

# MetroWest Center For Independent Living

Omicron Delta

Social Distancing

Stay at Home

Testing

N95

Black Disabled  
Lives Matter

Vaccine

PCA Shortages

## 2021 Annual Report

Health Care

Deaths

Telehealth

Vote By Mail

Boosters

Closed

Remote Learning

Isolation

Worker Shortages

Masks

Zoom

Food Insecurity

Hybrid

KN95

### Serving 26 Communities

Ashland	Bellingham	Dover
Foxboro	Framingham	Franklin
Holliston	Hopkinton	Hudson
Marlboro	Maynard	Medfield
Medway	Millis	Natick
Needham	Norfolk	Plainville
Sherborn	Southboro	Stow
Sudbury	Wayland	Wellesley
Weston	Wrentham	



## Message from the Executive Director

### Mission Statement

MWCIL enhances the full participation of persons with disabilities in the community.

### Vision

All people with disabilities are empowered to choose how they experience Independent Living.

### Leadership Team

Paul W. Spooner—Executive Director  
Rose Quinn—Assistant Director  
David Correia— Director of Advocacy  
Danya DelMonaco—Director of Services  
Winifred McGraw—Executive Assistant

### Board of Directors

Joe Bellil—President  
Edward Carr—Vice President  
Michael Kennedy—Treasurer  
Tyler Terrasi—Secretary  
Tammy Laverty  
Sebastian Leu

2021... Most of us had a few months of more relaxed living as vaccines kicked in and we could be outside. Of course, those with compromised immune systems did not get as big a break. And then came the Omicron (the Omigod) variant. Most break-through cases do not end up hospitalized, but some do. People with compromised immune systems are the most at risk and are isolated again.

Worker shortages in most sectors including health care, congregate settings and home health care, are rampant. People are having to go without treatment, and even basic needs for activities of daily living. The stories from nursing homes are worse than they have ever been, but it's hard to guarantee someone will find adequate help living in the community.

In spite of challenges, I commend our staff for their dedication and hard work as they continued to connect with people in the community to provide services and knowledge. We had some extra funding, and were able to provide additional support to many consumers. We were able to provide numerous consumers experiencing food insecurity with supermarket gift cards

We also continue to advocate for accessibility in employment and housing, for better health care and home based services, and for civil rights. COVID-19 has highlighted a myriad of existing problems in health care equity for people with disabilities.

I was appointed to the newly formed Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, where I hope to affect change on a state wide level.

Once again, we missed our annual in-person gatherings. IL Education Day at the State House, the Legislative Roundtable, and ADA Day were all virtual.

We lost many long-time activists this year. While COVID-19 may not have directly caused these losses, it almost certainly played a role. We will miss these fighters, and we thank them for all of their hard work and many accomplishments.

*MWCIL will continue to fight for the advancement of disability rights and to increase the opportunities for people with disabilities.*

Sincerely,  
Paul W. Spooner





# Financial

## Statements of Activities for the Period Ended June 30, 2021

<b>Support and Revenue</b>	
Government Funded Contracts	\$1,160,198
Service Fees	10,100
Gifts, Grants and Contributions	6,932
Other Income	144
<b>Total Support and Revenues</b>	<b>1,177,274</b>
<b>Functional Expenses:</b>	
<i>Program Services:</i>	
Independent Living Services	859,424
Statewide Independent Living Council	103,228
Total Program Services	962,652
<i>Supporting Services:</i>	
Administrative	200,693
Total Supporting Services	200,693
<b>Total Functional Expenses</b>	<b>1,163,345</b>
<b>Changes in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions</b>	<b>14,029</b>
<b>Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions — Beginning of Year</b>	<b>423,636</b>
<b>Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions — End of Year</b>	<b>\$437,665</b>

## Statements of Financial Position for the Period Ended June 30, 2021

<b>Assets</b>	
<b>Current Assets:</b>	
Cash	\$290,510
Accounts Receivable, Program Services	204,227
Prepaid Expenses	13,465
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>507,202</b>
<b>Property and Equipment:</b>	
Office Furniture and Equipment	33,081
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(32,079)
<b>Net Property and equipment</b>	<b>1,002</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>	
Deferred Compensation Account	17,130
Security Deposits	4,162
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	<b>21,292</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$529,496</b>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities:</b>	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$9,570
Accrued Payroll and Related Costs	52,348
Deferred Revenue	12,783
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>74,701</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities:</b>	
Deferred Compensation Plan Obligation	17,130
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>17,130</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$91,831</b>
<b>Net Assets:</b>	
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	437,665
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>437,665</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<b>\$529,496</b>



# The Core Services at MetroWest Center for Independent Living

Total number of staff	14
Staff with disabilities	9
Consumers Served	564
Individual Services	1457
Service Hours	4993

## Options Counseling

For individuals needing long term care services, we provide information and assistance in connecting with appropriate resources. This service is typically needed during a time of crisis or when an individual's situation is changing dramatically. Learning their options allows consumers to make informed decisions about their care and where to receive it.

