



Finger Lakes **Independence** Center

Opening Doors to Independence

Our Mission

To empower all people with disabilities while creating an inclusive society through the elimination of social and architectural barriers.

What's New at FLIC



**All of us at FLIC wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season!
FLIC will be closed on Thursday and Friday, December 24 & 25
and Friday, January 1**

Service Update

FLIC is open for business Monday - Friday from 9:00 - 5:00. However, as many services as possible are still taking place remotely.

To maintain good health for our staff and visitors, all staff are working some days in the office and some days remotely. You can always reach someone at our building at 607-272-2433. You can email staff members as well.

To receive FLIC services, **MASKS ARE REQUIRED IN THE FLIC BUILDING** at all times. Please do not come to FLIC if you have symptoms of illness. Social distancing is also required.

If you are returning equipment you can place it in the small wooden shed to the left of the front door, then come inside to confirm your return and get your deposit back. Please consider donating your deposit because as a nonprofit, we appreciate extra support during this time.

Winter Safety Tips for People with Disabilities

Winter weather brings with it safety hazards for people with disabilities. Inaccessible walkways and freezing temperatures are two of the most common obstacles, but there are many other challenges that require careful planning and consideration.

We talked to people with disabilities and got their expert tried-and-true tips to take on winter weather.

Consider your wardrobe

Subzero temperatures, inches (or feet) of snow, and blasts of wind can lead to accidents, injury, and/or illness. When preparing your winter wardrobe, make sure you're adding these pieces to your daily rotation:

Outerwear

Our blogger, Beth Finke, who is blind, suggests investing in a coat with a good hood on it. "If you can't see well then you need to be able to listen at intersections and the like. Hoods are easier to flip on and off than hats," she said. Also make sure that your coat is suitable for the winter conditions specific to your location.

Footwear

Invest in snow boots with good tread and insulation to keep your feet warm and to prevent slipping. Beth also recommends buying a good pair of cleats that you can attach to boots (available at outdoor and recreation stores like REI and Lands' End). Beth says: "They're cumbersome because you have to take them off the minute you get back inside, but worth it to prevent slipping on ice."

Gloves

Protect your hands with a good pair of gloves. "Find warm gloves with thinner material at the fingertips – they're intended for people who like to text, but they're handy for those of us who can't see well and need our sense of touch to find surfaces like keyholes, handles to the doors of cars, the buckle for your service dog's harness, and so on," Beth says.

Think of your wheelchair like your car

This tip comes from Phyllis Buchanan, who uses a power wheelchair. Phyllis says that she likes to think of her wheelchair like a car, especially in the winter season. This means making sure everything is tuned up, charged, and ready for the possible rough terrain ahead.

Phyllis also suggests having an emergency kit in case you become stuck in hazardous conditions. Some items to have on hand include a protein bar, bottled water, hand warmers, and kitty litter to use for traction.

She adds that wheelchair users should consider buying an all-weather poncho that is spacious enough to fit over you and your chair. These can be found at any camping supply store.

Wheelchair users may want to consider outfitting their wheelchairs with snow tires to prepare for the icy conditions. If you're seeking financial assistance or a grant to make sure your wheelchair is winter-ready.

Check your smoke alarms and CO2 detectors

Erin Hawley of [Easterseals Thrive](#) stresses the importance of ensuring your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors have fresh batteries and are in working order.

"You're more at risk for fires and carbon monoxide poisoning in the winter, so make sure you have a safety plan in place. If you're burning candles or have a fireplace, make sure they are out before going to bed

In case of emergency, have these plans in place

Some areas of the country may expect strong snowstorms, which can cause power outages.

Be prepared for emergencies with these crucial tips:

- Have emergency contacts in place;
- Connect with others on social media to check in, or to broadcast that you need help;
- Stock up on perishable foods;
- Make an emergency plan with your primary care physician to discuss prescription refills, treatments, oxygen, and anything else that may be impacted by a winter storm;
- Have a backup power source;
- Reach out to your utility company to inquire about becoming listed as a life-sustaining equipment customer

Make staying warm a priority

While this may seem repetitive (see: tip #1), it is important to make sure you're warm indoors and outdoors.

Says Erin: "I have circulation problems in my feet, so I buy hand warmers and stick them in my shoes (with socks on, don't put on direct skin). I also use them as they were meant, for my hands. It helps so much, and they can last up to 8 hours. They can be costly, but Amazon has the best prices."

Make sure your dog is ready, too

Seeing Eye and service dogs need to be prepared for winter weather conditions to ensure their safety and comfort.

Beth, who has a Seeing Eye dog named Whitney, advises others with dogs to avoid driveways, roads, and sidewalks where salt has been used to melt ice, as this is one of the biggest threats to healthy paw pads.

She shared that because she cannot see whether salt is present or not, she makes sure she puts a paw wax like "Musher's Secret" on Whitney's paws

before going on walks to form a protective barrier between the paw and pavement. Beth emphasizes that paw wax should be reapplied before every walk. Another option to protect paws is weather boots.

<https://www.easterseals.com/explore-resources/living-with-disability/winter-safety-tips-for-people-with-disabilities.html>

Join FLIC's Statewide Systems Advocacy Team!

