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## April 2021

Many of us have been vaccinated, or have scheduled an appointment. People 16 years and older are now eligible. If you are having difficulties getting your vaccine, please call us and we will try to help you navigate your options. Visit our [website covid page](#) for more information. *MWCIL can provide assistance with transportation for vaccine appointments.*

As we slowly transition to a new "normal", MWCIL is ready to work with you on any important issues. We will continue to resolve as much as possible remotely to protect both our staff and consumers.

Paul Spooner,  
Executive Director

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## Independent Living Centers Request Funding Increase

**UPDATE:** The State House Ways and Means Budget has increased our line item to \$7,847,455 dollars which is \$701,338 dollars over the 2021 level of \$7,146,117. We *greatly* appreciate this proposed increase, however, we are asking the Senate to fund line item 4120-0200 at \$8 million.

Massachusetts IL Centers need more state funding in order to meet increasing demands for services. We have met many of the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and predict that the need for services will skyrocket once in-person contact returns.

Specifically we are asking that the **FY' 2022 State Budget Item 4120-0200 be increased to \$8 million for the 10 IL Centers.**

Listed below are some of the expenses and services that will be increasing in 2022 if not sooner:

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nursing homes into the daylight. We will save the state money, save lives and improve quality of lives by assisting nursing home residents to return to their community.

- **Increased Poverty**—People with disabilities are more commonly low-income than other groups, and the pandemic has exacerbated their employment opportunities. More than ever, they need IL knowledge and resources to be able to stay in their homes independently.
- **Increased Mental Illness**—The pandemic has also exacerbated depression and other mental health issues at the same time that treatment and services have been reduced. We expect that it will take a while for this back log to improve.
- **Students**, especially those in special education, could lose a year of advancement in their educations. Many will never recover, and may need more IL services as adults.
- **Outreach** has been the biggest challenge during the pandemic. IL Centers will need to play catch-up. Outreach will need more funding to find those people who have fallen through the cracks.
- **Agging**—As “baby boomers” continue to age, they will acquire more disabilities.

[Download the 2021 IL Funding Increase pdf flyer](#) and please contact your legislators. Sign up for IL Education Day and tell your legislator about line item 4120-0200.

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## For the People Act

Voting has been a hot topic for a long time. Our November 2020 election was proven to be the most fair and secure election ever, yet lawsuits continue to disrupt the courts. Many states, including MA, have filed bills that would restrict voting, and other states have passed laws. While most of these increasingly restrictive laws are typically characterized as racial, they will also affect voting access for people with disabilities.

The House of Representatives has passed HR 1, For the People Act, "To expand Americans' access to the ballot box, reduce the influence of big money in politics, strengthen ethics rules for public servants, and implement other anti-

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</bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1/text>. The bill is now being debated in the Senate.

While disability organizations strongly support the intent, and most of the contents of HR 1, one piece remains problematic. Paper ballots are mandated, but are not accessible for everyone, for example, people who cannot mark a ballot or people who are visually impaired.

The AAPD has written an [objection to the Paper Ballot Mandate](#). Here is an excerpt: "Despite overall reduced paper consumption in many areas of daily life, as a result of technological advancement, paper-based ballot voting options have become the preferred voting system to many who believe mandating the use of paper ballots is necessary to ensure the security of our elections. However, it must be made abundantly clear, that the ability to privately and independently hand mark, verify, and cast a paper ballot is simply not, and will never be, an option for all voters."

NDRN has also provided [reasons why the Paper Ballot Mandate is not acceptable](#).

**Since the bill is now in the Senate, we encourage our readers to contact [Senator Warren](#) and [Senator Markey](#), and ask them to remove the Paper Ballot Mandate.**

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## Spaulding Sports Reopening

During the next 3 weeks, the staff will eagerly be preparing for our return to in-person sports! From April 26th to May 14th the virtual programming will be limited to a handful of group classes. They will be offering Target Sports and Mountain Biking in-person during this time. Please refer to the website for more details on dates/times of all programming.

Visit their website and signup to get more information on current at-home virtual programming, as well as upcoming in-person programming.

<https://sasc.spauldingrehab.org/join.aspx>

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## REAL ID Deadline Creeping Up In Massachusetts

While not disability specific, the federal deadline for Read ID's is October 1, 2021. The [Patch article](#) , by Mike Carraggi on April 20, has detailed information.

