

NORTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (ND SILC) ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021



NORTH
Dakota
Be Legendary.™

Statewide Independent Living Council

HUMAN SERVICES

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MESSAGE FROM THE NORTH DAKOTA STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL CHAIR

As the Chair of the North Dakota Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) I am honored to present this report that summarizes the goals and accomplishments of the past year. The SILC is a policy making council of volunteers, appointed by the Governor, whose membership must include a majority of individuals with disabilities. It is the SILC's responsibility to collaborate with State entities and the Centers for Independent Living (CILS) in the development and implementation of a three-year plan of Independent Living activities in the State. The CILs are community based and consumer-controlled organizations, located in each region of the state which are at the core of implementing services to support independence for individuals with disabilities. Priorities of the SILC for the three-year plan include:

- Facilitating the transition of persons with significant disabilities by increasing the number of individuals with disabilities who reside in their chosen, least restrictive community environment.
- Increasing Independent Living Program capacity through infrastructure and resource development in advocating for full funding for community-based Centers for Independent Living.
- Facilitating outreach to individuals with disabilities and other stakeholders who are underrepresented and/or underserved in communities across North Dakota.
- Advocating for the transition of youths with disabilities, including youth who were eligible for individualized Education Programs as they prepare to or have completed secondary education to postsecondary life.
- Facilitating public forums in each area of the state to increase the knowledge of the independent living philosophy and services among individuals with disabilities and the general public.
- Facilitating collaboration with state councils, agencies and organizations to enhance the service, opportunities and rights of North Dakotans with disabilities.

Council members have a deep appreciation for the dedicated CIL staff and we applaud their many achievements. CIL staff have continued to provide high quality services during the trying times of the pandemic. The SILC will continue to fulfill the role to advocate and work to strengthen service in North Dakota to advance and achieve meaningful independent living outcomes.

Sincerely,

Russ Cusack, ND SILC Chair



WHAT IS THE ND SILC?

The North Dakota SILC advocates for North Dakotans with disabilities to remain as independent as possible. The SILC promotes independence, inclusion, dignity, and participation to all citizens as we all have a right to enjoy same rights and opportunities.

The SILC is a Governor appointed Council. The council has statewide representation and is made of individuals with diverse disability backgrounds. Also represented is the Center for Independent Living, tribal, community service providers, other agencies, and Vocational Rehabilitation. We look for individuals passionate about the independent living philosophy, while helping to identify societal barriers, working with stakeholders to increase the supports in the state to make North Dakota accessible to all.

Quarterly meetings are held in February, May, August, and November in a hybrid manner (in-person and virtual), so everyone feels welcome to attend.



MISSION

The mission of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is to lead the Independent Living Network (North Dakota Centers for Independent Living) by developing resources and advocating for full community participation of North Dakotans with disabilities.

GOALS

The SILC and the CILs will:

Goal I: Improve service outcomes to North Dakotans with disabilities.

Goal II: Increase understanding of the independent living philosophy with those served and other supporting them.

Goal III: Partner with the Designated State Entity and collaborate with other disability organizations.

Goal IV: Recruit and maintain active cross-disability, consumer-controlled membership to ensure the Statewide Independent Living Council functions optimally.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF INDEPENDENT LIVING

What is Independent Living?

Centers for Independent Living believe that every person whether possessing a disability or not, has the right to make decisions about their own life. It is believed that all people should be able to take risks, design their own destinies, be allowed to succeed or fail, but most of all have the right to choose.

Independent living's fundamental principal is “empowerment”. It is about choice and respecting each person’s understanding of what independence is for them. This philosophy means being able to exercise the greatest degree of choice about where you live, whom you live with, how you live, where you work and how you use your time. It means participation in community life and pursuing activities of your own choosing.

“The Peer Mentoring program is beneficial for the mentor and mentee. People you would never meet under normal circumstances, and you form these relationships that continue long after the mentorship ends”

Dan Holte, Freedom Resource Center Board Member and Peer Mentor

Philosophical Tenets of Independent Living:

Equal Rights: People with disabilities have the same rights as all other citizens. This is the basic philosophy underlying independent living programs.

Integration: Integrated programs, services and facilities, are essential for people with disabilities to enjoy equal access to cultural, vocational, residential and leisure opportunities open to other people. Everyone has a right to such integrated experiences.

