

2020 Annual Report



Mission Statement:

The Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL) is dedicated to working with and responding to the ever changing needs of persons with disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota to promote societal acceptance, inclusion, and equal access for all persons with disabilities.



**Southwestern Center for
Independent Living (SWCIL)**

Serving People with Disabilities in Southwestern Minnesota

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Pamela Russell
Board Chair

Dear Friends,

While 2020 brought its challenges, it also accelerated changes that will forever impact our future. During the past year SWCIL’s dedicated staff and volunteers ensured the continuation of service by exploring and adopting new safety protocols, technologies, and methods of service delivery. Many successful new processes will continue to be offered as alternative means to serve. As we excitedly move forward, please join us in this look back at SWCIL’s impact during the past year. Some highlights from FFY 2020 include:

- Serving 452 consumers with consumer-directed independent living services
- Offering 26 community education classes
- Offering 5 community workshops
- Providing 22 social/recreational opportunities, fostering peer support relationships
- Serving on 28 councils, committees, and workgroups, advancing disability policies and efforts to promote awareness, access, and inclusion
- And more!

We hope you enjoy this celebration of last year’s achievements and 40 years of Independent Living services in Southwest Minnesota. We are here because of our passion to serve and our belief in empowerment and self-determination, that all individuals have the right to choose to live a lifestyle free from discrimination and exclusion. Thank you for your interest, involvement, and partnership. Now, we look forward to meeting the challenges of 2021 face (masks) on.

Sincerely,

Pamela Russell, Board Chair

Melissa Doherty, Executive Director



Melissa Doherty
Executive Director

What is a Center for Independent Living?

A CIL is mandated to provide **five (5) core services**:

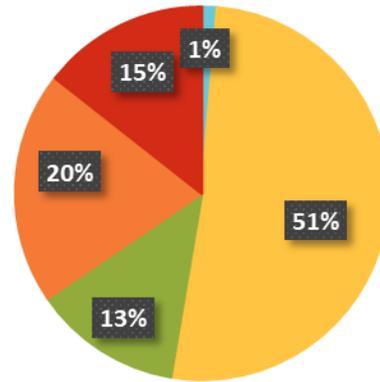
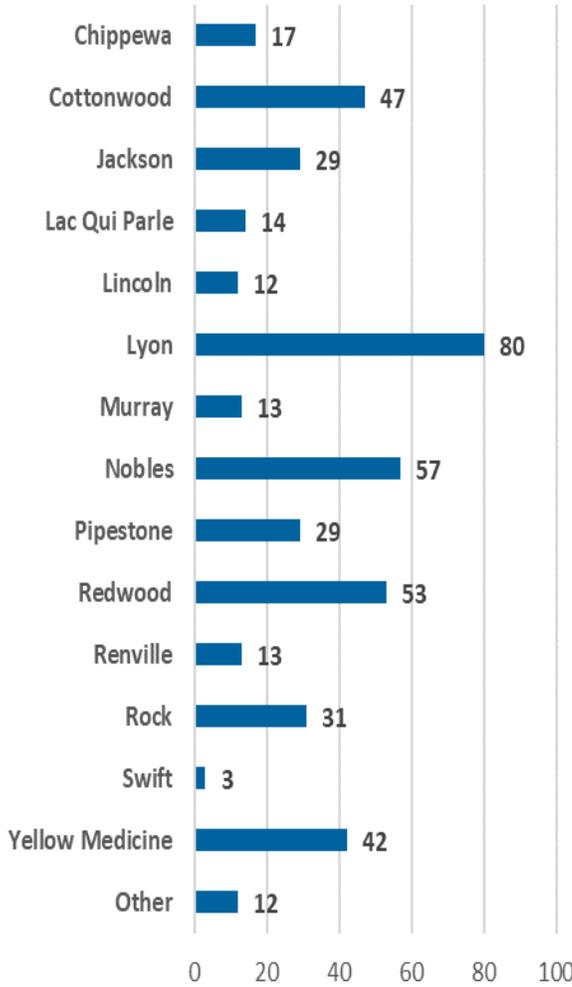
- ◆ **Advocacy** – Individual and Systems
- ◆ **Independent Living Skills Training**
- ◆ **Information Referral & Assistance**
- ◆ **Peer Counseling** – including cross-disability peer counseling
- ◆ **Relocation, Diversion and Youth Transition Services**

