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IL Net presents the results of a first-ever nationwide survey to collect information about CIL directors' salaries, work experience and educational background.

Conducted by Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD), the study offers thought-provoking information about the folks at the helm of our country's independent living movement. For example, the data indicated:

- nearly half of today's CIL directors (49%) have held that position for three years or less;
- there appears to be a lack of salary parity between male and female directors;
- parity may also be an issue among directors with disabilities and those without.

Among other things, the survey findings may be useful to CIL board members who've not had reliable information to support hiring and salary decisions before now. And it will be useful to the IL Net in providing effective technical assistance to CILs and SILCs on these issues.

## SALARIES

**IL NET is a  
collaboration  
of ILRU and  
NCIL.**

# AND WORK EXPERIENCE OF CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING DIRECTORS: NATIONAL SURVEY RESULTS

## INTRODUCTION

IL NET, a collaborative project of Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU) and the National Council on Independent Living, provides technical assistance to private, non profit Centers for Independent Living (CIL) and Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILC) throughout the United States. One of the questions most frequently received by IL NET deals with the salaries and work experience of CIL executive directors. Comprehensive national and regional information regarding salary ranges, work experience and educational background of CIL executive directors has not been readily available to date. In employing new CIL executive directors, governing boards (e.g., board of directors) have had to rely on fragmented and inconsistent information regarding typical salaries of directors. Salary histories of outgoing directors and information gathered from other local non-profit organizations have typically been used to set salary and experience criteria for new CIL executive director positions.

To address this lack of information and enable IL NET to provide better technical assistance to both CILs and SILCs on these issues, IL NET contracted with the Center for Persons with Disabilities (CPD) at Utah State University to conduct a nationwide survey of CIL executive directors. The purpose of the survey was to gather descriptive data regarding CIL executive directors' salaries, work history, educational background, number of employees supervised, number of consumers served monthly, and other related information.

## **SURVEY DESIGN AND PROCEDURE**

IL NET and the Center for Persons with Disabilities collaboratively developed a 17-question survey (see Appendix A) with input from several consumers of CIL services. The 17 questions were designed so that individuals could choose from a list of possible answers (e.g., yes/no, less than one year/ 2–5 years/ and so on). Every effort was made to ensure that the ranges for possible answers (e.g., years experience as an executive director) were easy to interpret and small enough to support useful data interpretation.

## **SAMPLE**

The list of 406 CILs (not including satellite offices) throughout the United States and its territories with relevant contact information (telephone numbers, mailing addresses, website URLs, and email addresses) was downloaded from the IL NET website. Staff from the CPD contacted the 406 CILs by phone or email to verify the contact information including the name of the current executive director. The CPD staff also inquired about the executive director's preferred format for completing a short survey (i.e., by telephone, through electronic means--Internet, paper/pencil, or computer disk).

## **SURVEY METHOD**

Upon verification of the contact information and survey format preference, a letter inviting the executive directors to complete the survey was sent to each of the 406 CILs in late October 2002. The introductory letter was followed five days later by the actual survey in the format requested by each individual director. Those requesting an electronic survey were sent an email message with instructions for completing the survey online. The message included a secure Internet URL to enable online completion of the survey. Surveys sent in electronic format were accessible to screen reader software enabling executive directors who use this accommodation to complete the survey independently. A paper copy of the survey, or computer diskette with a text version, along with a cover letter containing instructions for completing and returning the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope, were sent to those requesting these formats. To ensure the anonymity of executive directors' responses, identifying information such as the city, state and

zip code of the CIL s/he was representing was used to track survey completion and avoid duplicate responses. Individual names were not solicited or recorded on any format of the survey.

Three weeks following the initial invitation, a reminder to complete the survey was sent by email to the CILs that had a verified email address. Our goal was to ensure that at least 50% of the CIL executive directors in each of the ten Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) regions responded to the survey. Within one month after the initial invitation, over 50% of the executive directors in half of the RSA regions had responded to the survey. To ensure an overall response rate of at least 50%, CPD staff generated a list of CILs that had not yet responded in those regions that had a less than 50% response rate. From this list, CILs were randomly selected and contacted by telephone. Executive directors from each of the randomly selected CILs were asked to complete a telephone version of the survey. All surveys were completed by mid-December of 2002.

