

## **Appendix I. Federally-funded Centers for Independent Living**

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### ***Administration on Disabilities (AoD) Disability Employment Technical Assistance (TA) Center Landscape Assessment Appendices***

May 2021

As described in the methodology within the main section of the landscape assessment, the Center’s project team conducted quantitative and qualitative analysis to identify current Center for Independent Living (CIL) initiatives and areas of further development. Appendix I details findings from the quantitative data reviewed as well the qualitative interviews conducted with CIL staff and self-advocates.

### **Trends in Provision of Employment and Economic Advancement Supports and Systems Change Efforts**

CILs are consumer-controlled, community-based, cross-disability non-profit agencies that provide an array of independent living services, including services that can help with employment. The Administration for Community Living's (ACL) independent living programs support community living and independence for individuals with disabilities across the nation based on the belief that all people can live with dignity, make their own choices, and participate fully in society. CILs provide tools, resources, and supports for integrating individuals with disabilities fully into their communities to promote equal opportunities, self-determination, and respect.



### ***The Roles and Strengths of CILs in Advancing Employment Outcomes and Economic Advancement of Individuals with Disabilities***

Employment goals serve a key role in the independence of individuals with disabilities. Having a career and earning a paycheck remains the clearest path to economic freedom and mobility. Thousands of individuals receiving supports from CILs – both youth and adults – use services that support job-related goals. To support individuals with disabilities looking to enter the workforce or sustain competitive, integrated employment (CIE), CILs continue to share information, conduct referrals, and deliver training and other employment-related supports. All CIL services focus on including and supporting the individual.

This section will provide an overview of the three strengths discussed during qualitative interviews as well as identified through other research: the unique role of CILs in promoting self-

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determination as part of the career-seeking process, the capability of CILs in supporting youth transition to adulthood, and the resulting impacts and outcomes related to CIE and economic advancement.

#### Quick Facts

- In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the United States Congress appropriated \$90,805,000 to support 354 awards managed by 284 individual CILs.<sup>1</sup>
- CILs reported providing 1,069,091 services in Program Year (PY) 2019.<sup>2</sup>
- CILs reported providing 837,623 core service activities,<sup>3</sup> including providing information and referral services, independent living skills training, peer counseling and support, and individual and systems advocacy. CIL core service activities also include facilitating transition from institutions to community living, diversion from institutions to community living, and transition of youth from secondary education to post-secondary life.

### ***Unique Role of CILs in Promoting Self-Determination in Career-Seeking Process***

CILs have a variety of roles in supporting individuals with disabilities, including helping individuals apply self-determination principles to their everyday lives and learn to advocate for themselves based on their desires, hopes, and dreams. CILs are at the heart of aspiring forefront of advancing full inclusion and maximum self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities. Fostering high expectations and confidence is key to preparing individuals with disabilities to proactively pursue employment. During the key informant interviews, one interviewee shared, “If we want to encourage individuals with disabilities to get a job and feel a sense of equality in the community, we need to address what motivates and builds up confidence.” The interviewee added “In other words, how can we persuade people with disabilities that they are significant contributors to society and strong candidates for the workforce?”

Self-advocacy is an important way for individuals with disabilities to use their own voice and use principles of self-determination. CILs reported 22,705 self-advocacy goals successfully achieved in Program Year (PY) 2019.<sup>4</sup> A self-advocacy goal demonstrates an increase of independence in an identified area while simultaneously increasing the individual’s ability to address future issues. Two examples of areas addressed through self-advocacy goals include education on workplace accommodation rights and responsibilities and training on how to secure accessible, affordable housing.

CIL staff and national independent living leader interviewees distinguished between the service delivery models of CILs and traditional community-based organizations (CBOs) due to the

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<sup>1</sup> Administration on Disabilities (AoD). (2019). Annual Report on Centers for Independent Living Program Year 2019 Funded under Part C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended. Retrieved at:

[https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2020-11/PY19CILReport508%20FINAL\\_0.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/programs/2020-11/PY19CILReport508%20FINAL_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Services include core services and other independent living services identified in the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. Core services must be available at every CIL regardless of funding amount received or service area. Other independent living services vary from CIL to CIL in response to community needs and complement or expand on required services.

<sup>3</sup> AoD. (2019).

