



Minnesota Statewide
Independent Living Council

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

October 1, 2023 - September 30, 2024



WHAT IS THE MINNESOTA STATEWIDE Independent Living Council?



The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) are Minnesota citizens recruited from around the state and representing various ethnic groups, ages, disabilities, and backgrounds.

Members are appointed by the Governor to serve a one, two or three year term. MNSILC is federally funded as authorized under Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. More than 51% of MNSILC members identify as having a disability.

MNSILC is responsible for creating, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating a State Plan for Independent Living and promoting the services of the eight centers for independent living. Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are community-based, cross-disability, non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to a strict philosophy of consumer control. People with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization. Centers for Independent Living provide: Peer Support, Information and Referral, Individual and Systems Advocacy, Independent Living Skills Training, and Transition.

More information about MNSILC, including how to apply to serve on the council, is available on the MNSILC website at mn.gov/deed/silc.

The 2024-2027 State Plan for Independent Living can be found on the MNSILC website at mn.gov/deed/silc

ABOUT US

MNSILC Mission

MNSILC is responsible for creating, monitoring, reviewing and evaluating a State Plan for Independent Living and promoting the services of the eight centers for independent living.

Minnesota Independent Living Network

The Minnesota Independent Living Network refers to the entire independent living community including individuals with disabilities, the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC), the eight Minnesota Centers for Independent Living (CILs), the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development/Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DSE) and State Services for the Blind (SSB). The MNILNET can be found on Facebook at facebook.com/MNILNET.

MNSILC Vision

The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council has a vision that the independent living philosophy is fully integrated into communities and systems throughout Minnesota and that individuals with disabilities have every opportunity to be self-directed, to live a lifestyle of their choice, free from discrimination and to thrive as members of inclusive and diverse communities.

2024 MNSILC Members

Robyn Block
Paulo Matheus Carvalho Chaves de Castro
Jennifer Clement
Joseph Dailey
Monique Doward
Rosalie Eisenreich
Deborah Gleason
KiloMarie Granda
Crystal Hellekson
Karen Larson
Stephen Larson
Ed Lecher
Linda Lingen
Larry Lura
Amy McClellan
Dr. Mohamed Mourssi-Alfash
Tom Reed
John Rheinberger
Judy Sanders
Jacob Schuller
Michele Severson
Brad Westerlund



MESSAGE FROM THE MNSILC Chair

Deborah GLEASON

Letter from the MNSILC Chair

I am pleased to present the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council's (MNSILC) Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. It has been my honor to serve as Chairperson for this past year and it has been a wonderful learning experience. The members of the MNSILC are dedicated to promoting the Independent Living Philosophy through collaboration with its partners and other Independent Living Network supporters. We made great strides to embrace that this past year in all our activities and I am very excited about the projects that are in the works.

MNSILC members are appointed by Governor Tim Walz and this year we were pleased to welcome back members Robin Block of Good Thunder and Linda Lingen of Saint Paul as well as welcome new member John Rheinberger of Stillwater and ex-officio members Michelle Severson, representing the Minnesota Council on Disability and Anne Paulson representing the Department of Employment and Economic Development/Vocational Rehabilitation. (DEED/VRS)

This year we created a new State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) for October 2024 through September 2027. MNSILC does this in collaboration with all eight Centers for Independent Living (CILS), Independent Living Partners, DEED/VRS and input from the public to create a comprehensive plan of action for the next three years. I am grateful for the hard work, input, and powerful conversations we all had. We came up with what I believe is a solid plan that can make positive progress in the independent living movement. We are putting a strong emphasis on advocacy, youth engagement, education, and systemic sustainability.

LETTER

We made good progress on collaboration and will be continuing our efforts to engage even more. We are excited to have representatives from CILs and other non-council members now taking part on our committees. These additions have enriched the conversations and ignited action. All are welcome to be members of committees.

The eight Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in Minnesota provide direct services to people of all ages and disabilities. While each CIL has services unique to its area, all eight are mandated to provide five core services. Those services are advocacy, information and referral, independent living skills, peer support and mentoring, and transition. This year MNSILC visited two of our centers. In May, Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living, Inc. (SEMCIL), where we heard from the staff, toured the facility, and then toured their new all-inclusive play space Boundless. In September, Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL), where we heard from the staff and had an educational tour of their facility.

This year Minnesota had a great presence at the National Council for Independent Living Council (NCIL) Conference from several of the CILs and MNSILC. Those in person were able to attend educational sessions and march to the capital. While a few people had plans derailed by the global IT issues, we were able to virtually meet with most of our MN senators and representatives to share information about things affecting the independent living community.