Although every effort was made to verify email addresses for those who requested the survey in electronic format, there were 17 email addresses that came back undeliverable. These executive directors, along with the executive directors from the nine CILs that the CPD staff were unable to contact prior to sending out the survey, were mailed a paper/pencil version of the survey so that they would have an opportunity to respond.

## DATA TREATMENT

Survey responses, regardless of format, were entered into a secure database from which data analysis occurred. Electronic responses were automatically entered into the database while paper/pencil responses (i.e., by fax or surface mail), computer disk, and telephone responses were entered into the web-based database by CPD staff. After paper/pencil responses were entered, the paper copies were destroyed. Over two-thirds (175) of the surveys were completed online. CPD researchers preferred the online survey completion format for two reasons. First, we programmed the survey so that all questions had to be answered before it was submitted.

There were no missing data points from the online surveys. Second, online submission eliminated data entry error by CPD research staff. When the data were entered by respondents, the data automatically became part of the database no further data entry by CPD research staff was required. Table 1 summarizes the number (and percent) of surveys completed using each response format. Twenty-five (25%) percent of the respondents completed and submitted the paper version. The 15 telephone interviews were conducted by CPD staff to ensure that each RSA region was represented by at least 50% of the CIL executive directors. The one computer disk version was an accommodation for a respondent with a visual impairment.

**Table 1. Completed Survey Formats.**

Telephone	Electronic (Internet site with survey questions)	Paper/pencil through surface mail or fax	Computer disk
15 (6%)	175 (69%)	64 (25%)	1 (less than 1%)

Data from the completed surveys were analyzed using the SPSS software package. Frequency data were compiled for answers to each survey question. Frequency counts were used to define respondent demographics, provide a basis for response rate determinations, and to determine response modes for regional salary data (i.e., most common response for a specific question). Cross tabulations were conducted on selected pairs of data variables to reveal possible relationships. Visual analysis of the data in the tables was also used to detect possible relationships. No other statistical procedures were applied to the data.

## RESULTS

**Table 2. Regional Responses to Survey.**

There were 255 CIL executive directors who completed the survey for an overall response rate of 63%. Regional response rate ranged from 52% (Region II) to 70% (Regions VI and VII). Table 2 illustrates the number of executive directors who responded from each RSA region along with the corresponding response rate for each region.

RSA Region	Number of CIL Executive Directors	Number Who Responded	Response Rate
I. New England	20	12	60%
II. Upper Mid Atlantic	52	27	52%
III. Mid Atlantic	43	29	67%
IV. Southeast	45	27	60%
V. Upper Midwest	73	49	67%
VI. South/Southwest	33	23	70%
VII. Central Midwest	43	30	70%
VIII. Mountain/ Plains	32	19	59%
IX. West and Pacific Rim	40	26	65%
X. Northwest	22	13	59%
TOTAL	406	255	63%

**Table 3. CIL Respondents Primary Service Areas by RSA Region.**

Of the 255 CIL executive directors who responded, 119 (46%) indicated that their CIL served primarily rural areas. Ninety-one (91) or 36% served primarily urban areas and the remaining 45 (18%) served suburban areas. Figure 1 displays this data. Table 3 shows the number of respondents in each RSA region that reported serving primarily rural, urban or suburban areas.

RSA Region	Rural	Urban	Suburban
I. New England	4	6	2
II. Upper Mid Atlantic	9	7	11
III. Mid Atlantic	11	9	9
IV. Southeast	14	12	1
V. Upper Midwest	24	15	10
VI. South/Southwest	12	9	2
VII. Central Midwest	20	8	2
VIII. Mountain/ Plains	9	9	1
IX. West and Pacific Rim	8	12	6
X. Northwest	8	4	1
TOTAL	119	91	45

**Table 4. Education Profile of CIL Executive Directors<sup>3</sup>**

Table 4 provides a demographic profile of the 255 survey respondents and shows the relationship of gender and disability status to education background. Over half of the respondents were female (144) and more than three-fourths self-identified as being a person with a disability (196). Three respondents did not report disability status. Of those who self-identified as having a disability, nine (5%) reported having an earned doctorate degree and 78 (40%) reported having a masters degree. Respondents without a disability reported one doctorate degree and 24 masters degrees as the highest level of education attained.