Self-Determination: People with disabilities are entitled to choose the patterns of life and conditions of everyday living like everyone else does. They have the right to privacy, a home, work, going to school, leisure activities, social interaction, sexual relationships and life in a self-determined setting in an integrated community neighborhood.

Equal Responsibility: Just as people with disabilities have the right to self-determination, they have the responsibility to follow through with their commitments in good faith and with due consideration of the rights of others. They are accountable for their own actions.

SILC OVERVIEW

The ND SILC plans for the coordination and expansion of independent living services in ND. They advocate for full community participation of North Dakotans with disabilities.



THE COUNCIL

The SILC collaborates with four ND CILs to work on identifying issues important to all people with disabilities which need to be addressed at the State and Federal level. They obtain input from CILs, consumers, and other partners in the development of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The SILC works to build partnerships to address disability issues and to promote public policies and programs consistent with independent living values.

- Promote the IL philosophy and movement
- Provide input on IL throughout ND
- Provide Recommendations
- Identify financial resources and assess budget needs to support all aspects of the IL program
- Recommend ideas for research, training, legislative activities, and needs assessment
- Assist with the SPIL
- Coordinate activities with other councils
- Advocate for disability rights and related issues

SUBCOMMITTEES

The SILC has three subcommittees, with each member being assigned to at least one. The subcommittees carry out the main work of the SILC. They are responsible for devising a work plan outlining their duties related to the SPIL.

- External Affairs
- Internal Affairs
- Governance

MEMBERSHIP

The SILC is made up of members appointed by the Governor, a majority of individuals with disabilities and do not work for state agencies or CILs (consumer controlled).

The council must have 16 members representing:

- 2 CIL Directors/Reps
- 1 Rep from Vocational Rehabilitation
- 1 Rep from a State Agency
- 1 Tribal Entity Rep
- 2 Reps from Quadrant 1 (Williston/Minot regions)
- 2 Reps from Quadrant 2 (Devils Lake/Grand Forks regions)
- 2 Reps from Quadrant 3 (Fargo/Jamestown regions)
- Other members:
 - Consumers
 - Parents/guardians
 - Advocates
 - Others as appropriate

