

MILC RUN

MIDSTATE INDEPENDENT LIVING CHOICES

“Working for persons with disabilities towards empowerment to make informed choices.”

IMMEDIATE OPENINGS!

Variety of shifts! Positions available throughout our
11 county service area!



Midstate Independent Living Choices

is in search of **CAREGIVERS** interested in assisting individuals in their homes providing personal, supportive and/or respite care. Travel allowance for eligible cases/employees. Experience preferred, or willing to learn new skills.

To see a full listing of our current openings visit

www.milc-inc.org

Complete the application online and submit to

ebuckles@milc-inc.org or

call 715-344-4210, ext. 222 to request an application

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COVID 19 Vaccination now FDA approved for children ages 5-11



The U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized use of the Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine for children as young as 5 years old. Key points for parents and caregivers:

- The vaccine was found to be over 90% effective in preventing COVID-19 in children 5 through 11.
- The vaccine's safety was studied in approximately 3,100 children age 5 through 11 who received the vaccine and no serious side effects have been detected in the ongoing study.

The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for children 5 through 11 years of age is administered in two doses, 3 weeks apart, but is a lower dose than that used for individuals 12 years of age and older.

Commonly reported side effects included sore arm at the injection site, redness and swelling, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or joint pain, chills, fever, swollen lymph nodes, nausea and decreased appetite. More children reported side effects after the second dose than after the first dose. Side effects were generally mild to moderate in severity and occurred within two days after vaccination, and most went away within one to two days.

If you would like information about finding where your children can get the vaccine, please give us a call at 715.344.4210.

<https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/fda-authorizes-pfizer-biontech-covid-19-vaccine-emergency-use-children-5-through-11-years-age>

~Eric Riskus, IL Program Director

The iBill Currency Reader



The iBill Currency Reader helps people with vision disabilities identify different paper currency amounts. Just insert the corner of the bill into the raised slot, press the button, and the iBill will tell you the amount on the bill either verbally, by tones, or by vibration.

The U.S. Bureau of Printing and Engraving provides free iBills through the U.S Currency Reading Program. To see if you qualify or if you need help applying to the program, contact Midstate Independent Living Choices at 715-344-4210.

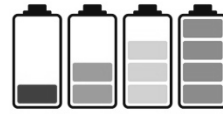
MILC can also help anyone with a vision disability connect to other resources, install simple adaptations like bump dots, borrow magnifiers, or demonstrate smart technology. Smart technology that MILC has available for demonstration include: Pebble HD magnifier, PENfriend 2 voice labeling system, and a speaking non-contact infrared thermometer. Please contact our office to find out how to try these items.

~Sandi Walkush, IL Consultant

Second Semester Recharge

*Refuel
Refresh
Recharge*

Second Semester
RECHARGE



Second semester is a great time to get ahead of the game for learning new skills that can help in the long run. Everyone's future looks different, and we all have a different path to take. If you, or someone you love, is a youth with a disability, consider taking a moment to learn how *Midstate Independent Living Choices* can assist you with transition from high school to whatever path lies ahead, whether it is work, college, or community living.

We offer several pre-employment transition courses (Pre-Ets) that can help get you ready. From budgeting skills to learning about self-advocacy to relationships, we are ready to help move you forward with new knowledge that can be the key to opening new doors for you or your youth.

Here is what you can expect with our classes:

- Group or One/One Classes
- Hands-On Activities
- Virtual or In-Person Options

Reach out to us or your DVR counselor and request a list of what Pre-Et courses are available in your area today to be ready for tomorrow!

~Oni Hendricks, IL Consultant



Tech Time



We have a workshop here at MILC called "Tech Time", which meets every Tuesday from 1-2pm. Alex Lena, one of our IL Consultants, will teach people with disabilities how to use the accessibility features and basic skills on their computers, tablets, phones, and other devices. If you or someone you know is looking for assistance with learning about your device, please call Midstate Independent Living Choices at 715-344-4210, ext. 232 for Alex.

