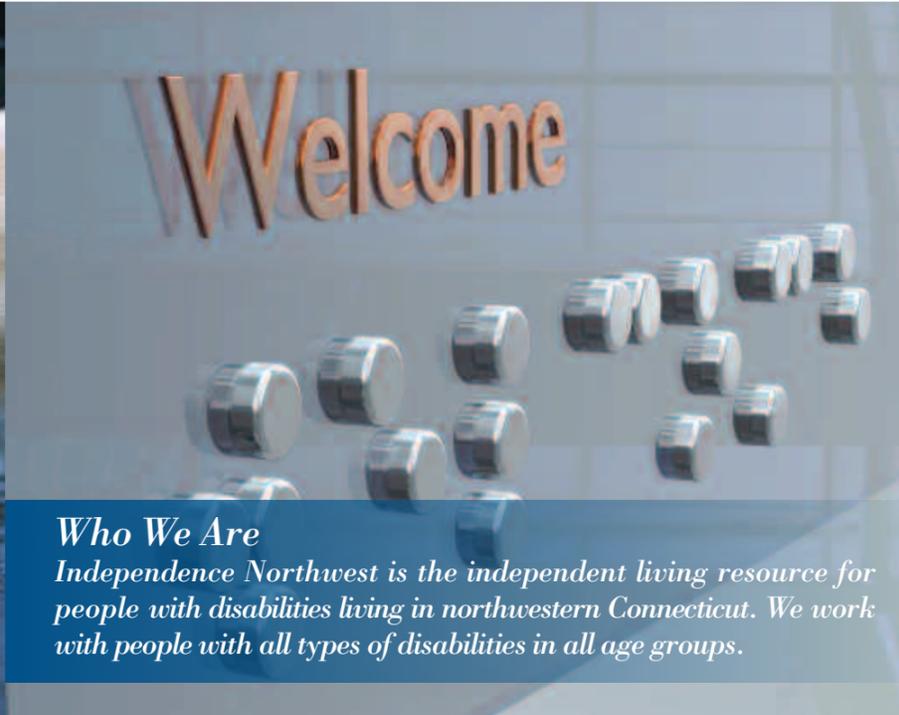




“Thanks to Independence Northwest we are able to receive funding for our son.”



Who We Are
Independence Northwest is the independent living resource for people with disabilities living in northwestern Connecticut. We work with people with all types of disabilities in all age groups.

Aging & Disability Resource Center

Independence Northwest, in partnership with the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging formed **Community Choices**, the Western Connecticut Aging & Disability Resource Center. Through coordination of existing aging and disability service systems, Community Choices raises visibility of the full range of options that are available, provides objective information and empowers people to make informed decisions.

Returning Home

Since its inception in 1988, Independence Northwest has assisted consumers in skilled nursing facilities and other institutions to return to life in the community with services and supports to live safe, successful and fulfilling lives in the communities of their choice.

Youth Transition Initiative

The Youth Transition Initiative works with young people to assist them in transitioning to and from school and work. Individuals work one-on-one with a peer mentor who can assist in locating appropriate housing, healthcare, benefits, education, employment and support services. Through outreach, information and referrals, independent living skills training, case management and peer mentoring, the program assists high school students with disabilities to transition into post-secondary school achievement and independence.

Welcome! Get Connected, Get Answers.

Independence Northwest (IN) is unlike any other service provider you may have tried before. Our organization is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. Most of the people on our staff, management and board have personally faced the same barriers you face everyday. We've learned how to surmount many of the obstacles that stood in the way of our leading more independent lives. We can show you how to do the same.

We know that people with disabilities, no matter how severe the disability can lead productive, independent and happy lives. We know because we've done it ourselves. Whatever your age, whatever your disability, we can help you achieve what you once believed was only a dream. We will work with you every step of the way, lending a hand and providing support, as you make your way to a more independent life.

