



# 2018 ANNUAL APRIL REPORT

## 2018 BOD

President:

Tim Sheehan, WI

Vice President:

Ronald Rocha, TX

Treasurer:

Karen M. Karney, VA

At Large Exec Officer:

Kim Gibson, GA

Secretary:

Scott Burlingame, ND

SILC Rep:

Melissa Ann Santora, AZ

Youth Rep:

Brittany Zazueta, CA

## Members at Large:

Scott Birkenbuel, MT

Aerius Franklin, ID

Melva Heinrich, ID

Sidna Madden, OK

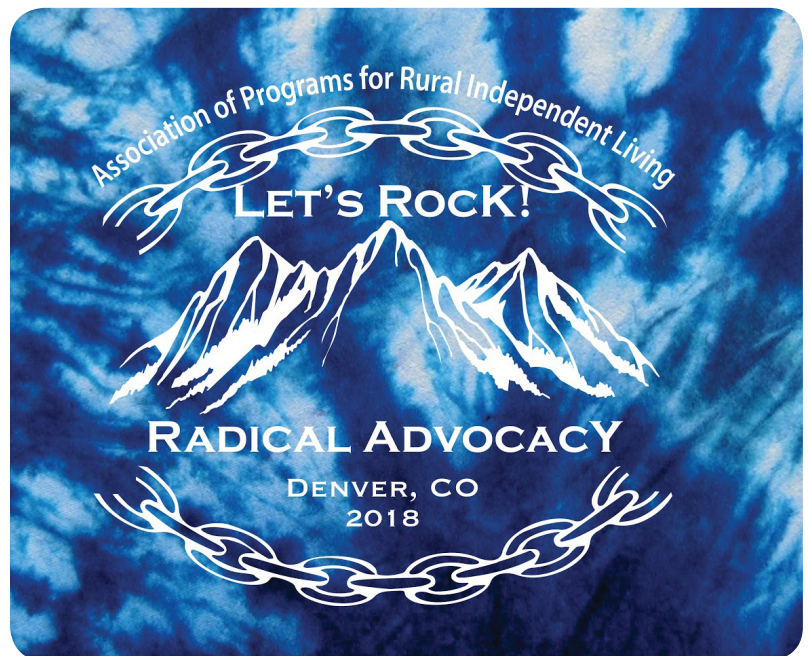
Sara Minton, TX

Beth Quarles, IN

Kimberly Tissot, SC

Brooke Wilson, UT

Jim Whalen, MI





# Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living

## Our Mission:

As a national membership organization, APRIL is dedicated to advancing the rights and responsibilities of people with disabilities in rural America by serving as a center of resources and by leading systems change.

