



ANNUAL REPORT

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE
OF THE DISABLED, NY

JULY 2021 - JUNE 2022



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SHARON MCLENNON WIER
Ph.D., MEd., CRC, LMHC
Executive Director



Dear CIDNY Supporters,

My name is Dr. Sharon McLennon Wier, and I am the new Executive Director for the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York (CIDNY). I began my tenure on July 6, 2021, after a nationwide-employment search by CIDNY's Board of Directors. After a careful vetting and deliberation process, the Board selected me for this position. I am the first blind, black woman to lead CIDNY. It is my honor and privilege to serve as CIDNY's Executive Director to continue the mission, staunch advocacy, and delivery of services to people with disabilities living throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

As we know, the pandemic changed the landscape for many Americans including people with disabilities. We observed a myriad of discrepancies with regards to appropriate housing, physical-medical healthcare, mental healthcare, educational and employment challenges, and especially for people with disabilities. Additionally, we learned that people with disabilities have been experiencing a crisis surrounding quality of life for many years. Now is the time to break this cycle of inequity and division between those who have disabilities and those who do not.

I want to assist CIDNY in the next phase of our advocacy for equity services when it comes to housing, education, employment, physical and mental healthcare, transportation, and civic engagement. With CIDNY's staff, Board of Directors, donors, and consumers, we will continue to build CIDNY as a leading independent living center that focuses on inclusion for all aspects of human existence. My organizational vision for CIDNY is to continue the current service delivery model and further grow CIDNY's infrastructure to provide additional services, such as mental health services, comprehensive employment services, and legal services. This vision requires all boots on the ground, and includes you, too.

I hope that you enjoy reading this report and learn about what has occurred at CIDNY the last year. So much has happened, including moving our Manhattan office to 1010 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 301, NY, NY 10018 (on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 38th Street) and building an accessible center which showcases technological features that address the needs of people with obvious disabilities, such as mobility, sensory, and medical disabilities, as well as hidden ones, such as mental health disabilities, autism, and traumatic brain injury. Please read our report to learn more and make an appointment to visit our new location. CIDNY is a special place, and its ability to foster systemic change is incredible. We can work together to make a difference--a truly rewarding experience for those who believe in the mission of CIDNY. Again, thank you for your financial support.

I look forward to many fruitful years partnering with you!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

MARTIN EICHEL

President

CIDNY Board of Directors



I'm delighted to share the highlights of our work through our 44th year. We value your investment in improving the lives of people with disabilities and are honored to have you as a partner in our work. I can't thank you enough for your commitment.

CIDNY achieves significant outcomes that make a difference in people's lives:

- This past year we helped **1,190 consumers** enroll in benefits.
- **740 New Yorkers with disabilities** at risk of homelessness received housing assistance—resulting in 50 families securing housing.
- This year alone, **745 CIDNY consumers transitioned from nursing homes** to living safely within their communities.
- In response to the growing need, given COVID-19's impact on social isolation, CIDNY has expanded our mental health services. Currently, **2,500 individuals receive regular wellness calls**. This is a 41% increase from last year.
- We conducted **more than 3,000 one-on-one counseling sessions** for planning and achieving self-support/advocacy goals.
- Our outreach and education program improved knowledge of resources, and increased the ability of individuals to self-advocate, **reaching 23,491 participants**.
- **105 people with disabilities diverted nursing homes** and transitioned into the community, saving taxpayers \$20 million dollars.
- Our team of trained consumer advocates and our CIDNY policy and advocacy staff helped **serve 424 individuals through advocacy and legal services**.
- We reached an audience of **678 people who were educated** by our appearances in traditional media, social media, and on digital platforms. We were featured 54 times in national and local newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and new media stories.

We know that the years ahead will bring new challenges as we continue to remove barriers and improve lives. We are committed to reaching and engaging more New Yorkers with disabilities. Your support makes our work possible. Thank you!

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Executive Director

Sharon McLennon Wier, Ph.D., MEd., CRC, LMHC

The Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York's (CIDNY) goal is to ensure full integration, independence and equal opportunity for all people with disabilities by removing barriers to the social, economic, cultural and civic life of the community.

WHO WE ARE

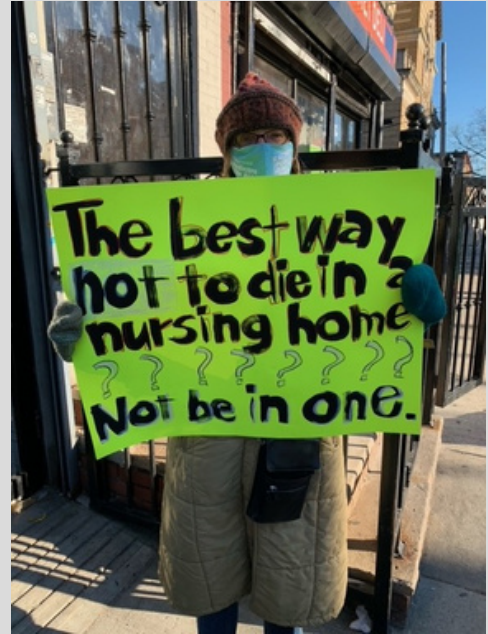
Founded in 1978, the Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY) helps people with disabilities achieve goals that will improve their lives, equip them with skills, and involve them in advocacy to bring about greater inclusion in our society. CIDNY's purpose is to ensure full integration, independence, and equal opportunity for all people with any kind of disability by removing barriers to the social, economic, cultural, and civic life of the community. CIDNY is led and staffed by a dedicated team, the majority of whom have disabilities themselves.

