

STORY IDEAS & INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITIES

Wisconsin Independent Living Network

2027–2029 Policy Priorities | Long-Term Care, Transportation & Accessible Housing

Real People. Real Experiences. Wisconsin Stories.

What does independence mean to someone who has spent decades in the same home? What happens when a county boundary becomes a transportation barrier? How does the design of an ordinary house affect whether someone with a disability can visit friends, find housing or participate in community life?

The Wisconsin Independent Living Network (WILN) is highlighting these questions as part of its 2027–2029 policy priorities addressing long-term care, transportation and accessible housing.

The following story opportunities feature Wisconsin residents and advocates who can speak about the personal experiences and everyday challenges behind these issues. A statewide policy expert is also available to provide context.

STORY IDEA 1

After 31 Years in Her Home, She Nearly Had to Leave

Story angle: Aging in place and the challenges of remaining independent

Chris Purdy has lived in her Wauwatosa home for 31 years. A retired registered nurse who spent much of her career working in health care, Chris values the independence and familiarity of the modest home she shares with her dog.

But after suffering three fractures in her back, everyday tasks became increasingly difficult. A neighbor stepped in to help maintain her yard, and Chris seriously considered selling the home she loves.

She has since regained some of her ability to manage the property, but her experience raises a larger question: What would help more Wisconsinites remain in their homes as their physical needs change?

Featured interview: Chris Purdy

Retired Registered Nurse and Wauwatosa Homeowner

Location: Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Interview arrangements: Through WILN media contact

Related WILN priorities: Incentives for accessible home modifications; affordable accessible housing; long-term care supports that help people remain in their communities.

Visual opportunities: Chris in her home, backyard and neighborhood. Existing interview and supporting footage are available for media inquiries, subject to permission and usage arrangements.

STORY IDEA 2

Too Much Income for Medicaid, but Still in Need of Help

Story angle: The gap between Medicaid eligibility and the cost of remaining independent

Chris Purdy spent her professional life working in health care. Now retired, she finds herself confronting a challenge that affects her personally: she says her income is too high to qualify for Medicaid, even as physical limitations make some everyday responsibilities more difficult.

Chris wants to remain in her own home, but worries about what will happen if her needs increase and she cannot obtain affordable assistance.

Her experience illustrates the concern behind WILN's proposal to explore additional long-term care coverage options for Wisconsinites who do not qualify for existing programs.

Featured interview: Chris Purdy

Retired Registered Nurse and Wauwatosa Homeowner

Location: Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Interview arrangements: Through WILN media contact

Related WILN priority: Explore a state-supported long-term care insurance or coverage option to address gaps in existing systems.

Reporting opportunities: The cost of remaining at home, Medicaid eligibility requirements, the availability of nonmedical assistance and how people plan for changing needs as they age.

STORY IDEA 3

When a County Line Becomes a Transportation Barrier

Story angle: Why crossing a county boundary can be complicated for transit riders with disabilities

For many Wisconsin residents, traveling from one county to another is routine. For people who depend on public transportation or paratransit, crossing the same boundary can involve different service providers, eligibility rules, schedules and transportation arrangements.

Brian Peters has spent years advocating for accessible transportation and the rights of people with disabilities. He can discuss the challenges created by fragmented transportation systems and the importance of reliable connections between communities.

Featured interview: Brian Peters

Longtime Transportation Accessibility Advocate

Independence First

Location: Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Interview arrangements: Independence First, 414-291-7520

Related WILN priorities: Regional Transportation Authorities; coordinated transportation funding; increased and stable investment in public transportation.

Visual opportunities: Bus stops, accessible transit vehicles, boarding and transfers, and county boundary locations.

Reporting opportunities: How regional transportation affects access to employment, medical appointments, shopping and community participation.

STORY IDEA 4

Could Everyone You Know Get Through Your Front Door?

Story angle: How ordinary housing design can exclude people with disabilities

A few steps at the front entrance. A doorway too narrow for a wheelchair. A bathroom that cannot be reached without climbing stairs.

These common features of residential housing can prevent people with disabilities from visiting friends and family or finding a home that meets their needs.

Andi Minster, an advocate with Independence First, can discuss the importance of accessible housing and how basic design decisions affect community participation.