## Vision Statement:

APRIL is the unified voice of Independent Living in Rural America

## Staff:

Billy Altom: Executive Director

Elissa Ellis: Director of Operations

Mary Olson: Director of Training and Technical Assistance

Sierra Royster: Youth Programs Coordinator

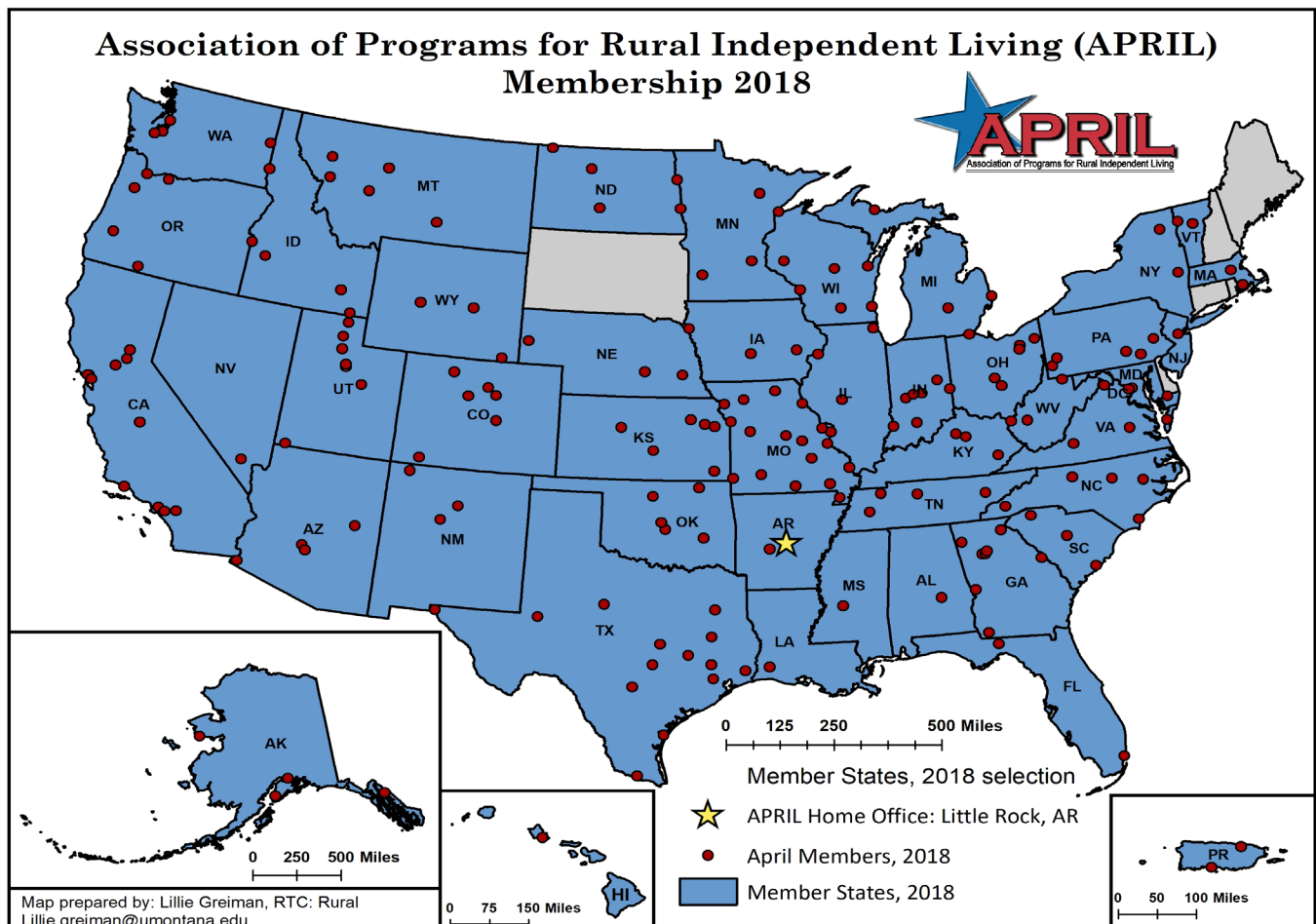


Photo APRIL Staff: Billy Altom (front), Elissa Ellis (center), Mary Olson (left), Sierra Royster (right)

# The United Voice of Rural Independent Living

The Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) is a national grassroots, nonprofit membership organization consisting of over 260 members from Centers for Independent Living, their satellites and branch offices, Statewide Independent Living Councils, Youth Leadership Forums, and other organizations and individuals concerned with the independent living issues of people with disabilities living in rural America.

- APRIL was founded in 1986 by twelve directors of rural CILs at a meeting in Houston, Texas.
- In 1994, APRIL attained its 501(C)(3) status and hired a national coordinator.
- In 2001, APRIL was awarded a major grant from the Department of Ed. to demonstrate a national transportation voucher model for rural consumers with disabilities. Staff were hired, policies and procedures were developed and an array of services and fiscal accountability were put in place.
- In 2008, APRIL collaborated with NCIL and ILRU to form the ILNET.



# About Our Programs

**APRIL's mission is achieved through Training and Technical Assistance programs including:**

- National Conference and Youth Conference
- Peer Mentoring programs
- Information and Referral
- IL Conversation teleconference series
- Youth Talk teleconference and facebook chat series
- Youth Leadership and Advocacy Committee trainings
- Growing Leadership and Succession Planning workgroups
- Knowledge translation advising
- Dissemination through our list serv, social media, and networks

**APRIL also engages in advocacy and collaboration initiatives including:**

- Leadership opportunities for youth with disabilities
- Rural advocacy work groups and initiatives
- Our partnerships and work plans with national Research and Training Centers, AgrAbility, ILRU and other allied national organizations



Photo Above: Chairs with signs about “Informed Choice” and “My Services My Choice”

