

The background of the entire page is a stylized American flag, rendered in a painterly or brush-stroke style. The stars and stripes are visible, though somewhat blurred and textured. The flag is enclosed within a thick, dark blue, textured border that looks like a hand-painted frame.

**UConn**

UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR  
EXCELLENCE IN  
DEVELOPMENTAL  
DISABILITIES

THE  
**IMPACT**

OF PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS  
ON 403,370 ADULTS AND  
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES  
IN CONNECTICUT

## **The Impact of Proposed Budget Cuts on 403,370 Adults and Children with Disabilities in Connecticut**

The programs being threatened with drastic cuts include Medicaid, SSI/SSDI, and cuts to Councils on Developmental Disabilities, LEND projects, State Independent Living Councils, and TBI Advisory Councils.

### **PROPOSED CUTS**

- **SSA/SSI:** Cut by \$74.2 billion including \$44 billion to disability programs
- **Medicaid:** \$800 billion cut over 10 years with additional cuts to SNAP and other programs for the poor.

### **IMPACTS**

- Assistance with personal care (like eating, bathing and taking medicine)
- Crucial community residential options that prevent homelessness or costly institutionalization
- Crisis intervention & behavioral support
- Caregiver respite services
- Needed home modifications such as ramps, lifts and shower access
- **LEND Programs:** Funding for all LEND programs eliminated ending a critical program in every state to train leaders in the field of disabilities
- **DD Councils**, along with the **State Independent Living Councils**, a portion of funding supporting **Centers for Independent Living** and the **TBI Advisory Programs** will lose half their funding and are combined into “Partnerships for Innovation, Inclusion and Independence”

### **IN CONNECTICUT**

- 4,880 adults and children receive **SSI**, with a maximum benefit per month of \$889
- 16,134 people with disabilities receive **SSDI**
- 9,680 people with disabilities live below the poverty level compared to approximately 3,200 without disabilities
- To afford a 2 bedroom apartment in Connecticut a person must earn \$24.72/hr. which would be 113% of their SSI payment

The following pages describe the impact these cuts will have on the lives of people disabilities in our state.

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## **Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities**

### **DD Council Overview**

The mission of Connecticut Council on Developmental Disabilities is to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities in community life. Reauthorized under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-402, the DD Council is entirely funded with federal dollars.

With a relatively modest annual budget (\$684,571) in FY 2015, the Council leveraged an additional \$192,658, effectively stretching its dollars to maximize their impact. Through Council initiatives and grants, we affect the lives of thousands of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Connecticut and their families, providing training and funding projects that otherwise could not be completed. We form effective partnerships with other organizations to help people with disabilities live good lives in the community. Here are just a few examples:

### **DD Council Activities and Programs**

- We promote independence and self-sufficiency:  
**Partners in Policymaking** is yearly advocacy training sponsored by the DD Council in partnership with the UConn UCEDD, and the State office of Protection and Advocacy. Annually, classes 25-30 self-advocates and parents are trained over 8 months.

We support **CT KASA (Kids as Self Advocates)**, which works with adolescents and young adults with disabilities, to develop leadership skills and to learn to advocate for themselves. 23 students are currently participating.

- We build capacity:  
Through our **Customized Employment** project, we are training provider organizations the skills to identify and develop jobs for people with disabilities. Customized employment training is a defined rubric that has been shown to lead to real jobs for hard to place individuals.

Working with Connecticut Legal Services, our **Parents with Cognitive Limitations** initiative has funded training for parents and court personnel, including judges, to address the unique issues that arise when these parents are involved with the courts. In addition, training was provided to DDS staff, self-advocates and medical personnel, including doctors. In all 330 people were trained in person, and additional individuals received training online.

- We respond to proven need:  
Following Hurricane Sandy, our **Emergency Preparedness** project educated local first responders on outreach to individuals with disabilities on disaster preparedness, created a “Go Bag” of emergency supplies for distribution, and created a training module for use by first responders.

