were awesome. The parts I found most

Don't be scared to follow your dreams...

enjoyable were working hands on with the equipment and learning new skills each and everyday—and also working with all the nice people. This program led to the job I have now. It helped me get my start in the working world with my first real hands-on job. It helped show me that if I worked hard enough, bigger and better things would come...and they did! It most definitely helped me find and maintain employment. If it weren't

for this program, I don't think I would have ever been seen for the job I have now. Having a job at the DNR program helped me learn even more skills then I knew before

and how to take those skills and use

them at my new job. The advice I would give young folks looking to enter the work force is don't be scared to follow your dreams or go get a job. It might be scary at

It might be scary at first but I promise it will get better!

first but I promise it will get better. Because that very first job you have in your life will take you places and the jobs after that will too.

STORIES

PHOTO ON PREVIOUS SPREAD

Nicholas, a young man with tawny skin and short dark brown hair, smiles warmly as he stands against an exterior white wall. His hand rests on a wooden railing.

PHOTO ON LEFT PAGE

Renee, a fair skinned woman with shoulder-length light blonde hair, smiles broadly as she sits on a bail of hay, with her service dog, Yvette, a pale yellow lab.

PHOTO ON RIGHT PAGE

Megan stands against light blue wall in the CIL gallery space, next to her artwork: a large still life painting of pitchers and an apple, a floral collage, and a watercolor painting of a silhouetted building and fence against a sunset.

RENEE

I came to the CIL through BSBP (Bureau of Services for Blind Persons). When I contacted them, I was ready to start working again after being a stay at home parent for several years and I knew I needed assistance in re-entering the work force. They suggested the AACIL for employment services, which is where I began working with Tennery in January of 2022. Tennery provided soft



Referral. In society it feels important to contribute with working. Working is a central component to finances, social participation, and contributing to the community at large. I was able to feel more effective.

Working is a central component...I was able to feel more effective.

skills training in a warm and welcoming environment that was approachable and an open dialogue. They also spoke about employment accommodations and advocacy, which later helped when a job opened at the CIL in Information and

Professionally, I have been able to advance in my social work career and work towards full licensure. I have learned so much about other disabilities being in an environment where so much of the staff are also peers with disabilities.



MEGAN

I first joined the CIL's art program at the beginning of the pandemic. I joined because I like

The virtual art classes gave me a way to socialize when I had no other opportunity to do so...

art. Also, like a lot of people, I had to stay isolated at home. The virtual art classes gave me a way to socialize when I had no other opportunity to do so, as well as getting me back into a hobby I love! I've gotten to learn various techniques in drawing and

painting. While learning different techniques, I enjoy the openness to do it in whatever way we want.

Claire is an awesome facilitator and I love working with her. It has also been great to create in person with everyone at the CIL. Besides

...as well as getting me back into a hobby I love!

making art it has been great to socialize with people whether virtually or in person.



WHAT'S AHEAD

The Center for Independent Living is always looking for new ways to engage with our community. As we move into another year of providing innovative, compassionate, and impactful support for our participants, we want to honor what we've all experienced over the pandemic. Keeping everyone safe is our main priority. Slowly and carefully reopening the offices for walk-in assistance, in-person classes and workshops, and social events will allow us to intentionally engage with our community.

- Reopening the offices for in-person classes, workshops, and events
- Offering hybrid and fully virtual classes, workshops, and events for participants who prefer this option
- New programming, including:
 - Summer Youth Camp, a youth-focused program for developing independent living skills and offering employment training and social recreation
 - OREO Club, a fun and friendly club for snackers who want to share personal experiences
 - Your World, a support group for those who are blind or low vision
 - Caring Connections, a support group for parents with disabilities
- Employment training and job opportunities for individuals who receive Social Security through our new affiliation as a Employment Network via American Dream Employment Network (ADEN)
- Officially launching our on-site art gallery space, Gallery Be, at the Washtenaw office
- Continuing to provide past programming favorites like Movie Club, art classes, SCI Discussion and Support Group, Safe Connections, and more
- Continuing our dedication to supporting everyone who contacts the Center for Independent Living at any and all of our offices

*Keeping everyone safe is our main priority at
YOUR CIL.*



THANK YOU

DONOR SUPPORT

Without your generosity, we wouldn't be able to provide our community with all of these amazing programs, powerful support groups, and such a variety of resources.