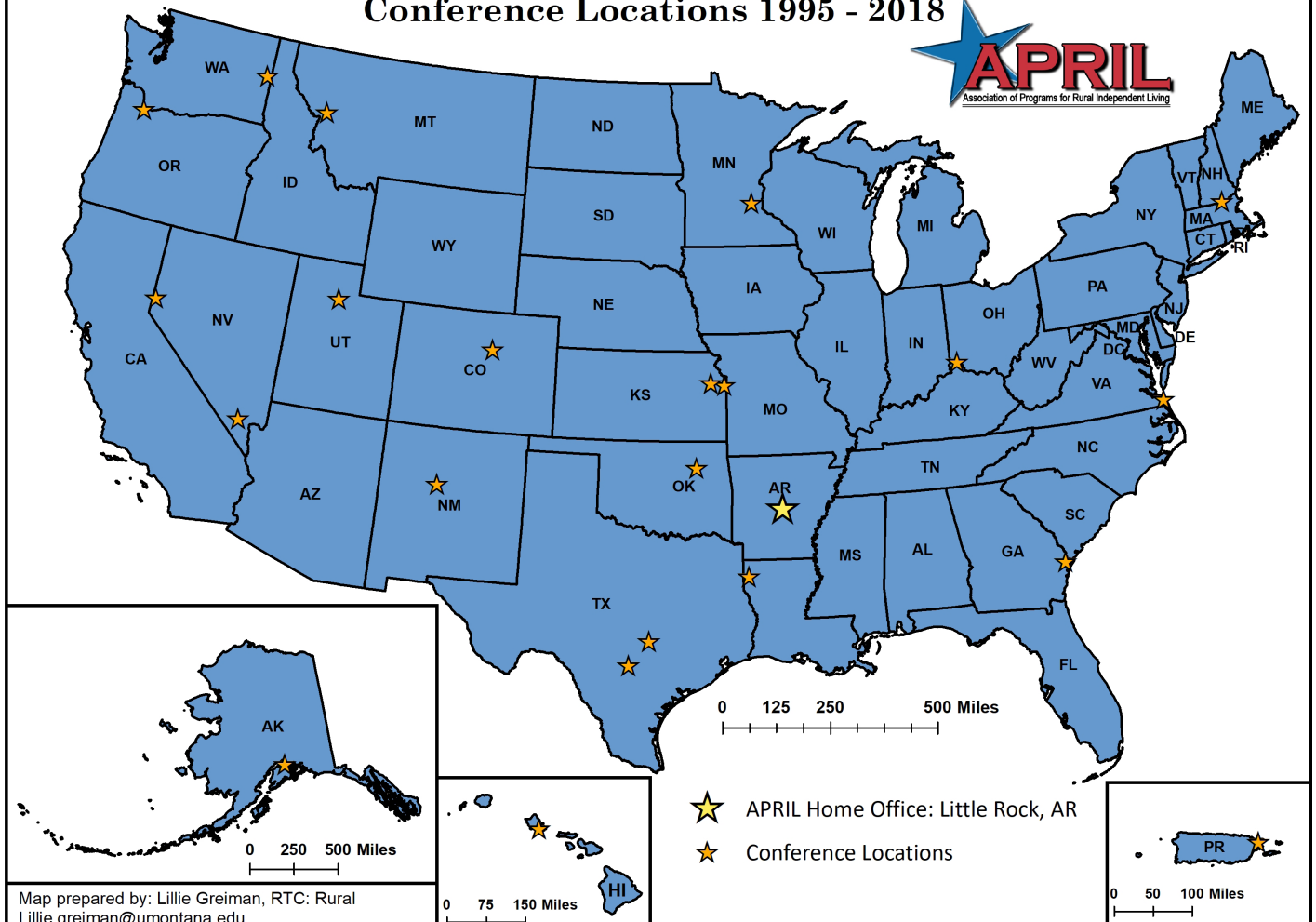


# National Conference

In 1995, APRIL held its first National Conference on Rural IL in Lawrence, KS with a gathering of about 80 participants. Subsequent conferences have reached Alaska to Puerto Rico; Hawaii to New Hampshire; and numerous points in between with attendance reaching over 400.

The APRIL Conference is a two and a half day training opportunity with an optional preconference day. Concurrent workshop sessions target: youth consumers, accepted and emerging practices presented by peers, research findings and opportunities for collaboration, tools and training for direct service staff, careers in IL topics which includes a training certificate, and SILCs and Board members.

## Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL) Conference Locations 1995 - 2018



# National Youth Conference

The Annual APRIL Youth Conference is an all-day event for youth with disabilities ages 30 (ish) and under. The Youth Conference is held in conjunction with the Annual APRIL Conference. Since its creation in 2004, attendance has steadily climbed to over 100 youth attending.