<sup>4</sup> AoD. (2019).



philosophy of independent living. According to interviewees, CBOs tend to foster an ongoing reliance and dependence on services and supports while CILs strive to promote responsibility among individuals with disabilities. In their supports, CIL staff often encourage an individual to participate in activities on their own and phase out supports over time related to employment-seeking, job training, and economic advancement. For example, rather than preparing a resume for an individual with a disability, a CIL would often rather teach the individual how to put together a resume. Another example of the difference between CBOs and CILs in their job development approaches. Typically, in CBO supported employment models, a job developer is responsible for reaching out to potential employers and doing the upfront outreach in marketing potential employees with disabilities. In contrast, CILs provide training and coaching for individuals to research different job opportunities, reach out to potential employers of interest, and attempt to market themselves.

### ***CIL Capabilities in Supporting Youth Transitioning to Adulthood***

The transition from high school to college, vocational training, or work is challenging for every young person and presents exceptional challenges for individuals with disabilities. As individuals with disabilities prepare for this transition, CILs across the United States have a critical role in helping youth to identify and act on their goals and plans. To elevate the role of CILs during this important time in the lives of youth with disabilities, ACL designed a new core service to address the transition of youth within the Workforce Investment & Opportunity Act (WIOA).<sup>5</sup> As a result, over the past three years, there has been a 27% increase in transition-related services for youth and young adults across CILs nationwide, reflecting the efforts of CILs to develop the transition core service as well as effective conduct outreach to students and youth with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

### ***CIE Outcomes and Economic Advancement of Individuals with Disabilities***

Research shows that employed individuals (across various demographics, including disability status) are healthier than those who are not employed.<sup>7</sup> CILs' efforts to support individuals with disabilities secure employment and improve other categories of social determinants of health (SDOH)<sup>8</sup> serve a dual purpose. First, "employment can improve health by increasing social capital, enhancing psychological well-being, providing income, and reducing the negative health impacts of economic hardship."<sup>9</sup> Second, there are significant linkages across various SDOHs. For example, if an individual's living conditions and environment are compromised, so too is their

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<sup>5</sup> The new core service added to WIOA is described as follows: "Facilitate the transition of youth who are individuals with significant disabilities, who were eligible for individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)), and who have completed their secondary education or otherwise left school, to post-secondary life."

<sup>6</sup> AoD. (2019).

<sup>7</sup> Goodman, N. (2015). The Impact of Employment on the Health Status and Health Care Costs of Working-aged People with Disabilities. National Disability Institute. Studies cited include: Yelin & Trupin, 2003; Thomas & Ellis, 2013; Ross & Mirowsky, 1995; McKee-Ryan, Song, Wanberg, & Kinicki, 2005.

[http://www.leadcenter.org/system/files/resource/downloadable\\_version/impact\\_of\\_employment\\_health\\_status\\_health\\_care\\_costs\\_0.pdf](http://www.leadcenter.org/system/files/resource/downloadable_version/impact_of_employment_health_status_health_care_costs_0.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> The five categories of SDOH as outlined by Healthy People 2020 (education; economic stability; health and healthcare; neighborhood and built environment; and social and community context). United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2020) Healthy People 2020. [www.healthypeople.gov/2020](http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020).

<sup>9</sup> Goodman, N. (2015).



ability to maintain economic stability. If an individual has had limited access to education, their ability to attain a job and a living wage is at risk. During the key informant interviews, a variety of CILs noted their holistic focus on supporting the individual in several aspects of their life and personal goals. Interviewees expressed that the totality of these comprehensive supports can significantly improve the chances of individuals with disabilities in not only securing a job and adequate income, but also in reducing threats to ongoing employment and economic security.

### **Challenges CILs Encounter in Prioritizing Employment and Economic Advancement**

Despite strong demand for support in securing and sustaining employment from individuals with disabilities who use CIL services, CILs encounter a variety of challenges in meeting this demand. During qualitative and quantitative research, the project team identified the following challenges detailed in this section: competing priorities, geographic limitations, the dual role of CILs as both advocate and provider of employment supports, and a lack of public knowledge of the critical roles CILs can have in fostering employment.

#### ***“Unless It is Part of the Plan, It is Not a Priority”***

As is the case with most organizations, if the strategic plan does not emphasize employment and economic advancement as a clear goal, then it is unlikely a priority. While State Independent Living Councils (SILC) are not receiving TA from the Center, the State Independent Living Plan (SILP) does influence the scope and focus of individual CILs throughout a state. SILPs must address the goals and mission of both the SILC and the CIL programs. In a review of the PY 2019 SILPs across all 50 states, DC and the territories, the Center program team observed a lack of attention on employment goals.<sup>10</sup> For example:

- Twenty-four states did not include any mention of goals, activities, or coordination with other entities specific to employment or economic advancement.
- Twelve SILPs included minimal activities specific to supporting the employment or economic advancement of individuals with disabilities.
- Ten SILPs included at least one measure goal as well as specific objectives and metrics related to the goal around employment of individuals with disabilities (mainly as part of the transition core service).
- Five SILPs included a significant focus on employment, prioritizing employment in numerous goals, activities, and metrics.

