

CIL of Northwest Florida

Empowering People with Disabilities to live their best lives.

2024 Annual Report



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Board of Directors

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Mission

CILNWF promotes, educates, facilitates, assists and advocates with and on behalf of people with disabilities, in partnership with their communities, to achieve their goals for independence.

Vision

CILNWF envisions a world where people with disabilities have freedom, choice and control over all aspects of their lives, so they can fully and equally participate in society.

Organization Significance

Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida (CILNWF) is not just an organization; we are a lifeline of support that enriches the lives of individuals with disabilities, their families, and the communities they inhabit. By championing independence for people of all ages, CILNWF empowers individuals to embrace their autonomy and navigate life on their own terms. CILNWF plays a pivotal role in enhancing the accessibility of neighborhoods, ensuring that everyone can participate fully in society. Moreover, CILNWF is catalysts for change, influencing disability policies at local, state, and national levels, thereby fostering a more inclusive world. With a blend of compassion and advocacy, CILs are making strides toward a future where independence is not just a dream but a reality for all.

History of Independent Living Centers

The first Center for Independent Living was founded by disability activists, led by Ed Roberts, in 1972 in Berkeley, California. These Centers were created to offer peer support and role modeling and are run and controlled by persons with disabilities. Independent Living philosophy emphasizes consumer control, the idea that people with disabilities are the best experts on their own needs, having a crucial and valuable perspective to contribute and deserve equal opportunity to decide how to live, work, and take part in their communities. There are currently 403 Centers and 330 branch offices located throughout the 50 states in America, all independently incorporated, operated, and funded.

History of Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida

In 1980, Center for Independent Living of Northwest Florida in Pensacola was established and later incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization in the State of Florida. CILNWF is a community based, cross-disability, nonresidential, private, nonprofit agency designed and operated within our local community by individuals with and without disabilities. CILNWF's purpose is to promote a philosophy of independent living. Fostering a philosophy of consumer control, peer support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy. To maximize leadership, empowerment, independence, integration, productivity, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities into mainstream American society.

Description of Programs and Services

Individual and Systems Advocacy:

- Promote positive change for and with individuals with disabilities
- Work with consumers on self-advocacy assertiveness to promote personal empowerment
- Systems advocacy activities in partnership with CILDRC consumers and community members to affect attitudinal and environmental change
- Regional Consultants for all five titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Information and Referral:

- Provide information on any subject related to all types of disabilities
- Refer consumers to other agencies in our network to assist in gaining independence

Peer Mentor:

- Peer Counselors with disabilities serve as role models and provide moral support and share creative solutions related to disability issues in a person's life.

Independent Living Skills Training:

- Trained staff members are available with innovative approaches to performing basic tasks that lead to independence, such as budgeting, resume writing and employment readiness assistance.

Transition Services

Services that facilitate transition from nursing homes and other institutions to the community, provide assistance to those at risk of entering institutions, and facilitate transition of youth to postsecondary life

Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST)-Gulf Coast Regional Demonstration Center:

- Assistive technology demonstration and "try before you buy" program
- Assistive technology device loans
- Equipment reutilization/recycle/refurbish program (as funding allows)
- Referral to low-cost loan programs for the purpose of obtaining assistive technology equipment or devices

Regional Distribution Center for Florida Telecommunications Relay, Inc.