The target population is youth with disabilities who are consumers, youth staff or volunteers of CILS, SILC affiliates or board members, Youth Leadership Forum attendees and staff, and those reached through schools, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other outreach attempts. The conference was created in response to a desire and need from youth with disabilities to have a place to build their community, share their experiences and learn skills. For many young people, it is a life changing experience. Many have an opportunity to travel away from home for the first time and gain confidence in their abilities to take control of their lives.

Sessions include: standing up for yourself, community change, rights as a person with a disability, IL Philosophy, disability history, culture, identity and current topics.

It is planned and executed by the Youth Steering Committee. This committee is comprised of volunteer youth leaders that have attended in years prior, including elected officers.



Pictured Above: 2018 Youth Conference Attendees

# 2018 Conference Highlights: Denver, Colorado



2018 Earl Walden Award Winner:  
Ian Engle

Also pictured: Billy Altom, Betty Walden



2018 Linda Gonzales Award:  
Whitney Harris

Also pictured: Billy Altom



Atlantis Community helped celebrate being in Denver, CO for our 24th Annual Conference with a historic display of ADAPT, a preconference on ADAPT Advocacy, and their IL-Mobile Unit. Photo of display left

## Youth Conference Steering Committee officers:

Co-Chairs: Emily Robinson and Molly Spence  
Secretary: Jaquilla Lee  
Treasurer: Brittany Zazueta

**443**

overall attendees

**90**

youth conference attendees

**15**

Vendors



# Peer Mentoring

APRIL Coordinates the IL-NET funded Peer-to-Peer Mentoring program for Statewide Independent Living Councils and Centers for Independent Living. Some Highlights include:

## **2018 consultants:**

**10** CIL Directors

**5** Youth Mentors

**4** SILC Directors

## **2018 Mentorings:**

**4** CIL

**3** Youth

**4** SILC

APRIL actively seeks out new mentors who are leaders in the Independent Living community. We also use one time mentors for specific goal areas as needed and requested. A mentoring is a six month agreement between the CIL or SILC requesting technical assistance services and the mentor who has the best skill set to meet their specific goals. Technical Assistance recipients may be requesting mentoring because they are new to their position or need refreshing on the basics of running an IL organization; or they are looking to expand their organizations typical services or goals and looking for tools, support, and practical advice on moving forward. The applicant sets tangible goals with clear expectations for both parties and those goals determine which mentoring method fits best with the preference of the applicant. These mentoring's also help inform trends in the needs of Independent Living Field staff for future training and technical assistance options.

These mentoring's are structured either as:

- Offsite mentoring, where the applicant can travel to a mentor's site to learn from the entire team to see how an IL Center or SILC operates or
- Onsite mentoring where the mentor travels to the applicant's site for a two day training to work with their staff and/or board, or
- Through electronic means

# IL Conversations

APRIL Coordinates and hosts the IL-NET teleconference series: IL Conversations. These 90 minute conversations are free of charge to participants and provide training on an array of topics geared towards CILs and SILCs. These trainings are an opportunity to gain peer support as well as learn about emerging and accepted practices in the IL field specific to the training topics. 2018 Conversations included:

- Peer Support: The Bread and Butter of IL
- Home is Where the Heartland is: Rural Housing Solutions
- Cross Disability Services: Serving Consumers with Mental Health Disabilities
- Taking it to the Street: Mobilizing Your CIL

<https://www.april-rural.org/index.php/il-conversations>

# IL-NET

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**CIL-NET · SILC-NET**

**Partner**

# Youth Services

## Youth Topical Training Calls:

These are calls held every other month on advanced topics affecting those who work with youth with disabilities. They are all presented by our youth mentoring program mentors. These are folks currently working in youth programs or who have worked in youth programs in Centers for Independent Living. There is a \$35 charge to members and \$50 charge for non-members to participate on this call, however, CILS who are currently receiving mentoring services through our youth mentoring program can attend these calls free of charge. 2018 Lineup Included:

- Youth transition and understanding the regulation for IL
- Impact of school suspension
- Youth at the SILC table
- Moving from systems advocacy to self-advocacy in the schools
- LGBTQIA2S+ youth community

## Monthly Youth Advocacy Committee Calls:

These are monthly teleconference and multi-media opportunities geared towards getting involved with other young leaders across the country to impact communities and increase inclusion of people with disabilities. The calls include a focus on continued skill building, current event discussions, as well as peer support and technical assistance to achieve change in youth's individual communities. Youth lead the discussions, decide the training topics, and the current event issues we act upon. APRIL lends support by developing tools and technical assistance. APRIL provides training on topics of interest as identified by the youth as well as access to current events and assistance in interpreting laws and other information. Open to youth with disabilities and allies, especially those who have attended an APRIL Youth Conference in the past.

