

Granite State  
Independent Living



*Tools for Living  
Life Independently*

# *New Hampshire's Only Center for Independent Living*



Home Care



Community Based Supports



Employment Services






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# What is Independent Living?

Independent Living is expressed and tied together through the following:

*Centers for Independent Living*  
*Independent Living Movement*  
*Independent Living Culture*

## CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are community-based, cross-disability (meaning they serve individuals with all types of disabilities), non-profit organizations that are designed and operated by people with disabilities. CILs are unique in that they operate according to the independent living philosophy of **consumer control**, wherein people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization.

All Centers for Independent Living provide:

Peer Support

Information &  
Referral

Independent Living  
Skills Training

Individual &  
Systems Advocacy

## THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT

When the process of deinstitutionalization began in the 1960's, many people suffering from significant disabilities were discharged from nursing homes and other institutions. Some of these individuals had spent the majority of their lives in such institutions. For the first time in history, this created an imperative opportunity for people with disabilities to live free and independent lives. From this, a culture and community with history, values and objective were born.

Massive national and global civil rights movements continued at that time. Leaders of the disability community began to realize that **human rights and civil liberties would only come with strong advocacy**. With most state-run institutions closed, people with significant disabilities became more visible, and more audible, within their public communities. However, society's unwelcoming attitude did not change. The private medical industry quickly adopted the traditional thinkings of formerly state-run institutions.

**Independent Living activists carried out some of the most daring protests in American civil rights history**, including the longest occupation of a Federal building in history, which led to the release of the regulations banning discrimination against people with disabilities in federally funded programs. As Independent Living philosophy took hold nationally and the Disability Rights Movement gained acceptance and political influence, **a grassroots movement for a comprehensive disability rights law (the ADA) was implemented**.

In the United States,  
there are currently:

403

Centers for  
Independent Living  
(CIL)

330

Branch Offices

56

Statewide  
Independent Living  
Councils (SIL)

*Today, Centers for Independent Living (CILs) ensure that the rights of people with disabilities are protected.* Even with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), people with disabilities often find that advocacy and support from the disability community and the Disability Rights Movement is an essential element in enforcement of the civil rights law.

## THE INDEPENDENT LIVING MOVEMENT

*The Independent Living Movement is founded in the belief that people with disabilities, regardless of the form, have a common history and a shared struggle, compose a culture and community that will advance further when banded together politically.*



The Independent Living philosophy emphasizes consumer control, the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs. These individuals have crucial and valuable perspective to contribute and deserve equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities. This is particularly in reference to services that significantly affect their day-to-day lives and access to independence.

According to traditional thought, disabilities are impairments to be cured through medical intervention. Because disability cannot be “cured” individuals with disabilities were many times treated as incapable and undeserving of optimal and self-directed care. The significant underestimation of the abilities and life quality of people with disabilities led to a state in which the evaluation of people with disabilities by medical professionals often times infringed on basic human and civil rights. With the increased education of disability awareness and person-centered planning and treatment being offered at medical institutions, this understanding has improved.

*The Independent Living Model sees the problem differently and understands disability as a construct of society. In this model, the problem lies in the environment, not the individual.* Though many people have physical, intellectual, or mental attributes that deviate from the ‘norm,’ disability is manifested in society through created and maintained physical, programmatic and attitudinal barriers.

The essential goal is to make it possible for people with disabilities to live ‘just like everyone else’. It is crucial for all persons to have the opportunity to make decisions that affect their life, pursue activities of their choosing, being employed in a job that fits their capabilities and interests, earning and saving money, and creating and maintaining an active social life and loving family life - the same dreams we all share.

Everyone has challenges and limitations, whether mental, cognitive or physical. Some are life-long, some are temporary. Some are sporadic and some develop over time. Challenges are part of the human experience. ***Independent Living means having every opportunity to be as self-sufficient as possible when these challenges occur.***



## Granite State Independent Living (GSIL)

### ABOUT US

Years ago, a small group of people experiencing disabilities from accidents sat around a kitchen table trying to figure out how to regain control of their lives. They started dreaming of an organization created with the mission of assisting individuals with disabilities - individuals like themselves. This was the seed of Granite State Independent Living (GSIL).

GSIL began in 1980 as a not-for-profit organization that provides services throughout New Hampshire communities and currently serves as the only Independent Living Center in the state. GSIL's mission is to promote life with independence for people with disabilities and seniors as they begin to experience disabilities and the need for support.