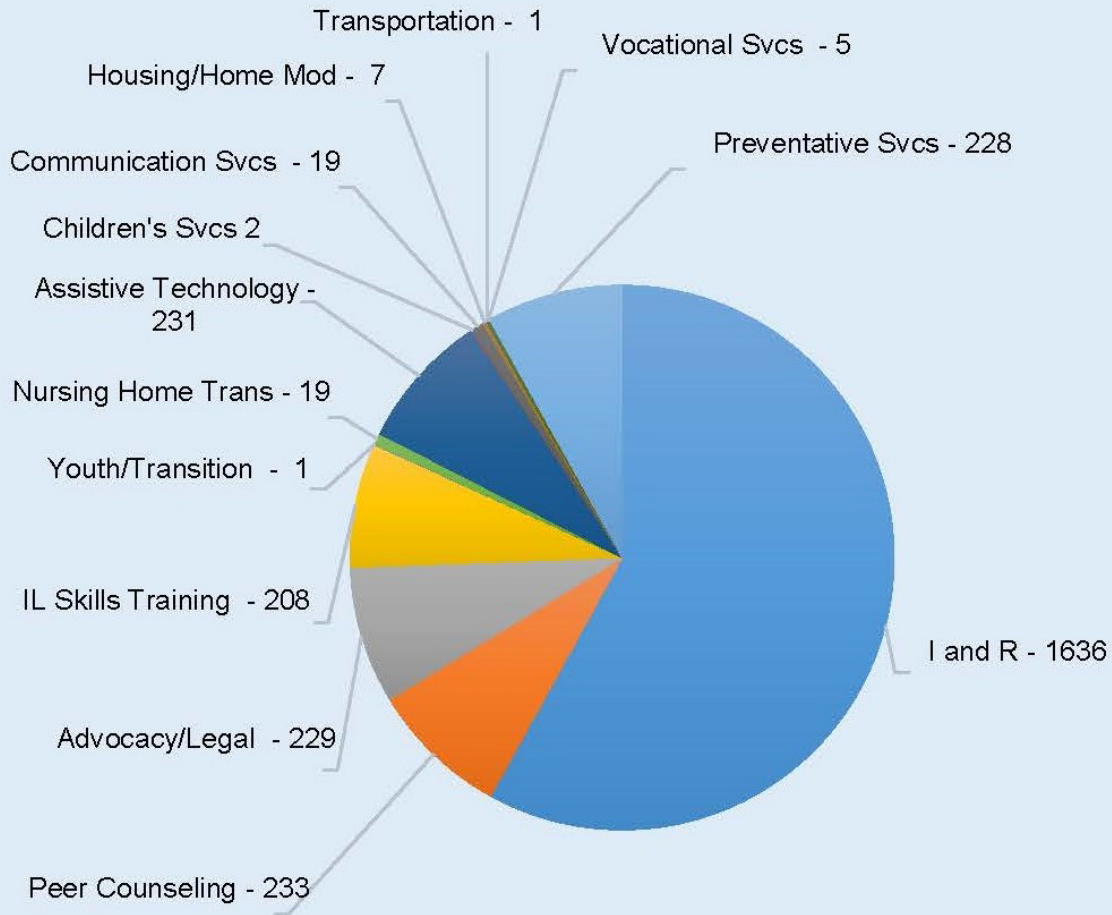
- Free loans of special telephone equipment to Floridians who are Hard of Hearing, Deaf, Deaf/Blind, or Speech Impaired for as long as they need it. Using this phone equipment helps people communicate more easily.

Community Advocacy Projects:

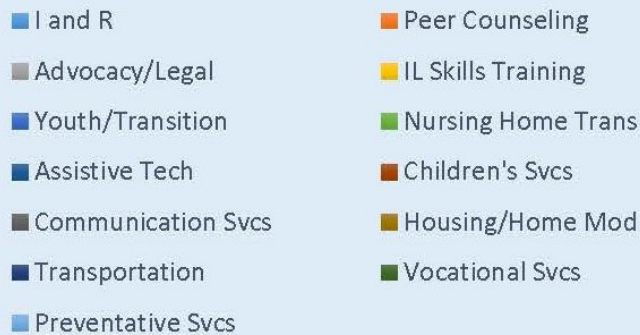
- Accessibility Studies and Surveys
- Americans with Disabilities Act Workshops and training
- Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities
- Voter Access for People with Disabilities
- Disability Etiquette/Sensitivity Training

