

# ILCs ARE AT THE FRONTLINES

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**People with disabilities are providing vital advocacy and services during this public health crisis.**

Independent Living Centers (ILCs), which are run by and for people with disabilities, are adapting to the needs of their local communities by addressing emerging needs and offering support to many New Yorkers most at risk. Any funding cuts to already underfunded centers will limit their ability to serve their communities and help people with disabilities through this crisis.

## PERFORMING ESSENTIAL WORK FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND OLDER ADULTS

- ✓ **Benefits Counseling** – Providing one on one advisement to people adjusting to changes in work or living situations and helping them navigate the complex service system.
- ✓ **Peer Counseling** – Peers are addressing mental wellness issues created by COVID-19 and checking in with consumers to gauge community and individual needs.
- ✓ **Independent Living Skills** – Helping people adjust to the current environment while meeting new obstacles at home and in the community, such as obtaining food and medication.
- ✓ **Transitioning people from institutions** – ILCs have been addressing the nursing home crisis by continuing their vital work to get people out of nursing facilities and other institutions and back home with their loved ones. The demand for this service is expected to increase exponentially given the horrid health and safety concerns in institutions during this pandemic.

New York's network of ILCs provide these critical Independent Living services to **more than 100,000 people with disabilities every year.**

**Cuts to Funding will Severely Limit ILCs Ability to Meet the Challenges of COVID-19 for People with Disabilities.**



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# ILCS HAVE A PROVEN RECORD OF PROVIDING COMMUNITY-BASED ASSISTANCE ON ISSUES CENTRAL TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

ILCs are unique in that they are designed to adapt to the needs of their community, not duplicate existing services.

Here's just a few examples of how centers are responding to the crisis in their communities:

Some ILCs are providing people in nursing facilities who are isolated from their loved ones and support systems with ways to connect virtually. "We have been loaning out iPads to local nursing facilities with whom we have relationships. It has been working out so far and the facilities are trying to be very responsible for the usage. We recently purchased a few more iPads and plan to get them out as soon as we can. The families are so appreciative to have a way to communicate face-to-face with their loved ones." – **Southern Adirondack Independent Living Center (SAIL)**

During a time when it is both extremely difficult and dangerous for many people with disabilities to get their own groceries, ILCs are here to help! **Western New York Independent Living, Inc.** is utilizing limited existing accessible transportation capabilities to help deliver groceries to people who cannot do their own shopping.

**Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled** is distributing personal protection equipment in cooperation with the New York City Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities.

**ARISE** in Syracuse is using their Adaptive Design resources to make personal protection equipment using 3D printers! With help from teams in Oswego and Cayuga counties, over 700 face shields have been distributed so far to hospitals, nursing homes and emergency responders.

**BRIDGES** in Rockland County is hosting regular virtual support groups for the community. Using Zoom, BRIDGES is providing a platform for people with disabilities to come together and provide support to each other as they struggle through the many challenges brought on by COVID-19.

The **Center for Disability Rights** in Rochester is helping people get out of nursing facilities, the most dangerous place for people to be right now, by partnering with local officials and tapping into available resources and their own community-based services. They are getting people a safe place to stay by utilizing FEMA non-congregate sheltering funds to allow these individuals and their caregivers to self-quarantine in a local hotel or college dormitory.

## ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEPENDENCE EXPRESS



## ASSISTING WITH GROCERY DELIVERY DURING THE PANDEMIC



"I was a resident in a Monroe County nursing facility for 4.5 years. I know exactly what it's like. It was claustrophobic with everyone living on top of each other, and everyone sharing staff. It's exactly what we are being told to avoid... actually it's worse! Our proposal won't save everyone, but it may save someone."

– Bobbi Wallach CDR's most recent Board Chair