We are part of the independent living movement, which began in 1972 and was rooted in civil rights and social justice movements. At that time, people with disabilities were living in segregated settings; taught in segregated schools; had few, segregated work opportunities; and unequal access to communication, housing, transportation, health care, food, civic life, and social opportunities available to people with no disabilities. While much has changed, many of the original struggles to achieve equality persist.

We support people with disabilities to live the lives that they want, and to envision the future they seek for themselves. We help with the day-to-day things that improve their lives. We bring a disability lens to new partners and the public and protect the civil rights of people with disabilities. We advocate to remove barriers and change systems that limit the participation of people with disabilities.

WHO WE ARE AND WHO WE SERVE

We speak many different languages, including American Sign Language, Arabic, Bengali, Cantonese, Edo, English, Farsi, French, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Loma, Mandarin, Nepali, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Tibetan, Urdu, Uzbeki, and Yiddish.



We are part of, and reflect, the diverse identities of the disability community in NYC. Fifty-six percent of CIDNY staff are people with disabilities. In addition, some of us are caregivers to a partner, parent, or child with disabilities. We have different racial and ethnic identities, different educational and work backgrounds, belong to different faith communities, and are LGBTQ inclusive. Seventy percent of our staff identify as female and 30% identify as male. Twenty-nine percent of our staff are Black, 30% are Hispanic/Latinx, 29% are White, and 8% are Asian American.

We serve individuals with disabilities of any racial and ethnic group citywide. We serve New Yorkers with disabilities who are poor and often have less educational and employment attainment than people without disabilities. We reach newcomers to our area and people who have not historically been represented in our society, including people with mental health disabilities and multiple disabilities. We help people with the greatest struggles to achieve independence and their personal goals.

WHAT WE DO



We help disabled New Yorkers:

- Find income or other supports, including healthcare, housing, transportation, education, and food that make people's lives better.
- Understand how to look for housing and use the rental support programs that can make renting possible.
- Transition from institutions to living in the community, as they choose, and without barriers.
- Understand how moving into the world of work will affect their lives.
- Navigate complicated systems and solve difficult problems to get the services they need.
- Register to vote.

WHAT WE DO

We teach

- People with disabilities life and work readiness skills, about their rights, and about how housing, health care, and transportation programs work.
- Businesses, the courts, government agencies, and the public about disability literacy and disability rights.
- Policymakers, about the status of people with disabilities and the issues affecting them, by collaborating with university-based researchers to develop reports.
- The public, about the lives and experiences of people with disabilities through first-hand testimonials depicting daily life in both mainstream and digital media.

We research

- Conditions in the community for people with disabilities— poverty, access to voting, education, employment, income, health, transportation, food, and the built environment.
- Disability status in comparison to people with no disabilities.

We organize

- A network of advocates who can respond quickly to policy developments that affect them, speak out, demonstrate, educate policymakers, and share stories with the media to educate the public.
- With people with disabilities to advocate for their own rights and teach them the skills they need to make a difference.
- With individuals to tell their stories about barriers to health care, voting, emergency services, transportation, and other issues, to fight for change.

We engage

- With lawmakers, by providing relevant research and individual perspectives and sharing thoughts on how proposed policies will affect people with disabilities.
- In coalitions, to bring together disparate groups to improve laws, regulations, and public policy.
- With the legal process when civil rights are being violated.

OUR PROGRAMS

BENEFITS

We conduct comprehensive benefit screenings for health care, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), heating assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), tax benefits, veteran's benefits, housing subsidies, Disability Rent Increase Exemption (DRIE), Senior Citizen Rent Increase Exemption (SCRIE), various waiver programs, prescription assistance, unemployment insurance, and subsidized transit. We provide information on these programs, help with applications, explain the appeals process, and make referrals to the appropriate agencies, when applicable.

EMPLOYMENT

We help youth with disabilities learn job readiness skills and direct people with disabilities to resources for training, employment, and vocational rehabilitation services.

FOOD ACCESS

We assist with enrolling in food assistance programs including SNAP, school breakfast, and summer meal programs.

HEALTHCARE

We enroll people in a variety of health coverage, including private insurance, Medicaid, and Medicare. We advise people who rely on Medicare regarding Medicaid payments for their out-of-pocket costs and premiums. We help individuals select a health plan that best meets their needs. We help people understand their health coverage and navigate their plans to get the care they need. We assist with problem solving for each kind of coverage.

HOUSING

We help people learn how to search for housing and about any housing subsidies they may qualify for. We help people apply for housing, including waiting lists, lotteries, and subsidies. We assist people with disabilities in nursing homes to apply for housing subsidies to help them transition back to the community. We advise people on their housing search and on ways to stretch their housing budgets and avoid eviction. We educate and assist people on their rights to accommodations and modifications under the Fair Housing Act.