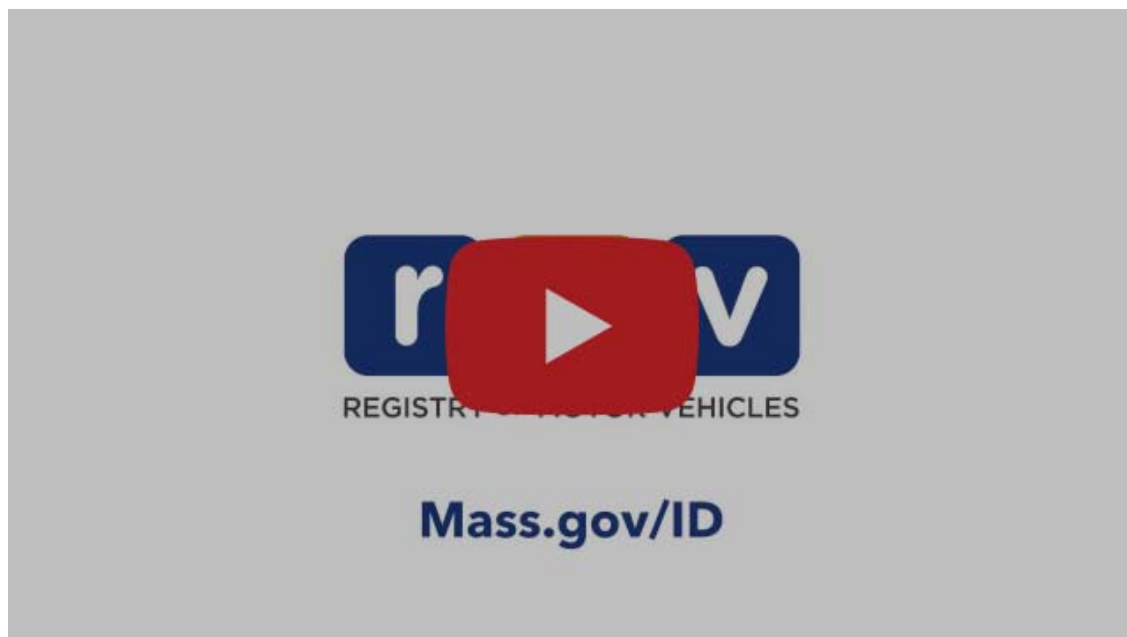
"Beginning Oct. 1, 2021, drivers' licenses and state IDs that are not REAL ID-compliant will not be accepted as identification by federal authorities.

What that means is relatively simple: Your standard license will no longer be enough to get you on a domestic flight or into federal buildings.

REAL IDs will still be optional, but if you don't have one you'll need a U.S. passport or military ID to get fly domestically or get into federal buildings.

You don't need a REAL ID to vote or drive. Children under 18 do not need a REAL ID."

Read the article - the ID requirements are confusing. Or visit [Mass.gov](#) for more information. The video below from Mass.gov is also helpful in determining these requirements.



Required documents to get a Real ID.



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## Whole Foods and Price Chopper Recruiting Young Adults with Disabilities for Training and Paid Internships

Classes start May 11 - Contact Karen Gostnhof at [kgostnhof@verizon.net](mailto:kgostnhof@verizon.net) or 978-660-4071.

Are you (or do you know anyone who would be) interested in some formal training in customer service and retail skills, including a paid internship at a Whole Foods or Price Chopper market that can lead to a job offer? The Polus Center is looking for 12 young adults, age 18-35, who would like to work in the grocery/retail industry.

### What is it?

- 4 weeks of virtual training by Thryv Consulting: Grocery Store Retail Skills for Success. Classes begin May 11 and will be offered 3 days per week for 4 weeks (May 11-June 4, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.). Topics include Cashiering Fundamentals, Understanding Grocery Departments, Safe Food Handling, Cleaning & Maintenance, Stocking & Facing Basics, Ergonomic Lifting, Workplace Code of Conduct, Soft Skills, Superior Customer Service, Professionalism & Etiquette, and Current Safety and Health Standards Awareness relating to COVID-19.
- 4 weeks paid internship (10 hours per week) at a Whole Foods or Price Chopper market, primarily in the Worcester and greater Boston areas. Learn about and match your talents to the variety of opportunities in different departments. Internships begin June 7.
- All participants will be enrolled in a local MassHire Career Center, providing access to all of their workshops, counseling, and job opportunities.
- Upon graduation from the program, successful participants will be offered positions that matches their talent and interests, or they can apply as an internal candidate at another store.