James & Jamie Abelson

Lynette & Jeff Adamo

Don Afflerbaugh

Alaudhi

Geraldine Allen

Peter & Sally Allen

Layla Ananda

Troy Barnett

Mark Behnke

Robin Bennett

Michael Bersuder

Doug Betcher

Rosalyn Biederman

Herbert & Christine Black

Blue Oak LLC

Dr. David Boden

Stephanie Bojkowski

Dan Borucki

Djamel Bouzit

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Karen Buczkowski

LuAnne Bullington

Steve Burleson

Micah Campbell

Arvin Carson

Timothy Cash

Katherine Caskey

Chris Cerbus

Albert Chan

Roger & Christina Chang

Micah Chappel

Christopher Clark

Kevin Clark

Comcast Heartland Region

Matt Cook

Darin Corcoran

Bill Cox

Vinny Craig

Eric Craig

Max Curtner

Arick Davis & Mark Laman

Robert Dekker

Christopher DePaola

Steven Derry
Shelley DeVries
Brent DeYoung
Christ Doulos
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Valerie Heacock
Katherine Healy
Jaycee Heilner
Gary Heitman
Katy Held
Jason Hendrickson
Bob & Gail Henry
Chris Herman
Mark Hill
Maurita Peterson Holland
Heather Hollins
Cassie Holman
Michael & Nina Homel
Mark & Vicki Hopper
Jerry Hubbuch
Tim Hull
Huron Valley Sunrise Lions Club
Micah Irrer & Brent Maze
Jeff Jackson
Loren Joostberns
Leonard Kaminski
Adam Karsten

THANK YOU

Dave King
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Joel Koning
Seth Kott
Kristine Kovac
Jodi Kreschmer
Kristen & Matthew Kurtz
Greg Kuypers
Walter Kwik
Mary Lamkin
DeAnn & Andrew Lazere
James Leonard
Rebecca Lewis
Ann Arbor (Host) Lions Club
Hannah Lippman
Mary Lirones
Christina Lirones
Alfonso Lopez
David Lovelace
George Lowrie III
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Chris Yu
Phillip Zazove & Barb Reedon

[DONATE](#)

HOW TO
HELP

Empowering the lives of
people with disabilities &
advocating for a more
inclusive community
for all.

GIVE NOW

734-971-0277

info@aacil.org



Support the CIL's mission to bring needed services to people with disabilities. Talk to us or make an online donation today.



TIME

Time is our most valuable resource. When you donate your time to the CIL, you're supporting the many facets of our work.



MONETARY

By donating financially, you're directly funding our team's ability to serve our community.



SKILLS/TALENTS

Ask us if we can share your talents with our community: music and the arts, writing, athletics, gaming, and more.



GOODS/SERVICES

The CIL accepts donations of goods and services year-round. Contact us about our current donation requests.

TEAM

CENTER *for* INDEPENDENT LIVING

STAFF MEMBERS



Joyce Blair
Administrative Specialist



Izzie Bullock
Employment Program
Manager



Eliot Carter, LLSMW
Advocacy & Technology
Access Program
Coordinator



Eleanor Chang, LSMW
Information & Referral
Specialist



**Shannon Clark,
LSMW, CWIP**
Information & Referral
Program Manager



Renee Echols, LLSMW
Information & Referral
Specialist



Eric Evans
Youth &
Pre-Employment Transition
Specialist



Alex Gossage
Executive Director



Shawnnika Guenther
Community Transition
Specialist



Andrea Henry
Business Operations
Manager



Kim Jagiolo
Community Transition
Specialist



Krystina Johnson
Community Program
Manager



**Tennery McCutcheon,
MS, CWIP**
Employment Program
Manager



Kelly Meadows
Director - Monroe



Karen Meints
Disability Awareness
Workshop Coordinator



Josh Nocella
Computer Training
Specialist



Will Purves, MS, GCGSS
Director of Planning &
Program Development



Felicia Rebottaro
Independent Living
Coach & Employment
Specialist



Amy Robinson
Information & Referral
Specialist



Jean Strzempek, LLBSW
Community Transition
Team Lead

NOT PICTURED

Robin Bennett
IL Program Assistant

Tara Farris
Employment Coordinator

Cynthia Harrison
Returning Citizens Program Manager

Bev Mattinson
Director of Finance & Administration

CENTER *for* INDEPENDENT LIVING

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