Besides counseling, Elizabeth normally spends significant time in outreach at hospitals, senior centers and other area institutions, so that when a crisis hits, individuals are aware that MWCIL Options Counseling can help them analyze their situation and select the best choices. This year, with limited access, Elizabeth pivoted to phone calls, keeping our services well known in the community.



MWCIL is committed to serving the diverse members of the community. Danya, the Director of Services, has kept the staff working effectively, in spite of Covid19.

## Information and Referral

MetroWest Center for Independent Living provides disability and community related information to all individuals with disabilities, family members, service providers, and community members who request it. We hold housing and driver's education workshops.

## Peer Support

One-on-one peer mentoring helps people with disabilities develop mutual support, assistance, confidence and understanding. MWCIL provides peer support in a consumer-directed manner over the telephone, in person at the center, or at a consumer's living site.

## Advocacy

MWCIL participates in Advocacy based on consumer and/or community issues. MWCIL advocates for needed legislation as well as funding and enforcement of existing laws to improve the quality of life for all people living with disabilities. MWCIL also supports consumer self advocacy which empowers consumers to be assertive and articulate when faced with obstacles to independent living goals.

## Independent Living Skills Training

Independent living skills training is personally tailored to achieve consumers' goals. Some skills relate to personal growth, others relate to learning more about how to handle and navigate services and responsibilities.

## Transition

Since 2015, Transition has been recognized by the Administration for Community Living as a fifth core service. At MWCIL, we have always supplied transition services as we move consumers from institutions to the community, as we work with youths transitioning to adulthood (TAP), and as we aid consumers living with changing disabilities to maintain their independence.

In 2021, the lack of access into Nursing Homes/Hospitals had an impact on transition services we were able to provide.





## Other Services

### Transition to Adulthood Program

The TAP Coordinator works with local students as they prepare for higher education, work, and life after high school. Outreach is key, as the student population changes every year, and we expand throughout our service area.

Goals may include college preparation, obtaining a driver's license, improving time management, financial and social skills, job search and interview skills. The TAP Coordinator advocates at IEP meetings, and supports senior projects that match student interests and strengths. The Coordinator tailors services to the individual needs of students and works with families and schools to support their community involvement.

While curtailed, we continue to offer Drivers Education prep classes to TAP consumers.

### Community Transition

We are experts on helping people move out of nursing homes and into the community. This process is long and complex. The sometimes daunting tasks include:

- Navigating housing
- Setting up a new household
- Acquiring new services
- Maintaining good health care
- Learning transportation systems

No one should have to live in an institution.



### TAP—Transition to Adulthood Program

The Transition to Adulthood Program serves 14-22 year old students with disabilities. Most youth services are no longer available after age 22, so it's critical for students to plan and prepare for their transition into adult services. Our traditional IL Core services are tailored to young people and their age-related needs. Students learn skills and self-confidence so they can successfully transition from special education to an independent adulthood. Expectations for students with disabilities are evolving with broader opportunities for internships, job placements and advanced education and training. TAP seeks to help students connect to these opportunities and become active participants in the community.

### One Care

One Care is an option for adults age 21-64 at the time of enrollment who are eligible for both MassHealth and Medicare benefits. The goal of One Care is to offer a better, simpler way for people with disabilities to get all the care they need in one streamlined, integrated, person-centered plan. MWCIL staff serve as Long Term Supports Coordinators and assess consumer goals, needs and supports. As part of the Integrated Care Team, MWCIL staff work with our contracted One Care partner (Commonwealth Care Alliance), to get appropriate supports approved and put in place. Examples of services include arranging homemaking services, transportation, and home health services.