Education Background (Highest level attained)	Male		Female	
	With Disability	Without Disability	With Disability	Without Disability
High School	1		3	2
Some College	11		17	3
Associate Degree	5	1	8	2
Bachelor’s Degree	25	11	36	12
Master’s Degree	37	13	41	11

Education Background (Highest level attained)	Male		Female	
	With Disability	Without Disability	With Disability	Without Disability
Doctorate Degree	5	1	4	4
Other <sup>4</sup>			2	
TOTAL	84	26	111	30

**Table 5. Summary of Respondent's Experience in Independent Living and as an Executive Director**

Table 5 provides additional information about the CIL executive directors regarding their experience in independent living as an executive director. Eleven respondents (4%) reported having less than one year experience in the INDEPENDENT LIVING FIELD and 114 (45%) of the respondents indicated that they had been the executive director for three years or less.

Independent Living Experience		Executive Director Experience	
Years of Experience	Number of Respondents	Years of Experience	Number of Respondents
Less than one year	11 (4%)	Less than one year	28 (11%)
2-5 years	56 (22%)	1-3 years	86 (34%)
6-10 years	65 (25%)	4-5 years	30 (12%)
11-15 years	56 (22%)	6-10 years	51 (20%)
16-20 years	40 (16%)	11-15 years	41 (16%)
Over 20 years	27 (11%)	Over 15 years	19 (7%)

The primary purpose of this survey was to gather information regarding the salaries of CIL executive directors and to look for possible relationships between salary, educational background, work experience, and job responsibilities. This information would be used by IL NET to provide more effective technical assistance to CILs and SILCs. The data that follows are presented in two ways. First, salary levels and related issues are provided as a national summary. Then, basic salary information is presented for each RSA region.

## NATIONAL SUMMARY

**Table 6. Summary of Salary Ranges and Perceptions of**

The most common annual salary range was \$41,000 to \$45,000 (44 responses). Forty-nine (49%) percent of the respondents (124 responses) indicated that their annual salary ranged between \$41,000 and \$55,000. Figure 2 portrays the national annual salary range summary. One of the survey questions asked how CIL executive directors perceived their salaries in comparison to executive directors of other service organizations in their local communities. Eighty-six (34%) respondents indicated that they didn't know how their salaries compared. One hundred twenty-three (48%) perceived that their salaries were at least a little lower than their peers. This is the same group who reported annual salary ranges between \$41,000 and \$55,000. Ten of the respondents whose annual salary range was reported above \$61,000 perceived their salaries a little below their peers. Twelve individuals in this salary range perceived their salaries about the same as their peers. Only three in that range indicated that their salaries were at least a little higher than their peers. The national annual salary range summary is included in Table 6. The summary of salary parity responses is also integrated in Table 6.

Salary Range: National Data		Perceived Salary Parity					
Annual Salary Range	Number of CILs Reporting	Don't Know	A Lot Lower	A Little Lower	About the Same	A Little Higher	A Lot Higher
Less than \$26,000	6	3	3				
\$26,000–\$30,000	15	7	6	2			
\$31,000–\$35,000	27	13	7	7			
\$36,000–\$40,000	34	14	8	8	4		
\$41,000–\$45,000	44	8	8	18	9	1	
\$46,000–\$50,000	40	12	8	13	6	1	
\$51,000–\$55,000	40	14	6	12	7	1	
\$56,000–\$60,000	19	10	1	6	2		

Salary Range: National Data		Perceived Salary Parity					
Annual Salary Range	Number of CILs Reporting	Don't Know	A Lot Lower	A Little Lower	About the Same	A Little Higher	A Lot Higher
\$61,000–\$65,000	9	3		3	2	1	
Over \$65,000	21	2		7	10		2
TOTAL		86 (34%)	47 (18%)	76 (30%)	40 (16%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)

**Table 7. Summary of Salary Ranges by Gender.**

Table 7 displays salary cross tabulated with gender. As the data in the table demonstrate, just over half of the respondents (144 or 57%) were female, yet more men than women reported their annual salaries above \$61,000. This is particularly true for those with an annual salary over \$65,000 (15% of the men versus 3% of the women).