A Center for Independent Living (CIL) must demonstrate the following:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">Consumer Control</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In decision making, service delivery, management, and establishment of policy and direction of the Center including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being governed by a board of directors comprised of at least 51% people with disabilities. • Employing a minimum of 51% people with disabilities. | <p style="text-align: center;">Community Based</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Located in the area served by the CIL, responding to the unique needs of the area, and having knowledge of and access to local resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Counties: Cottonwood, Jackson, Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Nobles, Pipestone, Redwood, Rock, and Yellow Medicine. |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Cross Disability</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ensuring that services are provided to individuals with a diversity of significant disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted outreach with 124 entities (unduplicated) in an effort to reach underserved and unserved populations. | <p style="text-align: center;">Nonresidential</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Private nonprofit agency designed and operated within a local community by individuals with disabilities and provides an array of IL services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWCIL services are provided in a setting of the consumer’s choice, in their homes, schools, community building, or online. |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Self-Help and Self-Advocacy</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Promotes self-help and self-advocacy among individuals with significant disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 217 consumers received advocacy/legal services, 203 goals set, 41 achieved and 157 in-progress for consumers in the self-advocacy/self-empowerment life area. | <p style="text-align: center;">Equal Access</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Promotes equal access for individuals with disabilities in society and to all services, programs, activities, resources, and facilities, whether public or private.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWCIL staff provides input on equal access projects in the local communities, as well as ensuring the accessible set-up of meetings and events held by SWCIL. |

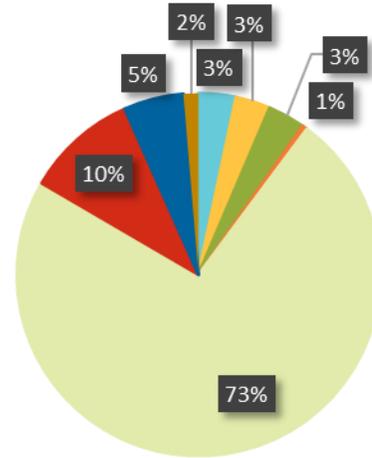
Consumer Demographics

Consumers Served By County (452 Total)



Age

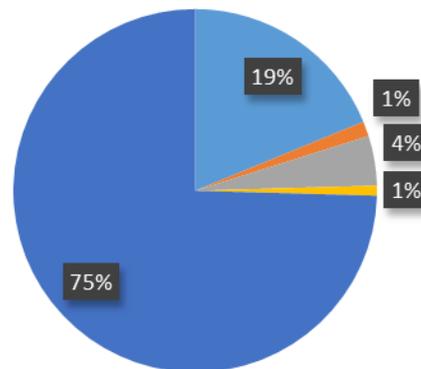
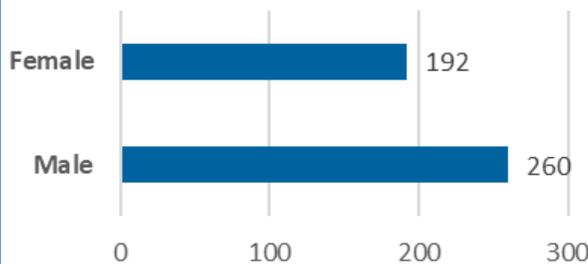
- Under 5
- Ages 5-19
- Ages 20-24
- Ages 25-59
- 60 & Over



Ethnicity

- American Indian
- Asian
- African American
- Native Hawaiian
- White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Two or more
- Unknown/undisclosed