2020 In-Person Forum

## Legislators' Forum

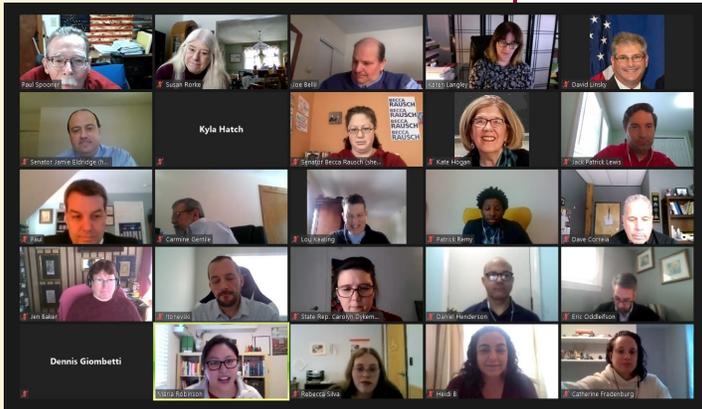
The annual Legislative Breakfast on February 5, 2021, was sponsored by the MetroWest Center for Independent Living and Easter Seals of MA. Karen Langley from REquipment attended as well as MWCIL and Easter Seals staff.

Senators Becca Rausch and Jaimie Eldridge attended along with Senate President Karen Spilka's staff, Dennis Giombetti. Representatives who participated included Kate Hogan, David Linski, Carmine Gentile, Maria Robinson, Jack Lewis and Carolyn Dykema.

The discussion covered disability issues, independent living, assistive technology and the REquipment reuse program. Paul Spooner described what has been happening at MWCIL, Joe Bellil highlighted Easter Seals of MA's Assistive Technology priority, and Karen Langley discussed REquipment. All programs need continued funding.

The legislators discussed the latest state house news.

Thank you to all of the legislators and staff who attended our 2021 Legislative Round Table with Easter Seals MA. We have said this before, but it's still true, the MetroWest delegation is The Best.



# Advocacy

MWCIL continues to promote equal access for individuals with disabilities to activities within the community.

The Advocacy Director, David Correia, worked with town officials in Ashland, Framingham, and Weston on issues such as accessible benches and tables at a town park, an ADA Transition Plan, assistive listening devices and railings in a school, and curb cuts in a school zone.

52 new access complaints were filed within our service area.

David also worked with the City of Framingham on complaints filed in previous years, several of which have been successfully resolved. We continue to work closely with the City of Framingham's Access Compliance Inspector to provide technical assistance.

We participated in the Voting Polls Survey Project sponsored by the Disability Law Center, to ensure that polling sites in our service area meet or exceed the required accessibility regulations for all voters. We visited sites in Framingham, Hudson, Maynard, Medway, Natick, Stowe and Sudbury during the US Presidential and Massachusetts General Elections, and found some of the issues previously reported have been corrected. COVID-19 precautions at the polling sites made conducting surveys more difficult.

MWCIL is also a member of the Massachusetts Access Committee, and we chair the Public Information and Education Committee of the SILC. And as mentioned earlier, Paul is now a commissioner on the newly formed state Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

2022 is an important voting year with all Congressional seats, all MA senate and house seats, and all state executive branch seats up for election. MetroWest Center for Independent Living will continue to be active in supporting relevant bills, and making sure our interests are prominent in election campaign platforms.



# Advocacy



## The Massachusetts Access Bills

David and Paul continue to fight for legislating MA standards to comply with 2010 federal standards for accessible design. This compliance will increase the number of accessible homes and accessible jobs. There are currently two bills in the MA House (HB 2419—Accessible Workplaces and HB 2420—Accessible Housing) and one bill in the MA Senate (SB 1629—An Act Building a More Accessible Massachusetts). As these bills work their way through the 2022 session, we will continue to testify, advocate and rally supporters.

MWCIL sponsors and maintains the [AccessibleMA.org](http://AccessibleMA.org) website to help inform voters on these bills.

## REV UP Massachusetts

We participated on the National Rev Up planning committee to craft new initiatives to encourage people with disabilities to register and vote during the pandemic. Thanks to REV Up advocacy, voters who are unable to vote with a paper ballot in Boston and Worcester had access to electronic ballots. We continue to work with the Disability Law Center to further voting rights for people with disabilities. 2022 will be very important as the Vote by Mail and other COVID-19 voting supports have lapsed, and the legislature is working on a permanent voting package. One especially tough issue is ensuring that people who are unable to use a paper ballot have the same private access as everyone else.

MWCIL sponsors and maintains the [RevUpMA.org](http://RevUpMA.org) website and email list service to help inform voters on their voting rights.

## Dignity Alliance Massachusetts

Dignity Alliance Massachusetts (DAM) is a large, grass-roots coalition dedicated to securing fundamental changes in the provision of long-term services, support and care. While problems with these services are nothing new, COVID-19 has highlighted and exacerbated the issues with congregate residences. DAM is equally committed to improving the quality and availability of Home and Community Based Services. With a long list of bills supporting transformative change to the lives of seniors and people with disabilities, MWCIL will continue to advocate for change at the state and federal levels.

