

## State IL Plans--Use Of Part B Funds

One of the major changes provided by the 1992 amendments to the Rehab Act was the strengthening of the role and responsibilities of the statewide independent living councils. A significant responsibility of the SILCs is joint development and joint signing (along with the state voc rehab agency) of the state plan for independent living (SPIL).

SILCs are required to work with state agencies to develop the plans to determine how to use the Part B funds provided each state through Title VII. The councils have options that fall into eight categories:

**--Support for the council's resource plan.** Each SILC is required to prepare a resource plan to meet expenses incurred in carrying out the functions of the council. Funds which may be used to support this resource plan include Part C of Title I as well as Part B of Title VII. These funds may be used to hire staff, rent office space, cover expenses associated with operating an office, reimburse council members for expenses associated with serving on the council, convene public hearings to obtain input regarding the plan, etc.

Many SILCs have used Part B funds in conjunction with Title I Innovation and Expansion funds and Social Security Reimbursement funds to support their resource plan.

**--Provide independent living services to individuals with significant disabilities.** This option allows funds to be used for the purchase of services for individuals.

**--Demonstrate ways to expand and to improve independent living services.** This option illustrates the tremendous latitude given to the SILCs and state agencies in developing plans for using the Part B money. For instance, if it is determined that sharing information and acquiring technical assistance via computer networking is a priority, Part B funds may be used to offset long-distance expenses incurred by centers and SILC members in accessing computer networks.

**--Support the operation of independent living centers.** Part B funds may be used to establish new centers or to supplement funding for existing centers--such centers, of course, must be in compliance with the standards and assurances in section 725 (b) and (c) of the Act.

In several states, SILCs use Part B as start-up funds for groups of independent living advocates seeking to start centers or satellites of centers in outlying regions of the state.

**--Support activities to increase the capacities of public or nonprofit agencies and organizations and other entities to develop comprehensive approaches or systems for providing IL services.** Again, this option provides opportunities for creativity. Several states are using a significant portion of their Part B funds to establish and to operate a statewide systems advocacy network.

**--Conduct studies and analyses, gather information, develop model policies and procedures, and present information, approaches, strategies, findings, conclusions, and recommendations to federal, state, and local policy makers in order to enhance independent living services for individuals with significant disabilities.** Under this option, the plan could support, among many other things, activities to learn how councils are fulfilling their responsibilities in other states and how they are using their Part B funds. Many states have used these funds to conduct surveys and polls, or to hold statewide summits and conferences to gain a better understanding of the needs within the state. This option also encourages SILCs to use the information gathered to educate policy makers about issues of importance to people with disabilities.

**--Train individuals with disabilities, individuals providing services to individuals with disabilities, and other persons regarding the independent living philosophy.** This option may be used to support training workshops on independent living, to hold statewide independent living conferences, and to send council members, agency and center staff, and others to state, regional, and national independent living conferences. Funds may be used to train consumer, SILC members, CIL staff, and rehabilitation professionals.

**--Provide outreach to populations that are unserved or underserved by programs under Title VII, including minority groups and urban and rural populations.** Under this option, funds may support efforts by centers to work with people who have traumatic head injuries or people with disabilities who are very old or who are very young; materials could be translated into Spanish or other languages; courses could be provided in sign language interpretation; satellite offices could be established in rural communities or minority neighborhoods; and so on.

It should be noted that there are no directions given in the Act on how the Part B funds are to be used. SILCs are encouraged to exercise their imagination. Decisions are made at the discretion of the statewide independent living council and the state vocational rehab agency as they jointly develop the plan for use of Part B funds