INDEPENDENT LIVING

We advocate for individuals, and to change the systems that affect them for the better. We provide peer counseling—using our own experiences as people with disabilities to help others. We provide educational information, workshops, and make referrals to community resources. We help people develop their independent living skills, learn about their rights for reasonable accommodations, and teach them advocacy skills. We help youth transition into adulthood with job readiness skills or planning for further education, including college. We prevent institutionalization by helping people stabilize in the community and get access to additional resources and benefits. We bring people home from nursing homes to live fuller and longer lives within the community.

LONG-TERM CARE

We educate, empower, and advocate for long-term care residents in nursing facilities and assisted living. We help people with disabilities leave institutions to live independently in the community. We provide individualized support to transition home, including one-on-one guidance by peers who share their experiences of living in the community and can discuss ways to make their goal of returning home a reality.

COMMUNICATIONS

CIDNY is a trusted go-to source and resource for journalists on a variety of issues, including health care, housing, employment, transportation, voting, and more. Reporters often reach out to CIDNY to seek insight and first-person perspectives on issues relating to the disability community. We have worked on media stories with local, regional, state-wide, national, and even international audiences. CIDNY also maintains working relationships with graduate student journalism majors from schools such as CUNY and Columbia University, ensuring the next generation of journalists is aware of our work and the disability viewpoint. Between July 2021 and June 2022, we reached over 746 million people through 123 media placements and digital communications on a variety of issues. In the mainstream press we were featured by ABC News, the Associated Press, Fast Company, Politico, Reuters, Spectrum News, USA TODAY; in the local press by amNY, Brooklyn Daily Eagle, City Limits, City & State, Gothamist, NY Daily News, Staten Island Advance, Queens Chronicle, and Queens Daily Eagle; and bilingual press including El Correo and Public New Service. CIDNY also authors a monthly column in the disability-focused Able Newspaper. CIDNY has consistently garnered media coverage across online, print, television, radio, and digital media.

CIDNY maintains a robust and ever-growing digital presence across social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. We also have a dedicated email and physical mail list through which we engage consumers, advocates, and decision makers. Our monthly newsletter is shared and promoted via email, physical mail, social media, and is also hosted on our website.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The People's Money- Idea Generation Sessions

On behalf of the NYC Civic Engagement Commissions (CEC), CIDNY hosted "The Peoples Money" a series of participatory budgeting idea sessions. New Yorkers ages eleven and up, regardless of citizenship or incarceration status, were invited to help directly decide how \$5million of mayoral expense funding is spent. Residents had [JZ1] the opportunity to submit creative ideas and vote for winning projects.

Nutrition Workshop Series

CIDNY partnered with Stellar Farmers' Markets to offer a series of free virtual nutrition workshops in the fall of 2021. Each workshop included an interactive nutrition activity led by a nutrition educator with tips for healthy eating and a delicious seasonal recipe demonstration led by a culinary educator.

Disability Rights and Awareness Webinar

CIDNY partnered with AgeWell New York to provide a Disability Rights and Awareness Webinar specific to COVID-19 Vaccination. Some of the webinar topics included types of vaccinations, differences between vaccinations, accessible vaccination locations, and in-home vaccination options.

Social Activities

People with disabilities joined CIDNY for a variety of social and educational activities, including workshops, recreational opportunities, disability awareness training, coalition and advocacy meetings, and outreach. Our educational workshops included presentations on budgeting, debt, personal finances, civil rights, housing, and using services like Access-a-Ride. They were offered online and were also taped, so participants could review material in the workshops and learn at their own pace. A workshop on All of Us, an ambitious, long-term health study that includes people with disabilities, was shown on Facebook Live. Our recreational activities included the popular Writer's Workshop and Movie Nights.

Housing Education Events

Rapid Transition Housing Program

Speakers from CIDNY gave an overview about the Rapid Transition Housing Program (RTHP), which requires referrals. Participants learned these basics: what RTHP is; how RTHP involves staff from hospitals, Managed Care Organizations (MCO), Medical Respite, Performing Provider System (PPS), and/or Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF); who can make referrals; who is eligible; the qualifications; how to determine eligibility; the RTHP Referral Form; the application process; and the needed documents and materials.

Homebase

The guest speakers from the NYC Human Resources Administration (HRA) gave an overview about Homebase, a homelessness prevention program that serves all five boroughs and provides aftercare services to clients leaving NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) homeless shelters. Participants learned the basics about: what Homebase is; how to find Homebase locations; who is eligible and what the qualifications are; how to determine eligibility; how individuals and households can access resources and support; what types of resources and support are available for individuals and households experiencing housing instability; and how to identify available resources and support related to landlord/tenant mediation, assessment for housing subsidy, and eviction prevention.