The state DDS has a growing waiting list for residential placements. Through our **Housing Matters** grant, we funded the research and printing of a housing resource guide that provided information of housing resources. In addition, workshops were conducted around the state to inform families of resources that they could access, that were not necessarily part of the DDS system, but that other families had leveraged to make a life in the community possible for their adult son or daughter with I/DD. These workshops were attended by 150 people. In addition, a conference on housing was attended by 120 people.

- We promote system change:  
Through our **2020 Campaign to Close Connecticut’s Institutions**, the Council has advocated for the closure of Connecticut’s remaining segregated institutions for people with intellectual disabilities, in favor of community living. Our advocacy has taken the form of testimony, press events, and most recently, the documentary ***Building a Great Life***, produced in partnership with CPTV that was aired in May 2017. In the Hartford area alone, 20,000 people watched *Building a Great Life*, which examined the case for closing CT’s institutions and was funded by the Council. Since 2015, when the campaign began, 2 of 5 Regional Centers have closed, and there is a serious proposal to close Southbury Training School in this year’s budget discussions.

- We collaborate:  
We fund and support the **Cross-Disability Lifespan Alliance**, a **200-member** coalition of disability advocates, consumers, nonprofit providers and state agencies that meets monthly develop a coordinated effort for statewide advocacy, collaboration, communication and education.

We ask your continued support for the DD Council. It plays a unique, indispensable role in Connecticut's disability advocacy community.

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## **CT State Independent Living Council**

### **CT-SILC Overview**

On May 26th, President Trump released his 2018 FFY budget proposal. One recommendation proposes a new “partnership for innovation, inclusion, and independence,” which consolidates three separately funded programs. In this move, it would defund both the Independent Living State Grants Program (\$23 million) and the [State Councils on Developmental Disabilities](#) (\$73 million).<sup>1</sup>

The Connecticut Independent Living Council (CT-SILC) opposes this proposal for the following:

- The Independent Living State Grants (Part B) are the primary funding source of many Statewide Independent Living Councils (SILCs) and independent living programs and services, which are mandated under Title VII of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2015 (WIOA) provided updated statutory authority for SILCs to specifically carry out duties. **Eliminating these funds to \$0 will jeopardize the existence of federally-mandated planning councils for people with disabilities.**
- SILCs are consumer-controlled. This means that the majority of the appointed members are people with disabilities. The primary responsibility of each council is to develop, monitor, and evaluate the 3-year federal Statewide Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). These plans outline goals and objectives to improve the independence of people with disabilities on a statewide level. In each 3-year cycle, SILCs assist with a statewide consumer satisfaction survey, needs assessments, and obtain robust public input into the development of the activities and services that are outlined in next state plan. **Eliminating these funds to \$0 will halt an intentionally designed, consumer-controlled process, whereby people with disabilities**

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<sup>1</sup> See page 467 of the Department of Health and Human Services Budget/Administration for Community Living Program: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/omb/budget/fy2018/hhs.pdf>.

**have direct input into both the state plan and the direction of Independent Living (IL) in Connecticut.**

- The resources allocated in each SPIL become projects that get distributed into local communities throughout the state and pilot new programs that expand services and reduce barriers for people with disabilities. **Eliminating these funds to \$0 will stop positive opportunities for centers and have a negative economic impact on these communities.**

**CT-SILC Activities and Programs**

The budget proposal calls this recommendation a new “partnership for innovation, inclusion and independence,” but it will have an opposite impact. Connecticut currently receives nearly \$1 million annually out of the \$23 million dollars allocated for these grants. These dollars fund independent living projects that develop and implement activities and services that seek to remove barriers, to build capacity for unserved and underserved consumers and to enhance the ability for people with disabilities to live independently.

The activities and services currently include or have included the following:

- **Supporting over 737** individuals annually to stay in their homes and work in the community through funding for structural modifications, security deposits, assistive technology and other needed supports for less than \$1,500 per consumer;
- **Supporting 5** Centers for Independent Living annually with funds to develop organizational capacity-building, sustainability plans and fee-for-service plans to include but not limited to 3D printing, legal services, and home assistive technology to assist consumers to stay in their homes;
- **Developing** a professional development and skill-development training series for Centers for Independent Living staff, board member and SILC board members and staff to expand knowledge of center development and management;
- **Training 50 individuals** annually on emergency preparedness in collaboration with the UCEDD;
- **Working with FEMA Region I Disability Integration office** to develop a statewide nonprofit organization, CT Rises, to meet CT’s emergency recovery needs of CT residents now and in the future.

