

Metro West Center For Independent Living



2024 Annual Report

Serving 26 Communities

Ashland, Bellingham, Dover, Foxboro, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Millis, Natick, Needham, Norfolk, Plainville, Sherborn, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Wayland, Wellesley, Weston and 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

- Sadie Simone—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
- Michael Kennedy—Treasurer
- Tyler Terrasi—Clerk
- Sebastian Leu
- Mark Dempsey
- Kay Bell
- Michelle Brown-Droese

2024 was a year of small and significant steps for MWCIL. MWCIL expanded programming, welcomed the passage of legislation that supports housing and individuals with significant disabilities that work and expanded and strengthened our board of directors.

With an eye toward slow, sustainable growth, MWCIL added two new programs in the last year, the Veterans Direct Care Program (VDC) and a MassAbility Supported Living Expansion Pilot. Both programs work with a small number of consumers and offer the opportunity to increase and diversify funding, without the need to add additional staff immediately. These programs also tie into our mission to support individuals with disabilities to live with dignity and independence in the community.

MWCIL continues to work with the Independent Living Network of Massachusetts to advocate for support for the network as well as policies that improve the lives of people with disabilities. The last year saw significant successes in the passage of An Act to improve quality and oversight of long-term care and the Affordable Homes Act.

Advocacy did not yield increases in funding for the network of Independent Living Centers. MWCIL will continue to work with sister programs in fighting for increases in the line item to support Independent Living Centers in Massachusetts.

MWCIL welcomed two new Board Members during the last year and one the previous year. We have focused on strengthening the board, updating our Bylaws and developing a board manual.

MWCIL continued to provide our core services to individuals, enhancing the full participation of persons with disabilities in the community. This year we helped individuals move out of nursing homes, successfully transition from high school to college, access benefits and supports that help them live independently and provided technical assistance to municipalities to increase access to public spaces.

Looking forward to 2025, MWCIL will continue to support individuals and the community to ensure that people with disabilities have access and opportunities to live, work and fully participate in their communities.

Financial



Statements of Activities for the Period Ended June 30, 2024

Support and Revenues	
Government Funded Contracts	\$1,339,085
Service Fees	7,480
Gifts, Grants and Contributions	2,862
Other Income	1,122
Total Support and Revenues	1,350,549
Functional Expenses:	
<i>Program Services:</i>	
Independent Living Services	923,321
Statewide Independent Living Council	148,321
Total Program Services	1,071,642
<i>Supporting Services:</i>	
Administrative	248,834
Total Supporting Services	248,834
Total Functional Expenses	1,320,476
Changes in Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	30,073
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions — Beginning of Year	511,080
Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions — End of Year	\$541,153

Statements of Financial Position for the Period Ended June 30, 2024

Assets

Current Assets:

Cash	\$274,341
Grants Receivable, Govt Contracts and Grants	314,218
Deferred Compensation Account	
Prepaid Expenses	28,729
Total Current Assets	617,288

Property and Equipment:

Office Furniture and Equipment	21,583
Leasehold Improvements	18,378
Subtotal	39,961
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(26,177)
Net Property and equipment	13,784

Non-Current Assets

Security Deposits	20,000
Right-of-Use Asset, Operating Lease	508,179
Total Non-Current Assets	528,179
Total Assets	\$1,159,251

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities:

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$42,033
Accrued Payroll and Related Costs	56,140
Deferred Compensation Plan Obligation	
Operating Lease Liability, Current	85,842
Total Current Liabilities	184,015

Non-Current Liabilities:

Operating Lease Liability, Non-Current	434,083
Total Non-Current Liabilities	434,083
Total Liabilities	\$618,098

Net Assets:

Net Assets Without Donor Restrictions	541,153
Total Net Assets	541,153

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$1,159,251**

Core Services

MWCIL is committed to serving the diverse members of the community.

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.

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 virtually, 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 how to handle and navigate services and responsibilities.

