



2023 – 2024

# Annual Report

# Independent Living Canada

## Who We Are

Founded in 1986 by the Independent Living (IL) Movement Membership, Independent Living Canada represents the network of IL Member Centres at the national level. IL Canada performs several functions on behalf of Member Centres including: providing a collective voice on national issues; fostering and maintaining partnerships; building the capacity and scale of IL in Canada; and preserving the integrity and importance of IL in Canada on the national stage.

## The Independent Living Movement

Independent Living is a social movement of and by persons with disabilities. The IL movement started during the late 1960's in the United States. During the 1970's the Canadian consumer movement promoted human rights, deinstitutionalization and full participation of all persons with disabilities. The Coalition of Provincial Organizations for the Handicapped (COPOH) first introduced the Independent Living movement to Canadians with disabilities in 1980. In 1994, COPOH became the Council of Canadians with Disabilities (CCD).

# Mission

Independent Living Canada is a national non-profit association of Independent Living Centres run by and for people with disabilities who promote the Independent Living Philosophy. Independent Living Canada supports the development of Independent Living Centres, and provides education and leadership for its member organization, partners and communities.

# Vision

Independent Living Canada envisions an inclusive and accessible society where people with disabilities are valued equally and participate fully.

# Mandate

Independent Living (IL) Canada's primary activities include:

- Promoting the development of IL Centres in Canadian communities;
- Articulating and promoting the IL vision, philosophy and work of the IL Centres at the national level;
- Providing organizational assistance, training and the implementation of programs to IL Centres; and
- Acting as a liaison between the IL Centres, various federal government departments, and Members of Parliament.

# Goals of the Movement

1. Persons with disabilities taking control of their lives, making choices, and advocating for themselves
2. Persons with disabilities direct and manage their own resources, including but not limited to:
  - Attendant Services
  - Nurturing Assistance
  - Transportation
  - Education
  - Health Care
3. The IL Movement has helped bring about significant changes in  
Through the IL Member Centres, we collectively:
  - Support individuals who have disabilities to live independently;
  - Support people to develop skills to manage their own home supports;
  - Bring people with disabilities together to share their expertise;
  - Provide accessible information, skills development and peer support;
  - Develop unique solutions;
  - Remove, prevent and provide education regarding

The Independent Living approach enables and supports persons with disabilities to examine choices, to make their own decisions and to take risks as a means of directing and managing their own lives. IL was created by and for persons with disabilities as an alternative to out-of-date services. Independent Living is a way of thinking and living. It is about having the right to make choices, live where one wants to live, have control over the supports one needs and following one's dreams.

# Accredited Member Centres

An Independent Living Member Centre (IL Member Centre) is a non-profit, consumer controlled, and community-based organization that has achieved the level of Accredited Member Centre with IL Canada. Membership in IL Canada is limited to organizations wishing to promote IL Canada objectives and whose application for membership has been approved by the IL Canada Board of Directors. Accredited Member Centre is the only category of membership.

We are proud and excited to relay that all Member Centres have successfully completed full, five-year accreditation with IL Canada! This accomplishment comes at no better time than to coincide with our current three-year operational funding grant. Congratulations to all of our Member Centres!

# Our Board Members

The Board of Directors for IL Canada are comprised of a majority of people who themselves live with a disability and include Members at Large as well as a representative from each Province where an Independent Living Centre is located.

Your board of directors is comprised of the following members:

Jennifer Jucknat	Chairperson, Provincial Rep – ON
Diane Kreuger	1st Vice-Chair, Provincial Rep – AB
Teresa Bullegas	2nd Vice-Chair, Member At Large
Susan Barrett	Secretary, Provincial Rep – NL
Suzanne Larocque	Treasurer, Member At Large
Pierre Hamelin	Director, Provincial Rep – QC
Sebastien Duguay-Nardini	Director, Provincial Rep – NB
Robin East	Director, Provincial Rep – SK
Vicky LeVack	Director, Provincial Rep – NS
Beth Caskey	Director, Provincial Rep – BC

## Acknowledging Freda Uwa

Congratulations to Freda Uwa on her remarkable first year as our National Executive Director! Her unwavering passion, can-do attitude, and forward-thinking vision have truly propelled Independent Living Canada into an exciting new chapter.

Thank you for your dedication and inspiring leadership, Freda!

# Message from the Board

It gives us great pleasure to write this year's message on behalf of the board of directors. Independent Living Canada is a vital part of the disability movement urban, rural, and remote, from coast to coast. IL Canada celebrated 38 years as a movement and throughout our long history, we have constantly made progress and continue to serve our member centres, consumers and stakeholders.