We have additional new members joining the council soon and look forward to their perspectives. We are continuing to recruit new members. Please apply at the Secretary of State Website.

In January 2025 new officers were elected. Robyn Block was elected as Chair; KiloMarie Granda, Vice Chair; and Monique Doward, Parliamentarian.

It has been my honor to serve as chair of MNSILC this past year. While my term on the council ended January 6, 2025, I plan to remain active on the Advocacy and Outreach Committees.

I look forward to continuing to collaborate with the council and the CILs and promoting independent living.

In partnership,

Deborah Gleason | MNSILC Chair

WHY RECREATION IS IMPORTANT TO Independent Living

The Minnesota Association for Independent Living (MACIL) defines independent living as: “Essentially, it is living just like everyone else—having opportunities to make decisions that affect one’s life, able to pursue activities of one’s own choosing—limited only in the same ways that one’s non-disabled neighbors are limited.”

Recreation and play are key factors in achieving the goal of living the life of one’s choosing. We at MNSILC decided to focus this Annual Report on the successes we have in recreation and enlightenment about options available. We also want to take an opportunity to educate about why it is so important for all to have the chance to play, move, and participate without barriers.

Just a few of the benefits:

- **Enhancing Quality of Life:** Recreation is essential for overall well-being. It supports mental and physical health, reduces stress, and brings joy, which aligns with the Independent Living (IL) philosophy of empowering individuals to live fulfilling lives.
- **Promoting Independence:** Recreational activities provide opportunities for skill-building, personal growth, and decision-making, reinforcing autonomy and self-determination—core values of the IL movement.
- **Building Community Connections:** Recreation fosters social engagement, reducing isolation and helping build networks of support. This is vital in creating inclusive communities where people with disabilities can thrive.

- **Celebrating Diversity of Experience:** Recreational choices reflect the diverse interests of the community. Supporting various activities respects individuality and reinforces the IL movement’s commitment to choice and respect for personal preferences.
- **Holistic Approach to Independence:** Recreation is a key piece of the IL philosophy, supporting not only physical independence but also emotional, social, and mental well-being.

MNSILC works in partnership with the 8 Centers for Independent Living to promote these ideas. We ask that you, as a part of daily decision making, incorporate these ideas into your work. This allows for a continuous building of inclusive communities. Supporting recreation options (and ALL independent living work) does require resources, and it’s valuable for state planning processes to consider independent living principles in regular and annual assessments of resource needs.

We hope you enjoy the stories and are looking forward to your partnering to keep the momentum going.



ACCESS NORTH

Accessible Deer Hunt 2024: A Heartwarming Success

Access North hosted its 5th Annual Accessible Deer Hunt at McCarthy Beach State Park on October 25th and 26th, creating a meaningful experience for ten hunters—five of whom were service veterans. This cherished event, centered on safety, fellowship, and enjoyment, owes its success to the dedication of staff, volunteers, and the support of our generous community.

Throughout the two-day event, our team worked tirelessly to ensure each hunter felt safe, comfortable, and prepared. Our support team went above and beyond by scouting optimal hunting locations and providing essentials such as deer blinds, hunt chairs, heaters, shooting sticks, and more. Volunteers assisted with tracking, field dressing, and deboning harvested animals, while also preparing and serving all meals, snacks, and beverages to keep participants fueled for the adventure.

One highlight this year was a successful harvest by a hunter using a crossbow, who then shared the venison with other hunters, reflecting the camaraderie that defines this event. Though several hunters spotted deer, they refrained from taking uncertain shots, demonstrating their shared commitment to safe and ethical hunting practices. For many, the hunt provides not only an opportunity to harvest deer but also a chance to connect with nature, find peace, and enjoy the outdoors. One participant mentioned that this annual hunt is his only opportunity each year to quiet his mind and immerse himself in nature—a sentiment echoed by many who expressed gratitude for the experience.

This year, three Action Track Chairs provided by McCarthy Beach State Park enhanced accessibility for hunters, enabling easier navigation of the rugged terrain. These chairs were a big hit, adding both adventure and comfort to the hunt. We extend our deep thanks to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for their invaluable partnership in making this possible.



Fundraising plays a crucial role in making the Accessible Deer Hunt possible each year. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we cover expenses for hunters, including lodging, equipment, food, and beverages. This year's fundraising success allowed us to purchase a hydraulic deer lift from New Height Technology, based in Alexandria, Minnesota. This innovative lift elevates hunters about six feet for improved visibility and is mobile, accommodating track chairs to create an inclusive hunting experience.