Transition

Some transitions are planned, some are expected and others just happen. Below are some examples of how MWCIL staff support people in transition

- Moving consumers from institutions to the community,
- Working with youths transitioning to adulthood (TAP)
- Helping consumers living with changing disabilities to maintain their independence.

Total number of staff	13
Staff with disabilities	9
Consumers Served	692
Individual Services	1833
Service Hours	5033



Programs

Veteran Directed Care

Veteran Directed Care gives Veterans of all ages the opportunity to receive the Home and Community Based Services they need in a consumer-directed way.

This program is for Veterans who need home and community based services to help them with activities of daily living, including help with bathing, dressing, or fixing meals. VDC is designed to provide Veterans with more choice and control over the services and supports they need to live successfully at home.

Veterans in this program are given a budget for services that is managed by the Veteran or the Veteran's representative. With the help of a MWCIL Independent Living Coordinator, Veterans hire their own workers to meet their daily needs to help them live at home or in their community. The IL Coordinator checks in with the Veteran monthly and meets with them Quarterly to ensure their home and community based needs are being met.

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.

Options Counseling

For individuals needing long term care services, we provide information and assistance connecting them 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.



Advocacy



Legislative Forum

Sponsored by the MetroWest Center for Independent Living and EasterSeals of Ma, the annual Legislative Forum was held at our office.

The MetroWest legislators are consistently strong supporters of Independent Living.

Sadie and David presented our priorities:

- Increase Independent Living Line Item 4120-2000 to \$10 million
- Vote for [S1553](#) and [H2291](#) - An Act Building a More Accessible Massachusetts
- Support Low-income Accessible Housing with 4 recommendations
- Support Regional Transit Authorities (RTA)

The following legislators and staff attended: Susan Nicholl - staff for Senator President Karen Spilka, Senator Becca Rausch, and Representatives Jack Lewis, David Linsky, Jeff Roy, Danielle Gregoire, Kate Hogan, Priscila Sousa, and Kate Donaghue.

EasterSeals Massachusetts updated everyone on the successes of the Navigator Program and asked for continued support. They also objected to cuts to Assistive Technology Programs.

REquipment asked for continued support of their successful DME Reuse program. They requested funding be annualized as a permanent line item.

The MWCIL Advocacy Director provides technical assistance on accessibility to cities and towns, businesses, and individuals, as well as system-wide advocacy at the State House. David meets with legislators to educate them on the issues facing our community. He has a leadership role as vice-chair of MASILC and is an important voice for MWCIL state-wide. David works extensively with our service area towns, improving local accessibility.

In addition to the Advocacy Director's work, and the Direct Service work with individual consumers, several staff members got out into the community and/or spoke up for Independent Living. Options Counseling and TAP hosted outreach tables at multiple local events, including Senate President Spilka's annual 55+ Health and Wellness Fair and the Framingham ADA Celebration.

Dan and Sadie attended the National Council on Independent Living's annual conference in Washington, D.C., meeting with their counterparts from across the country, advocating with our legislators and learning at workshops.

MWCIL continues to be an active partner with both REV UP MA (Disability Vote) and Dignity Alliance MA (Long-term Supports and Services). We maintain their websites, send out their emails, and participate in events. Both advocacy organizations have been effective in advancing their agendas.



Advocacy

2024 Successes

MWCIL successfully advocated to **maintain PCA services at current levels**, preventing cuts to services such as individuals needing complicated food preparation, as well as to current PCA users with fewer than 10 hours of ADLs.

The **Affordable Homes Act** represents significant funding and policies to support a wide range of funding for the production and preservation of housing. The act also establishes special commissions on Extremely Low-Income Housing, Senior Housing, and Accessible Housing for persons living with disabilities.

MWCIL applauds the passage of An Act to Improve Quality and Oversight of Long-Term Care (Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024), which is comprised of many of the long-term care bills that were filed over the last 2 years. If enacted effectively, the new legislation should ensure that nursing home residents and staff receive higher quality, safer, and more personalized care. This reform is expected to save and improve the lives of many people in Massachusetts.