### Who is eligible?

**All young adults age 18-35 who have a (self-disclosed) disability** are eligible to apply, provided they are Massachusetts residents, are not currently in

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options ranging from as little as 10 to as many as 40 hours per week. Starting salaries range from \$13.50 to \$15.00 per hour. Participants will be paid \$13.50 per hour for the hours they work in the internship phase of the program.

The Employment Program for Young Adults with Disabilities Program is funded through the state budget and administered by Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

### How to sign up?

To learn more or to set up a virtual interview for a seat in this exciting new program, contact Karen Gostenhofer, [kgostenhof@verizon.net](mailto:kgostenhof@verizon.net), 978-660-4071. Don't delay, there are limited seats and classes begin soon! For more information about the Polus Center, go to [www.poluscenter.org](http://www.poluscenter.org) or contact Theresa Kane, 978-270-2457.

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## Biden's Plan to Invest \$400 Billion to Make Long-Term Care Cheaper

Thanks to the Disability Policy Constium for this article:

A \$400 billion investment into senior care and long-term caregiving in President Joe Biden's American Jobs Plan may not fall into a traditional definition of "infrastructure," but it's one of the most popular provisions in the plan among Democratic and Republican voters alike, according to new polling from [Vox and Data for Progress](#).

The new poll, which surveyed 1,217 likely voters about various provisions of Biden's \$2.25 trillion American Jobs Plan and has a 3 percentage point margin of error, showed that Biden's investment to improve and lower the cost of long-term care for seniors and those with disabilities has broad support — 73 percent of respondents strongly or somewhat backed the proposal."

To read more, visit [vox.com](http://vox.com).

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*UPDATE: The Oscars will be televised Sunday, April 25!*

*Get ready for the Oscars by listening to the new episode of The Heumann Perspective: Camp Jened Un-Cut with @Denise Jacobson, Ann Cupolo Freeman and Lionel Je'Woodyard! Available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify with transcripts on the website: <https://judithheumann.com/1826-2/>*

## **A well deserved Oscar Nomination for Best Documentary Film has gone to Crip Camp.**

From YouTube: "On the heels of Woodstock, a group of teen campers are inspired to join the fight for disability civil rights. This spirited look at grassroots activism is executive produced by President Barack Obama and Michelle Obama."

CBS News recently reported on the movie: [CRIP CAMP: A DISABILITY REVOLUTION](#).

You can watch Crip Camp on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OFS8SpwioZ4&t=5623s> or on NetFlix.

We highly recommend watching Crip Camp!

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## **Webinar: Optimizing Outcomes for Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), MA Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing ( MCDHH) and MA Department of Public Health (DPH) are proud to offer a webinar "Optimizing Outcomes for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing" on May 12th from 4-5PM. This webinar will be presented by Dr. Barbara Hecht, Ph.D., from Clarke Schools for Hearing and Speech. Dr. Hecht was one of the writers of [About the Guidelines – Deaf Education Guidelines \(deafedguidelines.org\)](#). The Guidelines will be reviewed and strategies for implementation will be discussed. Learn how to incorporate the recommendations in your district.



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Thank you to Disability Policy Consortium for this news.

## John Oliver On Nursing Homes

HBO's Last Week Tonight ran a segment on the severe danger and neglect faced by people with disabilities and seniors in Nursing Homes. The whole segment was excellent, including an appearance by DPC board member (and NCIL awardee) Penny Shaw, one of the country's most steadfast and effective nursing home advocates. Check the segment out below, and then call your state and federal elected officials and ask them to support Home and Community Based Services as a better alternative to institutions.



## Partner Websites and Organizations

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[REV UP Massachusetts](#) - Increasing the Disability Vote!



[MA Tales of Independence](#) - a collection of videos by people who are successfully living independently.



[Dignity Alliance of Massachusetts](#) is dedicated to secure fundamental changes in the provision of long-term services, support, and care.

## **About MetroWest Center for Independent Living**

We provide an array of independent living services that enable people with

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by teaching the practical skills and confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. We promote access and change within society while advocating for programs and services needed by people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities. MWCIL is a consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability, nonresidential private nonprofit agency.

*We enable people with disabilities to gain freedom from nursing homes and other institutional settings.*

If you have a disability, live within our area (26 towns in Metrowest section of Massachusetts) and have needs, goals, or barriers related to your living independently, then contact us at 508-875-7853.

MetroWest Center for Independent Living is a scent-free environment. Please keep this in mind when you plan a visit.

**[View our Services](#)**



**MetroWest Center for Independent Living**

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