THE SILC COUNCIL

MEMBERSHIP AS OF FEBRUARY 22, 2022

Russ Cusack, Chair
Bismarck, ND

Gillian Plenty Chief, Vice Chair
Tribal Entity Representative

Angie Bosch
Director of a Center for
Independent Living

LaRae Gustafson
Representative of a Center
For Independent Living

Jan Beddes
Bismarck, ND

Leon Dietrich
Bismarck, ND

Brenda Boehler
Minot, ND

Benjamin Johnson
Minot, ND

Nancy Lundon
Devils Lake, ND

Deb Unruh
Dickinson, ND

Shannon Cook
Kenmare, ND

Bill Willis
Representative of
a State Agency

Jared Ferguson
Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation

NON-COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

Aimee Volk
Liaison for the SILC

Royce Schultze
Director of a Center for
Independent Living

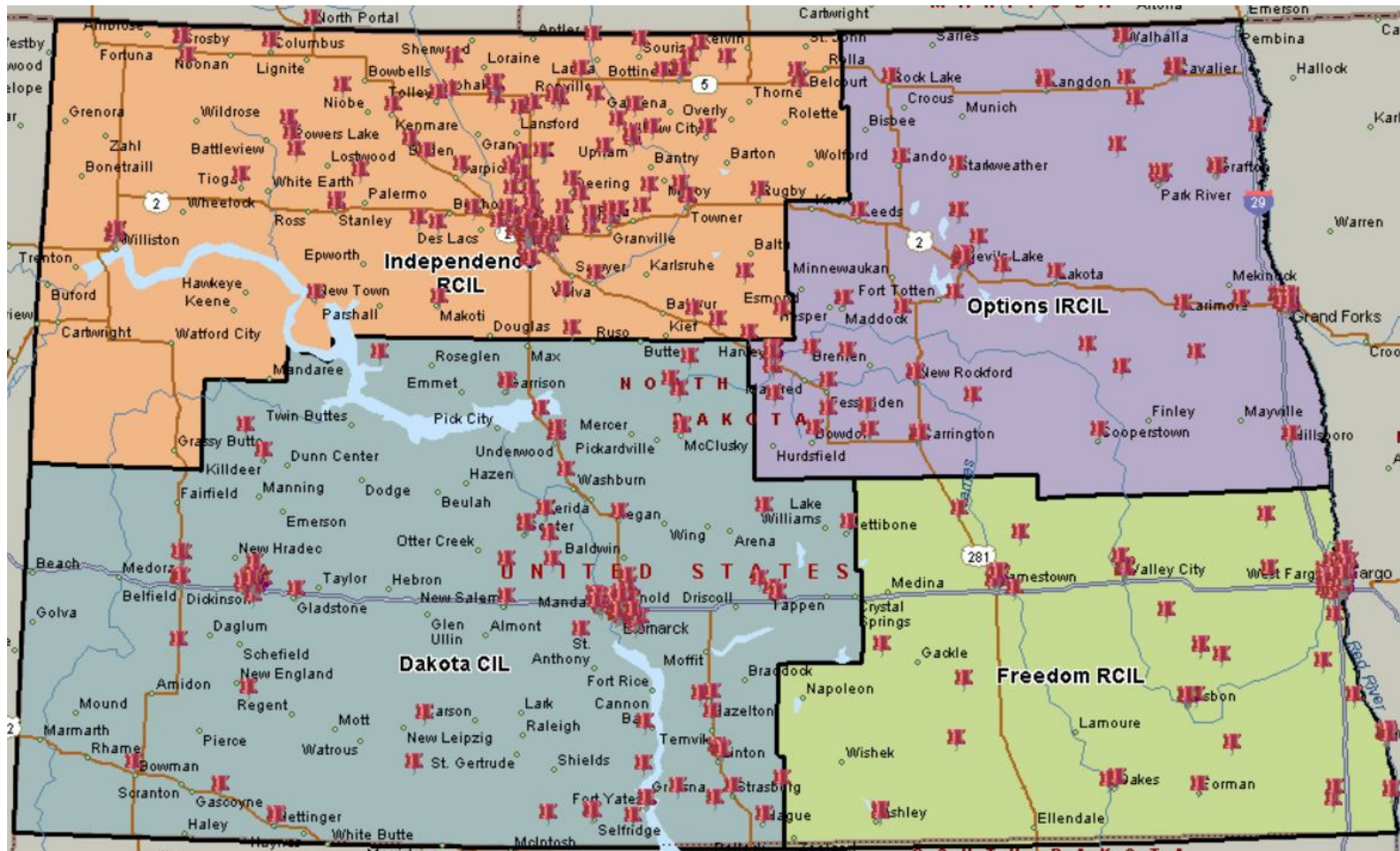
Scott Burlingame
Director of a Center for
Independent Living

Randy Sorenson
Director of a Center for
Independent Living

Damian Schlinger
Director of Vocational
Rehabilitation

NORTH DAKOTA CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

There are four CILs in North Dakota that provide statewide coverage. The state is divided into four quadrants to ensure that all North Dakotans have availability to services. This is a scatter map showing the areas where consumers were assisted from October 2020 through September 2021.



