



# NYSILC NEWS BRIEFS

The New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC) is a champion of systemic change promoting opportunities and full participation in all aspects of society for people with disabilities.

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**Editors note:** Below is the first of an anticipated series of articles on Best Practices at Independent Living Centers statewide. Please contact Patty or Joe at (518) 427 1060 if you know of a program or class deserving special recognition.

“People with disabilities and the elderly need to be better equipped with a greater understanding of financial matters,” says Brett Eisenberg, the executive director at the Bronx Independent Living. With the support of the Bethex Credit Union in the Bronx, and utilizing a curriculum developed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), BILS staffer Stephanie Ortiz began offering a new course last year at BILS about our money and banking systems. The class is being taught in American Sign Language (ASL). An overview of the banking and financial system was presented at the first class. Subsequent topics have included “balancing your checkbook,”



“managing your money,” “avoiding debt and getting out of debt,” “making critical financial decisions” and “understanding mortgages and other loan products.” Each week a test is given before and after class to measure the effectiveness of the lesson. The course described is part of a much larger initiative on literary programs in partnership with the Bronx Literary Zone. Literary Zones are a reform initiative developed jointly by the State Board of Regents and the State Education Department to promote English literacy and proficiency in urban and rural communities of concentrated poverty and educational achievement gaps. As part of this initiative, BILS staff has been offering Basic Education and GED classes in ASL at the Highbridge Community Life Center Adult Education facility. In addition, hearing impaired students are offered case management services. By both working with the consumers in the classroom and addressing needs at home, staff helps to ensure that students are able to manage multi-faceted challenges and complete the program.

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## NYSILC 2012 Public Policy Agenda Featured Highlights

*April 2012*

The New York State Independent Living Council (NYSILC) is an independent federally mandated state council that advances Independent Living philosophy through the network of Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) and statewide partnerships by engaging in and or supporting research, education, employment, community organization, advocacy, and systems reform. Its primary duty is to jointly develop the three-year Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) and conduct ongoing activities related to the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the plan and Independent Living Services as described in Section 705 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act as amended in 1992. NYSILC, in its planning function, and work with statewide stakeholders on a wide variety of issues impacting New Yorkers with disabilities, has found it necessary to develop a public policy agenda to articulate and support common issues that are important to the statewide network and the significant population they serve for the purposes of public education and awareness

Need Statement: It has been more than 20 years since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Much progress has been made. However, New Yorkers with disabilities still face discrimination in their lives. They also face some significant barriers. What does it mean to be a New Yorker with a disability? Based on U.S. Census data from the most recent American Community Survey, here is what we know:

- There are at least 2 million New Yorkers with disabilities over the age of 5 living in the community. This does not account for the infant to 5 population, institutionalized individuals or active military personnel.
- Out of these numbers, there are 928,961 civilian veterans age 18 or older living in the community in New York State. 232,805 of these individuals have a disability or 25.1%.
- The poverty rate for New Yorkers with disabilities is (28.6%) which is more than twice that of persons in our state without disabilities (12.3%).
- The employment rate for a New Yorker with a disability is 31.2% compared to 72% for a person without a disability resulting in a gap of 40.8% (ages 18-64).
- For median earnings of civilians age 16 or older during the last 12 months, New Yorkers with disabilities on the average earned \$10,903 less compared to a person without a disability (\$21,581 versus \$32,484).
- For students with disabilities ages 14-21 during the last 12 months, it was reported that they left New York State schools for the following reasons: 52% (15,937) graduated with diplomas, 21% (6,277) received certificates, 26% (7,788) dropped out, and 1% (390) died or aged out.

The following agenda looks to address some of the discrimination and need faced by **New Yorkers** with disabilities in the areas of education, civil rights, housing, transportation, long-term care, health care, and employment:

## State Issues

### Education

- Support State legislation to be introduced comparable to the Federal TEAM Acts to make improvements to the IEP process and facilitate the transition of youth with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, from the secondary school system into adulthood.

### Civil Rights

- Support State legislation to incorporate Title II of ADA into NYS Human Rights Law. (A.71/S.2407).
- Support State legislation to amend State Social Services Law Section 384-b to eliminate subdivisions (4) (c) and (6) (a-e), which permit termination of parental rights on the basis of mental illness or mental retardation (S.3026).

### Housing

- Support State legislation prohibiting rental discrimination based on source of income under the State Human Rights Law (A.1121B/S.83A).
- Support State legislation to be introduced to incorporate inclusive design features in new residential housing that receives financial assistance for construction from federal, state, county or local governments.