We were also delighted to welcome staff from the Southwest Center for Independent Living (SWCIL), who joined us to observe and learn our procedures firsthand. SWCIL hopes to organize a similar accessible hunt in southwestern Minnesota next fall, and we wish them every success as they work toward expanding these opportunities.

The Accessible Deer Hunt remains a highlight of the year, bringing people together to create lasting memories, foster gratitude, and strengthen the community. We look forward to building on this success and creating even more accessible outdoor adventures in the years to come.

FREEDOM RESOURCE CENTER

Nurturing Independence Through Peer Mentorship

We reflect on the incredible impact Freedom Resource Center (FRC) has had on individuals with disabilities, thanks in part to the dedicated individuals who make up our community. One such person is Glorias, a cherished member of our Peer Mentor program, whose journey with FRC began even before our doors officially opened in Fergus Falls. When asked about her ongoing support for Freedom, Glorias shared, “FRC is such a fun place, and I always feel so welcome & supported here. They help so many people with disabilities in various aspects of life, from housing and employment to budgeting and decluttering.”

But what exactly is a Peer Mentor? A Peer Mentor is a person with a disability who volunteers to assist others in achieving specific goals they set for themselves. This unique support system is built on the belief that individuals with disabilities, living independently, working, or actively participating in their community, are the best resources to help others on a similar journey. Peer Mentors like Glorias bring unparalleled insight and personal experiences to the table, serving as invaluable guides through difficult periods, new challenges, and current issues or problems.

Glorias exemplifies the qualities of a good mentor — a desire to help others, mentoring skills rooted in coaching and teaching, positive experiences with mentors in her life, and a spotless reputation. She explained, “Many years ago, I went to school and learned that I could help people as I am such a good listener.” As a Peer Mentor, Glorias not only lends a listening ear but also offers support, guidance, and assistance to those working toward their goals.

Volunteering as a Peer Mentor isn’t just about giving; it’s a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and experience. Glorias emphasized the joy of realizing that the role isn’t just about helping others but also about personal growth. “Because it goes back and forth,” she explained. “You think your role is to help them, but then you realize all the new things you’ve done and learned. It is fun!”

The impact of Peer Mentoring is beneficial, ranging from increased socialization skills and boosted self-esteem to providing a relatable connection for someone going through similar situations. Peer Mentors play a pivotal role in assisting and guiding individuals in the areas they need the most.



INDEPENDENT LIFESTYLES, INC. A CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (ILICIL)

Recreational Activities

Accessible recreation is key to ensuring that people with disabilities have opportunities for social engagement in their communities. Here at Independent Lifestyles, we continue to advocate and to create these opportunities for our consumers, staff, families and communities. We remain committed to breaking down barriers and ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunities. One of the biggest things we hear when talking to someone with a disability is that they lack opportunities for social engagement and often feel isolated. This is heartbreaking and as a community responsive organization and Center for Independent Living we feel compelled to be part of the solution. In response to this, we host several events all year round. We host the following events monthly:

Advocates for Independence – Advocacy committee made up of people with disabilities wanting to make change in our communities.

It's-a-Strike – Accessible Bowling League

Craft Club

Dinner Club

Movie Club

Parkinson's Support Group

Post-Polio Support Group

In addition to these monthly scheduled events, we also hosted several classes open to consumers and the community throughout the year. This year we hosted walk in wellness clinics, emergency preparedness classes and consumer appreciation days. We also hosted a series of computer 101 classes that were amazing!

Independent Lifestyles owns and operates a retreat center in Walker, MN called Camp Bliss. In response to the lack of socialization opportunities for individuals with disabilities we host several disability retreats at Camp Bliss annually. These have been a real hit and have created lifelong friendships and opportunities for inclusion and wellness. Our accessible retreat center offers wellness retreats, fishing tournaments, family retreats, women's retreats, turkey hunts etc. We are so happy to be breaking down barriers and empowering people to live their best lives with our life changing retreats.



Women's retreat at Camp Bliss, Ice House fishing Tournament at Camp Bliss

METROPOLITAN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (MCIL)

Raising Awareness at Summer Events by Nick Wilkie

The summer of 2024 was an active time for the Metropolitan Center for Independent Living (MCIL) community. There were three events specifically that MCIL had the pleasure of being a part of to support our community of people with disabilities.