Olmstead Housing Subsidy

The speakers from CIDNY provided an overview of the Olmstead Housing Subsidy (OHS) Program. Participants learned the basics: what the OHS Program is; how the OHS program involves family, peers, Transition Specialists, nursing homes staff, Nursing Home Transition and Diversion (NHTD) staff, and/or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) staff; who can make referrals; who is eligible and what the qualifications are; how to determine eligibility; the Olmstead Housing Subsidy (OHS) Referral Form; the application process; and the needed documents and materials.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

CIDNY educates State and local elected officials and policy makers on the issues important to New Yorkers with disabilities. We participate in legislative advocacy days with people with disabilities who are part of our advocacy network and staff, provide testimony, and join and lead coalitions that advocate on common concerns. We draft recommendations and testify on behalf of our coalitions. People with disabilities with whom we work attend meetings with legislators to talk about their experiences and describe how proposed legislation might affect them. Our policy work ensures that legislation that protects the civil rights of people with disabilities, including the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Fair Housing Act, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, New York State Human Rights Law, and New York City Human Rights Law, are enforced in our community. When advocacy and negotiation do not resolve an issue, we provide comprehensive research, testimony, and personal anecdotes to support litigation. We also act as plaintiffs in cases that affect the rights of people with disabilities.

Organizing for Change

Our advocacy efforts include coaching people with disabilities on self-advocacy as well as working for systems change at the city, state, and federal level. The peer advocates of our long-standing CIDNY Action Network (CAN) attend meetings and town halls, participate in educational visits to policymakers and protests with allied groups, and provide testimony and share their stories with elected officials and other decision makers.

Focus Groups on Health Plan Networks

We work with partners to conduct listening sessions around the state with a wide range of health care consumers whose valuable information guides our recommendations to New York State to improve health plan network adequacy and the quality of healthcare people with disabilities receive.

Litigation

When we hear about an issue that impacts people with disabilities that could be improved by a legal remedy or a change in policy, we work with our legal partners to pursue a solution.



WHAT'S NEW AT CIDNY

New Development at CIDNY

The year 2021 was a turning point for CIDNY. After 19 years, CIDNY had a new leader. Dr. Sharon McLennon Wier assumed the role of Executive Director in July 2021.

Dr. Wier spent the first six months of her tenure identifying areas where CIDNY excelled as well as areas where CIDNY needed improvement.

Identified needed changes included steps to diversify our resource development, bring technology to the forefront of our service delivery, and strengthen our workforce. In addition, our outreach plan supports our state plan for independent living and addresses our responsibility to serve certain underserved populations (Hispanics, Asian Americans, and Black Americans).



WHAT'S NEW AT CIDNY

Resource Development

CIDNY increased its annual budget by five percent over the last year through implementation of diverse fundraising campaigns, including the Fall and Spring Campaigns, Giving Tuesday, and Social Media Campaigns (TikTok, Twitter, Facebook, Print Media, and Email Blasts). Additionally, CIDNY increased grant proposals and applications to foundations, federal, state, and local agencies, and maintained a 90% renewal rate of current government contracts.

Consumer Services

CIDNY's strategic plan is to:

1. Increase the number of consumers who choose to open a file with CIDNY by five percent.
2. Offer consumers employment-readiness curricula personalized to the individual.
3. Ensure ten percent of consumers with independent living plans complete a consumer satisfaction survey.

Advocacy

Education

CIDNY successfully advocated for the NYC Dept. of Education (DOE) to ensure: 1) Incorporation of Individual Education Plans in remote, in-person, and blended learning; and 2) That the NYC DOE continue using the term "disabilities" when speaking of students with disabilities.

Employment

CIDNY successfully advocated for eliminating sub-minimum wage for people with disabilities.

Health Care

CIDNY successfully advocated for NYS to establish a safe staffing standard for acute care facilities and long-term care facilities. CIDNY's efforts led to nursing facility residents receiving permission to have an "essential support person" visit them in the facility. Through CIDNY's advocacy, NYS will end its artificial cap on increased Medicaid spending, so that the program can better meet the needs of people with disabilities. CIDNY expanded the Open Doors transition program to include more transition specialists in NYC. This program helps residents in nursing homes transition to living in the community. CIDNY'S Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program will reach more nursing and adult care facilities with regular coverage. CIDNY advocated for funding for the Community Health Advocate Program, which helps people with disabilities use their health coverage to ensure that it meets their needs.

Commerce

CIDNY successfully advocated for no fare increases for paratransit, seven-day or monthly MetroCards. CIDNY's advocacy resulted in expanded housing subsidies for those seeking to leave institutions, and funding to subsidize tenants with disabilities who lost income due to COVID-19 and couldn't pay their rent. Additionally, CIDNY's advocacy resulted in an extension of the moratorium on evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Citizenship

CIDNY successfully advocated for an upgrade of the system that provides access to emergency services for people who are deaf/hard of Hearing and victims of sexual abuse, thus helping them to "participate more fully in the conduct of civic responsibilities and opportunities for people with disabilities as a group," a citizenship goal of the NYS DOE.

WHAT'S NEW AT CIDNY

Board Development

Fifty-four percent of CIDNY's Board members have a documented disability. Thirty-three percent of the Board is racially and ethnically diverse. Ninety percent of Board members participated in board development trainings, including training on disability awareness, Independent Living, fundraising, governance, and stewardship. All of CIDNY's Board members made financial contributions to the agency. At least 50% of Board committee members participated in monthly board committee meetings with staff. All of CIDNY's new Board members received a Board member orientation.