The story introduces the concept of *visitability*: incorporating basic accessibility features into homes so more people can enter and participate in everyday life.

Featured interview: Andi Minster

Disability Advocate, Independence First — formal title to be confirmed

Location: Milwaukee area

Interview arrangements: Email Andi: aminster@independencefirst.org

Related WILN priority: Establish minimum visitability standards for new housing construction, including a no-step entrance, wider doorways and essential first-floor living spaces.

Visual opportunities: Residential entrances with steps, narrow doorways, accessible entrances and neighborhood walk-throughs.

Reporting opportunities: The difference between visitability and full accessibility; why basic accessible design matters to residents and visitors; how housing design affects social inclusion.

STORY IDEA 5**Wisconsin's Aging Homes and the Future of Accessible Housing**

Story angle: What happens when the housing people already own no longer meets their needs?

Wisconsin communities have many established neighborhoods where homes were constructed long before accessibility became a common consideration in residential design.

For people with disabilities and older adults, making these homes accessible can involve significant changes to entrances, bathrooms, doorways and living spaces.

Andi Minster can discuss the practical barriers created by inaccessible housing, while Chris Purdy can provide a homeowner's perspective on the importance of remaining in a familiar home as physical needs change.

Together, their perspectives offer a look at the relationship between accessible housing, community connections and independence.

Featured interviews:**Andi Minster**

Disability Advocate, Independence First

Interview arrangements: Independence First, 414-291-7520

Chris Purdy

Retired Registered Nurse and Wauwatosa Homeowner

Interview arrangements: Through WILN media contact

Related WILN priorities: Incentives for modifying existing homes; visitability standards in new construction; affordable accessible homeownership.

Visual opportunities: Older residential neighborhoods, accessible and inaccessible entrances, and footage of Chris in and around her home.

Chris can speak to her experience of remaining at home; she has not been identified as someone who has personally undertaken accessibility renovations.

STORY IDEA 6

“I Feel Like a Throwaway”: A Retired Nurse Speaks About Aging and Dignity

Story angle: Ageism, independence and the value of older adults

Chris Purdy spent decades working as a registered nurse, including more than 20 years with the Medical College of Wisconsin. Since retiring in 2020, she has continued to contribute to her community through volunteer work.

But as she approaches 80, Chris says she increasingly feels that older adults are overlooked or treated differently.

“I feel like a throwaway,” she says.

Her experience provides an opportunity to examine how attitudes toward aging affect older adults' sense of dignity, belonging and independence.

Featured interview: Chris Purdy

Retired Registered Nurse and Wauwatosa Homeowner

Location: Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

Interview arrangements: Through WILN media contact

Related WILN themes: Dignity and self-determination; community participation; policies that help people remain independent across the lifespan.

Reporting opportunities: Ageism in everyday interactions, the contributions of older adults, volunteering after retirement and the relationship between independence and quality of life.

STATEWIDE POLICY EXPERT AVAILABLE

Jason Glozier

Executive Director, Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers

Email: jglozier@wcilc.org

Phone: 608-422-0525

Jason Glozier is available as a potential source of statewide policy context for these stories, including the role of Wisconsin's Centers for Independent Living and WILN's recommendations addressing long-term care, transportation and housing.

He can help reporters understand how individual experiences connect to broader policy proposals and identify additional regional sources across Wisconsin.

Areas of expertise:

- Wisconsin's Independent Living Network and Centers for Independent Living
- Statewide disability advocacy and Independent Living policy
- Long-term care and community-based services
- Accessible transportation and coordinated systems
- WILN's 2027–2029 policy priorities

Interview availability and scheduling are subject to confirmation.

ARRANGING INTERVIEWS

Journalists interested in interviewing the individuals featured in these story ideas should contact:

Jason Glozier

Executive Director

Wisconsin Coalition of Independent Living Centers

Email: jglozier@wcilc.org

Phone: 608-422-0525

Please identify the story of interest, publication or outlet, deadline, preferred interview format and any accessibility accommodations needed.

WILN can help coordinate requests and provide additional information about its policy priorities.

Interviews are subject to each individual's consent, availability and preferred arrangements. The people featured in these stories speak from their own experiences

and perspectives and do not necessarily endorse every policy recommendation in WILN's agenda.