MWCIL sponsors and maintains the [DignityAllianceMA.org](http://DignityAllianceMA.org) website and email list service to help inform members and legislators on problems and legislation related to long-term services, support and care.

## Alternative Housing Voucher Program

Housing continues to be a major issue. Advocacy efforts statewide resulted in an increase of \$4.5 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program. 12.5 million was signed into the 2021 budget. At MWCIL, six nursing home consumers were selected to receive this voucher, and three will be able to utilize it to successfully transition back into the community.

## 2022

With a full legislative schedule and elections looming, MWCIL will continue to fight for civil rights and quality services for people with disabilities. COVID-19 has isolated our community in unexpected ways. We are committed to help keep the disability community safe and thriving.



## Consumer Stories

These Consumer Success Stories are written by MWCIL staff. All names have been changed. As these stories demonstrate, *every situation is different*. Sometimes a person needs something relatively simple to remain independent while other situations are very complex.

### **Samuel, age: 33**

**Disability(s):** Major Mental Illness

**Date began working with consumer:** 10/27/2020

MWCIL began working with Samuel in the fall of 2020. At this time, he was living in a motel in Framingham with his mother. By the winter of 2020, both Samuel and his mother had moved into his older brother's two-bedroom apartment (the brother's girlfriend lived there as well). It quickly became obvious to Samuel that this was a less than acceptable living situation, as he did not have any privacy and challenging family dynamics resulted in daily tensions. Samuel was also concerned that this situation could jeopardize his brother's housing stability.

Although he had already created a CHAMP (Common Housing Application for Massachusetts Programs) account and completed many housing applications, staff told Samuel that we could help him every step of the way regarding his housing search. Samuel's level of motivation and perseverance soon became apparent as he would often call with a question, only to soon call back to say that he did his own research or made some calls and answered his own question. Samuel also took the lead in contacting housing authorities and apartment complexes, eventually finding an available subsidized one-bedroom apartment by calling the Housing Authority and building a rapport with their Assistant Executive Director.

Coming from being homeless, Samuel had next to nothing in the way of basic home furnishings and we were able to assist him using Community First funds. Samuel remains stable in his apartment and is working at a local retailer in his neighborhood.

### **Tina, age 62**

**Disability(s):** Stroke and ruptured back disc

**Date began working with consumer:** 10/15/2020

Tina was referred by a previous consumer whom MWCIL had helped years ago. At that time she was working at a sober house on the night shift. In August, after living 3.5 years in Sage house, Tina received an apartment through Framingham Housing Authority. Tina had been in her apartment for about 1 year and had been sleeping on a recliner chair. Tina has severe back problems and also suffered a stroke. We got in contact with Tina and she was very happy that we would be able to help her. She said that the recliner was comfortable up to a certain point but after a while it was affected her back and did not allow her to achieve a good night's rest which made it difficult to remain employed.

Staff assisted Tina in applying for Part B funds to purchase a proper bed and other necessary household items. Upon receiving the items Tina was so grateful, even asking about volunteer opportunities at MWCIL so she could give back to the community. Staff let her know we were just happy that she will now be sleeping in a bed, able to rest comfortably and can continue working without problem.



## Consumer Stories

### **Jasper, age: 63**

**Disabilities:** Amputee, Diabetes, Mental Health issues  
**Date began working with consumer:** 6/15/2020

Jasper currently uses a manual wheelchair and finds it very difficult to get to and from medical appointments. During COVID times, the risk of illness is also a concern. Jasper recently applied for and received a laptop computer with funding through Cares Act - Part C. Obtaining this technology has allowed Jasper to attend all of his medical appointments safely, easily and independently. It allows him to reserve his energy, time and health for living and enjoying time with family and friends. Jasper continues to work with his IL Coordinator on achieving additional goals which will ultimately lead to more independence.

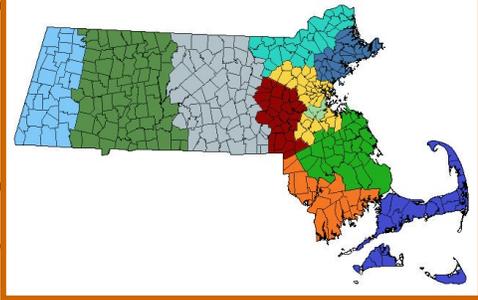
### **Damian, age: 31**

**Disabilities:** Autism and Anxiety  
**Date began working with consumer:** 2/5/2021

Damian was assigned to MWCIL through MRC on the VR-IL contract to work on IL Skills Training and Community Resource Access. Damian was primarily interested in seeking assistance with applying for and obtaining health insurance. At the time Damian had not had any health insurance for over two years. Damian felt that in order for him to work on such a lengthy application, he needed guidance so he wouldn't get anxious and overwhelmed, which was the reason he had been putting it off for so long. Damian and staff worked together over Zoom to complete his MassHealth application, for which he was ultimately approved. Damian now has health insurance and will be able to see a PCP for the first time in years. Damian also successfully found and scheduled an intake with a nearby counseling group where he will be able to start seeing a therapist.