Staff Development

All of CIDNY's new hires received formalized onboarding and participated in mandatory trainings as defined in the employee handbook/individual funder requirements and evidenced by certificates of completion in their personnel files. All staff who passed their probation period received a performance evaluation within a year.

Outreach

CIDNY conducted targeted outreach to bring the demographics of people served in line with American Community Survey (ACS) results, including minority youth with disabilities, individuals with mental health disabilities, and individuals living in facilities/institutions who want to transition to the community. These objectives helped fulfill contract requirements for the ACCES-VR and Association for Community Living (ACL) grants.

Human Resources

CIDNY is led and staffed by a racially and ethnically diverse team: Seventy percent are Latino, Black, and Asian-American. Most of our employees are people with disabilities. Fifty-nine percent of our staff are bilingual, and overall, they speak 19 languages, including ASL.

CIDNY conducted a targeted recruitment campaign reaching diverse communities, to ensure COVID-19 safety protocols were in place when staff returned to the office. We also implemented electronic timesheets.

Our efforts when hiring and filling positions have been strategic. Each hire or promotion was intentional and had an impact on the agency. This includes hiring a Director of Human Resources for the first time, who has centralized our hiring practices. This enabled us to fill positions more efficiently. During his tenure, CIDNY has saved \$135,000 in outside recruiter fees.

After 19 years of growth (from two funding sources to 30), CIDNY hired a Contract Manager, who acts as the nexus between funders, the directors, and staff. The Contract Manager is responsible for timely report submission and developing systems to ensure contract compliance, including accurate data collection. This position has reduced the time directors spend on contract management and increased time for them to focus on quality service delivery and staff development.

Information Technology

CIDNY implemented cyber-security measures by requiring staff to complete trainings on phishing and ransomware. CIDNY replaced inaccessible collaboration software, Google Workspace, with an accessible collaboration software, by migrating to Microsoft 365 in January 2022. CIDNY replaced the current client records database with a comprehensive client records management system that meets reporting needs of multiple funding sources by transitioning to Cilsfirst in March 2022. It is a client records management system built specifically for Independent Living Centers. With this new tool, staff can easily enter accurate data, and administration is able to efficiently track service delivery and identify gaps in service. Reports can be generated with just a few clicks. The system also allows CIDNY to track impact and monitor outcomes across multiple funding sources. In February 2022 CIDNY migrated to Ring Central for its soft and hard communication features, which are more accessible for users of assistive technology.



WHAT'S NEW AT CIDNY

In the Community

Education

CIDNY participated in ARISE, a diverse group of organizations and individuals that have come together to speak on behalf of students with disabilities in New York City.

Health Care

CIDNY participated in the NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene's Testing/Tracing and Vaccination Community Advisory Board. CIDNY represented the disability advocacy community on the Joint Office for People with Developmental Disabilities/Dept. of Health Work Group on managed long-term care for people with disabilities. CIDNY educated NYS policymakers on concerns regarding health care needs for people with disabilities and provided leadership to Health Care for All NY. CIDNY identified people with disabilities whose experiences illustrate shortcomings in the accessibility of the health care system and helped them use their experiences to work toward changes that would resolve these problems. These impactful testimonies helped legislators understand the needs of people with disabilities.

CIDNY led New Yorkers for Accessible Health Coverage efforts to improve access to coverage for people with serious illnesses and disabilities. CIDNY co-led the New York Association on Independent Livings' Health Work Group to help establish and pursue changes in health care that will improve access for people with disabilities. CIDNY created PowerPoints and webinars on changes in the administration of health care, health benefits, and services to assist consumers with disabilities in acquiring knowledge regarding their benefits. CIDNY participated in the Health Care for All NY's Steering Committee. CIDNY educated the network of agencies on working with people with disabilities as a specialist of I-CAN, and collected and shared stories regarding health coverage and access for people with disabilities in NYC.

Social/Recreation

CIDNY offered many social and recreational opportunities to people with disabilities in NYC: A Writers' Workshop; disability literacy; outreach, workshops to voting age youth with disabilities to increase their understanding of their rights; and education on disability awareness and accommodations for private and publicly funded agencies and corporations requesting such training and/or who have been identified as needing training to improve access. CIDNY created materials and outreach specifically to people who are deaf/hard of hearing to encourage increased registration and voting, participation in coalitions that promote voting rights and provide education on disability and linguistic access to voting, and knowledge of voting for people with disabilities through virtual channels.

General Community, Interests & Concerns

CIDNY developed, implemented, and facilitated educational and training programs for the community on various topics associated with independent living. We worked with partners to inform and assess their participants about an array of government benefits they may be entitled to but are not receiving, used COVID-19 networks to increase the awareness of ADA and other human rights laws, worked on implementing a disability training module for MTA operators and management staff, worked with Access-A-Ride to review eligibility standards prescribed by ADA, and worked with community leaders to train on surveying polling sites.

