



**CT State Independent Living Council**  
**151 New Park Avenue, c/o North Central Area Agency on Aging, #75**  
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My name is Molly Cole and I am currently the Executive Director of the CT State Independent Living Council. SILC works across CT to promote choice, equal access, opportunity, and full inclusion of people with disabilities into the economic, political, social, cultural and educational mainstream of American society. We work with the five Centers for Independent Living (CILs) throughout the state.

As a long time advocate of Life Course, I was pleased to see these domains used in the development of the DDS 5 Year Plan. However, knowing the real life challenges affecting citizens in our state who are served by DDS, it is critical use these domains to address their real life, specific challenges in order to move forward in a plan that allows all our citizens to lead a good life in the community of their choice.

Specifically, we need to create new supported living environments and options for all individuals. The Centers for Independent Living and the State Independent Living Council work hard to ensure that all our citizens live in supported and inclusive communities. It is critical that DDS partner with all the advocates and citizens of our state who are working to ensure inclusive communities. The voices and experiences of the Centers for Independent Living can provide the Department with important information, and also highlight the need for additional resources. The experience of the CILs shows us that we no longer live in a one-size fits all world. In fact, we can learn from the approach of other states and create new, supported living environments and options.

Specifically, this plan should be revised as follows:

- Include more specific goals and objectives with defined metrics that can be reviewed, revised and monitored for progress across the five years of the plan
- Include a clearer description of how the American Rescue Act Funds will be applied
- Operationalize expanded supported living opportunities within the community
- Include initiatives to address the broadened spectrum of need in the community
- Alleviate roadblocks to independent living. This is an area in which the Centers for Independent Living can be of assistance in identifying and implementing needed changes.
- Include enhanced family resources

- Include critically needed improved employment opportunities
- Identify formal collaboration with the communities and organizations across key agencies
- Include more individualized, supported living options and resources to support person-centered planning,
- Include the development of affordable community-based housing options
- Include resources to provide increased training for families and support personnel
- Include Improved medical and behavioral emergency support, which is critical to leading good lives in the community
- Address increased collaboration opportunities with DDS for supported individuals and their families and advocates in the community such as the Centers for Independent Living.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to your feedback, seeing the revised plan and the opportunity to build collaboration between DDS and the Centers for Independent Living in this process.

Molly Cole

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