The Board has an important responsibility to ensure that IL Canada reflects the broad priorities of Canadians with disabilities and our member centres. In this oversight role, the Board remains focused on IL Canada's dual responsibility to serve every member centre and to be financially self-sufficient.

There were a few key successes this year; including the successful recruitment of our National Executive Director, Freda Uwa, who is celebrating one year with IL Canada. Another success was receiving a 3-year grant with Accessible Standards Canada. This is a research project on accessible Festivals and Events and through the leadership of Lisa Snider, Research Project Coordinator and 4 Site Coordinators (BC, AB, ON, and NL) they have been able to complete surveys and Focus groups that are necessary to start a research paper that will hopefully make recommendations to the Government. New to IL Canada is a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). As the youth of Canada are our future, we look forward to this committee and what they can bring to the IL movement. The board of directors have also renewed their relationship with the international movement of Independent Living as well as the National Council on Independent Living (NICL), USA.

In closing, we are especially proud of the strong alignment we've established between the Board and senior management as we tackled challenges and continue to move forward with a future that aligns with the ever-changing challenges for not-for-profit organizations and people with disabilities.

IL Canada board of Directors

# National Executive Director's Report

It is with a sense of pride and accomplishment that I present this report, marking a full circle since my introduction to the membership at last year's AGM. Over the past year, I have dedicated myself to familiarizing with the Independent Living movement and delving into our internal processes. This journey, while not without its challenges, has been both enlightening and rewarding.

The start of my tenure saw significant transitions, including a change in Board leadership and the recruitment of an Executive Assistant. Building relationships with our member centres has been a key focus for me, and I have actively engaged through monthly ED meetings, one-on-one conversations, attending virtual or in-person events, and maintaining regular email and phone communication.

Throughout the year, I have concentrated on strengthening our internal processes to ensure efficiency. We've also worked on enhancing our online and offline presence to showcase the remarkable work being done across the member centres. This includes employing more inclusive strategies that reflect the core values of our movement.

I have leveraged existing partnerships and forged new strategic collaborations that will open up more opportunities for IL Canada. The work is ongoing, and there is always more to be done. However, with your continued support, I am excited to continue to build on our future together.

Thank you for your trust and collaboration throughout the year.

Sincerely,

*Freda Uwa*  
**National Executive Director**  
**Independent Living Canada**

# Treasurer's Report

Fiscal Year 2023-2024  
Presented September 26, 2024

Another year has come and gone! It certainly has been an interesting one!

We have continued to strive, work hard and diligently towards our goal of a more inclusive and independent living movement for all persons living with a disability. We continue to adapt to a changing world by using more technology.

To the members of Independent Living Canada, I present the Audited Financial Statement for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024. The Financial Statement was prepared by Frouin Group Professional Corporation Chartered Accountants.

Total revenue for the year was \$1,338,529., and our total expenditures were \$1,1,285,291 which shows a surplus of \$53,238.

At the start of the year, our fund balance was in a surplus of \$161,559 and at the end of the year March 31, 2024 our fund balance is in a surplus of \$214,807.

The work of IL Canada would not be possible without the contributions of our funders to which I would like to express a sincere thank you for your continued support and belief in our organization. We look forward to our continued successful partnership with you.

Respectfully submitted,

*Suzanne Larocque*  
**Treasurer**  
**IL Canada Board of Directors**

# Our Funders

On behalf of IL Canada and our member IL Centres, we would like to recognize and thank our funders and partners. Investing in the human and economic contributions of persons with disabilities is a win-win situation.

The financial support from Employment and Social Development Canada – Social Development Partnership Program helps us continue in our mission to provide core programming to millions of people living with a disability across Canada.



Employment and  
Social Development Canada

Emploi et  
Développement social Canada

# Our Partners

We believe in creating partnerships with other organizations, mainstream services and the public and private sector. IL Canada and Member Centres developed 300+ NEW partnerships.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to the following and all of our partners as we are grateful for your contributions and hard work; we couldn't have done it without you.



Accessibility Standards  
Canada



DAWN Canada



ARCH Disability Law  
Centre



Canada Accessibility  
Network

# Our Festival Partners

We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our incredible partners in the Festival Project. Your collaboration and commitment have been instrumental in helping us assess festival accessibility across Canada, working toward our shared goal of making festivals fully inclusive for everyone.

Together, we're making important strides toward creating accessible and welcoming experiences for all.