### Long-Term Care

- Support State implementation of the Community First Choice Option (CFC). Adoption of CFC which will ensure the State draws down an additional 6% Federal Medical Assistance for services provided under the Option. CFC should serve as the centerpiece in an aggressive Olmstead implementation strategy to ensure the right of individuals with disabilities to be served in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. CFC will change lives and save the State Medicaid dollars.

### Health Care

- Support the recommendation from mental health advocates to direct reinvestment of state savings from proposed psychiatric hospital closings into community wellness, prevention, and supports.

## Federal Issues

### Education

- Support Federal legislation preventing harmful restraint and seclusion in schools (H.R.1381/S.2020).

### Civil Rights

- Support Reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. The Rehabilitation Act is an important civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all activities of the Federal government and any entities receiving funding from the Federal government. The Act has not been reauthorized since 1998. The Rehabilitation Act needs to be reauthorized immediately with amendments that maximize the impact and potential of the Independent Living Program.

### Housing

Support Federal legislation to be introduced that is comparable to the Inclusive Home Design Act (formerly H.R.1408) requiring newly constructed, federally assisted single family houses and town houses including at least one level that complies with accessibility features for persons with disabilities to make housing available, preventing unnecessary expenses for renovations and allowing seniors to age Transportation

- Support Federal reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA) authorizing funds for highways, highway safety and transit programs, and paratransit, including fixed route and demand responsive services. This reauthorization is critical to providing equal access to public transportation in accordance with the ADA.

### Long-Term Care

- Support Federal legislation to be introduced comparable to the Community Choice Act (formerly H.R.1670/S.683) to require states to offer community-based per year.

### Employment

- Support Federal legislation related to the Fair Wages for Workers with Disabilities Act to aid competitive employment for persons with disabilities (H.R.3086).
- Support Federal legislation related to the SSI Savers Act of 2011 (H.R. 2103).

## **2012 Assessment of Top Training & Technical Assistance Needs**

In April 2012, NYSILC sent out a request to the New York CIL network to complete a survey on Survey Monkey to assess (by selecting up to twelve) important technical assistance and training needs from the federal 704 report listing. This survey was followed up with a second notice at the end of April, and a total of twenty-five centers responded. These centers prioritized their training and technical assistance needs as follows out of the following 21 topic areas:

1. Innovative Programs/Best Practices – **14 Responses**
2. Advocacy/Systems Advocacy – **11 Responses**
3. Resource Development/Fee-for-Service Approaches – **10 Responses**
4. CIL Board of Directors/Recruiting & Increasing Involvement – **9 Responses**
5. Networking Strategies/Electronic (Social Media) – **9 Responses**
6. Applicable Laws/Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 – **8 Responses**
7. Assistive Technologies/General Overview – **8 Responses**
8. Evaluation/Community Needs Assessment – **7 Responses**
9. Evaluation/Outcome Measures – **7 Responses**
10. Program Planning/First Line CIL Supervisor Skills Building – **7 Responses**
11. Program Planning/Team Building – **7 Responses**
12. Advocacy/Community Grassroots Organizing – **6 Responses**
13. Advocacy/Legislative Process – **6 Responses**
14. Applicable Laws/General Overview and Promulgation of Various Disability Laws – **6 Responses**
15. Data Collecting and Reporting/Dual Reporting Requirements – **6 Responses**
16. Marketing and Public Relations/Community Awareness – **6 Responses**
17. Program Planning/CIL Executive Directorship Skills Building – **6 Responses**
18. Resource Development/Diversification of Funding Base – **6 Responses**
19. Resource Development/For Profit Subsidiaries – **6 Responses**
20. Resource Development/Grant Writing – **6 Responses**
21. Volunteer Programs/General Overview – **6 Responses**

**You are Invited to:**

***Art and Edibles for the Disability VOTE***

**Saturday, July 28 3 PM – 6 PM**

At the Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley (ILCHV) <http://www.ilchv.org/hvlocate.htm>

A Silent Auction to Benefit the Non-Partisan Rensselaer County

Get out the Disability Vote Project

This is a joint project of the ILCHV and Voting Access Solutions with the purpose of doing voter registrations and voter education for person's with disabilities who live in Rensselaer County.

For more information contact Susan Cohen at 518-495-5787

Or [votingaccesssolutions@gmail.com](mailto:votingaccesssolutions@gmail.com)