# Examples of How CILs Are Using CARES Act Funding

Before spending CARES Act funding, consider the following:

* The pandemic has created new needs or heightened needs that existed before the emergency. How can you justify the use of funds related to new barriers or those existing prior to the pandemic that may have worsened? For example, individuals with disabilities experiencing food insecurity prior to the pandemic may have lost their network of support bringing them food, may encounter additional risks by being out in the community to purchase food and other needed items, or experience challenges covering the additional costs of food delivery services. Or, individuals may now be experiencing food insecurity related to the pandemic such as unemployment, lack of transportation, or following recommendations to stay at home.
* Can I clearly justify relatedness to COVID-19 such as health, safety, and well-being?
* Am I certain it is benefiting a person with a disability – for example, if I am donating backpacks to homeless shelters, how am I making sure that people with disabilities are receiving them?
* **Is this particular use of funds the best way to address the specific need?**

For more information on CARES Act funding and allowability please review the Administration on Community Living (ACL) [FAQ Centers for Independent Living: COVID-19 Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act of 2020](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Cregina.blye%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5C9U3QSB30%5CFAQ%20Centers%20for%20Independent%20Living%3A%20%20COVID-19%20Aid%2C%20Relief%2C%20and%20Economic%20Security%20Act%20of%202020) (<https://www.ilru.org/resources-covid-19>).

If you have any additional questions, please contact your CIL’s ACL Program Officer, which can be found under “Office of Independent Living Programs Contact List” at <https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/centers-independent-living>.

The IL-NET Training and Technical (T&TA) Center has compiled a list of how CILs are utilizing CARES Act funds to address the COVID-19 needs of consumers. The purpose of this list is to share what’s going on in the field in order to assist your CIL in generating ideas on how to best use these supplemental funds. However, ideas appearing on this list are not guaranteed to be the best solution for your CIL. Your CIL is well-positioned to determine the best use of these funds as an expert on the needs of your community and unique challenges related to COVID-19 that your consumers may be experiencing.

## Potential Solutions for Diversion: Staying in the Home

* Paying for technology for consumers so they can access telehealth, online purchase and delivery of groceries, and medical supplies as well as participate in CIL virtual programming.
* Distributing food at events, and providing gift cards to grocery stores.
* Teaching consumers how to order groceries and access other needed services online.
* Purchasing hot spots or data plans for those with no other means of connecting to the Internet for telehealth, accessing social networks, and staying connected to CIL’s virtual peer support sessions.
* Purchasing minutes for those with pay-as-you-go phones to ensure they are able to connect in case of emergency or to maintain social connections for mental health.
* Assisting with medicine delivery (paying for mileage or gas for CIL employees to deliver medications to those with no means to get them).
* No-contact necessary drop-offs for consumers including food; toilet paper; and other supplies such as adult diapers, straws, and feminine hygiene products.
* Purchasing portable ramps to keep consumers in their home when there are COVID-related home modification delays along with other expansions of home modification services.
* Personal Care
* Sending personal protective equipment (PPE) to the consumer and their personal care assistants or arranging large-scale no contact drop-offs to consumers.
* Sending COVID kits for in-home personal care assistance, such as gloves (ensuring you have non-latex as well), masks, hand sanitizer, hand soaps, face shields, and other PPE.
* Assessing needs of consumers to find out what they need to stay in the home (mailings, phone calls, etc.)
* Paying for washers or dryers for those who have medical risks to using laundromats.
* Buying smart home hands-free devices (like Alexa or Google Nest and light bulbs, etc.) to create more independence and social connection.
* Meeting social needs: distributing boxes with board games; cards; and coloring books; and iPads or laptops.
* Supporting consumers to stay in their homes with time limited supports such as paying utility bills, providing grocery cards, etc.

## Potential Solutions for Temporary Homelessness: Shelters are full, not accepting people or not safe for people with at-risk medical issues

* Paying for motel rooms. Some CILs asked all the open homeless shelters to contact them before sending anyone to a nursing home. Other CILs worked with consumers as they heard about them through other means.
* If concerned with creating ‘dependency’ you may set out some sort of independent living plan (ILP) where you will continue to pay for motel rooms while the consumer continues to work on goals, continues to put in applications for subsidized housing, etc.
* Some CILS have paid for rooms until funds ran down and then accessed funding from the United Way to continue funding afterwards.
* Paying security deposits for housing.
* Paying for utility deposits.
* Distributing wagon kits or backpacks for people with disabilities experiencing homelessness. Filling a wagon or a waterproof backpack with items such as protein bars, granola bars, whole fruits like apples and oranges, toothbrush and toothpaste, sanitation wipes, feminine products, shampoo, and a blanket or sleeping bag.

