

be empowered



Mission Statement

Access to Independence
advocates and educates to
support and empower
people with disabilities

Who is Access to Independence (ATI)?

Access to Independence (ATI) is:

- a private, non-profit agency
- consumer controlled
- an independent living Center (ILC)
- part of a statewide network of 8 ILCs, and a national network of several hundred ILCs

What is the IL Philosophy?

- People have the right to make their own choices
- People have the right to manage their own affairs
- People have the right to live as independently as they choose in the community

Who does ATI Serve

- ATI serves people of ANY AGE and with ANY TYPE of disability – no screening or eligibility tests required!
- ATI serves friends, families and others who know of or assist people with disabilities
- ATI serves the business community
- ATI serves anyone who may need disability information or services

Where does ATI provide services?

ATI has a 4-county services region that includes:

- Columbia County
- Dane County
- Dodge County
- Green County

What are ATI's Services

ATI has 4 Core Services:

- Information and Referral
- Peer Support
- Independent Living Skills Training
- Advocacy

Information and Referral (InR)

- ATI staff are ready to provide current information about disability-related issues and services available to people with disabilities.
- InR topics include, but are not limited to:
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Benefits and finances
 - Social and recreational needs
 - Technology
 - Disability information
 - Legislation, policy and voting
 - Healthcare and long-term care

Peer Support

- Staff and trained volunteers can be available to persons with disabilities who are looking for support and assistance. Peer Support can assist an individual with learning how to cope and succeed with a disability through sharing real-life experiences

Independent Living Skills Training

- ATI staff can provide both group and individualized assessment and training in skills areas such as:

Budgeting

Transportation (own and public)

Communication

Computer Skills

Cooking

Household Maintenance

Many MORE!

Advocacy

ATI, and the other ILCs throughout the country have been leaders in providing advocacy at both an individual level and a systems level for generations.

Access to Independence provides advocacy in three distinct ways in our communities.

Individual Advocacy

- Individual Advocacy services can be the link people need, as well as a way to teach individuals how to effectively communicate their wants and needs, to obtain needed services and supports.
- ATI can provide advocacy services for IEPs, grievance and appeal processes in long-term care systems, and even with providers of any sort.

Systems Advocacy

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world” – Gandhi

ATI has the ability to influence social change and disability policy and legislation at a local, state and federal level. ATI does this directly as an agency and by educating and empowering people in our communities to demand change!

Grassroots Advocacy

ATI offers anyone in our region an opportunity to be a part of a grassroots advocacy network called ActionNet, ActionNet is:

- A regional grassroots advocacy network that educates and empowers anyone in our region who is interested in disability issues, policy or legislation at a local, state or federal level
- Consists of Local Advocacy Groups in each county that make up the network, and offers people different opportunities to be involved in disability issues at different levels of commitment
- Identifies and trains individuals to be self advocates and community leaders for disability issues
- Working with the other 8 ILCs to develop a statewide grassroots advocacy network to strengthen the voice of people with disabilities in Wisconsin

Other ATI Services

- Assistive Technology
- Accessibility Assessments
- Public Benefits Assistance
- Youth Programs and Services
- Services for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Nursing Facility Transition and Diversion
- Disability Awareness
- Community Education
- WI Certified Peer Specialist Program

Assistive Technology

ATI is home to hundreds of Assistive Technology devices for demonstration and even short-term loan. ATI staff can travel to homes and businesses and demonstrate how to use devices that can eliminate barriers and improve independence. ATI staff are also able to assist individuals with finding and purchasing technology that meets their needs.

In addition to selection, demonstration and loan of equipment, ATI has programs to assist individuals with the payment of their needed item(s). ATI offers the following programs:

- Wisloan
- Telework
- TEPP

Accessibility Assessments

ATI is able to provide accessibility assessments to government, business, and individuals based on the laws of the:

- Americans With Disabilities Act
- Fair Housing Act

ATI can provide informal assessments to individuals who need help making their homes accessible, or knowing what products are available for accessibility. ATI can also do formal assessments for businesses who want to improve accessibility or may not be in compliance with the standards set in the ADA. ATI is also able to work with local governments and schools on the accessibility of the programs and services.

Public Benefits Assistance

ATI staff are able to assist individuals with aspects of the complicated world of public benefits. ATI staff can assist individuals with:

- Applying for SSI/SSDI – completing the application paperwork or online program, as well as assistance with the request for reconsideration and request for a hearing
- Completing necessary paperwork to apply for Medicaid or the Medical Assistance Purchase Plan (MAPP) and the Health and Employment Counseling (HEC) programs
- Advocacy as necessary with the Social Security Administration and county Economic Support staff

Youth Programs and Services

ATI currently offers the following programs and services to youth with disabilities:

- Peer Power Program that provides youth with disabilities the skills to actively participate in planning for their future (IEPs, career exploration, etc...); identify goals for adult life including employment, education, housing and community participation; take steps to reach their goals; and assertively express their goals
- Wheelchair athletic programs including hockey and basketball

Services for people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

- Individual assistance and group classes for ATI services and other programs
- Interpreter information
- Specialized Technology and equipment information

Nursing Facility Transition and Diversion

The right to live where one chooses is a fundamental aspect to the IL Philosophy. The Supreme Court upheld this belief with the Olmstead Decision of 1999.

- ATI assists individuals who currently reside in nursing facilities or other institutions and wish to live in the community. ATI can also assist the facilities themselves who have difficulty with the transition process
- ATI assists individuals who may be hospitalized or at home, and at risk of being forced to move to an institution. ATI can also assist hospitals with finding ways to avoid institutionalizations
- ATI will work with the individual and their formal and informal support networks to ensure that a person is able to live in the setting of their choice and that barriers to this independence are overcome.
- ATI supports the idea of a person's right to risk and failure when making their choices

Disability Awareness

ATI strives to build inclusive communities that value people with disabilities and respect the differences that disability culture brings to society. ATI brings awareness through outreach to non-disability partners, work in the media, and community forums, among other methods.

Community Education

ATI educates the communities in our region about an array of topics including:

- Disability legislation and policy
- Disability etiquette
- The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Self Advocacy

WI Certified Peer Specialist Program



A Peer Specialist is a person who has not only lived the experience of mental illness but also has had formal training in the Peer Specialist Model of Mental Health Supports. They are an integral part of Mental Health Recovery Teams.

For information on this Career Ladders Program contact:

Alice F. Pauser, CPS

WI Peer Specialist Program Coordinator

www.wicps.org

608-242-8484 ext 224

alicep@accesstoind.org

Fee-For-Services

- ATI has a menu of specialized services that are available for a flat fee or at an hourly rate. Please see our separate brochure for more information, or contact ATI today!

CONTACT ATI

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THANK YOU!

Any Questions?