After achieving the initial goals from his VR-IL contract, Damian and staff moved on to discuss what his future might look like in terms of employment. Damian has not worked in over six years due to not feeling mentally and emotionally ready. Damian and staff had a few meetings where we discussed his strengths, interests, and overall goals for a career. Damian and staff did some job searching on Indeed and a few other job sites to see what employers are looking for in terms of skills and requirements for different roles. During this time, Damian was also working with Worker's Opportunities Unlimited (WOU) to complete some personal assessments to evaluate him and his skill level. Staff coordinated with WOU to encourage Damian to be open to applying to jobs and doing some interviews to try and gauge his interest of returning to the workforce.

Damian decided to apply for a job at Medway Technologies as a Production Technician. Damian went there to have an informal meet and greet with some of the senior staff to discuss the organization, and the job itself. Staff received an exciting email from Damian a few days later saying that they decided to offer him the position without a formal interview because they liked him so much! This was great news and a big boost of confidence for Damian after years of being down on himself and feeling unqualified to work. Damian is currently in the process of filling out the needed paperwork, and employee information needed prior to starting.



# Massachusetts Statewide Independent Living Council

MWCIL provides administrative support and is the financial conduit for the Massachusetts SILC. Under the leadership of Sadie Simone, MASILC has become an effective organization for people with disabilities state wide. MWCIL staff, Paul Spooner and David Correia actively participate in MASILC efforts.

## 10 Independent Living Centers

Ad-Lib, Inc. - Pittsfield

Boston Center for Independent Living - Boston

Cape Organization for Rights of the Disabled - Hyannis

Center for Living and Working, Inc. - Worcester

Disability Resource Center - Salem

Independence Associates, Inc. - East Bridgewater

MetroWest Center for Independent Living - Framingham

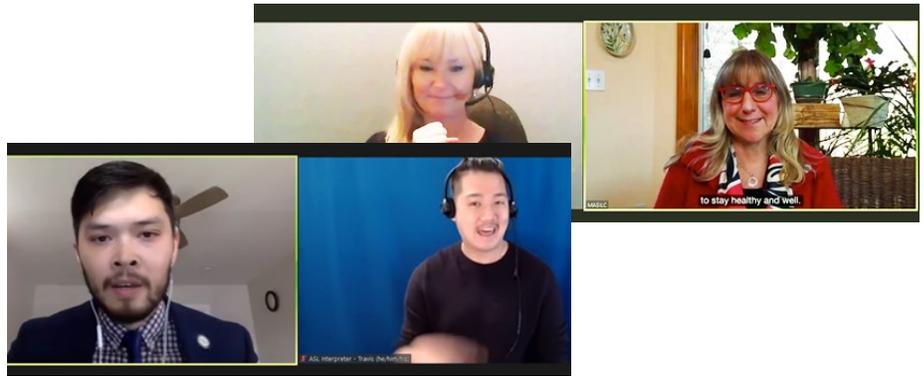
Northeast Independent Living Program - Lawrence

Southeast Center for Independent Living - Fall River

STAVROS - Amherst

## IL Education Day at the State House

2021 IL Day at the State House was online, and can be rewatched at [masilc.org](http://masilc.org). We learned about several topics from different experts. Topics included Community Living, Fighting Isolation, and Support from IL Staff.



## 31th Anniversary of the ADA

This year's virtual celebration was a great collection of videos and live discussion, with many young people presenting. Topics included the past, present, future, dance, therapy animals, racism, art and poetry. Videos are available at [masilc.org](http://masilc.org).



# Staff



Paul



Rose



David



Danya



Elizabeth



Rebecca



Kyla



Donna



Dan

and Wini!



Lou



Mandy



Sue

# **MetroWest Center for Independent Living**

**was created by people with disabilities seeking full integration into society. MWCIL empowers people with disabilities with the practical skills and self-confidence to take control over their lives and become active members of the communities in which they live. MWCIL works to promote access and change within society and responds with programs and services to meet the needs of people of all ages with a wide range of disabilities.**

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