**disABILITY LINK Shares Response to COVID-19**

The IL-NET National Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Center at ILRU is providing support to centers for independent living and statewide independent living councils as we all navigate the unprecedented times of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. We are sharing this resource below in support of the communities you serve. Please email us at [**ilru@ilru.org**](mailto:ilru@ilru.org) with examples of how CILs are communicating with consumers in your communities—and how SILCs are communicating within your states-- and the resources you have found helpful. Visit the [ILRU Resources on COVID-19](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__r20.rs6.net_tn.jsp-3Ff-3D00158-5F8yv47u7itI97Bv26g6oWGlOZ01fpWlXqVsjpFQwiaGZrsoesveb8FZUAjDsrG9ZkR2Y6Hrs57s7ToZQj02-5F1-2DU6w3HkJgJc6pJYMf5gK-5F5r3AA3oo59W2Ye-5F3AgizDOlAhHIwlQ7t2vXuDMwNYEuFVGiMBja6ptomLtcEgCo-3D-26c-3DW3T1b4p95S7i-5FewVJ5lXRtdilG4NKvKbWF2DQ-5FXC59j-2DmsyoXfPmFQ-3D-3D-26ch-3DVJDyhDUlZU5azo2BGYy0S-5Fgg-2Dy7LTndG3VpQZK0pJiSmQQCwRHlNjw-3D-3D&d=DwMFaQ&c=ZQs-KZ8oxEw0p81sqgiaRA&r=uGn_Vkl_JR-YWpk6ktqEcA&m=3YxXI4PRCPocrlfKh95eLqxydM9jVgK7gDJ-x8JpDZQ&s=fvAvbl7SLxgu4FIYywdP4yv90tzMMt7d_eA_Opf_D-Q&e=) webpage for daily updates.

All items we post are presented with the stipulation that they are only examples of how one CIL or SILC has addressed important emergency-related matters. Other organizations should adopt only those of the examples that fit their organization's circumstances. Each organization is responsible for ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local laws and directives. These materials have not been reviewed by ACL; therefore, no assumptions should be made regarding compliance or cost allowability.

The following information is shared by Kim Gibson, Executive Director, disABILITY LINK:

**Importance of Having a Plan**

We believe it is important to have an emergency plan in place. Of course, adjustments will always need to be made because no plan is perfect. It is noteworthy that in our planning for disruptive events such as COVID-19, we had already identified key areas and had developed contingency plans to roll out if necessary. We have our emergency and safety procedure that outlines what goes on as well as universal safety measures that should already be in place.

**Zoom and Virtual Classes for Youth**

We are continuing services through our established Zoom technology for our virtual groups. As a response for the youth out of school, we are hosting a virtual class for any and all students with disabilities. Individuals can join these free, virtual classes that cover topics such as peer support, advocacy, time management from home, fact-checking news, and more. Monday through Thursday EST. 10:00 am – 11:00 am ages 10-13 and 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ages 14 & up. Initially teachers showed up to see what it was about and then really spread the word for us.

**Social Media**

We have utilized Facebook and Twitter for continued updates on the activities about coronavirus. Basically, the only thing that is interrupted is our face-to-face contacts, computer lab, and our in- person groups. We utilize a cheap Twigby phone and have distributed that number for call-ins, however, individuals can call to our office phones and it is routed to the appropriate staff, same as any other time. Staff can check voice messages while teleworking.

**Communication with Consumers**

Consumer contacts are made by email, phone, audio, or video conferencing. We use the same remote translation services we always have. We have laptops that are normally used for our computer lab that staff can utilize in the event of these types of situations. We also have hot spots that are only activated when needed, so if a staff does not have internet, we can provide them that access. Currently, here in Georgia, three companies are offering free internet for 60 days.

**Equipment for Staff and Consumers**

Staff have remote access to our shared drive. We also have available webcams and headsets for staff or consumers who may need them for the video conferencing aspect.

**Guidelines for Teleworking**

We do have forms and guidelines for teleworking, temporary assignment, and time tracking while teleworking which guides the process.

Overall, it is noteworthy to state that this is sometimes used outside of emergencies for accommodation reasons which is why most of this has been an easy process for us. I have truly gained a lot of my prep skills from CIL directors who have mentored me over time.

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