More than 50% of GSIL Board Members and employees have a disability, allowing for more involvement and the creation of opportunities for individuals with disabilities than possible at most other organizations.

### SERVICES WE PROVIDE

GSIL offers all 4 core Independent Living services, as listed below:

	<h4>Advocacy</h4> <p>Provide advocacy in the community at state and federal levels, as well as teach individuals to advocate for themselves and to advocate for system changes to improve their independence.</p>		<h4>Information &amp; Referral</h4> <p>Maintain and offer a comprehensive list of statewide services and resources to help individuals find the support they need to live and work in their community.</p>
	<h4>Peer Support</h4> <p>Connect individuals with similar experiences, encouraging support and information sharing.</p>		<h4>Skills Training</h4> <p>Provide practice training of independent living skills, from personal banking to supervising personal care attendants to skills needed in seeking employment.</p>

## ADDITIONAL SERVICES

**Medicaid Personal Care Assistance (PCA)** - An attendant care program for individuals that have a severe physical disability that must require a wheelchair for mobility. *GSIL is the only provider in the state offering this service.*

**Medicaid Personal Care Service Program (PCSP)** – An attendant care program for individuals that are eligible for Choices for Independence (CFI) waiver; must be a senior or adult with a chronic illness or disability.

**Medicaid Home Care** – Designed for individuals when they cannot self-direct their care.

**Independent Care Options** – Provides payroll and support services for individuals that want to choose, manage and supervise their personal care worker.

**Nursing Home Transition** - Working with nursing home residences who want to live in the community by helping to identify abilities, challenges and developing a comprehensive care plan to make the transition back into the community and out of the nursing facility successful.

**Quiet Comfort** – Technology system that provides notices to families and reminders to individual's cell phones or computers for everyday activities, allowing seniors and people with disabilities to live comfortably, safely and independently in their own homes.

**NH Chapter of Spinal Cord Injury Association** - Creates opportunities for individuals with spinal cord injuries to participate in social and educational opportunities to gain peer support and answers to challenges that this disability brings.

**Home Modification** – Providing facilitation and covering some expenses for small accessibility modifications for the home.

**Assessable Transportation** – Providing wheelchair accessible transportation and offering reimbursement for rides.

**Job Placement** – Working with individuals referred from NH Vocation Rehabilitation to help them every step of the way in obtaining employment, from resume writing to job interview skill development.

**Financial Planning and Disability Benefits Guidance** – Helping individuals understand their benefits and how income can affect them.

**Earn and Learn** – An alternative learning program for at-risk students with disabilities, in which they re-engage with education and develop skills while earning high school credits.

**Ticket to Work** – A program for helping Social Security Disability recipients find employment.

**Employer Staffing Assistance** – Helping to match employers with the right new hire.



## CONTACT US

For more information on GSIL services please contact us at (603) 228-9680 or at [info@gsil.org](mailto:info@gsil.org). Eligibility requirements and payment options (if applicable) vary between services. Please contact us for more details on costs and eligibility.

[info@gsil.org](mailto:info@gsil.org) | [www.gsil.org](http://www.gsil.org) | (603) 228-9680



## FIND US

As a statewide nonprofit, we have 8 offices throughout New Hampshire:



### Concord, NH Office - Main Office

21 Chenell Drive  
Concord, NH 03301  
603- 228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-225-3304 (fax)



### Berlin, NH Office

350 Glen Ave, Suite 3  
Berlin NH 03570  
603-228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-326-3368 (fax)



### Littleton, NH Office

76 Main Street  
Littleton, NH 03561  
603-228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-444-3128 (fax)



### Concord, NH Office - Annex

163 Manchester St. Suite 3  
Concord, NH 03301-2295  
603-228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-228-5614 (fax)



### Dover, NH Office

750 Central Ave., Unit O  
Dover, NH 03820  
603-228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-617-3567 (fax)



### Manchester, NH Office

60 Rogers Street, Suite 207  
Manchester, NH 03104  
603-518-4600  
1-800-773-4033  
603-627-3780 (fax)



### Keene, NH Office

105 Castle Street, Room 7  
Keene, NH 03431  
603-228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-903-0869 (fax)



### Nashua, NH Office

23 Factory Street  
Nashua, NH 03060-3092  
603-228-9680  
1-800-826-3700 (toll-free)  
603-883-5134 (fax)