The first event was that MCIL hosted The Caravan for Disability Freedom & Justice on one of their Minnesota stops. From April to October 2024, the Caravan has been driving across the nation, visiting cities and educating participants in the history of civil and disability rights. This effort promotes awareness for the continued struggle for freedom and justice and build coalitions to address these issues. On the day the caravan arrived, we hosted a voter engagement event alongside our co-hosts REV UP MN, The Arc Minnesota, Minnesota Olmstead Implementation Office, Minnesota Council on Disability, The University of Minnesota Disability Resource Center, and the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council. Disability Viewpoints, a local disability-focused show, was onsite at MCIL doing interviews with people and staff on the importance of efforts like the Caravan and how these events bring people together. It was a great day and opportunity to create positive change.

Another event that MCIL participated in was Disability Pride Day festival at the Capitol. This was the 2nd annual event hosted by Advocating Change Together. The event brought the disability community out in force. There were speakers, vendors, food trucks, entertainment and tons of camaraderie to enjoy. A few MCIL staff made the trek over to the event from our nearby office to share the experience and distribute much-needed Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) such as hand sanitizer and gloves to the public.

And what summer in Minnesota could feel complete without a trip to the famous Minnesota State Fair! MCIL joined our friends at the Minnesota Council on Disability booth for a few days, greeting interested visitors and giving out some “swag bags” filled with PPE. It’s always a delight to grab an ear of roasted corn and meet people from all over the state while representing Independent Living. Through efforts like this, we celebrate people with disabilities and contribute to the healthy recovery of our community.



MSCIL staff at Disability Pride Day Festival



Caravan for Disability Freedom and Justice on display in front of MCIL

OPTIONS INTERSTATE RESOURCE CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

A Change in Direction

Post “Americans with Disabilities Act” Options started to notice a change in people with disabilities feedback from building and community access to wanting increased access to recreation. People in very rural areas have an increased reliance on State and Federal recreation outlets than their urban counterparts. Where a large urban recreation provider may have a pool, trails, accessible play components, and programming, small communities generally do not. Because of this rural people with disabilities rely a great deal on the availability of our State Parks, Federal Forests, and Refuges to provide outdoor access. Due to this Options offers people with disabilities through its website “Options Outdoors” a place they can go that describes an outdoor element’s level of accessibility. One of the frustrations people with disabilities have is after all the effort to go to a place they find it has some feature not attended to that completely blocks their access. It is Options hopes that through the information we provide people will have a better idea of what to expect before getting to a site. Most of the data collected so far details fishing piers, fishing programs, and hunting programs but we hope to initiate the addition of hiking trails shortly. Through the State Independent Living Counsel Options was able to purchase evaluation equipment we are using to evaluate trails within our service area so we can relay this information to the people we serve. The information collected provides a person insight into trail surfaces, cross slopes, grades, resting spots, and obstructions. In addition to physical features Options also increased programming by purchasing adaptive recreation equipment we can show and lend to people so they can find out if it works for them.

This past year was Options 29th year offering people with disabilities an accessible deer hunt. The Hunt is held at Rydell National Wildlife Refuge and offers up to 20 hunters with disabilities the opportunity to hunt. Option has provided this experience to hunters with all types of disabilities including blindness, deafness, mental illness, intellectual disabilities, and physical disabilities. The hunt is designed to mimic to the greatest degree possible the northern Minnesota hunting experience. People not only hunt but also share meals and stories, hunters with disabilities with a great deal of experience are able to share with new hunters with disabilities.



SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SEMCIL)

Boundless Accessible Playground

Founded in 1981, (South Eastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living) SEMCIL is a 501(c)(3) non-residential, non-profit organization that has been serving the southeastern Minnesota community since 1981. Run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities, full inclusion and community participation is the foundation of the work SEMCIL does. SEMCIL partners with individuals to explore the tools and resources they need to challenge and overcome barriers and accomplish their desired goals. Boundless serves as an invitation to learn and grow into a fully inclusive future through play.

It is widely recognized that the social and physical benefits of play are important to all individuals of all ages. Play allows for development in the areas of communication, coordination, problem solving, imagination, and relationship building at a pace that is determined by the individual. Children should have inclusive access to recreational activities in all communities. Parks and playgrounds are spaces that foster this need yet Southeast Minnesota lacks fully accessible play spaces, particularly indoors and in rural communities. While many community and indoor parks and playgrounds have ramp access to play structures, they lack ground level surfacing and access to many of the actual play features, including slides. These design deficiencies hinder engagement, especially for children and their caretakers who have a disability. We've designed Boundless to remove as many barriers as possible and to open the play experience in a new way.