In discussions with ACL/AoD program staff, there was a consensus that supporting the employment and career aspirations of individuals with disabilities is embedded and should be included as a component of **all** five CIL core services (**Exhibit 1**). Unfortunately, in many of the interviews with CILs and national partners, interviewees did not convey a similar viewpoint. Many stakeholders expressed because employment is not an official component of any of the core

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<sup>10</sup> Primary research conducted reviewing the state independent living plans for all 50 states and the territories. Retrieved at: <https://acl.gov/programs/centers-independent-living/list-cils-and-spils>



services other than the newest one related to transition, CILs do not have the bandwidth or capacity to focus intently on employment outside of the new core service.

Thus, part of the Center’s role may include working with CILs to brainstorm strategies for expanding their focus on employment as part of their existing scope of work. This may include strategies such as embedding employment more directly into various core service functions and more prominently within their SILPs or individual CIL strategic plans.

### Geography Matters

CIL interviewees expressed concerns related to supporting people with disabilities from rural areas as well as diverse underserved populations. Interviewees described the challenges that economically depressed areas – whether rural towns or certain inner-city communities – encounter in designing an employment program when there may be fewer employment options and employers within the larger general labor pool in the area. Interviewees recommended for the Center to “meet CILs where they are at,” and to tailor TA so that CILs receive support aligning with their individual circumstances and geographic area. Another concern that interviewees shared was the lack of

Exhibit 1. CIL Core Services



technological prowess in various regions of the country. For example, not every individual has access to broadband (particularly in rural areas), and the costs associated with technological access can be exorbitant to low-income individuals with disabilities. Additionally, a lack of employment opportunities and community engagement can lead to social isolation which can in turn also impede the attainment of employment.

Despite these challenges, there are CILs that have developed innovative strategies for supporting individuals in remote areas of the country. For example, Access Alaska, the largest CIL in Alaska, has leveraged its strong peer-supports group to provide mutual support for troubleshooting issues around job supports and transportation to make employment possible. As a result, Native students living in areas of the state that lack formal roads have secured CIE. Another example of an innovative strategy is a local CIL that entered into an agreement with AT&T to offer a discount rate for internet access at \$10 per month per individual. Despite these innovative strategies, however, many CILs continue to experience challenges with the area of CIE and need additional access to new ideas and solutions.





**Success Story Theme: Innovation**  
**DisABILITY Link**

Covering Fulton County, Georgia, DisABILITY Link serves an array of diverse populations, including predominantly white rural and suburban communities and people from urban, marginalized communities. The observed trend has caused DisABILITY Link to prioritize the hiring of staff from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Hiring a team of racially and geographically diverse staff is key to ensuring person-centered services that not only encompass a person's disability but additionally incorporate a person's cultural identity into the process. People can feel supported holistically by assuring that their cultural traditions and norms are considered when pursuing their path to employment and independence.

**Dual Role of CILs in Advocacy and Employment Supports: A Blessing and Curse**

One of the most common challenge of CILs identified through both qualitative and quantitative research is their dual role in both advocacy and employment supports. While attempting to create formal relationships with employers to streamline and offer services, CILs are also often advocating for change at those employers on behalf of individuals with disabilities. As one interviewee noted, "It's difficult for some CILs that have played a significant role in advocating for a Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) system to do a better job of supporting the employment goals of individuals with disabilities or [advocating for] an employer to develop more inclusive hiring practices and more adequate job accommodations to then attempt to negotiate a contractual partnership [with those organizations and] secure funding to offer specific pre-employment and on-the-job supports." These dual roles can often create conflicting views and an atmosphere of distrust among potential partners. This results in a major impediment to allowing CILs to have a more significant role in supporting prospective workers with disabilities.