ACCESS IN ALL SEASONS

-adopt a curb cut-



This winter, let us work together to ensure that all our community members have access to the places we all enjoy. Adopt a curb cut by volunteering to clear away snow from sidewalks, transitions, and curbs throughout the day so that we all can continue to move with accessibility throughout Portage County.

*CREATED AND SUPPORTED BY THE PORTAGE COUNTY
COALITION FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES*

The Portage County Coalition for Adults with Disabilities is working with Midstate Independent Living Choices and several other organizations within the county towards the goal of equal access for all. This year we are launching an initiative called "Adopt a Curb Cut." The goal of the initiative is for people who are able to see a curb cut that is not passable to clear it or salt it. Even if a plow goes by, it leaves a mound of snow, and even if the curb cut was clear before the plow went by, there is bound to be a small mound of snow. This little pile of snow presents huge challenges for people with mobility challenges or mobility devices. Access to curb cuts is paramount to equal access. This is complicated by snow and slush.

There will be signs placed in high-visibility places throughout Portage County asking people to support this initiative. This initiative is starting in Portage County, but we would love to see "access in all seasons" spread throughout our entire service area. If you would like to see something like this happen in your area, please contact Karalyn at MILC at (715) 344-4210 x230 or kpeterson@milc-inc.org. I'd be happy to assist.

Emergency Preparedness



When an emergency or a winter crisis pops up, there is always that initial, "What do I do now?" The first step is to remain calm and think through the big problem, breaking it down into smaller problems. Preventative measures can also help in diverting emergencies. Here are some tips to help you survive this winter.

Make sure warm items are accessible and at the ready. Blankets, sweaters, candles, space heaters, etc. Make sure you are following the instructions on anything that utilizes power, open flames, or any heated surfaces to avoid burning yourself or shocking yourself.

Do your pipes freeze? When the weather gets to sub-zero temperatures, it's common for pipes to freeze and crack. One thing you can do to help prevent this is to make sure your pipes are insulated properly. You can leave your water running at a trickle in a couple areas of the home to help prevent pipes from freezing. Make sure you know where your water shutoff valves are located in the home in the event of a pipe bursting. Have backup water at the ready for things like flushing toilets, cooking, cleaning, etc. in the event of frozen pipes. You can purchase 5-gallon buckets at your local hardware store that you can use to fill with water and store in the event of an emergency. Make sure you label your buckets for the purposes of your water!

Stock up on non-perishable food items. Make sure you have a functioning can opener! If you have food that can spoil in the fridge, place it outside in a cooler.

Stock up on common battery sizes. AA, AAA, D, and 9V are commonly used. If you rely on medical equipment that requires a specific battery size, make sure you have a few of those at the ready.

House fires are extremely common in the winter months because of lights on the tree, holiday cooking, space heaters, fireplaces, etc. Make sure you have a plan in the event of a fire. Get some fire extinguishers for your home. (Be sure to check what the extinguisher is for! (Extinguishers are graded for specific fire types.)

Check your outside ventilation! Where do the exhaust pipes from your furnace go? Make sure that they are kept clear of snow drifts. Blockages can cause carbon monoxide to poison the air in your home. If you are experiencing headaches, unexplained memory loss, or "blackouts," it could be a sign of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Lastly, and I cannot stress this enough, **Power Strips should not be Daisy Chained!!** understand that sometimes everyone wants every part of their house lit up for Christmas, but this can cause electrical shortages and fires.

Make sure that any equipment you need in regards to your disability is properly functioning. Oxygen tanks, CPAP machines, pumps, etc. The last thing you want in an emergency is failing equipment. Keep your service providers' emergency phone numbers in your phones or written down somewhere.

These are just scratching the surface of emergency preparedness, so if you would like a consultant to come visit you and help you come up with ideas, then please give MILC a call!

~Eric Riskus, IL Program Director

Assistive Technology Review At MILC:



Yaktrax:

Winters in Wisconsin can be brutal. Wind, snow and ice make for traveling and walking outside dangerous. Older adults and individuals with disabilities that impact their balance are at a high risk for slipping and falling on ice. Falls can result in injury ranging from mild to severe such as minor scrapes to broken bones to head injuries. Common areas falls can occur are on driveways, parking lots, sidewalks, and steps. To help in reducing the risk of falls, consider the following: wearing shoes with good traction, don't rush, take extra time, and pay attention.