CIDNY'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In the wake of COVID-19, CIDNY adjusted to ensure consumers received vital supports. The Wellness Calls initiative has allowed CIDNY's consumers to receive check-in calls from staff. These calls reduce social isolation and improve mental well-being and quality of life. In 2021, CIDNY made 1,430 calls, with 1,300 unduplicated consumers served. In addition, CIDNY has successfully assessed the need for COVID-19 vaccination and evaluated the degree of hesitancy through seventy six calls. CIDNY followed a psychosocial paradigm in guiding and educating our consumers about vaccination. Our experts have had the contextual and historical understanding and psychological training to identify the motivations or need-based considerations associated with vaccination. Most of our clients are the most vulnerable to severe COVID-19 and within the categories of hesitancy (the majority being BIPOC, low-income, and people with disabilities).

CIDNY has conducted over 1,000 additional calls on a range of vaccine-related topics; e.g., clients' perception of vaccination and barriers to immunization. We followed up by creating plans to support any challenges they faced. With additional resources for awareness campaigns and staffing, CIDNY can leverage our expertise, institutional knowledge, and far-reaching network to achieve greater scale. These resources help address the ongoing pandemic and post-Hurricane Ida-related needs and provide COVID-19 vaccine education.

CIDNY has worked to ensure housing security for our majority low-income participants during the pandemic. CIDNY has advocated for funding to subsidize tenants with disabilities who lost income due to the pandemic and cannot pay their rent. CIDNY housing experts met with lawmakers to educate them about poverty rates, housing insecurity, job loss, pandemic harm, and how these factors intersect with the needs and conditions most people with disabilities face. CIDNY is a member of the implementation subcommittee of the Right to Counsel coalition. Initial language left out explicit reference to people with disabilities. CIDNY's education of lawmakers led to amendments to include people with disabilities. CIDNY's work successfully brought about the Governor's budget proposal, including language addressing the issue of people with disabilities. In addition, CIDNY proposed an extension of the moratorium on evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. CIDNY is a member of the Right to Counsel (RTC) NYC coalition. Together, coalition members, including CIDNY, generated more than 500 calls and emails to judges and the Governor to prevent evictions. CIDNY presented information on the impact of continuing the moratorium on people with disabilities, should the existing law be extended. As a result of these efforts, a second application period for the "COVID Rent Relief" program was approved.

The pandemic presented new challenges for CIDNY, given our person-centered approach and target population. During the pandemic, many consumers didn't have the technological capacity or resources to access their enrollment and needed benefits. CIDNY successfully transitioned to remote work to ensure that our consumers received support safely. Our benefits counselors continued to conduct intakes and evaluations remotely and supported the transition process in advocating for individuals in nursing homes.



Wellness Calls for COVID-19 Vaccines

CIDNY received funding from the Disability Vaccine Access Opportunities Center to conduct a wellness call initiative for COVID-19 Vaccines to consumers. Grant funding was extended through December 2022. Our program conducted targeted outreach to seniors to increase check-in calls. Wellness calls were vital to supporting access and problem-solving for homebound individuals. CIDNY assisted people with disabilities in reconnecting with the services and supports they needed to remain safely in their communities. Additionally, on calls, consumers received comprehensive evaluations, followed by connecting them to appropriate supplemental resources.

As part of CIDNY's general activities and direct services, we have shared information about health and vaccination with constituents. The wellness calls initiative allows CIDNY consumers to receive check-in calls from staff. These calls reduce social isolation and improve mental well-being and quality of life. The team made over 2,500 wellness calls to assess needs and link consumers with community resources.

LEGISLATIVE POLICY AND ADVOCACY WINS

We see the need for improvements to laws and policies every day in our work. People with disabilities come to us with stories of barriers in their everyday lives, of getting lost or forgotten in complicated systems, and of the hard-won successes that they achieve. We learn from these lived experiences and bring people together to help find solutions. We invest in creating long-term policy solutions, building advocacy campaigns, and mentoring the next generation of disability advocates. We help raise awareness through social media and action alerts, texting elected officials, sending emails, and amplifying key issues. We educate the public and government officials about the available research and people with disabilities' stories; we report on trends; and we help them understand the policy solutions that are within our reach. We testify at hearings and comment on how people with disabilities will be affected by proposed changes to law, regulation, and policy. We bring groups together around common concerns and work to create lasting change. When education and negotiation fail and civil rights are violated, we seek remedies in court. Many of these efforts are years in the making. But our persistence and hard work ultimately pays off. Here are some of our advocacy wins this past year:



Making New York City Subways Accessible for All

After many years of advocating and collecting stories about the impact on people with disabilities, particularly as a barrier to employment, CIDNY became the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit to improve subway elevator access. Frequent outages and delays for repairs are another concern. One of our suits, filed in NYS court, is the first to ever challenge the fact that over 75% of NYC's subway stations are unusable by people who can't traverse stairs, making it the least accessible subway system in the nation. This affects hundreds of thousands of NYC residents and visitors. The suit alleges that the MTA's failure to install elevators in stations throughout the city is in flagrant violation of the NYC Human Rights Law. A second suit, filed in federal court, accuses the MTA of not maintaining the few elevators that do exist, leading to frequent breakdowns. In June 2022, CIDNY and our disability advocates coalitions reached a landmark settlement with the MTA NYC subway system promising universal access. Many New Yorkers need this access—not just people with permanent disabilities but others, with limiting medical conditions, many seniors, and even families using strollers.