Annual Salary Range	Gender of Executive Director	
	Male	Female
Less than \$26,000	3	3
\$26,000–\$30,000	4	11
\$31,000–\$35,000	9	18
\$36,000–\$40,000	14	19
\$41,000–\$45,000	19	25
\$46,000–\$50,000	18	22
\$51,000–\$55,000	16	24
\$56,000–\$60,000	6	13
\$61,000–\$65,000	5	4
Over \$65,000	16	5
TOTAL	110	144

**Table 8. Summary of Salary Ranges by Disability Status<sup>6</sup>.**

Seventy-seven percent (77% or 196 individuals) of the respondents indicated they were a person with a disability. Salaries tended to be distributed across low to mid salary ranges for these individuals. They were not as well distributed in higher salary ranges (i.e., above \$56,000). Twenty-nine percent (29% or 16 individuals) of the CIL executive directors without disabilities reported annual salaries above \$56,000. Only sixteen percent (16% or 32 individuals) of the CIL executive directors with disabilities reported annual salaries above \$56,000. Proportionally, twice as many CIL executive directors without disabilities than those with disabilities reported annual salary ranges above \$56,000. Table 8 summarizes this data. The percent number in the parentheses denotes the proportion of respondents in the specific category (i.e., person with or person without disabilities) who chose the particular response.

Annual Salary Range	Disability Status	
	Person With a Disability	Person Without a Disability
Less than \$26,000	5(2%) <sup>7</sup>	1(2%) <sup>8</sup>
\$26,000–\$30,000	13 (7%)	2 (4%)
\$31,000–\$35,000	22 (11%)	5(8%)
\$36,000–\$40,000	28 (14%)	4 (7%)
\$41,000–\$45,000	31 (16%)	13 (23%)
\$46,000–\$50,000	33 (17%)	7 (13%)
\$51,000–\$55,000	32 (16%)	8 (14%)
\$56,000–\$60,000	12 (6%)	7 (13%)
\$61,000–\$65,000	6 (4%)	3 (5%)
Over \$65,000	14 (7%)	6 (11%)
TOTAL	196	56

**Table 9. Summary of Annual Salary Ranges by Education Background.**

Table 9 summarizes annual salary ranges cross tabulated with education background. Individuals in the middle salary ranges (\$36,000 to \$50,000) tended to have a bachelor's or master's degree. A visual analysis of the data appears to indicate that advanced education might be related to higher salary ranges. For example, six respondents in the highest salary range (\$65,000 and above) had only an associate or bachelor degree and two respondents with advanced degrees reported annual salary ranges below \$26,000.

Annual Salary Range	High School	Some College	Associates	Bachelors	Masters	Doctorate	Other
Less than \$26,000			3		1	1	1
\$26,000-\$30,000		1	3	8	3		
\$31,000-\$35,000	2	4	1	12	7	1	
\$36,000-\$40,000	2	4	1	14	13		
\$41,000-\$45,000		8	2	17	17		
\$46,000-\$50,000	2	7	3	10	18		
\$51,000-\$55,000	1	5	1	9	19	4	1
\$56,000-\$60,000		1		1	8	9	
\$61,000-\$65,000		1		3	4	1	
Over \$65,000			1	5	11	3	1
TOTAL	7	31	15	79	101	19	3

**Table 10. Summary of Salary Range by Primary Service Area**

Table 10 presents information on salaries cross tabulated with primary service area. The highest salaries (above \$56,000) tended to cluster in CILs that primarily serve suburban and urban areas. Salaries ranging between \$26,000 and \$50,000 were clustered in CILs that serve primarily rural areas. For example, only 10 respondents (8% of the CIL executive directors in rural areas) reported annual salary ranges above \$56,000 while 14 (31% of CIL executive directors in suburban areas) respondents and 25 (27% from urban areas) reported this same salary range.