Gender



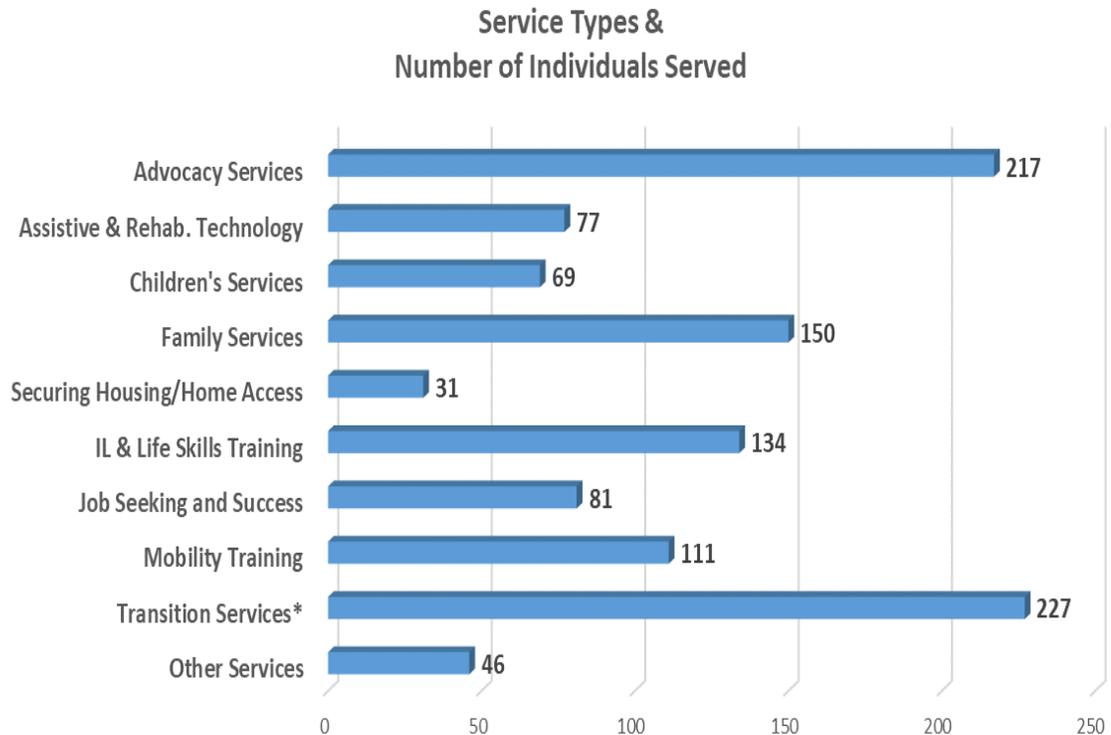
Disability

- Cognitive
- Mental Health
- Physical
- Vision/Hearing
- Multiple

Individual Services

SWCIL works in the least restrictive setting as chosen by the consumer, in their own homes, schools, and communities, to work on independent living goals the consumer defines.

During FFY 2020 the following services were requested by and provided to individuals with disabilities living in Southwest Minnesota.



*Transition Services include relocation to community living, prevention of institutionalization, and youth transition to post-secondary life.



“I was able to leave the nursing home. I am working on a business plan with help from the small business development center. I will manage the company and apply for a loan.”

“SWCIL works amazing with the special education staff and students. They ask to see what IEP goals the students have and try to include those within the student’s learning outcomes. Well done!”

Consumer Outcome Highlights

During FFY 2020 SWCIL services assisted consumers to achieve the following:

- 4** Consumers **obtained competitive, integrated employment**
- 7** Consumers were assisted in **sustaining employment**
- 25** Consumers **obtained their driver’s permit and/or other necessary means to acquire driving independence.**
- 47** Consumers **sustained their independent living situation**
- 5** Consumers **relocated from a nursing home or other institution**
- 168** At-risk consumers received services that **prevented institutionalization**



Pictured above from left to right: Ali Andree gaining independence in cooking skills, Stephanie Bakker singing karaoke at the Valentine’s Day Dance, and Jeremy Hibl enjoying a Valentine’s Day Social Recreation Event.

“My goal was to pass my permit test and [SWCIL Staff] was amazing and I passed my permit test!”

“SWCIL has made a very valuable difference in my life.”

“One of my goals was time management and I think that I have made a lot of progress.”

Consumer Success Highlights

Preparation for Driver's Education:

A teenager with learning and developmental disabilities, a chromosome deletion, and a head injury decided she wanted to read the Minnesota Driver's Manual. Her disabilities created difficulty with reading words of two or more syllables, and the manual is written at an 11th to 12th grade reading level. SWCIL helped her figure out how to move forward using a custom-made reading window while listening to staff read aloud using deliberate diction and a carefully timed pace. When coming to the end of a line of text she would reorient her reading window and then say "Ready" for the next line. After more than one year of work she successfully read the driver's manual and said that reading it helped her have an easier time understanding what was going on in her high school driver's education class.