At MILC we have **Yaktrax**, a lightweight traction device that can assist in decreasing the risk of falls. These fit over the sole of your shoes to provide extra stability when walking on snow and ice. Yaktrax are spikeless and are easy to put on and take off. For more information or to set up a time to see these devices, please contact Alex Lena at 715-344-4210 ext. 232.

~Alex Lena, IL Consultant

Ramp Up To Winter With These Maintenance Tips



Do you or someone you know use a ramp? Do you know how to clear off your ramp from the winter elements? Do you have all the tools you need?

Whether you have an aluminum or wooden ramp, proper maintenance of your ramp can sustain your ramp for several years to come. It is important to preserve your ramp by clearing off all snow and ice. When shoveling your ramp use a plastic shovel only, a shovel with a metal blade can damage your ramp. If you get a light dusting of snow on your ramp use a broom with strong bristles to brush off the layer of snow. Using a broom reduces any scratching or damage a shovel may cause. To reduce ice buildup and create traction use extra course non-clumping cat litter on your ramp. If you already have ice and snow buildup, use Magnesium Chloride on your ramp which will not cause any corrosion.

Be prepared and preserve your ramp for the many years to come by utilizing these tips!

~Madison Matijevich, IL Consultant



LOAN PROGRAMS

What is Wisloan?

Wisloan is a statewide, alternative loan program that allows Wisconsin residents with a disability, or their families, to purchase adaptive equipment, assistive technology or modify their homes so that they can live more independently. The applicant must be 18 and a resident of Wisconsin who wishes to improve his or her quality of life through the acquisition of items (examples include assistive technology, modified vehicles, etc.).

Both Telework and Wisloan loan amounts will depend on the item being purchased and the ability to repay. The current interest rate is 6.5%.

Bad credit, including bankruptcy is not a reason to not apply. The focus is on the ability to make the monthly payments. Reasons for credit issues are taken into consideration by the review board. Contact an IL Consultant at the MILC office for assistance in completing an application.

What is Telework?

Telework is a statewide, alternative loan program allowing Wisconsin residents with disabilities to purchase computers and other equipment needed to work from remote sites away from the office, including at home, on the road or at a Telework center. In addition to the purchase of equipment, the loan funds can be used for training to use equipment, extended warranties, the cost of maintenance and repair.

What is TEPP?

Telecommunications, Equipment Purchase Program

If you are one of the millions of people who have difficulty using a telephone, you should know that help is available through the Telecommunications Equipment Purchase Program, or TEPP. The TEPP Program provides funding, (through the Universal Service Fund), for people with disabilities to purchase specialized telephones and related equipment.

The TEPP program issues vouchers, each with different dollar amounts, based on several categories of disability. For example, the Hard of Hearing voucher is \$100, the Deaf/Severely Hard of Hearing voucher is \$800, and the Mobility Impaired voucher is \$1,600. (Vouchers over \$100 require a \$100 co-pay, but there are programs available that may help cover that cost).

If you don't know what kind of phone will work for you, we have several different types of phones that you can borrow from our Wistech Loan and Demonstration Program so you can 'Try before you buy'.



Please contact MILC for further information about the TEPP Program or to schedule an appointment to try a few phones. (We can also assist with the application).

Midstate Independent Living Choices
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Stevens Point WI 54481

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Information regarding EVV: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/evv/index.htm>

How To Get a Hold of Us:

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Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-344-4210 or 800-382-8484
milc@milc-inc.org or www.milc-inc.org

Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Strike: I&R Specialist

To contact the following departments dial:

Mental Health/Peer Support: Ext. 243
IL Program: Ext. 238
PAS Program: Ext. 224
Human Resources: Ext. 226
Accounting: Ext. 214

MOVING?

**Let us know so we can keep
you on our mailing list.**

Contact us at milc@milc-inc.org



Partially Supported by Wistech,
Wisconsin's State Assistive Technology Program



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