# Comprehensive Needs Assessment Results Executive Summary

Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council

## Purpose

The Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council (MNSILC) contracted with Wilder Research to create a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) to understand the independent living experience and needs of people living with disabilities in Minnesota. MNSILC is a federally mandated council of community volunteers appointed by the Governor. This council works collaboratively with the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and coordinates activities with other entities in the state that provide services similar or complimentary to independent living services. Survey results will inform the next State Plan for Independent Living, which will be in effect from 2017-2019. The plan is shared with legislators, advocates, and others. This plan also helps MNSILC to advocate for those needs and for more funding to expand opportunities for Minnesotans with disabilities.

## Methods

Data was collected from late September 2015 through February 2016. The survey was available in an online format and a low-vision accessible paper version. The survey was made available through provider emails to the people they serve, the MNSILC website, as well as events and data collection sessions held at the offices of independent living providers. People taking the survey were asked to forward the survey to anyone else they felt could provide useful information. In order to take the survey, a person had to have a disability, mental illness, or chronic health condition; be age 18 or older; and live in Minnesota.

## Characteristics

Characteristics of survey participants were compared to people with disabilities in the state of Minnesota. Survey participants are more likely to be female (58% compared to 49%), live in an urban area (36% compared to 20%), and be age 25 to 59 (75% compared to 40%) than people with disabilities in Minnesota. Overall, survey participants have a similar racial and ethnic make-up as people with disabilities in Minnesota. Survey participants represent all 13 different types of disabilities asked about in the survey. Sixty-eight percent of participants have more than one disability. Participants include both individuals who have received services from the Center for Independent Living (61%) and those who have not (39%).

This executive summary outlines the recommendations that Wilder Research has made based on the results of the survey. In order to compare the experience of people with disabilities across the state of Minnesota, answers to all questions were compared between urban, suburban, and rural participants. If there were notable differences between these groups, they are described in the text.

## Prioritize housing supports and financial assistance

* 75% of participants need some type of support to stay in their current housing. Participants that report needing support most commonly need financial support (44%), home-making or cleaning services (40%), or yard work and maintenance (34%) to stay in their current housing.
* 60% of participants feel they can receive the support they need to stay in or maintain the place where they want to live. This was highest for urban participants (70%) and lowest for suburban participants (53%). Rural participants were in the middle (66%).
* 40% of participants had more than one option they liked when deciding about where to   
  live. This was highest for urban participants (50%) and lower for both suburban and rural participants (34% and 35%).
* About half of all participants (49%) would live somewhere else if they could. This was highest for suburban (55%) and lowest for rural participants (41%). 47% of urban participants would live somewhere else if they could.
* Of those that would live somewhere else, participants say they most need affordable housing (64%), assistance finding a place (50%), and help with packing or moving (47%) to do so.
* Most participants feel safe in their homes regardless of where they live (92 to 96%). In total, 86% of participants feel safe in their neighborhood. This was highest for rural participants (97%) and lowest for urban participants (83%). Suburban participants were in the middle (91%).
* Statewide in Minnesota, the average 1-bedroom apartment requires 87 percent of an individual’s monthly SSI payment[[1]](#footnote-1). The Twin Cities region added 759 affordable housing units, which was only 7% of all new housing in 2014[[2]](#footnote-2).

## Consider policies that support people with disabilities to obtain an equitable and living wage, without losing financial assistance while it is still needed

* 55% of participants are employed full-time, part-time, or self-employed. This is higher than the state average of 44% and the national average of 35%[[3]](#footnote-3).
* 63% of participants have looked for or applied for a job in the past year. 69% of participants report problems when looking for a job. Of those, the most common problems were concern about losing government assistance or benefits (28%), lack of transportation (19%), and not enough education or training (17%).
* 65% of working participants report experiencing at least one of the problems listed in the survey while on the job. Of those that had problems, the most commonly reported include: concern about losing government assistance or benefits (40%), less pay than others in a similar job (35%), negative attitudes about disabilities (33%), and fewer promotion opportunities than others in a similar job (27%).
* Urban participants are more likely to say they have experienced a problem in the workplace (80%), compared to suburban participants (57%) and rural participants (50%). Of those participants that experience problems in the workplace, 71% have experienced more than   
  one problem.
* 80% of participants have received some type of financial help over the past year. Of those, the most common types of financial help are: Medical Assistance (60%), Social Security Disability Insurance (44%), Food Support (32%), Supplemental Security Income (26%), and Social Security (22%).

### Increase transportation options, especially in rural areas

* Participants most often drive themselves, use a bike, wheel-chair, or motor-scooter, or walk to get where they want to go (58%). This was higher for urban participants (67%) and about the same for both suburban and rural participants (54% and 52%).
* Participants also commonly go places with the help of a family member or friend (43%).
* Urban participants are most likely to use public transit (44%), while rural participants were the least likely (7%). Suburban participants were in the middle (20%).
* 30% of urban participants and 23% of suburban participants use Metro Mobility and services like it, compared to 3% of rural participants.
* 32% of all participants say they could not go somewhere in the past month because they did not have transportation.
* When asked how transportation choices could be better, urban and suburban participants most commonly say their rides need to be more reliable and on time (49% for urban and 43% for suburban). They also say more transportation options are needed (34% each), and the options need to cost less (32% and 26%) and be more physically accessible (32% and 28%).
* Rural participants most commonly request more transportation options in their area (38%). They also need rides offered at different times or on different days, transportation options to cover a wider area, and to be eligible for more transportation services (24% each).
* Participants most often need transportation in the morning and afternoon (74% each) and on weekdays (84%). Rural respondents were less likely to know what days and times they need transportation services (29% to 33% reported “don’t know” as opposed to 2 to 10% for urban and suburban participants).

### **MNSILC recommends additional funding for the Centers for Independent Living**

This assessments supports the fact that the needs of people with disabilities in Minnesota are great. They range across many basic areas of life and community living. If we, as a state are to get to a point where people with disabilities have a choice about where they want to live, work, and how they want to participate in their communities, then services and supports need to be available to them so they can make choice a reality. Centers for Independent Living are the sole providers of independent living services (as defined in Federal Law) and therefore critical in efforts to assist people in living lives of choice.

This summary presents highlights of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment Survey Results created for the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council. Keep in mind that these issues are complex and interdependent. All these issues affect one another and will not be solved by one approach. For more information about this report, contact Pam Taylor at [mnsilc1215@gmail.com](mailto:mnsilc1215@gmail.com). The full report is available at [mn.gov/deed/silc](http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/councils/silc.jsp).

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JULY 2016



1. Cooper, E., Knott, L., Shaak, G., Sloane, L., & Zovistoski, A. (2015). Priced out in 2014: The housing crisis for people with disabilities. Boston, MA: Technical Assistance Collaborative, Inc. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 Metropolitan Council. (2015). Falling further behind: 2014 Affordable housing production in the Twin Cities region. MetroStats. Retrieved from [Metropolitan Council](http://www.metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Housing/Falling-Further-Behind-2014-Affordable-Housing-Pro.aspx), http://www.metrocouncil.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/ Housing/Falling-Further-Behind-2014-Affordable-Housing-Pro.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 3 Erickson, W., Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2014). 2013 Disability status report: Minnesota. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Employment and Disability Institute (EDI). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)