Over the course of our first year, we have had over 120,000 visitors come through the Boundless doors, experience fully accessible recreation, and are proud of the offering we created in Southeastern MN. We will continue to grow our programmatic offerings and are actively working on educating those that chose to visit Boundless about Centers for Independent Living, the import of access, and most importantly, the history and present-day barriers that impact disabled people throughout our communities.



SOUTHERN MINNESOTA INDEPENDENT LIVING ENTERPRISE AND SERVICES (SMILES)

Recreation Program by Anna Johnson

There is a jovial feeling that comes from doing a fun activity. But, there is an indescribable feeling in learning something new and accomplishing what you didn't think would be possible. SMILES, Center for Independent Living (CIL) Recreation Program is designed to really see our consumers. We believe every one of our recreation participants deserves a chance to be known and appreciated. Our recreational program utilizes natural-environmental learning to improve functional skills that can be used in everyday life. We don't offer activities to "pass the time". We meet our participants where they are in life and offer opportunities for them to grow. While participating in our program, consumers are able to hone in on their talents and skills, feel at ease in a community setting, and experience self-accomplishment. As icing on top of the cake, they get the chance to build meaningful relationships, while being mentors and supporters of one another.

2023-2024 provided several fun and educational moments for SMILES, CIL consumers and community members, who identify as having a disability. Some of the recreational events we offer include attending local theatre performances, adaptive waterskiing, bowling, camping, cooking, crafts, volunteering in the community, outings, adaptive bicycle riding, and educational classes. Our most recent educational class was CPR/AED Certification Training for our consumers, taught by Miss Minnesota, Emily Schumacher.



SOUTHWESTERN CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SWCIL) Recreation Opportunities

This year SWCIL has continued to provide recreational, social, and peer development opportunities in an inclusive space for people with disabilities to interact with their family, friends, and other peers. The Marshall Social Rec Volunteer Committee consists of persons with disabilities who plan and facilitate these events based on participant needs and wants. This committee also meets annually to review SWCIL's volunteer position description, IL history and disability awareness training, vulnerable adult reporting, and plans for the upcoming year's events.

Needless to say, those who attend these events enjoy them and look forward to them.



A collage of photos: Spin the wheel at the Lyon County Fair; tie-dye in the park, winner of the ugly sweater contest with Santa.

Themed Group Events

Several of the events SWCIL hosted this year were large group events with various themes, such as “fall ghouls,” “festive sweater,” “spring fling,” and “lu-wow.” In addition to socializing, attendees enjoy music, karaoke, bingo, dancing, crafts, games, refreshments, and the opportunity to win prizes. **134 individuals attended** these events this year.

Host Group Events

SWCIL also hosts small group events for people with disabilities to gather for leisure social time to build natural peer supports. This year **25 people gathered** to enjoy the process of making tie-dye clothing at a local city park.



Disability Awareness Booth

Every August SWCIL also sets up a Disability Awareness Booth at the Lyon County Fair. This year SWCIL **engaged with 273 visitors**, who, in addition to learning about what services the agency provides, can view and interact with several assistive technology items, such as adaptive silverware, braille dice, or electronic pens capable of scanning words from books or other documents into an app that can read them aloud.

“Spin the Wheel” Game

Booth visitors are also given the option to play a “Spin the Wheel” game, where some participants are asked questions aimed at increasing disability awareness, such as “*When was the ADA passed into law?*” or “*Who was the founder of the disability rights movement?*”



Learn + Experience

Other participants spinning the wheel get the chance to experience a simulated disability, such as putting on a headset that simulates visual limitations. Others get to learn a little sign language, choosing from a variety of words or phrases (like “yes” or “no” or “thank you”), or how to spell their name.

Outreach

As part of this outreach, SWCIL **distributed 238 gift bags** (144 included a pass to a grandstand event; 55 included a wristband for riding rides; 39 included sensory items). The sensory bags included fidgets, pop-its, small plush toys, and squishy toys.



STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND (SSB)

Benefits of a Support Group



A client, DP, was seen by counselor Sue to discuss his active involvement in volunteering. During their conversation, Sue asked DP if he would be interested in facilitating a support group within his housing co-op. DP enthusiastically agreed, and soon after, Stacy Shablott met with him to help plan how to bring the support group to life.

DP played a key role in recruiting fellow residents with vision loss, and the group now boasts over 15 members. They meet monthly with a set agenda to address the needs of the community. One of their first actions as a group was to improve the signage at the mailboxes. They found that the original signs were difficult to read, so they replaced them with bold print using a black marker, making them more accessible for those with low vision.

Additionally, the group was instrumental in acquiring a donated CCTV (Closed Circuit Television magnifier). After securing a common area to place it, members were given demonstrations on how to use it. The group has now become an integral part of the building's committee, ensuring that new lighting upgrades are designed to be beneficial for those with low vision.