Annual Salary Range	Primary Service Area		
	Rural	Suburban	Urban
Less than \$26,000	3	1	2
\$26,000-\$30,000	11	1	3

Annual Salary Range	Primary Service Area		
	Rural	Suburban	Urban
\$31,000–\$35,000	19	2	6
\$36,000–\$40,000	17	6	11
\$41,000–\$45,000	22	9	13
\$46,000–\$50,000	21	4	15
\$51,000–\$55,000	16	8	16
\$56,000–\$60,000	4	9	6
\$61,000–\$65,000		2	7
Over \$65,000	6	3	12
TOTAL	119	45	91

**Table 11. Summary of Annual Salary by the Average Number of People Served in a Month.**

Table 11 presents data on annual salaries cross tabulated by the average number of persons served each month. Data in the table indicates that higher salaries tended to cluster around CILs that serve greater numbers of people per month. Two-thirds (20) of the respondents who reported a salary range above \$61,000 were from CILs that serve more than 250 consumers per month. Even for these large CILs, however, annual salaries were as low as \$31,000 to \$35,000. Visual analysis indicated that mid-range salaries (e.g., \$36,000–\$50,000) were fairly well distributed across CILs of all sizes.

Annual Salary Range	Average Number of People Served in One Month										
	Less than 25	26–50	51–75	76–100	101–125	126–150	151–175	176–200	201–225	226–250	More than 250
Less than \$26,000	1	1	1	2			1				

Annual Salary Range	Average Number of People Served in One Month										
	Less than 25	26-50	51-75	76-100	101-125	126-150	151-175	176-200	201-225	226-250	More than 250
\$26,000 – \$30,000	3	5	2	2	2			1			
\$31,000 – \$35,000	2	7	4	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2
\$36,000 – \$40,000		6	4	6	3	4	4	3	2		3
\$41,000 – \$45,000	2	9	5	6	7	2	3	3	2	2	3
\$46,000 – \$50,000		5	5	2	7	4	3	4	1	4	5
\$51,000 – \$55,000	2	7	6	5	6		2		3	1	8
\$56,000 – \$60,000		1	2	3	3	3	1	1	1		4
\$61,000 – \$65,000		1					1				7
Over \$65,000					1			2	5		13
TOTAL	10	42	29	28	30	15	16	16	16	8	44

**Table 12. Summary of Salary Range by Number of Employees Supervised.**

Table 12 summarizes annual salary ranges by the number of employees supervised. Salaries appeared to be distributed evenly (except for the \$46,000–\$50,000 range) among the CIL executive directors that supervise between 6–10 employees (this group comprised 101 of the 255 respondents). However, the data appear to indicate that as a CIL executive director supervised more employees, the annual salary range increased slightly. Of note, though, is that 12 executive directors with an annual salary over

\$65,000 supervised 10 employees or less while eight in this same annual salary range supervised more than 20 employees. The relationship between annual salary and number of people supervised, based on visual analysis, appears to be inconsistent for CIL executive directors in the high and low salary range categories.

Annual Salary Range	Number of Employees Supervised			
	Less than 5 Employees	6-10 Employees	11-20 Employees	More Than 20 Employees
Less than \$26,000	4	1	1	
\$26,000-\$30,000	6	6	1	1
\$31,000-\$35,000	2	16	7	2
\$36,000-\$40,000	5	18	10	1
\$41,000-\$45,000	6	18	13	7
\$46,000-\$50,000	6	9	19	6
\$51,000-\$55,000	4	16	11	9
\$56,000-\$60,000	4	5	7	3
\$61,000-\$65,000	1	4	2	2
Over \$65,000	4	8	1	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>39</b>

**Table 13. Summary of Annual Salary by Experience in the Independent Living Field.**

Finally, annual salary ranges ranked by experience in the independent living field and experience as a CIL executive director are summarized in tables 13 and 14, respectively. Visual analysis indicates that there is a possible relationship between the number of years of independent living experience and annual salary. There also appears to be a possible relationship between years of experience as a CIL executive director and annual salary.

