

# Disability Organization Descriptions:



## Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and Disability Networks

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Independent Living is the principle that individuals with any disability, to the fullest extent possible, shall work, live in their own homes, raise families, and participate in the everyday activities of life.

Centers for Independent Living (CIL's) are typically non-residential, private, non-profit, consumer-controlled, community-based organizations providing services and advocacy by and for persons with all types of disabilities. Michigan's CIL's are an excellent first-contact for information regarding disability issues and for outreach and recruitment activities.

### Services

#### Information and Referral Services

- Employment services and information
- Spectran paratransit rider certification
- Emergency services and support information
- Housing information - subsidized and barrier-free
- Obtaining adaptive equipment and assistive technology
- Social Security and other supportive funding information
- Recreation and volunteer opportunities

#### Community Awareness and Advocacy

- Working with employers to provide job accommodations
- Accessible housing development
- Public speaking to groups, schools, employees, churches, etc.
- Legislation - speaking before Michigan legislature and national advocacy
- Americans With Disabilities Act - teaching seminars and one-on-one training assistance

#### Individual Skills Development

- Job readiness skill-building
- Rehabilitation nursing assessments and follow-up services
- Independent living assessments and skills training
- One-on-one training for individuals with specific needs
- School-to-work transition services for students with disabilities

#### Peer Support

- Matching people with disabilities as mentors for newly disabled people
- Matching people with similar disabilities for support and information sharing

## **RICCs**

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### **What is a 'RICC'?**

"RICC" stands for "Regional Interagency Consumer Committee." A RICC is a local, grassroots, group of people with developmental disabilities, their friends and family members. Membership is also extended to local advocates, community leaders and service providers. There are more than 50 RICCs statewide and the number is growing.

Historically, RICCs have had three main functions: (1) to provide a forum for addressing local issues; (2) advocating for needed changes in the community, and (3) to inform the DD Council about local conditions for persons with developmental disabilities.

### **--An Effective Means--**

Over the past 30 years, RICCs in Michigan have proven to be a very effective means of changing local systems and the way communities interact with people with disabilities. Many are strong centers for self-determination.

Through local programs, networking, political action and hands-on advocacy, RICCs work to see people taking control of their own lives by making their own choices.

A RICC's activities and influence are usually concentrated in a county or multi-county region of the state. Each RICC helps people with disabilities to become leaders in advocacy in the local communities it serves.

What makes a RICC so effective at the grassroots level? RICCs partner with allies, such as centers for independent living, Arc chapters, and other resources to make changes in their community. A RICC can be its community's most effective champion for change. A RICC can also help its members learn critical information, build confidence and develop leadership skills.

### **--Council Funds and Supports--**

RICCs are funded and supported by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. Council grants provide operating funds. The community service specialist who supports and guides the RICC activities around the state is a member of the DD Council staff.

RICCs build community coalitions, sponsor workshops, provide training and support to rally around issues. RICCs are charged with recognizing the diversity within each Michigan community and addressing the needs of culturally-diverse people with disabilities.

Another form of RICC grant activity is the RICC-Endorsed Community Mini-Grant. This can be as much as \$12,000 and requires endorsement from the local RICC.

### **--Areas of Emphasis--**

A RICC's priorities reflect the Council's. Among the areas of emphasis are transportation, education, recreation, employment, housing and health.

RICCs welcome your involvement. New RICCs are forming all the time. Contact the Council office for more on these effective advocacy coalitions.

## Arcs

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### What is an Arc?

Arcs (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens) operate in accordance with the Arc of the USA and/or the Arc of Michigan. Local chapters around the state advocate for individuals with developmental disabilities, cognitive impairments and their families by promoting choices, creating opportunities and providing support needed to fully participate in the community. They are consumer driven operate according to the principals of inclusion and self advocacy.

Services provided by various Arc chapters may include, but are not limited to: Recreational Programs, Special Olympics, Monthly Dances, Social Services Assistance, Family Support, Family Guidance, Family Activities, Guardianship Information, Educational Advocacy, Referral Services, as well as legislative information and advocacy for both children and adults with developmental disabilities and other cognitive impairments.