Group Highlights

Two facilitators now lead the group with ongoing support from Stacy Shablott.

A module-led session led by Stacy covered Charles Bonnet syndrome. Three members disclosed for the first time that they had experienced visual hallucinations but had never shared this with anyone before. One member shared how his hallucinations of parked cars led him to give up driving for safety reasons. This heartfelt discussion led to the group deciding to focus on transportation options in their next session, addressing challenges when one can no longer drive.

Prior to the support group starting, several group members had not received low vision assessments. After attending the support group, they decided to have an assessment. Sue was able to **provide adaptive equipment, including sunglasses and white support canes, to those who needed them.**

Stacy L Shablott, CTRS, Aging Eyes Coordinator, Vision Loss Rehab Specialist

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

THE MINNESOTA COUNCIL ON DISABILITY (MCD)

Summer of Outreach

The Minnesota Council on Disability (MCD) is a small state agency that focuses on policy, training, technical assistance, and outreach for people with disabilities across the state of Minnesota. As usual, MCD has had a busy year, attending and promoting several disability focused events in Minnesota in 2024 within our community network and across social media.

In summer 2024, MCD did the bulk of our outreach. We kicked off by attending the Disability Pride Festival at the Capitol hosted by our partner ACT (Advocating Change Together). Shortly afterward we attended Twin Cities Pride Festival with our friends at the Minnesota Olmstead Implementation Office and Wilderness Inquiry. People loved our rainbow fans that had “Access is Love” stamped across them.

This summer, we attended two fairs, including the Kandiyohi County Fair and then our biggest event of the year, the Minnesota State Fair. With our many partners supporting us at the fair booths, we passed out thousands of disability-focused swag and literature to fair visitors. Our disability posters were a hit as usual with teachers, and people expressed appreciation for our “Disability Pride” buttons and Emergency Preparedness materials.

While at the fairs, we also collected hundreds of responses for our Legislative Survey that we use to understand issues important to Minnesotans with disabilities. We then use the Legislative Survey to inform our public policy work for the following legislative year. 2024 was also the first year that the Kandiyohi County Fair was largely accessible to people who use wheelchairs thanks to partnership with MCD.

MCD supported and promoted two public informational displays this year: the Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities Inclusion Mobile Museum and the Art of Disability Justice Now b AmplifyMN: A Disability Justice Collective by University of Minnesota students.

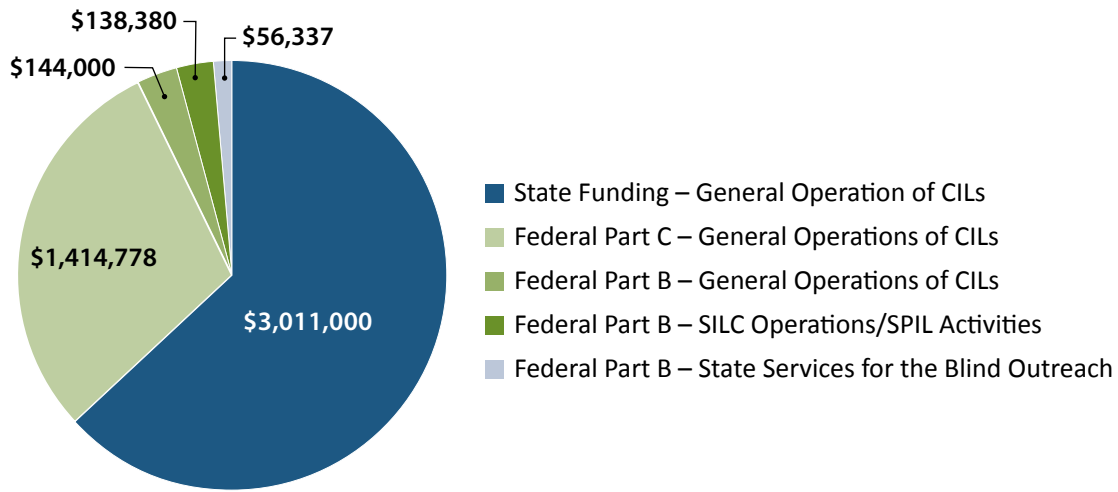
In addition to formal events, MCD continues to support accessibility in recreation at Minnesota State Parks in continued partnership with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and through technical assistance with communities interested in building accessible spaces and playgrounds.