Independence, Inc.
315 3rd Ave SW
Minot, ND 58701
701-839-6561
TTY: 701-839-6561

Branch office in
Bottineau, ND

Options IRCIL
318 3rd Street NW
East Grand Forks,
MN 56721
218-773-6100

Branch offices in
Harvey, Cavalier and
Devils Lake, ND

Dakota CIL
3111 E Broadway
Ave
Bismarck, ND 58501
701-222-3636 or
800-489-5013

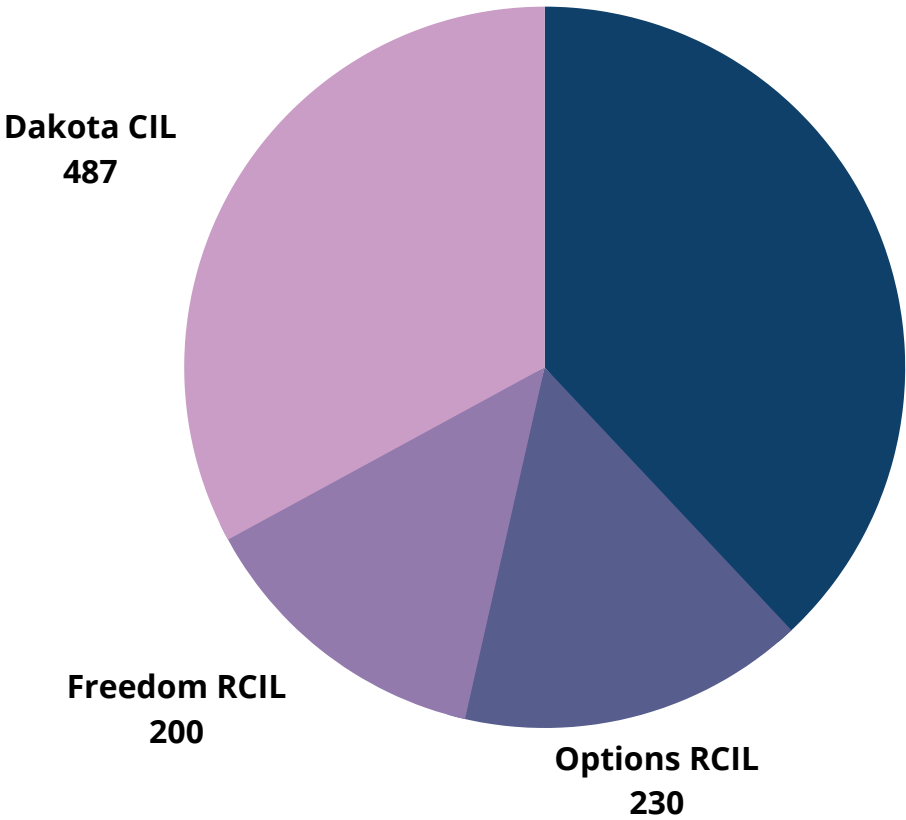
Branch office in
Dickinson, ND

Freedom RCIL
2701 9th Ave S,
Ste H
Fargo, ND 58103
701-478-0459 or
800-450-0459

Branch offices in
Jamestown, Lisbon,
and Wahpeton, ND

FFY 2021 DATA - From the CILs

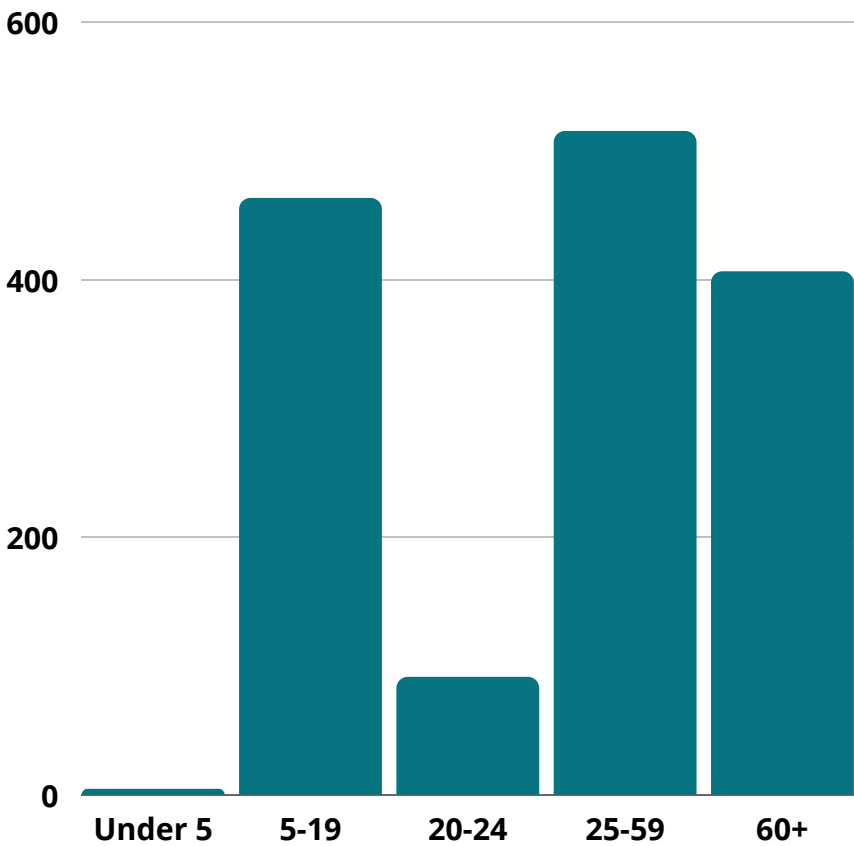
(October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021)

