



Massachusetts Independent Living Centers

2025

Massachusetts's 10 Independent Living Centers

serve people with disabilities of all ages in every city and town in Massachusetts.

Independent Living Centers support people with disabilities to live, work and participate fully in their communities through **5 core services:**

- Information and Referral
- Peer Support & Mentoring for Youth and Adults
- Independent Living & Life Skills Training
- Individual & Systems Advocacy
- Institutional Transition & Diversion; Youth Transition

Massachusetts Residents Served in FFY 24

Total Served:
32,370

11,978 consumers, family members, partners in the community, municipalities, and government entities received information or referrals from Independent Living Centers.

182 individuals transitioned from institutionalized settings such as nursing homes to the community.

965 youth across the Commonwealth received transition services.

10,522 individuals obtained access to health care services they previously did not have.

957 individuals obtained Assistive Technology.

Massachusetts Independent Living Network

FY 2026 Priorities

Budget Priorities

Independent Living Centers Line Item 4120-0200

\$10 Million for 10 Independent Living Centers (increase of \$2 million)

Independent Living Centers (ILCs) are consumer-directed, consumer-controlled, cross-disability nonprofit agencies. ILCs are critical in keeping individuals with disabilities independent in the community and out of costly institutional settings.

The 10 ILCs that serve Massachusetts are advocating for a funding increase of \$2 million to Line Item 4120-0200 in the FY26 budget. This funding increase is imperative to ensure ILCs can maintain services, hire and retain staff, and ensure the individuals they serve can remain living independently in the community. Massachusetts ILCs require more state funding to meet increasing demands on our services for consumers with increasingly complex needs.

Independent Living Centers are funded in a separate line item with pass-through funds, and not through Chapter 257 rate setting. As a comparison, Community Integrated Services (CIS) and Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) vendors have received 25% and 10% funding increases in the FY24 and FY25 budgets through rate setting, specifically for staff. ILCs, on the other hand, have received one line-item funding increase since 2016.

Maintain Funding for Personal Care Attendants

The Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program enables over 50,000 people with disabilities and elderly people to live in the community with dignity and independence. PCAs offer crucial support with daily activities such as eating, bathing, toileting, transferring, laundry, shopping, housekeeping, transportation to medical appointments, and meal preparation. The PCA program also serves as an important source of work — there are 65,000 PCAs in Massachusetts, a majority of whom are women of color, and they are spending their checks in businesses and in neighborhoods across the state.

This year's budget includes language that would place an artificial and indefinite cap on PCA program spending starting July 1, 2026. The spending cap would result in people not getting needed PCA services or PCAs not being able to get needed pay raises.

The ILCs advocate that the language curtailing the program in future years be removed.

Accessible Affordable Housing Funding

For the FY25 budget, we advocate to:

- **Increase the Alternative Housing Voucher Program funding** to \$30 million (Line Item 7004-9030). Last year, the phrase “Prior Appropriations Continued” was vetoed from this line item, which meant a significant loss in money available to the program. This year, EOHLC expects to spend all of its money, and requires an increase simply to maintain the vouchers that have already been issued.
- **Retain Accessible Affordable Housing Grants at \$2.5M** (Line Item 7004-9031). The Accessible Affordable Housing Grants (AAHG) offers developers and landlords grants to create or rehabilitate physically accessible housing that prioritizes AHVP recipients. This program has funded projects across the state since its inception a few years ago. The Governor’s budget did not include this program.

Regional Transit Authority Funding

Increasing funding for Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) is fundamental to increasing accessible, affordable transportation in Massachusetts. A funding increase of \$258M for Regional Transit Authorities, allocated in the following way, would have a significant impact on people with disabilities in the state:

- \$200 million for operating costs, for RTAs to continue to sustain current service and expand routes
- \$40 million for fare free programs to continue to build on the success of these programs and increase ridership
- \$10 million for Connectivity Grants for RTAs to provide more cross-regional service
- \$8 million for the Community Transit Grant program which provides funding to meet the transportation needs of older adults, people with disabilities, low-income communities and rural communities

Legislative Priorities

H.2569 An Act expanding the availability of adaptable housing for people with disabilities and seniors

S.1733 An Act Building a More Accessible Massachusetts

Sponsors: Rep. Christine Barber, Sen. Michael Moore

We support AAB (Architectural Access Board) regulations that would align MA regulations with Federal Regulations. These regulations would:

- Bring MA into compliance with Federal Law by aligning state standards with the 2010 federal standards for accessible design
- Make housing accessible by requiring adaptable units in renovated buildings
- Remove barriers to work by ensuring access for all individuals in both customer and employee areas
- Prevent lawsuits and simplify development by addressing access problems in the blueprint phase, instead of in a courtroom after development has been completed

H.1481/S.1004 An Act to Create Affordable Homes for Persons with Disabilities

Sponsors: Rep. Rob Consalvo and Rep. Marjorie Decker, Sen. Robyn Kennedy

The Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP) provides rental assistance for low-income adults with disabilities age 60 and under. This bill would make AHVP easier to use, administer, and issue. This legislation would:

- Increase the maximum eligibility age from 60 to 62
- Update language and verification process for persons with disabilities
- Create a payment standard of 120% Small Area Fair Market Rent (SAFMR)
- Retain unspent funds with the program rather than reverting them to the general fund

H.1278 An Act Relative to Wheelchair Repair Requirements and Consumer Protection **S.210 An Act Expanding Wheelchair Warranty Protections for Consumers with Disabilities**

Sponsors: Rep. Jim O'Day, Sen. John Cronin

Wheelchairs and scooters are prone to defects and sudden failure. It is common for consumers to be left stranded or isolated in their homes for weeks, or even months, awaiting repairs. This legislation:

- Expands the existing warranty to two years
- Covers all wheelchair users in the Commonwealth
- Holds wheelchair providers and suppliers accountable to reasonable repair timelines by requiring they cover costs consumers face as a result of their defective chairs, and stock common parts so they are prepared to service chairs efficiently

S.914 An Act Relative to Spouses as Caregivers, Sponsor: Sen. Bruce Tarr

S.1938 An Act Supporting Family Caregivers, Sponsor: Sen. Joanne Comerford

Some disabled people need caregivers, such as Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) to maintain their independence and ability to live in the community. There is currently a dire shortage of paid caregivers in the state. Spouses are currently unable to be paid as caregivers by MassHealth, meaning that some are forced to perform unpaid caregiving work, reduce work hours, and even quit their jobs to care for their loved ones.

These bills would allow spouses to be authorized to serve as paid caregivers in the MassHealth program for the provision of certain home-based care and services just as other relatives are already permitted to serve as paid caregivers.

The Independent Living Network supports continued funding for Assistive Technology and Durable Medical Equipment Programs.

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