**Marketing and Outreach**

Several interviewees commented that one of the largest challenges is educating potential partners in the community about CILs' roles and capabilities related to employment. As one interviewee noted:

*"CILs need to do a better job at marketing and conducting outreach about their strengths and capabilities. If a CIL is in a state where officials understand the value of CILs, the state agency may reach out on occasion with respect to partnership activities. But the reality is, CILs should be the ones proactively reaching out not only to state agencies, but community organizations and employers to inform them of the various activities CILs could take on to promote individuals with disabilities advance socioeconomically."*

Often, many potential partners, such as employers and other community organizations (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, Workforce Investment Boards, or American Job Centers (AJC)), may not consider CILs as potential partners in identifying and connecting potential employers to job-seekers with disabilities. As federal and state contracting entities, as well as other private sector companies across various industries, evolve and aim to create more inclusive and diverse workforces, these groups need organizations linked to job candidates with disabilities. CILs could have a critical role in serving as a facilitator of such connections, but according to several CIL leaders, it is not often that these partners are even aware of CILs or what they do.



## Emerging Themes and Opportunities for Accelerating CIL Engagement in Employment and Economic Advancement of Individuals with Disabilities

### *Partnerships as Key to CILs Contributions to Employment*

#### *Engaging with Employers*

One of the factors highlighted in the qualitative research conducted was the role CILs can have in serving as a connector of job-seekers with disabilities with employers. Interviewees described several examples where CILs have built strong employer awareness and employment opportunities for the individuals they support and have collaborated with large corporations, medium-sized companies, and small businesses. These examples included:

- Consulting with employers regarding building inclusive workplaces and developing appropriate job accommodations;
- Providing advice to employers on modifying their recruitment, hiring, and onboarding processes to attract a more diverse workforce;
- Serving as a liaison between employers interested in recruiting workers with disabilities and individuals that CILs support to facilitate connections and determine if there is a strong employment match;
- Offering pre-Employment Transition Services (pre-ETS), including helping employers design internship and apprenticeship programs for young adults with disabilities;
- Providing training to supervisors and other employees on disability etiquette and “people first” language;
- Contracting with employers to provide disability-specific human resource benefits (e.g., peer-supports, financial capability training);
- Trouble-shooting transportation and accessibility challenges that impede prospective workers with disabilities from participating in employment; and
- Partnering with both the human resource division and diversity and inclusion programs inside large corporations as well as medium-sized companies is key to CILs developing a sustainable and scalable relationship with employers.

#### *Collaborating with AJCs*

CILs and AJCs share a mission to improve the lives of job seekers with disabilities, but job seekers with disabilities often do not consider AJCs to be resources for their job search. Rather, job seekers turn to other avenues, such as going directly to their VR agency, accepting facility-based work, or remaining unemployed.

Until recently, there had been little attention at a federal level to the intersection between CILs and AJCs under the workforce investment system. Even during the decade-long Disability Employment Initiative (DEI), CILs were not prominently included in local level systems-change



investments. However, in a pilot led by the LEAD Center<sup>11</sup> and funded by the United States Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) in 2013, CILs collaborated with local AJCs in supporting jobseekers with disabilities to effectively use resources of the workforce investment system by leveraging knowledge, skills, and expertise of the CILs. The initial pilot included five CILs and 16 AJCs. Each CIL increased their understanding of the services offered by their local AJCs and provided free disability awareness and TA to AJC staff to build the capacity of AJC staff to serve job seekers across the spectrum of disability. CILs educated jobseekers with disabilities about what to expect when they entered an AJC and how to advocate for themselves with the staff of the AJC to obtain the services and supports they needed individually to pursue their CIE goals. Jobseekers received coaching from the CIL as they participated in the activities of the AJC and completed a questionnaire when they exited the service options offered by the AJC.

During the pilot, the CILs worked with the LEAD Center to develop tools for other CILs and AJCs. The tools were included in the [\*Promoting Employment and Economic Advancement: A Toolkit for CILs and AJCs\*](#),<sup>12</sup> a collection of resources for both CILs and AJCs to deepen their understanding of each other’s services and structure to improve the lives of job seekers with disabilities through employment. The checklists, guides, and fact sheets in the toolkit leverage CILs’ knowledge and skills on disability issues and community resources as well as AJCs’ training and employment services. This combination of knowledge maximizes the talents and skills of both partners and creates a “win-win-win” for CILs, AJCs, and for job seekers with disabilities. It is unclear how many CILs/AJCs are aware of this resource or have received additional TA in how to effectively apply the strategies identified in the pilot in their own localities. However, the pilot confirmed a strong potential for CIL-AJC collaboration in the future. Additionally, the Center may have an opportunity to partner with ODEP’s national TA partners to cultivate this relationship further in the future.