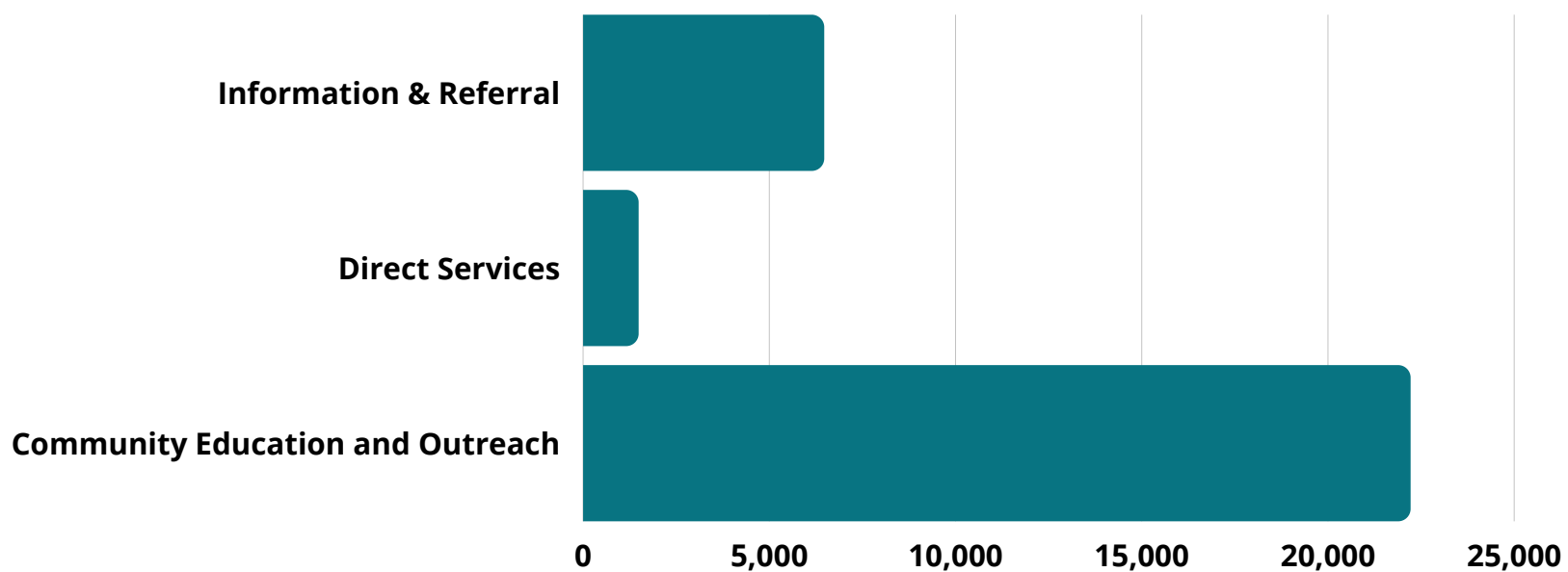


Independence, Inc.
562

The four North Dakota CILs served a total of **1,479** people through direct services in the past year.

The CILs serve consumers of all ages throughout the state.



