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# Estimating the Cost for Achieving Universal Access to Centers for Independent Living, 1998

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# Ruralfacts

## Estimating the Cost for Achieving Universal Access to Centers for Independent Living

Over the past 20 years, the national network of centers for independent living has significantly advanced the cause of people with disabilities, and helped countless thousands of individuals with significant disabilities achieve healthy and independent lives.

Yet, the residents of 40 % of the nation's counties -- mostly rural counties -- lack basic access to CILs. To achieve universal rural access to ILC services, we estimate an additional investment of approximately \$71.5 million will be needed. This estimate is based on the following:

1. Our research identifies 336 CILs with over 253 satellite<sup>1</sup> locations.
2. We estimate that these centers and their satellites annually provide direct services to over 212,000 individuals living in 1,896 (60%) of the nation's counties.
3. CILs actually delivered services in an average of 5.7 counties. We estimate that the U.S. needs as many as 218 more CILs to reach the 1,245 counties in which no services are delivered.<sup>2</sup>
4. Further, we found the median budget of a CIL was \$328,000. Accordingly, we estimate that an additional \$71.5 million would be needed to achieve universal access to CIL services using the existing model of center based programs and satellites.

This estimate is based on projections of the number of counties in which services are actually provided. CILs have larger catchment areas (an average of 7.1 counties) than those in which they actually deliver services.<sup>3</sup> The following table presents estimates of the cost

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<sup>1</sup>Satellites include branch offices and outreach locations.

<sup>2</sup>To calculate the number of CILs needed, we divided the number of counties in which data showed no services delivered (1,245) by the average number of counties in which CILs reported actually delivering services (5.7).

<sup>3</sup>A CIL may not deliver services in all counties in its catchment area for many reasons: the lack of resources being the primary one reported. We estimate 109 new CILs would be needed to cover the 773 counties falling outside a catchment area into such an area.

of establishing universal access to CIL services using both catchment areas and service areas. These estimates are quantitative in nature and do not address the quality or sufficiency of services.

It is important to note that the reported median (\$328,000), average (\$530,000), lowest (\$55,000), and typical (\$200,000) budgets observed reflect all funds used to operate a center, and not only federal funds.<sup>4</sup>

Estimates of Funding Needed to Achieve Universal Access to CIL Services Based on Both Catchment and Service Areas and at Levels of Funding Reflecting the Lowest, Typical, Median, and Average Budgets.

Funding Levels	\$55,000 (lowest)	\$200,000 (typical)	\$328,000 (median)	\$530,000
To Fund 109 CILs with an Average of 7.1 Counties in Their Catchment Areas and Reach the 773 Counties Not in a Catchment Area	\$5,950,000	\$21,800,000	\$35,752,000	\$57,770,000
To Fund 218 CILs to Actually Deliver Services in an Average of 5.7 Counties and Reach the 1,245 Unserved Counties	\$11,990,000	\$43,600,000	\$71,504,000	\$115,540,000

The estimates are based on the premise of expanding the existing model of CIL services. In some areas, it may be more effective to expand the number of satellite programs operated by existing CILs rather than to create new CILs. Alternative models (e.g. virtual CILs, itinerants, etc.) have also been discussed. Whatever model is used, it is critical for CILs to have a stable financial base that permits them to administer the programs, conduct advocacy, provide core services, and leverage additional funding to address local needs.

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<sup>4</sup>Awards from Title VII of the Rehab Act range from \$55,000 - \$200,000 annually. Additional CIL funds come from many public and private sources. These additional funds are frequently “earmarked” (i.e. restricted) for specific activities, populations, or geographic areas, and cannot be used for administration or core services.

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