Annual Salary Range	Independent Living Experience					
	Less Than 1 Year	2-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	More Than 20 Years
Less than \$26,000	3	2	1			

	Independent Living Experience					
Annual Salary Range	Less Than 1 Year	2-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	More Than 20 Years
\$26,000-\$30,000	3	4	6	2		
\$31,000-\$35,000	1	10	10	4	1	1
\$36,000-\$40,000	2	10	6	7	8	1
\$41,000-\$45,000		13	12	9	8	2
\$46,000-\$50,000	1	4	10	15	7	3
\$51,000-\$55,000	1	6	12	7	8	6
\$56,000-\$60,000		2	7	4	4	2
\$61,000-\$65,000		2		3	2	2
Over \$65,000		3	1	5	2	10
TOTAL	11	56	65	56	40	27

**Table 14. Summary of Annual Salary by Years of Experience as a CIL Executive Director.**

	Independent Living Experience					
Annual Salary Range	Less Than 1 Year	1-3 Years	4-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	More Than 15 Years
Less than \$26,000	2	4				
\$26,000-\$30,000	6	3	2	2	2	

Annual Salary Range	Independent Living Experience					
	Less Than 1 Year	1-3 Years	4-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	More Than 15 Years
\$31,000-\$35,000	4	15	4	3	1	
\$36,000-\$40,000	4	16	3	8	2	1
\$41,000-\$45,000	3	18	6	8	6	3
\$46,000-\$50,000	2	11	6	10	8	3
\$51,000-\$55,000	3	9	5	12	8	3
\$56,000-\$60,000	2	2	3	6	3	3
\$61,000-\$65,000	1	2	1	2	3	
Over \$65,000	1	6			8	6
TOTAL	28	86	30	51	41	19

## REGIONAL SUMMARY

While national data is helpful, it may be more useful to individual CILs and SILCs to summarize salary data by region. Table

**Table 15. Annual Salary Ranges in Each RSA Region.**

15 provides a summary of the most common annual salary ranges and the upper and lower bounds (range of annual salary ranges) reported by CIL executive directors in each RSA region. Annual salaries above \$65,000 were reported in all regions except VI and VIII. Regions III, IV, VI, and VIII were the only regions that reported annual salaries below \$26,000. Regions III and IV reported the greatest range among annual salaries (i.e., salaries below \$26,000 and above \$65,000).

RSA Regions	Annual Salary		
	Most Common Salary Range	Lowest Range Reported	Highest Range Reported
I. New England [12] <sup>9</sup>	\$46,000– \$50,000 (4) <sup>10</sup>	\$36,000– \$40,000 (1)	More than \$65,000 (2)
II. Upper Mid Atlantic [27]	\$41,000– \$45,000 (6)	\$31,000– \$35,000 (1)	More than \$65,000 (3)
III. Mid Atlantic [29]	Median range: \$36,000– \$40,000 <sup>11</sup>	Less than \$26,000 (2)	More than \$65,000 (4)
IV. Southeast [27]	Median range: \$41,000– \$45,000	Less than \$26,000 (1)	More than \$65,000 (1)
V. Upper Midwest [49]	\$46,000– \$50,000 (12)	\$26,000– \$30,000 (1)	More than \$65,000 (5)
VI. South/Southwest [23]	\$41,000– \$45,000 (7)	Less than \$26,000 (1)	\$61,000– \$65,000 (1)
VII. Central Midwest [30]	\$51,000– \$55,000 (7)	\$26,000– \$30,000 (5)	More than \$65,000 (3)
VIII. Mountain/Plains [19]	\$31,000– \$35,000 (5)	Less than \$26,000 (1)	\$56,000– \$60,000 (1)
IX. West and Pacific Rim [26]	Median range: \$46,000– \$50,000	\$31,000– \$35,000 (4)	More than \$65,000 (3)
X. Northwest [13]	\$36,000– \$40,000 (4)	Less than \$26,000 (1)	\$51,000– \$55,000 (2)

**Table 16. Independent Living Experience of CIL Executive Directors in Each Region.**

National data indicate that experience in the independent living field may have some bearing on salaries. Table 16 summarizes the most common independent living experience ranges (in years) for each region. Overall, nearly one-fourth of the CIL executive directors reported being involved in the independent living field for 6–10 years. Nearly three-fourths had been involved in the independent living field between two and 15 years.