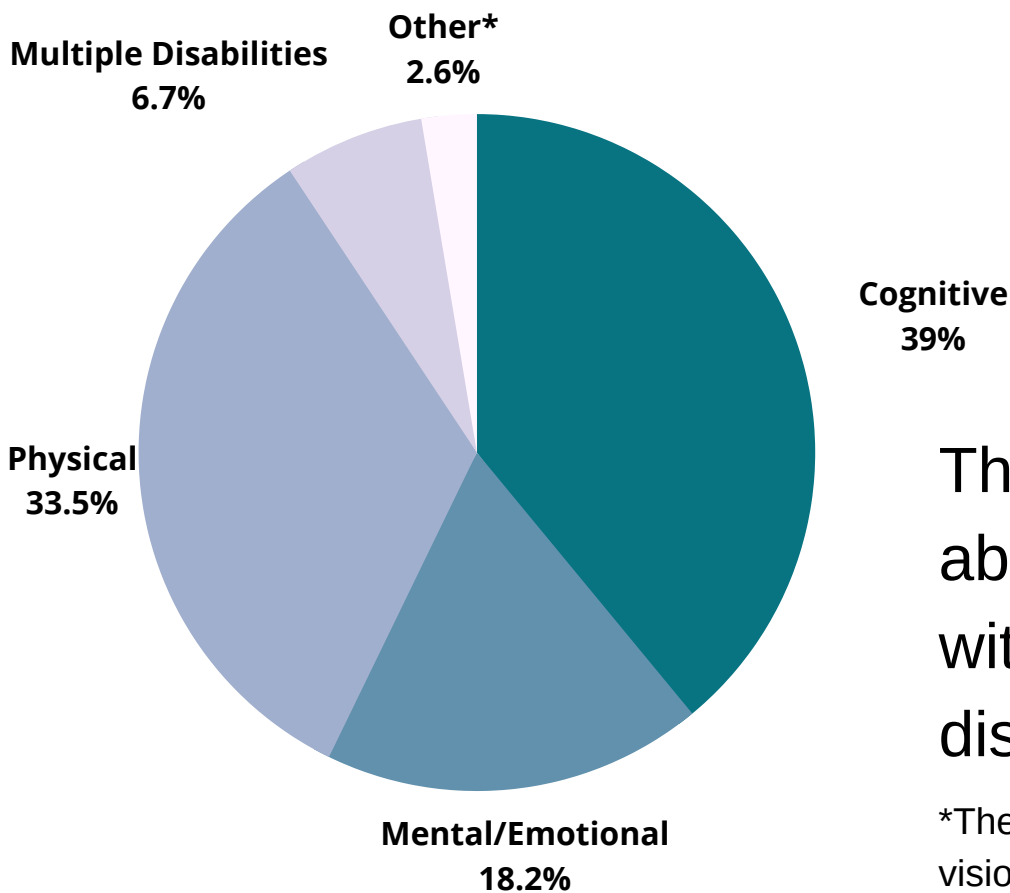
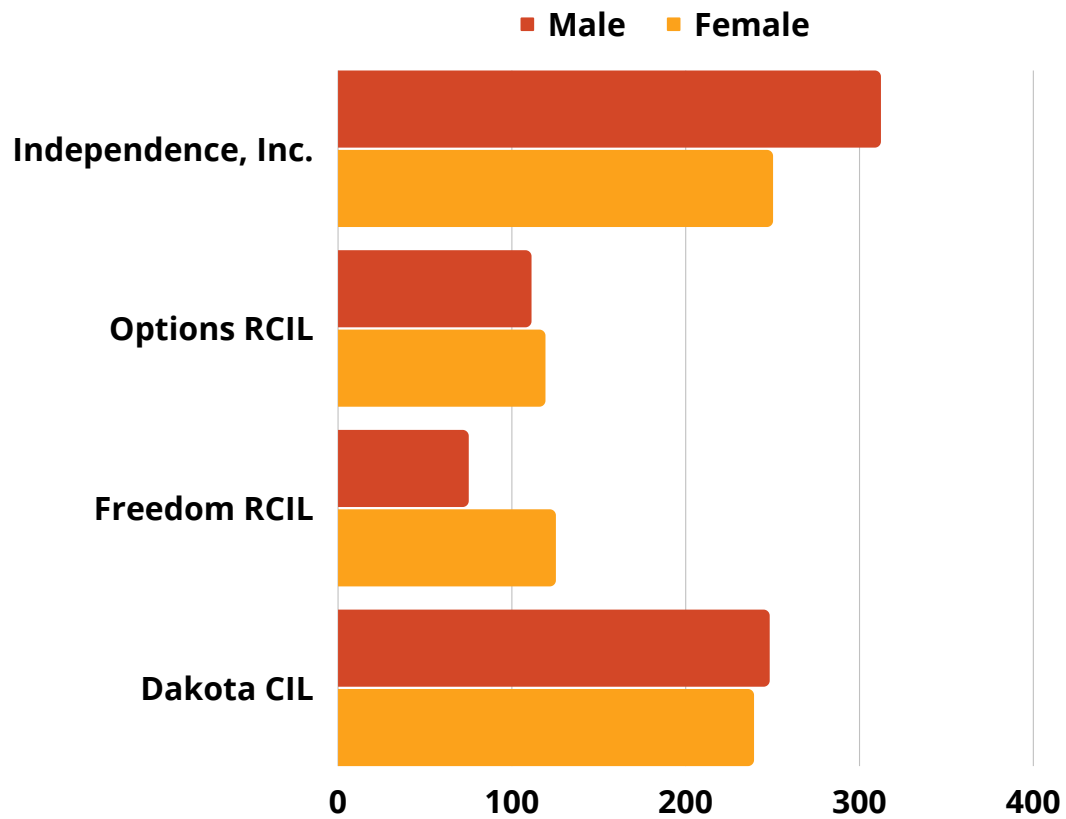