## Potential Solutions for Nursing Home Transition

* Paying postage for mailings to nursing home social workers to build relationships to get consumers out. Examples include thank you letters for the hard work they are doing, CIL brochures to explain who you are, and information on transition services and who residents can contact.
* Loaning iPad/tablets as needed for nursing home residents to have access to a Center for Independent Living employee for transition purposes, such as to show them potential housing options by video call.
* Paying for hotel rooms and personal care for individuals once they are out of the nursing home while permanent accommodations are being set up or finalized.
* Paying for utility or security deposits.
* Paying for home necessities.
* Emergency relocation programs to move individuals out of congregate facilities.

## Potential Solutions for Vaccine Access for Consumers

* Providing transportation to vaccination sites.
* CIL office becoming a vaccination distribution center.
* Advocacy efforts
* Held a press conference regarding concerns within COVID-19 vaccinations rollout
* Serving on advisory groups or public health committees to advocate for health equity and access to vaccines for people with disabilities
* Advocating for information on accessibility of vaccine sites to be posted on the vaccine finders
* Educating the vaccine effort leaders about the concentration of people with disabilities who are from racial and ethnic minority groups or low-income in communities that need more sites, more education, and resources.
* Assist individuals without Internet or email addresses to get vaccine appointments
* Utilizing staff to ensure individuals with disabilities know how to get reasonable accommodations when they make a reservation or are on-site to get vaccinated.

## Enhancing Collaborative Efforts: Making sure CARES Act funds are supporting persons with disabilities.

* Reach out to the homeless shelters, assistive living facilities, senior centers – you can find people who need assistance in staying connected to their families, people who need to stay in their homes to prevent them from moving into a nursing facility where the COVID-19 numbers are high.
* Supporting food pantry boxes or otherwise supporting local organizations addressing food insecurity, including food delivery.
* Some CILs have put together applications for CARES support on their websites that consumers can fill out to request assistance.

## Addressing CIL Operational Needs

* Upgrading website to be more functional (or to build one that didn’t exist), including ways to contact individuals, set up appointments, and include upcoming events.
* Hiring staff to be technology trainers.
* Software upgrades and purchases (don’t forget [Tech Soup](https://www.techsoup.org/)!) including Zoom, Teams, GoToMeeting, Adobe Creative Cloud or Adobe DC for paperwork that needs to be signed or edited, more Microsoft license purchases for home-based employee computers, DocuSign and similar programs for consumer signatures. For more tips on selecting technology platforms and applications, view the IL-NET’s [technology tips selection factsheet](https://www.ilru.org/technology-tips-how-select-technology-meets-your-needs) (https://www.ilru.org/technology-tips-how-select-technology-meets-your-needs).
* Hardware upgrades: computers, printers, cell phones, tablets, wireless keyboards, mouse, etc. for home-based employees or outdated office equipment.
* Office remodeling and prepping for return to work:
	+ Purchasing sanitation stations
	+ Installing plastic barriers/shields
	+ Installing temporary walls for those CILs using shared space/cubicle offices
	+ PPE and sanitation (hand sanitizer, wipes, etc. for employees and consumers who visit)
* Assign staff to coordinate navigating complex systems for vaccine access, transportation to vaccine appointments (Uber vouchers, etc.).
* Purchase freezer for CIL.

The IL-NET continues to operate technical assistance (TA) peer discussions for center for independent living staff. To learn more about TA peer discussions, visit ILRU’s website at <https://www.ilru.org/technical-assistance>. For specific, one-on-one technical assistance, please contact Paula McElwee, the IL-NET’s Associate Director of Technical Assistance, at paulamcelwee.ilru@gmail.com or 559-250-3082.

Share with the IL-NET how your CIL utilized CARES Act funding to address the needs of your community by completing the following short survey at [**https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5747308/CIL-COVID-19-Stories**](https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/5747308/CIL-COVID-19-Stories).

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