RSA Regions	Years Experience in the Independent Living Field					
	Less than 1 year	2-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	15-20 years	More than 20 years
I. New England [12] <sup>12</sup>		1	2	5	2	2
II. Upper Mid Atlantic [27]	2	9	4	3	6	3
III. Mid Atlantic [29]	1	6	7	9	3	3
IV. Southeast [27]		7	7	6	6	1
V. Upper Midwest [49]	1	8	13	15	6	6
VI. South/Southwest [23]	3	8	5	4	2	1
VII. Central Midwest [30]	1	5	12	4	4	4
VIII. Mountain/Plains [19]	2	4	5	5	2	1
IX. West and Pacific Rim [26]		6	8	4	3	5
X. Northwest [13]	1	2	2	1	6	1
TOTAL	11	56	65	56	40	27

**Table 17. Executive Director Experience of CIL Executive Directors in Each Region.**

Table 17 summarizes the most common executive director experience ranges for each region. The number of years experience as an executive director may have some bearing on salary, though visual analysis indicates that experience in independent living may have an even greater effect on salary than years experience as an executive director.

RSA Regions	Years Experience as an Executive Director					
	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	More than 15 years
I. New England [12] <sup>13</sup>	2	3	1	1	5	
II. Upper Mid Atlantic [27]	5	7	5	2	3	5

RSA Regions	Years Experience as an Executive Director					
	Less than 1 year	1-3 years	4-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	More than 15 years
III. Mid Atlantic [29]	1	10	1	7	7	3
IV. Southeast [27]	2	11	3	7	4	
V. Upper Midwest [49]	1	17	4	11	11	5
VI. South/Southwest [23]	6	9	3	4	1	
VII. Central Midwest [30]	4	3	9	8	3	3
VIII. Mountain/Plains [19]	3	5	4	4	1	2
IX. West and Pacific Rim [26]	3	12		6	4	1
X. Northwest [13]	1	9		1	2	
TOTAL	28	86	30	51	41	19

## DISCUSSION

This survey indicated several issues for consideration by governing boards of CILs and SILCs as they set salary ranges and develop compensation packages for executive directors. These include (1) salary equity across gender, (2) salary equity for executive directors with and without disabilities, (3) experience in the independent living field and previous administrative experience as a salary setting criteria, (4) variability of salaries within RSA regions, and (5) the need for training and technical assistance to the very large number of relatively new executive directors. Each of these issues is briefly described below.

### Issue One: Salary Equity Across Gender

The data seem to indicate that, for individuals in the higher salary ranges, there is a disproportionate number of males to females as compared to the overall population of CIL executive directors (See table 7). Education and experience in independent living appear to have a modest relationship with salary (See tables 9, 13, and 16). The question of salary equity as it relates to experience, education and gender should be explored further.

### Issue Two: Salary Equity for Executive Directors With and Without Disabilities

The data show that CIL executive directors in the higher annual salary ranges are disproportionately represented by individuals without disabilities (See table 8). This is particularly concerning since more than three-fourths of all respondents self-described as having a disability and a large proportion (87 or 44%) of these indicated that they had earned advanced university degrees (See table 4). Equitable salary levels for people

with disabilities who have earned college or university degrees is an issue for further consideration.

### **Issue Three: Experience in Independent Living as a Salary Criterion**

Experience in the independent living field appears to have a positive bearing on salary levels (See tables 13 and 16). Those respondents with more experience in independent living tended to earn larger annual salaries. However, experience as an executive director may not have much effect on salaries (See tables 14 and 17). It may be that newer executive directors are hired at higher annual salaries, regardless of administrative experience. Salaries of those who have been administrators for a longer period of time may not have kept pace with inflation or with the annual salary range that the market now demands. As in many employment situations, the issue of salary equity must be addressed to ensure adequate compensation for those who have long-standing commitment to an organization.