Healthcare Advocacy

The Health Equity Assessment Bill, which passed both houses of the NYS legislature in June 2021, was delivered to the Governor on December 10, 2021, and CIDNY made chapter amendments with bill sponsors. Governor Hochul signed the bill into law on December 22, 2021. CIDNY's Health Policy Director was quoted in the press release celebrating its passage.



Adult Sexual Abuse Act

CIDNY staff met with eleven legislators. Each was educated on the Adult Survivors Act and was asked to support the bill. In March of 2022, CIDNY staff testified before the Senate Finance Committee in support of the Adult Survivors Act. The Adult Survivors Act was signed in May 2022.

SUCCESS STORIES

Benefits

M called CIDNY for assistance with the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). She is 79 and lives alone. Her only income was \$900 a month in Social Security retirement benefits. She heard about the Affordable Connectivity Program and wanted more information.

YY, a CIDNY benefits counselor, explained that he could help M set up an account on the National Lifeline Verifier website, which would grant her access to establish an online account and submit applications online. YY explained to M that she may qualify for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) either through other public benefits programs or through income requirements. As a participant in ACP, M had a potential yearly savings of \$360. M had both Medicaid and SNAP, and thus qualified for ACP.

Based on the information provided by M, YY completed the online application and submitted it. M was approved immediately. YY emailed her the approval letter with instructions to contact her internet service provider and inform them that she has been approved for ACP, which would prompt them to apply the benefit to her monthly bill. M said she understood and was very thankful for YY's assistance. YY followed up to ensure she is receiving this benefit and has not encountered any difficulties.

Support Services

PF, at 37, has limited mobility in both of her legs. She initially called CIDNY for help with housing. PF was living alone in an inaccessible apartment building with no elevator. CIDNY's counselor soon discovered that PF was not receiving an adequate amount of needed care in the home, and was also in need of transportation services and funds to purchase food.

CIDNY's counselor assisted PF with preparing and submitting applications for Managed Long-Term Care for home care, Access-A-Ride (AAR) for transportation, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for food, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). With all of these in place PF saved money, increased her income by \$988 a month, and was able to remain in her home with the assistance of homecare.

Housing

SM, a senior citizen with chronic disabilities had been living with her husband and daughter in a family apartment. Now, her daughter and husband had left her, but before doing so had destroyed the apartment. They also left SM with \$8,000 due in back rent, to which was now added charges for the damage they had caused.

SM wanted to stay in the apartment; it was what she had known and what she was used to. The apartment was rent-controlled; there were some utilities connected to the rental; and it was in a neighborhood that is often called one of the best places to live in NYC. CIDNY's Rapid Transition Housing (RTH) counselor tried to see if this apartment could still be suitable for SM, but concluded on inspection that it was too far gone. SM was not going to be able to pay for all of the damage and the back rent.

The apartment unit was also not convenient for SM; it had two bedrooms; she only needed one. SM explained that she had tried long and hard for the previous six months to maintain the apartment just so she would not become homeless. CIDNY's counselor considered all of SM's medical conditions in relation to her current living arrangement. Since SM had no extra medical equipment or 24-hour home care, the extra room was unnecessary. For RTH to assist SM, she would have to be placed in an efficiency apartment, a studio, or a one-bedroom unit.

SM was assigned to a Housing Specialist (HS) as well as an Independent Living Specialist (ILS) within the RTH team. The Housing Specialist was able to assist SM with locating a different apartment in her neighborhood, near all of her doctors and other support locations. The Housing Specialist also helped with acquiring new furniture and appliances which accorded with SM's needs. RTH staff volunteered to put together certain household items, since SM's support systems were very limited.

From start to finish, it took a little over a year for SM's full transition from her old apartment to her new apartment. Monthly check-ins are still happening. With RTH support and teamwork, SM has been maintaining her rental obligation, finding community support, and striving to gain independent living skills while maintaining her place in the community.

TESTIMONIALS

"In one sentence, CIDNY was and is a lifeline to impactful services."

I have been with CIDNY for a couple of months, they do all of the work for me even when I don't ask. Staff call to ask how I'm doing, and they're very nice. CIDNY is doing everything right! I will call my counselor and they will help me even on their break, Delva is the nicest lady I've ever seen in life. CIDNY is nice and good people that do their work, they give me a good experience. **M.C.**

I have been with CIDNY since 2020 when I was hospitalized. I have had a pretty good experience with CIDNY. People should choose CIDNY because they are patient, respectful, and take their time with their clients. If I can describe CIDNY in one word: FANTASTIC!" **J.C.**

"I've often dreamed of being part of something big. CIDNY is that something. It provides me and many like me the opportunity to pursue the American dream. The notion that if you work hard, you will be successful looks different for people with disabilities and is even more nebulous for those of us who are of color. CIDNY is the vehicle by which all individuals with and without disabilities can pursue the American Dream through hard work in a DIVERSE and INCLUSIVE workplace."