2024 Consumer Data

Summary of Services January thru December 2024



TOTAL SVCS = 2819



1033 Consumers Served

293 Consumer Goals Achieved

866 Consumers Received I & R

FAAST and Equipment Loan Programs

- Loaned/re-loaned 278 pieces of assistive technology and equipment
- Recycled/refurbished 12 pieces of assistive technology equipment
- Made disability modifications to 4 vehicles

Florida Telecommunications Relay Program

- Distributed 52 phones to new clients
- Exchanged phones for 30 existing clients
- Generated \$14,739 in income

Noteworthy Events

Advocacy at the Capitol and in the Community



CILNWF team members participated in CIL Day 2024 at the Capitol in Tallahassee. The purpose of CIL Day is to provide education and awareness to our local and statewide legislative body on matters important to the disability community. Pictured above right are team members Bridgett Johnson, Diana Tift, Carolyn Grawi and Karen Teamer posing with State Representative Michelle Salzman (center).



CILNWF was invited to be a part of Constituent Services Day at Bubba's 33, sponsored by Florida State Representative Michelle Salzman. We, along with other area resource organizations, were able to highlight various programs and services available to people in our community. One CILNWF consumer who attended was able to discuss with Representative Salzman the need for Deaf Services in our community. We also got to highlight the MILES van and demonstrate how we can operate as an office while out at events.

Emergency Preparedness Workshops



CILNWF conducted two workshops aimed at educating people with disabilities and community partners about the importance of preparing for emergencies and the unique needs faced by many who have various difficulties with access. Community partners included Escambia County Emergency Management, American Red Cross, Be Ready Alliance Coordinating in Emergencies (BRACE), Legal Services of North Florida, Florida Department of Health and Escambia County Area Transit. Workshops were held in Pensacola at Studer Community Institute and at Bob Hope Air Force Enlisted Village in Shalimar, Florida.

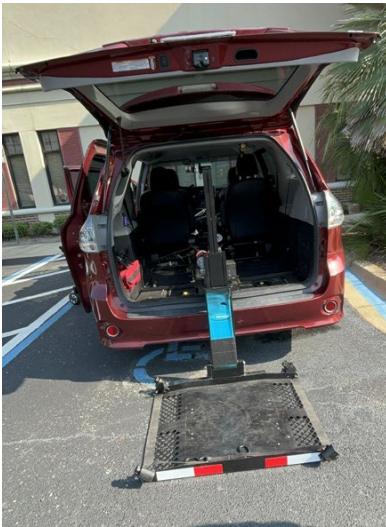
Social and Recreational Events



In response to feedback collected on our Strategic Planning Surveys, we hosted several events to allow for socialization and peer support for our consumers.

Success Stories – Making a Difference

We assisted a consumer with getting a lift on her vehicle so that she could transport her power wheelchair. Her words: *I want to thank CIL for changing my life. I was unable to leave home without a lift on my vehicle and they assisted me with what turned out to be very difficult to find and install; yet Danny was with me the whole way keeping me grounded as we worked through each issue to get it done. After the lift was fully installed, I realized in order to load up safely I needed forearm crutches and once again, though I had tried other agencies in the area, it was CIL who came through for me! Now I can move around more freely and still have the support to stay upright while loading my chair. Without the lift and crutches I would still be unable to leave home, but instead I am able to go to a doctor's appointment and, as my energy allows, even enjoy an outing just because I want to go. I finally get to feel the freedom I have missed since becoming a wheelchair user. The lift and the crutches have really changed my life in ways only few can really understand. Thank you, CIL, and thank you Danny.*