## Advocacy Webinar Training Series:

A training series targeted to the members of the youth with disabilities. 2018 trainings included:

- Finding your voice and your issue; how to engage in advocacy which is available as an On Demand training on the APRIL Website
- A five part training series on the American's with Disabilities Act and how it applies to youth with disabilities

# Committee Work

## **The Youth Leadership Committee:**

The Youth Leadership Committee (YLC) provides guidance, insight, and support to the youth connected to APRIL in various capacities. They will provide ongoing feedback to APRIL as an organization regarding youth services. They provide mentorship for youth in first time leadership roles and trainings on what those responsibilities are. APRIL has two designated youth seats on its Board of Directors. This group became an official committee in 2018 and is led by the two youth Board Members.

## **The Future Track/Careers in IL Committee:**

This committee is dedicated to developing the next generation of executive level leaders in the Independent Living Movement. It provides trainings that can help emerging leaders gain the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to lead Centers for Independent Living and Statewide Independent Living Councils. This committee is open to APRIL members. 2018 highlights include:

- A Careers in IL track at the 2018 Conference including a training certificate for those who participated
- A survey of the field to find trainings that are already available and determine what is still needed in order for staff to complete core competencies for leading an IL entity

## **Advocacy Committee:**

Dedicated to working with grassroots advocates from across the country to organize national advocacy efforts. Points of emphasis include:

- IL funding
- Protecting the ADA
- Housing advocacy
- Promoting employment as the first and preferred outcome for all people with disabilities
- Ensuring the rights of people with disabilities are protected in cases of national emergency

2018 highlights include:

- Collaboration with numerous organizations to develop legislation addressing the institutionalization of people with disabilities during and after disasters
- Supporting legislative priorities of allied organizations
- Supporting individual members' advocacy initiatives in their community



# Committee Work

## The APRIL Transportation Advocacy Committee:

This committee is open to membership and meets monthly. 2018 highlights include:

- Served on the Transportation Research Board in developing the TCRP B-44 Impact of the Trend Toward Separate Statewide Medicaid Transportation Brokerages on Human Services Transportation Coordination
- meeting regularly with Uber
- Providing input to Delta Airlines Advisory Board on Disabilities regarding Service and Support Animals
- Working with the University of Montana RTC in Exploring Access to Independent Living Services for People with Disabilities through a Transportation Network Analysis
- Serving on the Arkansas Public Transportation Coordination Council
- Serving on the Amtrak Community Outreach Committee
- Participate in the monthly Equity Caucus Transportation calls
- Worked with the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center on the Every Ride Counts Campaign and presented on Making Community Connections to Meet the Transportation Needs of People with Disabilities in Rural America
- Continuing to support individual committee members in staying up to date on transportation policies of interest
- Providing peer support on transportation advocacy issues in member's communities



Photo Left:  
Janet Wilkinson and Billy  
Altom ride the accessible  
public transit in Denver,  
CO

# Special Projects

## **AgrAbility**

After years of serving on the National AgrAbility Advisory Team, in 2016 APRIL officially partnered with the National AgrAbility Project. Our partnership works to increase awareness of the National AgrAbility Project and connect the state funded and affiliated projects in each state with the local CILs and SILCs. We provide resources to APRIL member CILs to assist them in serving farmers and/or ranchers. We are working to increase the opportunities for youth with disabilities who are involved or want to be involved in agriculture. We are focusing on how to target the youth with disabilities population as a group that can be engaged in agriculture as an occupation and/or hobby.