Direct Service: Provide one-to-one services to persons with significant disabilities. It offers more intense assistance in identifying and resolving the barriers that hinder them from living at the highest level of independence possible.

Information and Referral: Provide information to persons with disabilities, service providers, and community members on disability and independent living topics and issues.

Community Education and Outreach: Educating the community of the issues and barriers affecting persons with disabilities. Outreach activities are designed to educate people about independent living and increase the usage of the CIL.

Our CILs are able to respond to the local needs of the people and communities they serve.



The CILs are uniquely able to serve people with all types of disabilities.

*The category of 'Other' includes vision, hearing, and other disabilities.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE - SUCCESS STORIES

Freedom RCIL

Accident-related disabilities can happen to anyone, anytime. This past spring, on a nature hike, an individual fell and broke their ankle. "Freedom helped me connect with the resources I needed so I could return to work quickly, and attend follow up care for my injury. I was unable to use the stairs, which meant there was no way for me to get in and out of my home to attend work or appointments. Freedom's ramp program saved the day! Freedom is very active in the communities I've lived and worked in, and I've seen how they have helped others find solutions. I called hoping for ideas, and they came through with so much more. Within a couple days a ramp was installed, I don't know what I would have done without them."



Dakota CIL

Before I came to Dakota Center for Independent Living (DCIL), I was lost and hopeless. My physical and mental health were at an all-time low, and I was frustrated, empty, and afraid. I felt like I had been abandoned by everyone, that I had nothing to look forward to, and I didn't have any reason for living. That all changed when I became a part of the DCIL. They provided support, education, direction, and assurance that I needed to regain my physical and mental health. I was treated with warmth, care, and understanding. I met with staff who helped me to examine and find a positive direction for my life. I attended classes, training, and activities that helped me address mental health issues and find peace of mind. I regained contact with survival skills, leisure skills, and activities that brought joy into my heart and hope into my life. I also attended groups and classes that helped me live a healthy lifestyle and deal with chronic physical issues. The staff's dedication to each consumer and the support and social interaction provided by the programs has been extremely helpful in my recovery.

A yellow diamond-shaped road sign with a black border. The sign is mounted on a metal pole and features the words "RECOVERY" and "AHEAD" in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters, stacked vertically. The background of the sign is a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

Independence, Inc.

Independence, Inc. worked with a 16-year-old high school student living with cerebral palsy and epilepsy. He told us that throughout his life, he has missed out on many things, and that got worse as he was forced to isolate during the COVID 19 pandemic. During this time, he joined Independence, Inc. to participate in virtual programming, including Youth Hangs, Career Connections, and other Independent Living Skills Classes.

He told us this gave him an opportunity to be included, to be part of a community, and fun and enjoyment. He tells us it was a way out of the isolation and a chance to be part of something.

His mom tells us Independence, Inc. is so important for her son as he grows, to help to navigate a world that might not always be inclusive.



Options RCIL

Options was asked to assist three brothers with various disabilities that continued to live in their parents' home long after their passing. The home had not been upkeep and was in a state of condemnation and professionals deemed it unsalvageable. The home did not have running water (two areas of the pipes had rotted and you could see outside) which was considered dangerous in the subzero climate. They used public restrooms and community bathing facilities.

One of the brothers had a minimum wage job with no benefits. One brother was not working and had applied for Social Security Disability (SSDI) multiple times but only received denials. Options assisted the brothers by insuring they had to move, next getting an extension on the condemnation process, apply for housing, and assisting with eligibility for expedited housing assistance for homelessness (in which another agency assisted). He was referred to Vocational Rehabilitation to work on securing a new career.

