



Independent Living Services Program

Office for Independence Services
Rehabilitative and Independence Services
Health, Developmental and Independence Services

What is a Center for Independent Living?

- A consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency that is designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of independent living services.
- There are 27 Centers for Independent Living in Texas.



What do CILs provide?

- Centers for Independent Living offer Core Services that are established by the Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living (ACL).
- Core services include:
 - information and referral services;
 - independent living skills training;
 - peer counseling (including cross-disability peer counseling);
 - individual and systems advocacy; and
 - transition services.
- Many CILs offer services other than core or ILS contract services.



Independent Living Legislation

- 84th Legislative Session, 2015
 - DARS abolished (HB 2463 & SB 200)
 - Independent Living Services (ILS) Blind and General consolidated and moved to HHSC within the Medical and Social Services Division
 - Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) moved to Texas Workforce Commission
 - The ILS program was outsourced to Centers for Independent Living



Independent Living Services

- Independent Living Services (ILS) were outsourced on September 1, 2016 to Centers for Independent Living (CIL) throughout Texas
- All counties in Texas are assigned to one of the contracted centers
- Several Centers have opened satellite offices in communities they serve



What are ILS Contract Services?

- ILS contracted services consist of purchased goods and services necessary to meet an individual's independent living goals.
- Examples:
 - Services for individuals who are blind such as Orientation & Mobility, Diabetes Education and low vision or adaptive devices.
 - Prosthetics & Orthotics
 - Durable Medical Equipment (e.g. walkers, wheelchairs, etc.)



What are ILS Contract Services?

- Examples continued:
 - Home modifications (e.g. grab bars, lift systems and other non-permanent modifications)
 - Vehicle modifications (e.g. hand controls, tie downs, etc.)
 - Hearing Aids and other hearing devices



What is the ILS Process?

- Referral
- Application
- Eligibility Determination
- Assessments and Independent Living Plan Development
- Service Provision
- Waiting list placement (if funding is not available)



Eligibility for ILS

- To be eligible for independent living services, a consumer must:
 - have a significant disability (as defined by federal regulation)
 - be present in Texas and
 - be able to benefit from services and reach independent living goals.
- Definition of significant disability -- A severe physical, mental, cognitive, or sensory impairment that substantially limits an individual's ability to function independently in the family or community.



Comparable Benefits

- During the assessment, the CIL will gather information to determine if there are any other insurances, programs or community resources that can assist with the services.
- Comparable benefits must be utilized before applying ILS funds. Examples of comparable benefits:
 - waiver programs (e.g. CBA, MDCCP, CLASS)
 - private insurance
 - Medicaid or Medicare
 - community resources (e.g. Texas Ramp Project)



Consumer Participation in Cost of Services

- The provision of ILS services requires consumer participation in the cost of services, in accordance to the HHSC fee schedule.
- Diagnostics and evaluations are completed without cost to the consumer.
- The HHSC fee schedule uses federal poverty guidelines to determine the percentage of consumer participation.
- All consumer participation funds collected by CILs are utilized by that CIL to provide services under the ILS contract.



Completion of Services

- ILS contracted services are designed to be short term and provide specific services.
- There is a potential for a waiting list for complex rehabilitation services such as, power wheelchairs, prosthetics, home modifications, etc.
- Upon completion of services, a consumer's case is closed.



HHSC Staff

- The Independent Living Program is located in the Office of Independence under Rehabilitation and Independence Services at HHSC. The staff consists of:
 - Director, Office of Independence, Keisha Rowe
 - Contract Manager, Bradley Westbrook
 - Policy Program Specialist, Michelle Pruneda
 - Training and Technical Assistance Unit Supervisor, Laurie Pryor
 - Compliance Unit Supervisor, Debbie Gatica



Training & Technical Assistance Unit

- The training and technical assistance unit is comprised of 11 program specialists and a supervisor, Laurie Pryor.
- The TA Unit provides technical assistance to CILs to assist them in meeting the contract obligations. This is most frequently answering questions about Standards and services as well as assisting them in the complex rehabilitation purchasing process.
- The TA also provides training via CIL site visits, telephone and monthly webinars to CIL staff.



Compliance Unit

- Compliance unit is comprised of 8 compliance specialists and a supervisor, Debbie Gatica.
- Compliance specialists complete monthly activities related to financials such as invoices and advances/reimbursements.
- Compliance completes programmatic and financial monitoring via desk reviews and on-site monitoring visits.



Office of the Ombudsman

- The Office of the Ombudsman is available to consumers if they have concerns about their services at a Center for Independent Living.

- Contact information:

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

Office of the Ombudsman

MC H-700; P O Box 13247

Austin, TX78711-3247

1-877-787-8999 or Relay Texas 7-1-1 or

1-800-735-2989

fax: 1-888-780-8099



Client Assistance Program

- The Client Assistance Program at Disability Rights is available to consumers if they have concerns about their services from a Center for Independent Living.
- Contact Information:
 - phone: 1-800-252-9108
 - videophone: 1-866-362-2851



ILS Program Information

- HHSC Independent Living Services Website: <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/disability/independent-living-services>
- Independent Living Services Standards for Providers: <https://hhs.texas.gov/laws-regulations/handbooks/independent-living-services-standards-providers>



Questions?

For questions after this presentation:

- Contact your local Center for Independent Living for answers to questions about the specific services they offer and consumer issues.
- Contact the training and technical assistance specialist assigned to the specific Center for Independent Living.



Thank you

Laurie Pryor, LBSW
Training & Technical Assistance Supervisor
laurie.pryor@hhsc.state.tx.us
817-588-2441