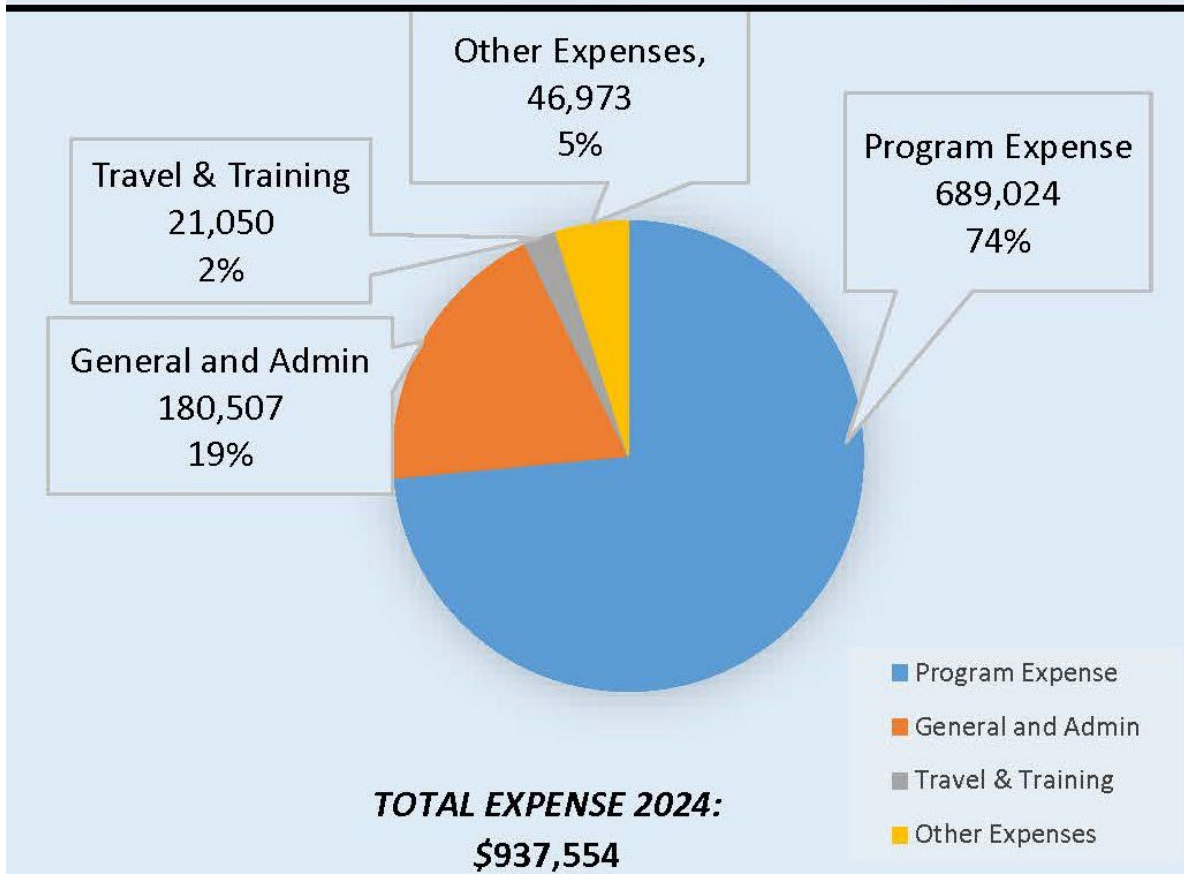
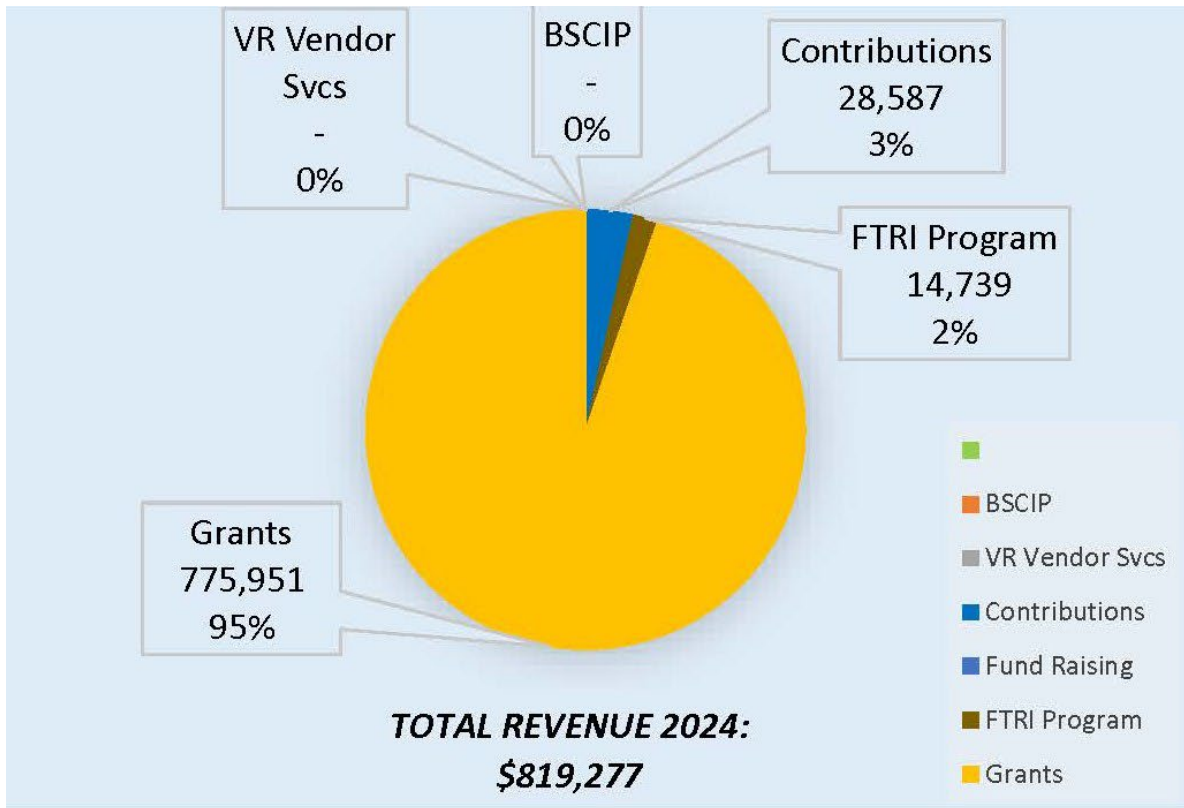
Christian was referred to CILNWF by Sue Straughn from WEAR-TV after being contacted by Christian's Aunt, who had recently been appointed legal guardian after her removal from a bad living situation in another state.

Christian has several disabilities such as autism, blindness, Blount's disease and she is also diabetic. She is still mostly non-verbal and may also have some emotional issues. She began attending Escambia Westgate school. She is slowly making the transition and her Aunt is trying to get as much help as she can to help Christian be as independent as possible.

CILNWF was able to assist with loans of a communication board and some sensory items from the FFAST Demonstration library. We were also able to provide an oversized manual wheelchair, as Christian has difficulty walking due to the Blount's Disease.

Pictured at left is a very different young lady from when she first came to CILNWF. That smile says it all!

2024 Financial Information



How You Can Help!

- **Equipment:** We always accept donations of gently used durable medical equipment, power wheelchair, hospital beds and other items needed in the course of daily activities.
- **Specialty Volunteers:** We need some strong volunteers with trucks or trailers to help us pick up some of the heavier donated equipment, such as hospital beds.
- **Cash** donations are always appreciated. You can donate by check or on our website www.cilnwf.org/donate.



Treasures Await, Save the Date
**Center for Independent Living
Celebrates**

45
ANNIVERSARY

Sapphire Soirée

JULY
SATURDAY | **26** | 6:00 PM

AT CULINARY PRODUCTIONS
201 E Wright St, Pensacola

