

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Issue #3
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From: Leah Beltran [mailto:leah.beltran@disabilityinaction.org]
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2014 12:14 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Issue #3

Dear Members,

I wish I could be with you today at the Capitol building to testify in person. Although I can't be there today, I wanted express to you the importance of being able to provide the services and equipment that people with disabilities need through the IL division of DARS.

As a Center Director/Executive Director of a Center for Independent Living since 2008, I have been pleased to be an instrumental part in assisting over 4,000 people with disabilities receive many services that have allowed them to continue to live independent lives or to begin living the life they want to live.

Centers for Independent Living (CIL) are more than just a referral agency. Many times, we are the voice for people with disabilities but we teach self-advocacy as well. We are people with disabilities helping and empowering people with disabilities. A CIL looks at the whole person and how the disability can cease to be a barrier to independence.

There are so many examples of people who, with the right equipment, could stay in their homes. And as you may agree, it is healthier and more cost efficient for the state, for someone to remain in their home. Grandparents raising their grandchild with a disability who need a lift for their vehicle to be able to get the child out into the community, someone with a disability who needs a ramp because the one that exists is dangerous and they have fallen and injured themselves, not to mention any number of devices that would allow people with disabilities to be able to communicate their needs because they can't speak, or a device that would allow them to have more mobility. CIL's are capable of greatly reducing the waiting list that currently exists for IL services.

CIL's are at the front lines working to meet needs. We employ people with disabilities. My Center currently has a full time independent living specialist who is totally blind. She has been blind all of her grown life. She is an excellent example of peer mentorship. She is a person who knows very clearly what it means to navigate life in spite of her disability and is willing and able to advocate for the needs of people with blindness. Given the opportunity to manage IL funds, Disability in Action would hire specialists who can serve other disabilities as well.

Disability in Action is very active in the communities it serves. We will continue to be a viable community partner. CIL's would also be the best choice as a partner in managing IL funds to provide our communities with the equipment and services they need to live independently.

Thank You,

Leah Beltran

Executive Director

Disability in Action (formerly Not Without Us!)

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