## **Healthy Community Living**

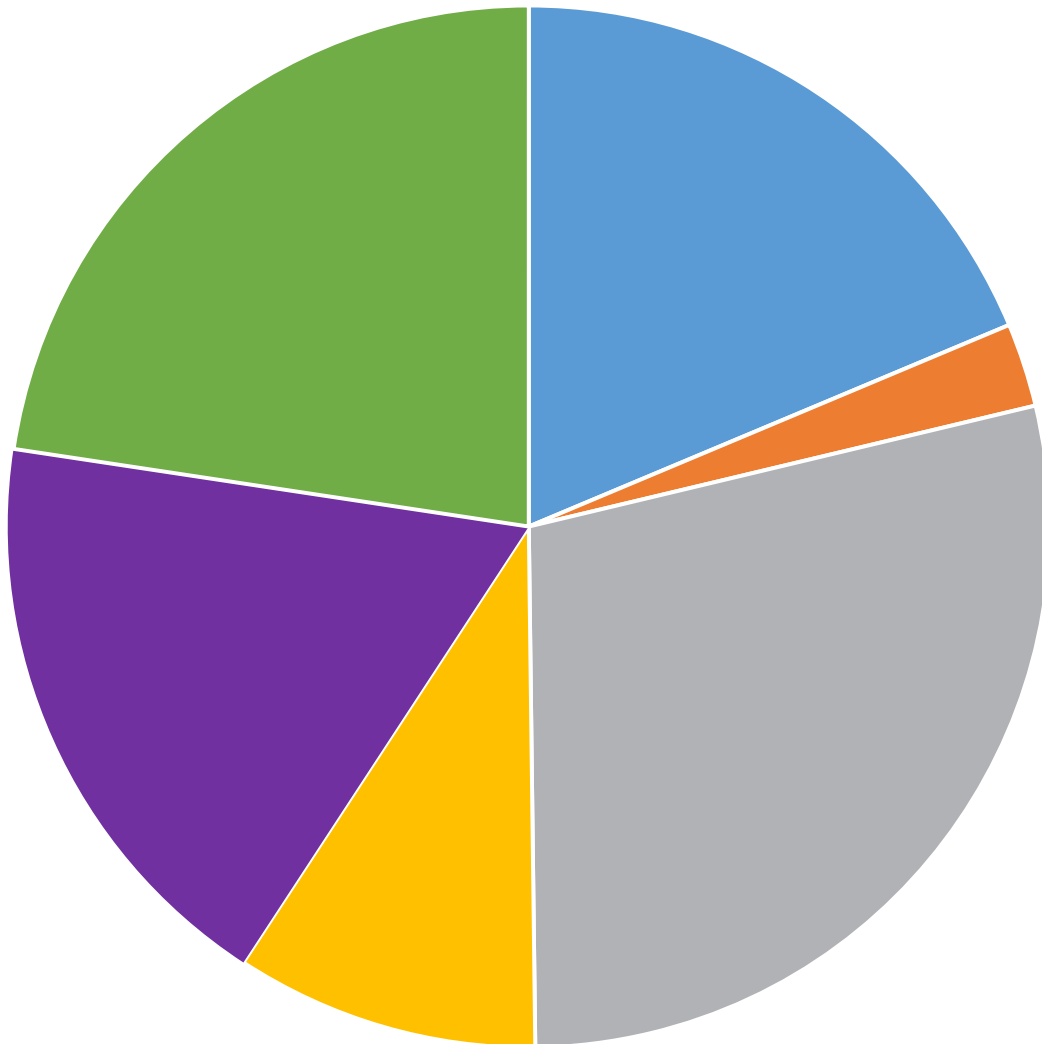
APRIL contracts with the RTC:Rural at the University of Montana on the Healthy Community Living project. APRIL handles development and execution of contracts, sub-recipient relations, training and technical assistance, and is part of the writing and editing team. This year APRIL recruited, onboarded, and trained eight new CIL sites to evaluate the two curriculums that were developed through the iterative participatory curriculum development process. These evaluations of the ILST workshops are ongoing through 2019. Part of onboarding and training included developing and executing contracts, organizing a training for the evaluation sites at the APRIL Conference, and providing ongoing support to implementing sites through teleconferences.

## **Advocacy and Strategic Collaborations:**

- AgrAbility National Steering Committee Member
- Arkansas Public Transportation Commission (Governor Appointed)
- Center of Innovation on Disability and Rehabilitation Research: Advisor
- Advisory Committee on Transportation Equity (DOT Secretary Foxx appointed)
- National Council on Disability (Presidential Appointment)
- National Disability Leadership Alliance Member
- SILC-NET (Facilitator, Trainer, and advisory member)
- Impact of Trend Toward Separate Statewide Medicaid Transportation Brokerages on Human Services Transportation Coordination (member)
- Transportation Equity Caucus Member
- SCAP Committee Member
- Knowledge Translation advisor for RTC: Rural in MT
- Keynote Speaking and on-site training and TA as requested

# 2018 Funding

2018 APRIL Funding  
\$562,018



- IL NET 180,000
- AgrAbility 27,500
- U of MT RTC: Rural 20,688
- U Of Kansas 25,000
- RTC: HCL 90,830
- Unrestricted 218,000



**For more information on opportunities listed in the Annual Report contact:**

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