

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 13, 2026

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Wisconsin Independent Living Network Unveils Policy Priorities to Strengthen Community Living

Statewide network calls for improvements in long-term care, transportation and accessible housing to help Wisconsinites remain in their homes and communities, regardless of age or ability

MADISON, Wis. — As Wisconsin prepares for the 2027 legislative session, the Wisconsin Independent Living Network (WILN) is calling on state leaders to advance 13 policy priorities designed to help people with disabilities and older adults live independently in their homes and communities.

The recommendations, outlined in WILN's *Long-Term Care, Transportation and Housing Priorities for the 2027–2029 Biennium*, address barriers that can limit where people live, how they receive essential services and whether they can participate fully in community life.

WILN brings together Wisconsin's eight disability-led Centers for Independent Living, the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers and the Independent Living Council of Wisconsin. Together, these organizations work to advance independence, accessibility, self-direction and equal opportunities for people with disabilities across the state.

Strengthening Long-Term Care and Community-Based Supports

WILN's seven long-term care priorities focus on expanding access to services that help people remain in their communities rather than entering or remaining in institutional settings unnecessarily.

Among the recommendations, WILN is calling for an additional \$2.6 million in state general purpose revenue funding to strengthen institutional transition services provided by Wisconsin's Independent Living Centers. These services help people who want to leave nursing facilities and other institutions navigate the challenges of returning to community living.

WILN also proposes making Home and Community-Based Services a required benefit under Wisconsin Medicaid, exploring new long-term care coverage options for people who do not qualify for existing programs, modernizing personal care nursing requirements and reimbursement, and protecting consumer choice in the Family Care and IRIS programs.

Making Transportation Work Across Communities

Reliable transportation is essential for accessing employment, health care, education, groceries and social opportunities. Yet transportation systems and funding programs can be fragmented, particularly for people who do not drive.

WILN's three transportation priorities call for increased and stable public transportation funding, opportunities to coordinate transportation funding across programs, and authorization for communities to establish Regional Transportation Authorities.

These proposals are intended to improve coordination, reduce unnecessary barriers and help transportation services better reflect the ways people travel across municipal and county boundaries.

Expanding Accessible and Affordable Housing

WILN's three housing priorities address both the accessibility of Wisconsin's housing supply and the financial barriers that can prevent people with disabilities from finding or remaining in suitable homes.

The network proposes establishing basic visitability standards for new housing construction, including at least one step-free entrance, 36-inch doorways, and a first-floor bedroom and bathroom.

WILN also recommends state incentives to make existing homes more accessible, along with new approaches to affordable accessible homeownership, including property tax incentives for accessibility modifications and a statewide community land trust initiative.

Together, these recommendations seek to ensure that more Wisconsinites can find housing that meets their needs throughout their lives.

A Shared Vision for Independence Across the Lifespan

Although the proposals address different state programs and policies, WILN emphasizes that long-term care, transportation and housing are closely connected.

Accessible housing offers limited independence without reliable transportation. Transportation alone cannot overcome a lack of appropriate community-based services.

And even strong support programs cannot fully succeed when people have no accessible, affordable place to live.

WILN is encouraging state policymakers, candidates for public office, community organizations and Wisconsin residents to review the recommendations and consider how state policy can better support community living.

The network's priorities reflect a central principle of the Independent Living Movement: people with disabilities should have meaningful choices about where they live, the services they receive and how they participate in their communities.

The full policy agenda, executive summary and individual issue fact sheets are available [\[at this link\]](#).

About the Wisconsin Independent Living Network

The Wisconsin Independent Living Network (WILN) includes Wisconsin's eight Centers for Independent Living, the Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers (WCILC) and the Independent Living Council of Wisconsin (ILCW).

Wisconsin's Centers for Independent Living are disability-led organizations that provide services, advocacy and resources to help people with disabilities live independently and participate fully in their communities. WILN works to advance policies that promote consumer choice, self-direction, accessibility and community integration throughout Wisconsin.

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