Choosing a Vocational Path:

A transition age youth with disabilities was unsure if he wanted to pursue work or school after graduation. He was reluctant to leave home for school or consider options for work. With SWCIL assistance he explored job options near his home and learned about the education different jobs required. While working with SWCIL he used the Minnesota Career Information System (MCIS) to explore his interests and the careers that fell within those areas, and he decided to pursue a degree from a local vocational school. With assistance from SWCIL he enrolled in a graphic design program at a local vocational technical college and began attending classes while remaining at home.

Budgeting Skills:

A high school student with cognitive and mental health disabilities wanted to learn budgeting skills to help him run a small business. He owns and operates a small hobby farm selling produce and other goods to local restaurants and individuals in the community. SWCIL helped him learn what a budget is and why it is important to maintain. After learning about how and why to budget, he learned how to break down his expenses for his personal life and for his hobby farm/business. He discovered where he was losing money and identified where he could save money each month, which would get him out of the red and begin earning an income. He has plans to grow the business after graduating from high school.



Pictured above: SWCIL staff and consumers wait to meet legislators at the SWCIL capital trip.

Advocacy Assistance:

After two years of making requests, having the required assessments completed multiple times, and appealing decisions, the parents of a young girl with fetal alcohol syndrome were able to obtain in-home services for her under a home and community based services waiver. SWCIL staff helped the family with identifying their child's areas of need, how to clearly and appropriately describe those needs, how to navigate the appeals process, and how to prepare for the appeal hearing.

Community Activity Highlights: Peer Mentoring

Fostering Peer Support Relationships

Peer relationships can be vital to independent living success by offering knowledge through learned experiences, support and encouragement in achieving independent living goals, and connection to resources that meet needs specific to the individual. The Southwestern Center for Independent Living (SWCIL) supports a variety of non-consumer group activities that facilitate opportunities for the development of peer support relationships. These group activities are open to the public as a means of reaching out to underserved populations.

SWCIL sponsors the Marshall Area Social Recreation community group which offers social/recreation activities and opportunities to develop and foster peer support relationships. Marshall Social Rec. events and activities are planned by a volunteer committee of participants. A total of 255 participants (duplicated count) attended these events.

FFY 2020 EVENTS

- **Large Group Dances/Activities: 4 events, 120 participants**
- **Coloring Club: 6 events, 35 participants**
- **Craft Night: 2 events, 49 participants**
- **Game Night: 1 event, 3 participants**
- **Conversations, Coffee, and Me (online connection with peers during the MN stay at home order): 8 events, 48 participants**
- **Earth Day Challenge (offered through social media)**



Pictured above: Jocelyn Caldwell and Sami Hey smiling at the Valentines event.



Pictured above: Sensory board made at an event.

During FFY 2020 SWCIL also initiated an ongoing, participant led, interactive forum for parents, caregivers, and guardians of children (of all ages) with disabilities to share challenges, offer ideas and resources, and provide and receive on-going support. Attendees have discussed various struggles securing appropriate services for their children at school and through waiver programs, especially during the pandemic. Increased social isolation is also addressed. Participants have offered ideas and peer support, and have encouraged and explored means to advocate for their children.

Ramp Program

Building modular residential ramps, low rise long tread steps, and exterior entrance railings.

“A ramp was put by my front door; it helps me so much”



Picture of: New wooden ramp construction attached to a consumers home.

Temporary Ramp Rental Program

Providing temporary residential access solutions to facilitate: the prevention of institutionalization; relocation to the home/community-based living settings of an individual’s choice; societal inclusion; and/or the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to explore the use of AT to remove access barriers.



Picture of: New temporary aluminum ramp construction attached to a consumers home.

With the installation of a temporary ramp at her rural residence, a woman in her 70’s has been able to spend another season in her home, helping her husband tend to their vegetable garden and enjoying the scenic view. The ramp, which allows her to safely enter and exit her home, has given her and her husband needed time to find suitable community based housing in town.

Ramp & Home Modifications:

Assessments Completed

Residential Ramp: **29**

Home: **4**

Projects Completed

Ramp Construction: **9**

Home Modification: **2**

Other Programs

Veteran Directed Care (VDC): Helping veterans create a self-directed plan to remain living at home.