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Thank you for your continued support of our work.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED IN NEW YORK, INC. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2022	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2021
Grants and contributions:		
Government contracts	\$8,016,402	\$7,709,053
Foundation and institutional grants	59,905	276,885
Individual contributions	707,894	708,773
Fee income	225,894	23,574
Interest income	7,002	6,360
In-kind support	79,000	180,000
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	0	(29,400)
Unrealized loss on investments	(9,404)	0
Net assets released from restrictions	0	-
Satisfaction of program restrictions	0	0
Total support and revenue	\$9,086,693	\$8,875,245
EXPENSES	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2022	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2021
Program services	\$7,087,382	\$6,572,765
Supporting services:		
Management and general	1,179,856	1,382,735
Fundraising	104,018	129,874
Total supporting services	1,283,874	1,512,609
Total expenses	\$8,371,256	\$8,085,374
Change in net assets	\$715,437	\$789,871
Net assets - beginning of year - as reported	3,447,276	2,657,405
Prior period adjustment	0	0
Net assets - end of year	\$4,162,713	\$3,447,276

**For the year ended June 30, 2022 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2021).
Audited financial statements are available upon request. **

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

CENTER FOR INDEPENDENCE OF THE DISABLED IN NEW YORK, INC. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2022	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2021
Current assets:		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,264,923	\$809,110
Investments	\$1,120,610	\$1,126,887
Unconditional promises to give	3,750	19,693
Government grants receivable	2,148,958	2,522,251
Prepaid expenses and other assets	23,392	19,596
Total current assets	\$4,561,633	\$4,497,537
Long-term assets:		
Security deposit	162,265	162,265
Fixed assets, net	552,018	457,870
Total non-current assets	\$714,283	\$620,135
Total assets	\$5,275,916	\$5,117,672
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2022	TOTAL AS OF JUNE 30, 2021
Current liabilities:		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$414,004	\$409,593
Government grant advances	\$92,991	\$217,217
Paycheck Protection Program loan	511,103	993,896
Total current liabilities	\$1,018,098	\$1,620,706
Non-current liabilities:		
Deferred rent	95,105	49,690
Total non-current liabilities	95,105	49,690
Net assets:		
Unrestricted	4,027,880	3,337,993
Temporarily restricted	134,833	109,283
Total net assets	\$4,162,713	\$3,447,276
Total liabilities and net assets	\$5,275,916	\$5,117,672

**For the year ended June 30, 2022 (with comparative totals for the year ended June 30, 2021).
Audited financial statements are available upon request.**

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

MAITE REYES- COLES, M.A.

Contract Manager

This year, CIDNY would like to spotlight an employee of the year. After the directors and managers nominations and voting, Mrs. Maite Reyes-Coles, the Contract Manager at CIDNY, was selected for this year's award.

Maite Reyes-Coles joined CIDNY as its contract manager in April of 2021. She has advocated on behalf and with people with disabilities for over 20 years.

Maite started her career as an advocate for people with disabilities at an Independent Living Center as Coordinator of the PRIDE 2000 project, a collaboration between the Social Security Administration and the Center for Independent Living. In this role she provided direct services to public assistance beneficiaries with disabilities to help them seamlessly transition from TANF to SSI or employment with no interruption in their benefits.

Most of Maite's career has been in service to people with disabilities. She has contributed to plans to end homelessness as well as represented the disabled community during the planning of a homeless resource center. Her efforts ensured that the needs of homeless individuals with disabilities were included in the initial planning stages and not an afterthought once the center opened. She led a team of independent living specialists in implementing a multi-county nursing home transition program.

Maite's advocacy takes many forms. It ranges from serving on community boards representing the interest of people with disabilities to assuming the role of funder and monitoring agencies to ensure they are not only accessible in terms of their facilities, but also that their records are in order and reflect effective, quality service delivery.

Maite's extensive experience in contract management includes database administration, data analysis, and data modeling to ensure accurate reporting for diverse funders.

Maite is a graduate of New York University and studied Vocational Rehabilitation at the University of Wisconsin.

We asked Maite to choose one word that describes CIDNY: "Inclusion."

Maite always goes above and beyond in her role as Contract Manager. Not only does she make sure all contracts are in compliance and that reports are submitted accurately and on time, but more recently she has taken on much of the reporting for the direct services team. Maite navigated our transition from our former database to Cilsfirst this past year and has spent countless hours ensuring the data was transitioned correctly. She understands the mission and work of centers for independent living and has been a great asset to CIDNY.

CONTACT US



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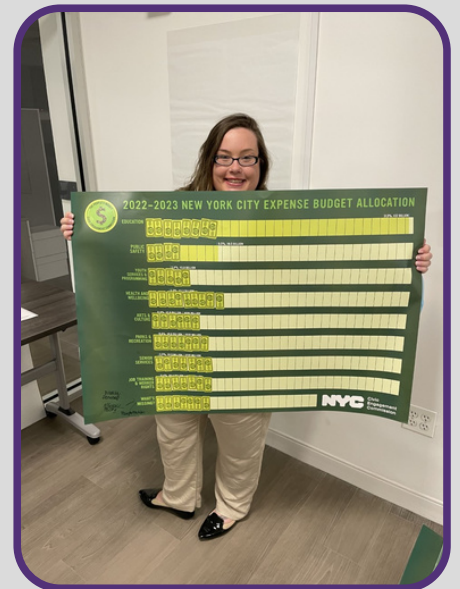


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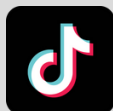


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