As MCD celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, we hope to continue participating in community events and supporting accessibility for all Minnesotans for many years to come. If you would like MCD to participate in your event, please contact MCD ex-officio member to MNSILC michele.severson@state.mn.us.



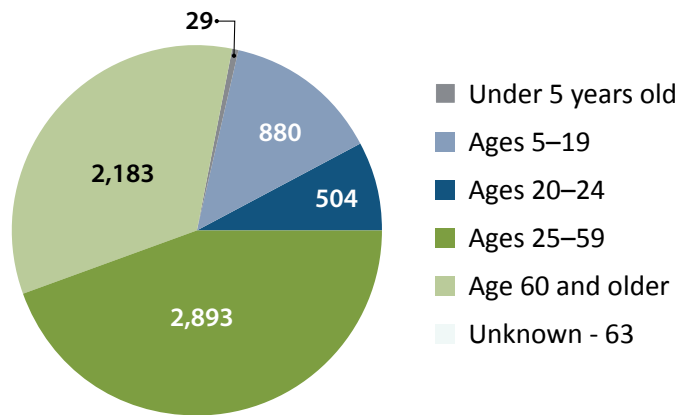
BY THE NUMBERS & MAP OF MINNESOTA

Independent Living Funding Distribution

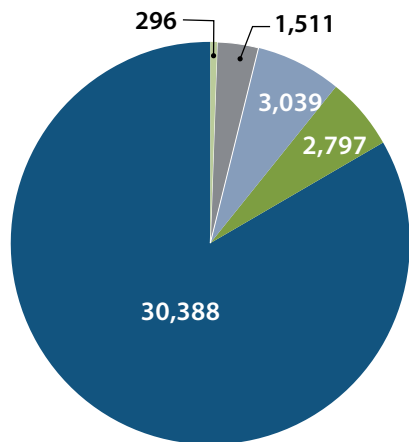


Total Number of People Served by Centers for Independent Living

In FFY 2024, 6,552 individuals were served by Minnesota’s eight CILs. The total number of requested and received IL services during this reporting period was 46,942.