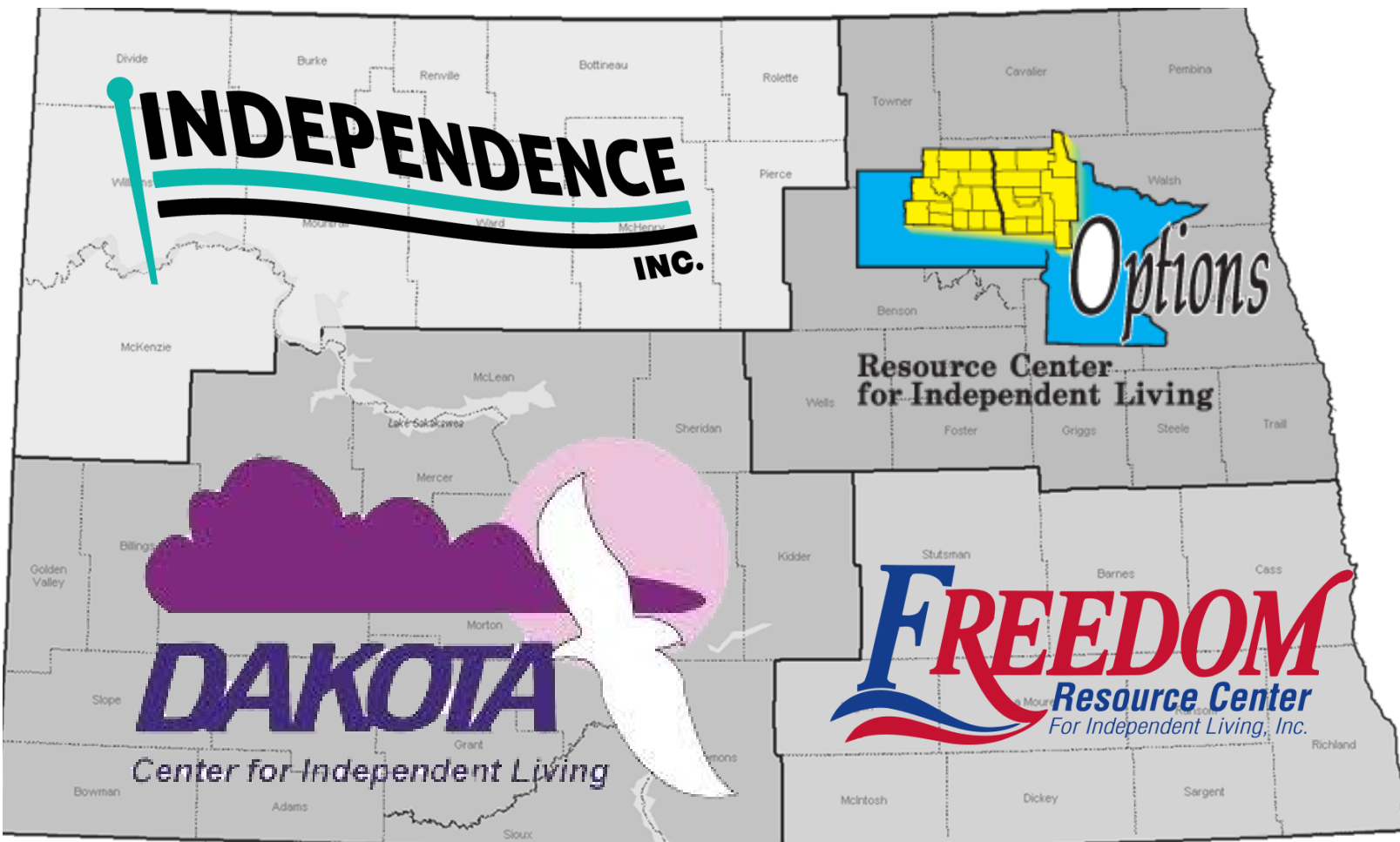
They had never lived in an apartment before, so they had no experience with their responsibilities as a tenant. Options provided skills instruction on landlord and tenant responsibilities. They again assisted oldest brother apply for SSDI which was approved. They assisted the brothers to get stimulus money, which was used to get furniture for their new apartment.

To find out more about the Statewide Independent
Living Council, please visit:

<https://www.nd.gov/dhs/dvr/councils-partners/ndsilc.html>

For any questions, please call:

1-800-755-2745



For more information on which Center for Independent Living
can assist your area, please visit:

<http://www.ndcil.org>