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NEW YORK STATE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL, INC.

NYSILC

empowering new yorkers with disabilities

NYSILC News, January 2026

Profiles in Generosity

Meet our NYS Disability Rights Hall of Fame sponsors and other NYSILC donors and supporters. Their generosity enables our success!

This month we're featuring the **Center for Disability Rights (CDR)**:

The Center for Disability Rights, Inc. (CDR) is a not-for-profit, community-based advocacy and service organization for people with all types of disabilities.

CDR uses a peer model where people with disabilities show other people with disabilities how to live independently and advocate for themselves. The Center for Disability Rights, Inc. continues to be a unique fusion of advocacy and supportive services.

Visit their website for more information.

NYAIL Budget Advocacy Day

Nothing About Us Without Us!

Date: February 9, 2026

📍 **Location:** The Well inside the Legislative Office Building, 198 State St, Albany, NY, US, 12207

📢 Registration Is Now Open!

The **New York Association on Independent Living** is excited to announce that registration is now open for our **2026 Budget Advocacy Day** in Albany on **February 9**.

Each year, advocates, Independent Living Centers, and partners from across New York State come together to elevate disability priorities directly with state legislators. Budget Advocacy Day is a powerful opportunity to advance civil rights, community integration, and consumer-controlled services during a critical moment in the legislative session.

Whether you're a seasoned advocate or participating for the first time, your voice matters. Join us as we work collectively to ensure disability issues remain front and center throughout the state budget process.

👉 **Register today and be part of the movement.**
Together, we make impact happen!

2025 NYC Voter Accessibility and Experience Survey

The New York City Comptroller's Office is surveying NYC voters about voting accessibility and their experience during the 2025 General Election, either during Early Voting (October 25, 2025 through November 2, 2025) or on Election Day (November 4, 2025).

We value your feedback and kindly ask that you complete a brief survey by January 30, 2026. Please note that you are not required to answer all questions to complete the survey and that your individual responses will be kept confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Click here to complete the survey.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

Support NCIL's Project Independent Living

Safeguarding Independence in Uncertain Times

For more than 40 years, the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL) has worked to ensure that people with disabilities have the same right as anyone else: to live independently, in their own homes, and as part of their communities.

Today, that right faces new uncertainty. Shifts in federal funding and oversight have created instability for the nationwide network of **Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs)**.

Learn more and donate here.

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DISABILITY EMPOWHER NETWORK

Leadership Retreat for Disabled Women

When: **Friday, March 20-Sunday, March 22, 2026**
Where: Rochester, NY - Strathallan
Cost: $475 Registration

*Registration fee includes most meals, two night hotel stay, welcome bag, and workshop materials.

The Leadership Retreat is an annual event empowering disabled women and feminine-aligned nonbinary leaders to develop their leadership skills , build connections, work towards professional and personal goals, and drive change in their communities.

This immersive retreat offers participants the opportunity to engage in dynamic workshops, interactive activities, and group challenges led by accomplished disabled women. Topics range from leadership development and goal setting to self advocacy and public speaking.

The retreat fosters a supportive and inclusive environment where participants can share experiences, exchange ideas, and forge lasting relationships. Attendees leave with renewed confidence, actionable plans for the future, and a strengthened sense of community, ready to lead with impact and inspire others.

Here's the link to learn more or register.

EmpowHER Camp Applications Are Open

EmpowHer Camp begins with a week camping in the mountains, where participants learn survival, leadership, and independent living skills. At camp, young leaders are matched with their mentors and make lasting memories around the campfire.

Through EmpowHer Camp, Young Leaders connect with mentors & other youth with disabilities. Participants also learn basic survival skills, practice leadership, build confidence, and gain independent living skills.

EmpowHer Camp is for disabled girls and feminine-aligned youth ages 13-18. We also accept applicants older than 18 if they are still in high school. Our program includes individuals with all types of disabilities.

After the camping trip, each participant will work on a year-long community project that will grow their disability advocacy, communication, and leadership skills. Mentors will support their young leader mentees throughout this project.

After a year of mentorship and working on impactful projects, young leaders and their mentors reunite in Washington, D.C. for a week of building their leadership skills, connecting with disabled women leaders, advocacy, and some sightseeing in D.C.

EmpowHer Camp's impact on participants lasts long after the year of programming. All graduates of EmpowHer Camp join our Alumni Network, where we continue to support each alumni and provide educational and fun workshops and events. We have supported alumni in their pursuit of college, jobs, scholarships, and more.

Applications are open until February 18th. Apply Here.

Join Team SBANYS in the 2026 NYC Half Marathon!

Are you interested in running the 2026 United Airlines New York City Half Marathon?

The Spina Bifida Association of New York State (SBANYS) has been granted five bibs for this exciting race on Sunday, March 15, 2026 at 7am.

Join Team SBANYS and help support the programs and advocacy for individuals and families affected by Spina Bifida across New York State. You can apply in one of two ways:

Apply directly by completing and submitting the attached application below to julia.duff@sbanys.org.

Application Form
You can apply via the link below and Julia will send you the full application to complete.

Register Here!
First come first serve – apply soon to secure your bib and race for a cause that matters!

Attention Young Adults with Disabilities - We have $1,000 Scholarships available!

Our Pat Figueroa Scholarship program provides funding for young adults with disabilities to attend and participate in independent living related conferences and/or national disability and leadership trainings.

Are you a Center for Independent Living (CIL) or other organization working with young adults? Please share this information with your young adult consumers!

Learn more and apply here!

Accessible Food Pantries and Resources in New York State

This holiday season, we're sharing some information about accessible food pantries and other food resources throughout New York State, organized by region.

Find the list on the NYSILC website..

This is part of an ongoing project to build a comprehensive resource aimed at helping people identify which food pantries, kitchens, and other resources in their region are accessible.

If you know of a resource in your area not listed, please email Amy at **awink@nysilc.org**.

Let Us Share Your News!

We'd love to help spread the news about your NYS Independent Living Center (ILC) or disability-related organization.

If you have information about a service, event, or news you would like us to share, please email Amy Wink at awink@nysilc.org.

Thank you!

Upcoming NYSILC events/activities:

Next NYSILC Full Council Meeting - **Friday, March 27, 2026** from 9:30am to 2pm at the Wolf Road Marriott in Albany and remotely via Zoom.

Please visit https://nysilc.org/council/meetings-calendar for details.

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