Over 300 individuals and families were served as a result of Hurricane Superstorm Sandy;

- Coordinating the CT Cross-Disability Lifespan Alliance, a **200 member** coalition of disability advocates, consumers, nonprofit providers and state agencies in order to develop a coordinated effort for communication, education and resource sharing.
- **Provided 50** youth, ages 16-21, with transition services to include developing post-secondary and/or employment planning;
- **Developed pre-vocational programming for 60 adults**, ages 22-65+ in order to increase the number of consumers who have pre-vocational plans by providing an overview of potential vocational opportunities, assisting consumers identify the vocational skills they offer an employer; and setting long term and short term goals and determine if they are reasonable;
- **Funding a** Visitability project to support the development of a tool-kit for cities, towns and developers to use as a guide for new construction and supporting an annual home design contest for **20** architecture students to understand and to develop models for accessible housing design;
- **Supported** CT Youth Leadership Forum, a summer program for **25 youth annually** to develop their peer leadership and organizing skills and creating yearlong community projects;
- **Collaborated with VSA Arts CT** to develop art programming and art exhibits for **over 100** people with disabilities.

### **An Independent Living Success Story**

A 30-year-old mother partially paralyzed in a car accident, came to a Center for Independent Living looking for help in transitioning out of a nursing facility. With the help of staff, she moved into an apartment, got counseling for an abusive relationship and found a job. She now works for a local store, lives in the community and has custody of her 5-year-old daughter. Part of the resources and funding assisting her transition were provided through the State Plan for Independent Living case service dollars that support individuals to stay in their homes and live independently in the community.

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# LEND

## Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities

### LEND Overview

The University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at UCONN Health is home to the CT Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) training program. The goal of LEND is to prepare trainees from a wide variety of professional disciplines to assume leadership roles in the delivery of services to children with autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities in clinical practice, education, research, and public policy.

There are 52 funded LEND programs across the country. Connecticut's LEND involves collaborations from across the state to improve the outcomes for children with special health care needs.

### FUNDING:

- LEND federal funding comes from DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services), HRSA (Health Resources Service Administration), Maternal and Child Health Bureau.
- \$443,000 funded one year of our education, research, and advocacy curriculum. In 2016, a 5 year award was given for a total of 2.2M.
- Each year, **approximately \$117,000** in-kind funds are committed from UCONN for 9 full graduate student stipends and tuition reimbursement.
- Each year, LEND receives approximately **\$232,282 in-kind** contributions from UCONN to support several faculty

### Key Characteristics of the CT LEND program:

- **More than 52 Connecticut students, medical professionals, and family and children** with disabilities participated in LEND training in the first year.
- **Interdisciplinary graduate students and faculty** from: Audiology, Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics, Human Development and Family Studies Medicine, Special Education, Nursing, Pharmacy,

Physical Therapy, Public Health, School Psychology, Social Work, and Speech and Language Pathology.

**First Year Impact:**

- CT LEND trainees worked with **over 3,000 children with disabilities** and worked with **more than 2000 families** in all regions of the state, including medically underserved areas.
- **Nearly 83% of the families** served by CT LEND trainees this year are from **underserved minorities**.
- **100% of the first generation, minority undergraduate trainees** are continuing work/studies in disability related fields, with **80% enrolling in advanced higher education programs**.
- CT LEND trainees have received **prestigious internships and fellowships** at Yale, the Rose F. Kennedy Center/ Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Westchester Institute for Human development in Valhalla, and the National Association of County and City Health Officials.
- By leveraging the interdisciplinary training capacity of LEND, **two additional grants were awarded: a Diversity Fellowship and Pediatric Audiology Supplement**
- **More than 400 pediatricians and medical professionals** participated in LEND faculty led professional development on emerging and critical issues like the Zika virus, autism, and transitions in medical care.

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