Cordially,

Eileen M. Healy
Executive Director
Independence Northwest



Empowering Individuals to Be Their Own Advocates



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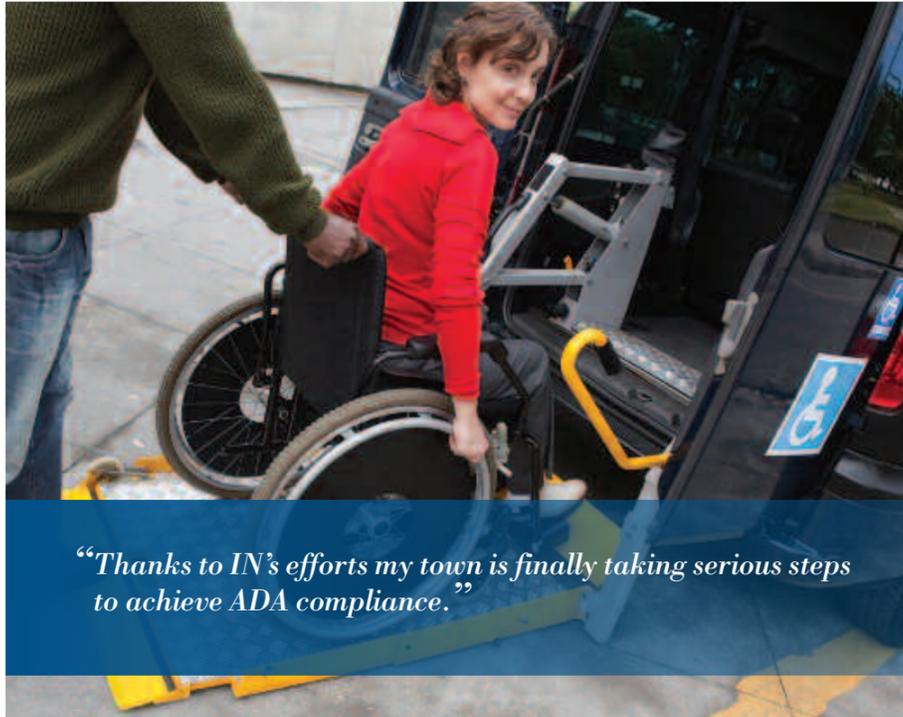


YOUR ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR
DISABILITY SERVICES IN NORTHWESTERN CT

EQUALITY
CHOICE
OPPORTUNITY



EMPOWERMENT
COMMUNITY
JUSTICE
ACCOMPLISHMENT
FREEDOM
ACCESS



“Thanks to IN’s efforts my town is finally taking serious steps to achieve ADA compliance.”



“The program is great, so helpful and many others could benefit from this opportunity if given to them.”



“IN works with the whole person. The computer assistance I received enables me to attend college and gives me the help I need to meet my goals.”



“It’s important for people to know there’s help in the community to get them back on their feet. Without an organization like Independence Northwest, many people lose hope.”

Our Approach

We believe the problem lies with society, not the individual. The preferred solution is to fix society to meet the needs of people with disabilities. A disability is not a disease but a condition, often times permanent, that affects or restricts an individual’s ability to perform certain tasks. With our approach, the person with the disability, not the professional, controls the service; the desired outcome of the service is to achieve control over daily living whenever and wherever possible. Individual empowerment is a key objective of our organization.

Our approach is based on two fundamental principles:

- To ensure equal access and equal opportunity
- To empower people with disabilities to achieve greater independence so that they can lead fuller and more satisfying lives

People with disabilities are the controlling force behind our organization and have a voice in everything that we do: policy decisions, day-to-day operations, services and advocacy directions. As with all independent living organizations, the vast majority of people who work for Independence Northwest have disabilities. We work to meet the needs of our community by offering effective and purposeful services.

Peer Mentoring

Peer counselors are well trained in effective coping, communication and advocacy skills. They have valuable firsthand knowledge of disability and other relevant issues.

We believe that people who have experienced attitudinal, physical, intellectual and communication barriers themselves, are often the best service providers for others who are experiencing these same barriers.

Peer counselors also serve as role models for the individual by offering concrete evidence of possible achievements. Throughout our work together, your needs and issues are explored and we assist you to define your goals. Together, we begin the work to attain them.

Individual Advocacy

Our Individual Advocacy services reflect the principles of consumer control and self-management, an important step towards achieving independence. Independent Living Advocates work one-on-one with those who are interested in leading more independent lives. The work of an IL Advocate can take many different forms depending on your goals. The IL Advocate walks alongside you as you work toward these goals, which may be going to work or school, obtaining benefits, or moving out of an institution into a more independent setting. By working together, the IL Advocate teaches the individual self-advocacy skills and provides ongoing support and guidance.

Independent Living Skills Instruction

The heart of independent living is having the skills to create the life that you want. Independence Northwest offers independent living skills instruction to assist you with the skills you need to gain more control over your life.

We work with consumers one-on-one to set goals and acquire the necessary skills to deal with everyday situations, including employment, education, housing, self-care, benefits, personal assistance and transportation, among other areas. Working together we can help you acquire the skills you desire to meet your unique needs.

Community Advocacy

At Independence Northwest, we empower people with disabilities, concentrating our efforts into a collective strength so that we can eliminate barriers and abolish discriminatory policies. Being advocates for social change is a crucial part of what we do and another reason our organization is so different from others.

We work to improve community services and ensure equal access for people with disabilities by focusing on policy change, legislative action and compliance with existing laws.

Information and Referral (I & R)

Our I & R service provides essential information to people with disabilities, families, service providers and community members on a variety of disability-related topics including entitlement programs, disability rights, housing, employment and community services.

The I & R staff works with individuals to determine their needs and helps them develop an awareness of the options available to them. Our experienced staff is available to assist you in obtaining information on a broad range of disability topics and can make appropriate referrals.

Consumer Control

Consumers take control over the direction and goals of their own personal services. You decide how you would prefer to live, which services to use and determine your own course of action. We supply the support, knowledge, skills and tools that are available to us; it is up to you to put them to work.