Wini McGraw and MWCIL advocated for bills to Protect the Homes of Seniors and Disabled People on MassHealth. Without this bill, when someone over 55 on Medicaid passes away, the state looks to the person's estate for repayment of Medicaid, often leaving spouses and family members without a home. Correcting this injustice was part of Chapter 197 of the Acts of 2024.



2025 Goals

- Increase funding for Independent Living Centers
- Expand accessible housing and employment opportunities to people with disabilities
- Access to voting: continue to support and advocate for expansion of mail-in, early voting and accessible voting opportunities
- Increase access to home and community-based supports
- Increase access to transportation

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.

Note: Consumers in stories are not pictured.

Jack, age 66
Disability: Cerebral Palsy
Started with MWCIL: November, 2023

When we first began working with Jack, he expressed the need for assistance applying for accessible, subsidized housing opportunities but had no personal documentation and did not know how to start the process. For many months with the assistance of his Transition Coordinator, Jack worked hard to get his core documents, which was a challenge because he was born in another state. After many months, Jack has finally received his documents and has begun to submit them to the places he's applying for housing. Jack remains in a skilled nursing facility while he works toward achieving his ultimate goal of obtaining subsidized housing.

Jeff, Age 47
Disabilities: Lymphedema, Intellectual/learning disability, mental health disorders
Started with MWCIL: March, 2024

Jeff was homeless due to a no-fault eviction and has lived at a motel with his father and mother for 6 years. Jeff sought assistance from MWCIL to find options for subsidized housing and to secure an apartment. Throughout his time with MWCIL we were able to assist him in getting documentation together, communicating with property managers, and applying for different housing complexes. Jeff was able to secure housing this past September through a lottery application submitted by MWCIL. We assisted with the screening process and secured a property within the Framingham area. Jeff is now very happy with his new living situation and can focus on moving forward in his life.



Consumer Stories

Maria, age 23

Disabilities: Intellectual/Learning Disability

Started with MWCIL: August, 2022

Maria began working with MWCIL as a TAP consumer and then continued working with an IL Coordinator after she graduated high school. She started college in a temporary trial program for homeless youth sponsored through MassBay Community College. During this time Maria struggled with working and going to school full time and relied on her IL Coordinator for support. Maria received an opportunity to be a part of a pilot program through SMOC for unhoused youth where she could maintain some stability while working toward her main goal of finding safe, affordable housing away from her abusers. She also wanted to obtain legal citizenship. Maria's IL Coordinator worked closely with her to find an immigration lawyer and supported her throughout a hearing where she took her abusers to court as well as aided her through the entire process of applying for subsidized housing.

Maria's work visa was granted, she received a social security card and soon will be granted legal citizenship after the proper channels have been followed. After two years, Maria was granted priority housing status and received a unit offer from Framingham Housing Authority in August of 2024.

Carly, Age 18

Disabilities: ADHD, PTSD, Mental Health

Started with MWCIL: June, 2024

Just after Carly began working with MWCIL TAP, her mother passed away, making her housing situation uncertain. In the last 6 months, Carly has been able to enter SMOC youth shelter and work with their housing case managers, start and maintain her job at Starbucks, and begin saving money for her own place.

Carly worked with her Youth Transition Coordinator on financial literacy and budgeting and has been able to save enough to cover rental deposits and is actively working on finding independent housing that fits her budget. Carly obtained her driver's license this quarter after 2 attempts. She is working full time while completing her senior year in a more independent study format, which gives her several days a week where she can work at Starbucks and attend school one day a week to gather assignments and check in with professional staff.

Carly will continue working with MWCIL for support as she makes progress toward her goals of living independently in the community.

MA Association of Independent Living Centers

The MA Association of ILC's is a collaborative group of the 10 ILC's in MA. They work together to assist MA residents with disabilities to live independently in their community of choice.

IL Education Day at the State House



IL Conference



MA Association of Independent Living Centers

ADA Celebration

The celebration of the 34th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act was August 2, 2024 at Dunn Pond State Park in Gardner.



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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