### **Issue Four: Salary Variability Within RSA Regions**

The most common annual salary range reported in this survey was \$41,000–\$45,000 (See table 6). The mode, however, varied widely across regions and, in some cases, within regions (See table 15). This variability may be due to CILs that primarily serve urban vs. rural areas (See table 10). Or, it could be a function of the years of experience that CIL executive directors bring to the job. Further, since this data is calculated on a regional basis (See table 15), it could be related to the economic health of individual states and communities. It may be extremely difficult to determine an acceptable, uniform national or regional salary range for CIL executive directors. It appears that many variables, including experience with independent living, geographic area served, number of employees supervised, number of consumers served, and education background of the CIL executive director have bearing on this determination.

### **Issue Five: Training and Technical Assistance for New Executive Directors**

One hundred fourteen (114 or 45%) of the respondents had served as executive director for less than three years when they completed this survey. A large number of "new" directors could mean that there is a great deal of turnover among executive directors. Or, it could mean that new directors are more likely to complete surveys; they may be more eager to contribute to the knowledge base than their colleagues who have tenure as executive directors. In any case, this has tremendous training and technical assistance implications for IL NET. Future research may want to focus on specific skill building issues for new directors as one means of reducing turnover and encouraging longevity in the executive director position.

### **Limitations**

This data is limited in several ways. First, we were unable to survey all 406 CIL executive directors identified for this study. A complete picture would be available only if we had data from every CIL. However, a response rate of 63% (255 of the 406 CILs identified) is considered high for a national survey. We made a concerted effort to include every CIL and to ensure that each RSA region was represented by at least 50% of the CILs in the region. Second, inferential statistical procedures were not applied to this

data. The purpose of this survey was to provide a description of the salaries and work experience of CIL executive directors nationwide. Inferential statistical analysis of this data may be warranted as more complex questions from the independent living network arise. Finally, we elected to use ranges for most of our responses. This was done to increase the likelihood of survey completion by the CIL executive directors. We determined that making the responses easy to choose was a tradeoff for more lengthy specific dollar and year/month data. Requiring respondents to carefully calculate their annual salaries and years and months on the job may have unnecessarily discouraged some responses. The range data was carefully arranged so as to make the data useful in technical assistance activities. Use of range data usually requires the sacrifice of specificity, but in this case it was a sacrifice considered necessary to improve overall response rates.

## CONCLUSION

This survey was designed to gather information regarding salary, work history, and other factors that describe CIL executive directors. The survey was sent to 406 individual CIL executive directors and was completed by 255 respondents with at least 50% of the CIL executive directors in each RSA region responding. The data indicated that there appears to be a lack of salary parity between genders and between those with and without disabilities. We learned that experience in the independent living field is an indicator of higher salaries and that salaries vary widely within and between the ten RSA regions. It is our hope that this data will further enable IL NET to accomplish its mandate to provide technical assistance to executives and governing boards of CILs and SILCs throughout the United States and its territories.

## FOOTNOTES

1 See footnote 3 below for an explanation of the discrepancy between these absolute totals and the totals included in table 4.

2 Blank cells indicate that no one chose that particular response. This is true for all tables in this document.

3 Data for the three respondents who did not report disability status and the one respondent who did not report gender was not used in table 4.

4 Three respondents chose 'other' as their education background. One of these respondents did not report gender either. Therefore, data for this respondent were not included (see footnote 2).

5 One respondent did not report gender.

6 Three respondents did not report disability status.

7 This indicates that 2% of the respondents who self-identified as having a disability chose this response.

8 This indicates that 2% of the respondents who reported they did not have a disability chose this response.

9 The number in brackets [#] is the total number of CIL executive directors who responded from that region.

10 The number in parentheses (#) is the number of CIL executive directors who reported that specific annual salary range in that region.

11 In some cases, the same total number of respondents chose different salary ranges. This results in data that are multimodal (i.e., more than one 'most common' response). In these cases we decided to use the median, or middle, annual salary range. In cases where the median is used in this table, it is clearly indicated.

12 The number in brackets [#] is the total number of CIL executive directors that responded from that region.

13 The number in brackets [#] is the total number of CIL executive directors that responded from that region.

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