### ***Strengthening CIL-VR Relationships***

There are numerous synergies between CILs and VR programs, and an opportunity exists to advance a mutual goal of supporting individuals with disabilities to secure CIE. It is important to note, however, that CIL-VR relations vary across the country and can create major impediments for individuals seeking services when the relationship between the two entities is strained, dysfunctional, or non-existent.

CILs and national partners participating in the qualitative research shared their experiences with local VR agencies. For those with successful partnerships with VR, interviewees expressed that it took a great deal of time to establish a trusting relationship. However, once the CIL interviewees were able to demonstrate their utility to their VR partners through addressing gaps and supporting the aims of individuals with disabilities, relationships “blossomed.” These relationships resulted in additional opportunities for the CIL to take on an even greater role in improving CIE outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Such opportunities often led to a contractual agreement where the VR

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<sup>11</sup> The LEAD Center is a collaborative of disability, workforce and economic empowerment organizations dedicated to improving employment and economic advancement outcomes for all people with disabilities. See [www.leadcenter.org](http://www.leadcenter.org) for more information.

<sup>12</sup> The LEAD Center. (2016, March). Promoting Employment and Economic Advancement: A Toolkit for CILs and AJCs. <http://www.leadcenter.org/resources/tool-manual/promoting-employment-and-economic-advancement-toolkit-cils-and-ajcs>





provided funding to the CIL to provide pre-ETS, connect jobseekers with local employers, and provide ongoing coaching and peer-mentoring through the employment process.

Unfortunately, other CIL interviewees discussed examples of severed relationships and ongoing challenges with VR. Examples of challenges included:

- Holding VR agencies accountable for focusing on person-driven employment goals as opposed to pushing individuals into a job that was not of interest (and often with low-wages and low hours) just to report a successful closure as quickly as possible;
- Proactively engaging with CILs in a meaningful way to co-refer individuals with disabilities and employers; and
- Addressing deficiencies in case backlogs, lack of capacity building or provider transformation among VR providers, and bandwidth challenges.

Successful VR-CIL partners are critical to successfully effectuating improved CIE outcomes and socioeconomic advancement of individuals with disabilities at an individual and systems level. Recognizing this, federal partners with ACL and the United States Department of Education's Office on Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) are working to improve Special Education-VR-CIL collaborations at a local and state level. The initiative, *Pathways to Partnerships*, will help the Center with connecting and coordinating efforts with OSERS-funded National TA Centers with the goal to increase opportunities for CILs to have meaningful roles in the delivery of transition and employment supports.

### ***Collaborating with Other Local Community Organizations Engaged in Employment and Workforce Development***

Other entities with roles to support local employers could serve as strong allies to CILs in promoting CILs' unique assets and expertise related to creating a more diverse and inclusive workforce. Local chambers of commerce and small-business organizations have tremendous influence over their members in a community. A few examples provided during CIL interviews demonstrated the potential for these partners to serve as key conduits connecting CILs with employers at a larger scale as opposed to investing heavily in building one relationship at a time.

### ***Increasing Transition Supports for Youth with Disabilities via Direct Partnerships with Special Education***

With passage of WIOA, it is imperative that CILs that wish to provide pre-ETS need to not only collaborate with VR, but also partner with Special Education programs to identify and begin supporting youth while they are in the education system. Interviewees with experience engaging with local school districts spoke about the challenges of collaborating with school officials and the fact that each school district was different. Interviewees noted that an in-depth education process was required to help local education agencies (LEAs) to see the potential in working with CILs and the possibility of aligning with LEA federal transition requirements (known as Indicators 13 and 14). This led to LEAs understanding the advantages of delivering transition services in partnership with CILs.



### **Success Story Theme: Collaboration**

#### **ABLE-SC, South Carolina**

Every summer, eligible students in South Carolina with a broad range of disabilities can receive pre-ETS through a partnership between the ABLE-SC (a CIL), the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD), and the South Carolina Department of Education (DOE). ABLE-SC contracts with some LEAs in the state to work with special education teachers to provide students with the following services: job exploration counseling, work-based learning opportunities, education about post-secondary education options, workplace readiness, and instruction in self-advocacy. Through this successful partnership, students with disabilities in South Carolina are prepared for post-secondary education employment, in addition to having the independent living skills needed to become fully self-sufficient members of the community.