4 Veterans Served

Informed Choice Services: Career counseling and referral services for individuals receiving subminimum wages in Southwest Minnesota. **445 Individuals Served**

Consumer Directed Community Supports (CDCS) Support Planning: Creating self-directed plans to remain living in the community. **153 Individuals Served**

Benefits Planning: Financial planning services, consultation on how work affects benefits, and creating a plan for employment success. **7 Individuals Served**

Accessed Health Care Benefits:

A young woman was seeking services for health needs so that she could put her best efforts into her employment. She had been without medication for cognitive and mental health disabilities for more than a year. SWCIL guided her in the process of applying for insurance benefits as well as making appointments with appropriate health care professionals so she could resume her medical care. By maintaining appropriate health care, she has been able to maintain her current employment for a year.

Home Accessibility to Remain at Home:

A middle-aged individual with multiple significant disabilities needed to make his home more accessible due to his increased risk of falling. SWCIL staff shared information on Consumer Directed Community Supports and how to develop a plan to include home modifications as well as staffing needs. As he created his budget it became evident that the modifications he needed would exceed the budget without leaving funds for much-needed staffing. SWCIL helped him advocate for additional funding from the County's aggregate pool to cover the cost of the home modifications. The County approved the added dollars, and the family was able to complete all the necessary home modifications, enabling him to remain living safely at his home.

Finding Housing:

A middle-aged woman with multiple disabilities had been homeless for two years in a metropolitan area. Instead of living on the streets, she spent her limited income on temporary living situations, moving from one to another. Having decided to relocate to a more affordable area, she temporarily lived with family until finding herself homeless again. She reached out to SWCIL for help to find a permanent, affordable place to live. She was able to secure a subsidized apartment and worked hard to learn to budget her money. She now has a home she loves and money left over each month for other things she has always wanted. She is also getting in-home help and meals through a HCBS waiver. She stated, "I finally have everything I need and even some things I want."

Self-Employment Support:

Having survived an automobile accident that left her with a TBI and many challenges, a young woman was able to make her dream of owning her own photography business come true. Through SWCIL and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, she received employment support and benefits counseling and learned about state and federal work incentives and how to manage her benefits so that she can be successful while having safety nets in place in case her situation changes. These services inspired and motivated her to follow through with her self-employment goal.

"I love working with SWCIL because as an agency the people we serve are our top priority. We are here to support others in their pursuit of their goals and dreams." - Linda Halbur

Meet Our Staff



Pictured above SWCIL Staff. From left to right: Top row: Jennifer Cox, Melissa Doherty, Deb Gratz, & Adam Chandler. Middle row: Ruth Hubbling, Ted Stamp, Teri Woelfel, & Dan Wahl. Bottom Row: Jen Thovson, Shanda Walker, Linda Halbur, & Annette Swanson Not Pictured: Marie Grengs & Harry Remley

SWCIL Board of Directors



Pamela Russell
Chair



Janice Ross
Vice Chair



Derek Klinkner
Treasurer



Leah Hastad
Secretary



Maria Trejo
Member



Tashauna Swanson
Member



Carrie Stiernagle
Member



Cody Seehafer
Member

Financial Sources

Public Support

Support for Core Independent Living Services

State\$385,469

Federal.....\$175,859

Total Support for CIL Services..... \$561,328

Other Contracts

Subcontract with the MN Department of Employment & Economic Development to fulfill requirements of section 511 of WIOA providing an opportunity for individuals receiving subminimum wage to learn about employment options and express a choice to work toward competitive, integrated employment. (Ended 7/2020)

Federal.....\$ 52,120

Funding to support preventing, preparing for and responding to COVID-19. Appropriated through the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act and OMB Memorandum M-20-11 – Administrative Relief for Recipients and Applicants of Federal Financial Assistance Directly Impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Federal.....\$ 22,217

Total Public Support..... \$635,665

Program Service Revenue

Ramp Program, Veteran Directed Care, Consumer Directed Community Support – Support Planner Services, & Other Sources

Revenue\$179,035

Total Program Service..... \$179,035

Other Sources of Revenue

Other.....\$ 5,419

Total Other Sources..... \$ 5,418

Grand Total from All Revenue Sources..... \$820,119

GET INVOLVED

VOLUNTEER

We place tremendous value on the individuals, groups, and companies that support our goals. Volunteers can make a large impact by giving a small amount of their time.

Join us at www.swcil.com

DONATE

As a non-profit organization, we rely on the generosity of people like you. Join us in our mission to promote societal acceptance, inclusion, and equal access for all persons with disabilities.

Support our work at www.swcil.com

CONNECT WITH US



This document is available in alternate formats upon request. Contact us at swcil@swcil.com or 507-532-2221.