

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Fact Sheet for Virginia's Parents Virginia Centers for Independent Living

What is a Center for Independent Living?

Centers for Independent Living (CILs) help people of all ages be included in community life. Virginia has 23 CILs. CILs are run by and for people with disabilities. CILs work with people with disabilities, including students, to help them make their own decisions about their lives and to remove things that make it difficult for them to achieve their independent living goals within their communities. This doesn't mean that people with disabilities are on their own and have to do everything by themselves. We all need help and support in some aspects of our lives. CILs help maximize independence and help people with disabilities gain new skills and advocate for themselves.

How can a Center for Independent Living Help Me?

CILs provide services to individuals with all types of disabilities as well as to the local community. All CILs provide the following core services.

- **Advocacy** - helping people with disabilities speak up for their own needs and those of others, make their own decisions, and exercise their rights
- **Peer Counseling** - people with disabilities help guide participant on how they can meet their challenges, goals, and dreams, in part using their own lived experience
- **Independent Living Skills Training** - participants learn the skills needed to live on their own or with others, with needed supports.
- **Information and Referral** - provide information about various topics make referrals to other helpful organizations.
- **Transition Services** - for youth at risk of going into an institution - these services help people with disabilities move into or live in the community

DID YOU KNOW?

CILs are funded under the federal **Rehabilitation Act of 1973**. But Virginia also funds CILs from state money so that the state can have more programs.

For more information you can contact your local CIL or you can contact:

The Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

804-662-7078; 800-552-5019

Kevin.Koziol@dars.virginia.gov

You can also contact PEATC at:

800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010

www.peatc.org

partners@peatc.org

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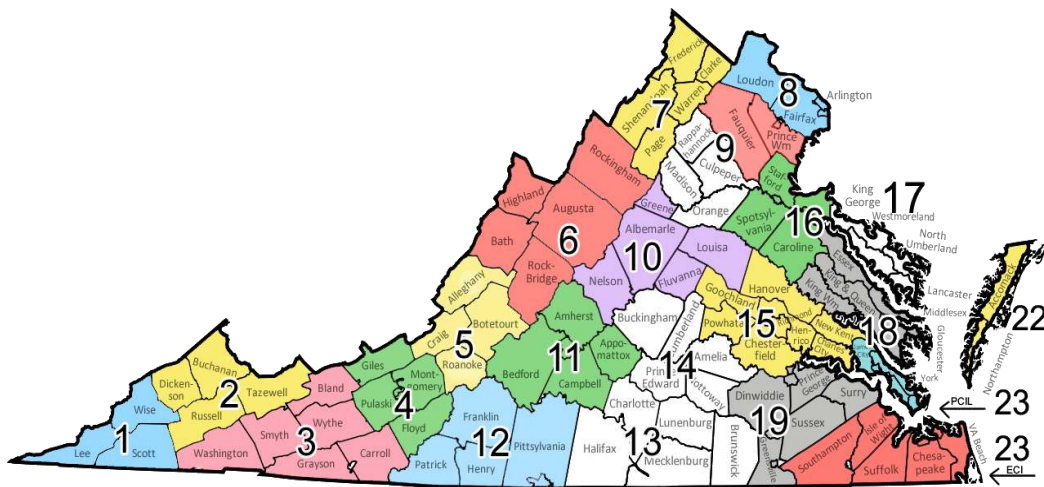
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Besides the main services described above, different **CILS provide other types of services based on what people in the community say they need**. Some may be able to attend an IEP meetings. Some CILs provide help for people looking for housing. Some provide help for people who have been discriminated against due to their disability. Some CILs provide help with Medicaid (insurance) or disability benefits issues. CILs often have social activities as well. They are a great life-long resource for people with disabilities.

You can check with a local CIL to see what services they offer. CILs serve people with any type of disability.

Where is the Local Center for Independent Living?

Here is a map that shows the general area that each Center for Independent Living serves. Not all areas of the state are served by a CIL.



CILs help people with disabilities learn about and exercise their rights, make their own choices, and become more independent!

What else do CILS do?

CILs work to change laws and policies in Virginia and nationally. They hold disability awareness activities, and they teach and help the community learn about and implement the *Americans with Disabilities Act* and other laws that ensure that programs, services, buildings, employment, and educational opportunities are as accessible to people with disabilities as they are to everyone else.

Accessibility means that if a person uses a wheelchair, there must be a ramp that allows you to get into the building and spaces inside must accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility device. People who are deaf and have a medical appointment are entitled to an interpreter if needed. Websites and print materials must meet accessibility guidelines for people with vision impairments. These are just a few examples. **There are some exceptions in the law regarding accessibility requirements.** Your CIL can tell you about these.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools, and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.



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