### ***Offering Longer-Term Employment Supports through the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Waiver System***

CILs providing services under their state Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers is not a new initiative, but typically only includes initiatives related to person-centered planning, peer-supports, and opportunities for self-direction. In states where Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports (LTSS) is provided through a managed care model, CILs have contracted with managed care plans to provide many of these services. However, the Center did not identify any available information during the landscape assessment research to determine whether a significant number of CILs offer longer-term supported employment services and benefits planning to individuals eligible for Medicaid funded HCBS. As a result, there is an opportunity for CILs to serve an important role in supported or customized employment services based on a person-driven model as opposed to a provider-centered model.

### ***Resource Development Supporting CIL Focus on Employment and Economic Advancement of Individuals with Disabilities***

#### ***Ticket-to-Work***

Entering or re-entering the workforce is often a challenging process for many individuals. Having a “go-to” resource for answers to commonly asked questions can make this transition easier for job-seekers. The Ticket-to-Work program (T2W) offers additional information, guidance, and support in accessing employment, work incentives, and benefits planning. As partners of the T2W program, CILs offer a range of services to help job-seekers with disabilities prepare for and find work, as well as remain employed or advance one’s career. Specialized services offered by some Employment Networks (EN) include benefits counseling, resume writing, interview skills, and assistance with requesting job accommodations. Once an individual with disabilities secures a job, an EN can continue to provide supports in several ways, including to secure job accommodations, communicate with employers, stay in touch with Social Security and reporting earnings, and address questions about the impact of work and income on benefits.

Many CILs have become ENs, and some CILs interviewed noted using the T2W program to create new funding streams to support ongoing CIL operations. Others expressed having been discouraged from participating in the T2W program due to the lengthy and costly administrative burden of the EN application and approval process. Some CILs reported having become ENs but not yet having determined a strategy for directly reaching out to T2W holders to inform them of the CIL’s EN status.



Once an individual with disabilities has secured employment through VR, the VR agency may close the individual's case approximately 90 days after they start working. When state VR services end, many individuals find that they need continued support to help them keep their job and increase their earnings over time. Thus, VR agencies often partner with ENs (including CILs) that provide job retention services and other types of ongoing support. This arrangement, known as Partnership Plus, gives T2W program participants continued access to individualized employment services, if needed. An individual can assign their T2W to an EN of their choice to receive these additional services towards the path to financial self-sufficiency.

Interviewees shared that two challenges with such an arrangement for CILs. The T2W payment structure is based on specific milestone payments with the first one of securing employment as the most substantial. Typically, contracts with VR allow for VR to collect the first and most substantial payment, leaving less substantial milestone payments to the follow-along EN. Particularly when CILs (whether they are ENs or not) have a relationship with VR in which they are conducting the "heavy lifting" in terms of assisting jobseekers with finding and securing employment, this payment structure can deter CILs from engaging in Partnership Plus arrangements with VR agencies. Helping CILs become ENs and develop successful T2W models, as well as work with their VR counterparts to develop mutually beneficial relationships to coordinate T2W efforts, is likely an area of TA focus as part of the Center's work.

### ***Contracting with State-Funded Local Entities (Special Education, Higher Education, Medicaid HCBS, VR, and Workforce Investment) to Provide Specific Pre-Employment and Ongoing Job Supports***

As described in the "*Partnerships as Key to CILs Contributions to Employment*" section, there are many local and state agencies receiving federal and state funding to support individuals with disabilities secure and sustain employment. Given the various core services CILs must provide, interviewees felt strongly that CILs need payment for the services they are providing to support youth transition efforts, jobseekers' employment outcomes, technical consulting provided to AJCs, and longer-term employment supports financed through Medicaid HCBS. Many CILs shared that they do not know how to negotiate contractual relationships that would lead to additional resources to expand their employment and financial capability services. Some of the questions interviewees requested that the Center help CILs address included:

- How can CILs obtain additional contracts to serve individuals who VR does not have the capacity to serve?
- What are key elements that CILs should negotiate within contracts with VR and other federally-funded systems?
- Are there ways for CILs to forgo a relationship with VR when previous efforts have been unsuccessful, and offer similar services when VR lacks the resources or bandwidth to meet increased demand for employment supports?
- How can CILs create funded partnerships directly with the private sector (e.g., employers, financial service institutions, and other entities) seeking TA with recruiting support, benefits planning, and financial capability of workers with disabilities?



The Center will focus strongly on helping CILs with developing and enhancing strategic partnerships as well as securing additional resources to increase their capacity and focus on supporting individuals with disabilities in achieving CIE and economic advancement.