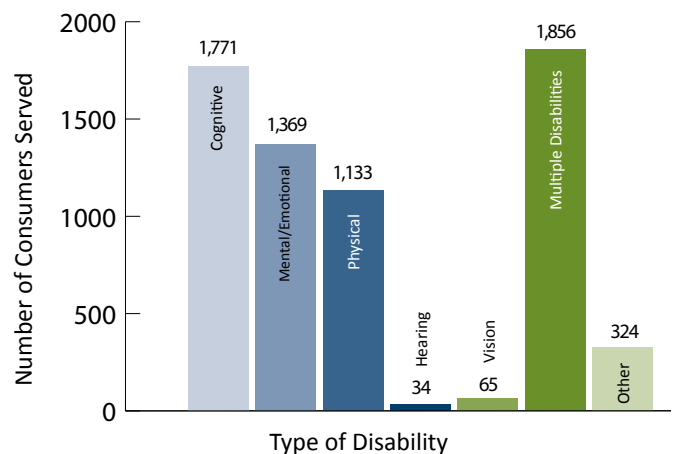


Core Services

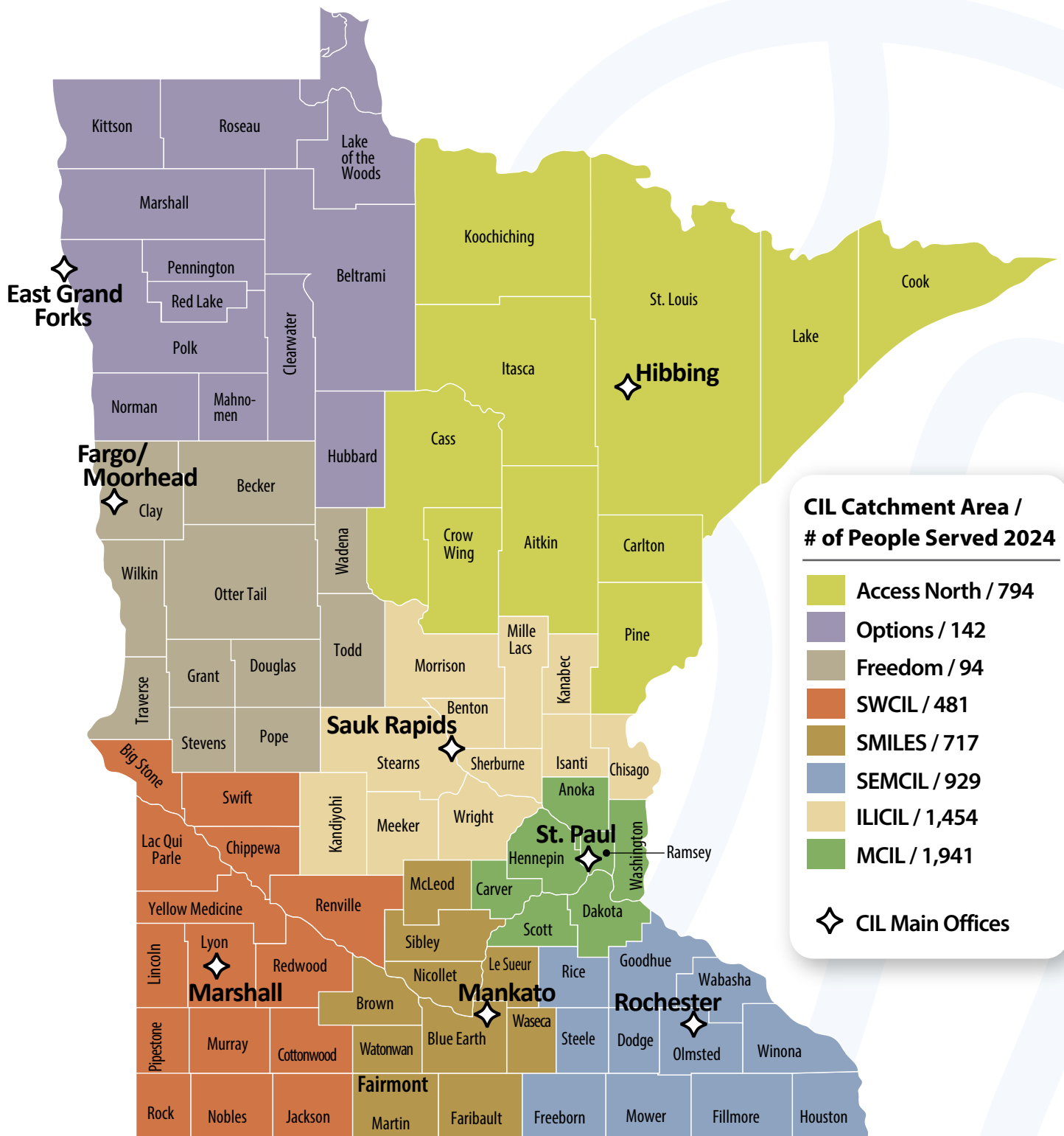


- Advocacy
- IL Skills Training
- Information and Referral
- Peer Counseling
- Transition Services

People and Disabilities Served



MAP OF MINNESOTA



MNSILC works with many partners to increase awareness about independent living. These partners have been instrumental in the work done by MNSILC:

Centers for Independent Living

- Access North Center for Independent Living
- FREEDOM Resource Center for Independent Living
- Independent Lifestyles, Inc. – A Center for Independent Living - ILICIL
- Metropolitan Center for Independent Living - MCIL
- OPTIONS Interstate Resource Center for Independent Living
- Southern Minnesota Independent Living Enterprises and Services - SMILES
- Southeast Minnesota Center for Independent Living - SEMCIL
- Southwestern Center for Independent Living - SWCIL

National and State Organizations

- Administration of Community Living - ACL
- Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living – APRIL
- Independent Living Research Utilization - ILRU
- National Association of Statewide Independent Living Councils - NASILC
- National Council on Independent Living - NCIL
- Department of Employment and Economic Development/ Vocational Rehabilitation Services – DEED/VRS
- Minnesota Council on Disability - MCD
- Minnesota Department of Human Services - DHS

- Minnesota Department of Health
- Minnesota Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund - ERAF
- Minnesota Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities – Partners in Policy Making
- Minnesota Governor Office, Tim Walz and LT Gov. Peggy Flanagan
- Minnesota Secretary of State
- Minnesota STAR Program
- Minnesota State Services for the Blind - SSB
- Olmstead Implementation Office - OIO
- State Rehabilitation Council – General
- State Rehabilitation Council – Blind

Other Organizations

- ADA Minnesota
- American Council of the Blind
- Arc Minnesota
- Disability Viewpoints
- Minnesota Brain Injury Association
- Minnesota Disability Law Center
- Minnesota National Alliance of Mental Illness - NAMI
- National Federation of the Blind – NFB
- PACER Center
- Rev Up MN



For more information about the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council or to request an alternative format go to: mn.gov/deed/silc or mnsilc1215@gmail.com or call: Jo Erbes, Coordinator at **612-518-1487** or **MN Relay at 711**.