FLIC is excited to share that we have received a grant to have a Statewide Systems Advocate. The Advocate will be a part of a system under New York Independent Living Association to advocate for people with disabilities through policy and educational means. Valerie Horn will start as an SSAN Advocate for FLIC. She will be sharing relevant news that affect the disability community through emails, the newsletter and social media. During the legislative session (January through June), she will actively support new bills that affect the disability community and attend Legislative Days in Albany, NY. In the meantime, she will be working on objectives that will promote advocacy awareness in the region.

If you would like to become a part of FLIC's Advocacy team, please feel free to email Valerie at: valerie@fliconline.org. Being part of the team, you will receive relevant action alerts of issues you are passionate about, for example, housing, education or health care to name a few. The Action Alerts will ask you to email, call or write a letter to your representative and we encourage you to express how you feel about the subject. It is extremely important for your representatives to know what the community and constituents feel about certain topics. You may volunteer to assist at certain events or participate in a few workshops. At this moment, COVID-19 is changing the traditional platform of connecting in person and hosting events with the public to a technical platform of Zoom, social media, calls and emails.

Predicted bill #1 that will be important for policy 2021:

The Disability Integration Act is an ongoing bill that was introduced by the Minority Leader and Senator of New York, Charles Schumer. The bill targets full integration of people with disabilities in the community by clarifying several clauses such as articulating the right to live in the community without creating unnecessary government programs. This assures the constitutional right to liberty for people with disabilities and senior citizens who want to live in the community. By encouraging people to integrate in the community, the Federal and State government are saving millions of dollars compared to institutionalization. This act has been gaining traction since 2017 but the disability community wants to see the bill passed. Progress towards independence has begun. *Olmstead vs L.S.* banned segregation of people with disabilities and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 assured people with disabilities would be allowed to live independently. Currently, several states are not fully compliant with *Olmstead* and the ADA. This Act is slowly gaining support but also with criticism. One such example is the bill would increase government oversight.

For more information, check out these resource links:

<https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2019/disability-integration-act.html>

Are You Interested in Being Part of a Support Group via Zoom?

In these physically distanced times, it is easy to feel isolated and disconnected. FLIC is here to help and we want to hear from you!

Please email Megan at Megan@fliconline.org if you would like to join a support group via zoom to talk about coping with covid, anxiety and depression, living with invisible disabilities, or other areas that impact your life. We want to know about the issues you are facing and how FLIC can best assist you going forward. Email Megan today!

Emergency Preparedness Tip of the Month-December The Core Advisory Group of Tompkins County reminds you:

"Emergencies Don't Wait. Make Your Plan Today."

First Aid

Task one: Know what to do while waiting for an ambulance to arrive.

Call 911 instead of trying to take an injured or ill person to the hospital yourself. It seems like waiting for an ambulance will make it take longer to get help, but ambulance crews can start providing care as soon as they arrive. They can get the patient to hospital quickly, legally, and more safely.

1. Stay on the line with 911 and follow emergency instructions.
2. Stay calm and try to keep the patient calm.
3. Don't move a patient who was injured in an automobile accident or fall, or who was found unconscious.
4. If the patient is cold, cover them with a blanket.
5. Don't give an injured person anything to eat or drink (unless instructed by the 911 dispatcher).
6. Have someone watch for the ambulance and show the crew how to get to the patient. (This is especially important in an apartment or office building, or if your address is hard to see from the street).

Task Two: Make or buy first aid kits for your home and car.

Ready-made first aid kits are available at most department stores or your local American Red Cross chapter. These kits come in a variety of sizes and prices. You can also make your own kit from supplies you probably already have around the house.

Some items that should be included in a basic first aid kit are:

- Adhesive Tape
- Gauze Pads & Roller Gauze (assorted sizes)
- Antiseptic Ointment
- Hand Sanitizer (liquid or wipes)
- Band-Aids (assorted sizes)
- Plastic Bags
- Blanket
- Scissors and Tweezers
- Cold Pack
- Small Flashlight and Extra Batteries
- Disposable Gloves
- Triangular Bandage

Task Three: Take training in first aid, CPR, AED, or pet first aid.

Helping others in a medical emergency isn't as hard to learn as you might think. Knowing how to apply a bandage, identify the signs and symptoms of shock, perform CPR or use an automatic external defibrillator (AED) can save a life.

First responders may not be on the scene for five minutes or more. It is up to individuals like you to be ready to help someone who is injured. The person whose life you save may be someone that you love.

Many [American Red Cross](#) chapters now offer training in pet first aid. Training may also be available through your local humane society, kennel club, or pet store. Check with your veterinarian to see what special items you may need to include in a first aid kit for your pets. If you travel with your pet, or if they are service or hunting animals, you may want to make a travel-sized pet first aid kit as well.

Contact your local fire department or American Red Cross chapter to learn what first aid classes are available in your area. Ask your employer if they will sponsor a class for your workplace, or take a class with your family or on your own. Many classes are offered free of charge. Courses may also be offered at your place of worship, school, or community organization. Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training also includes first aid training.

For more information, visit <https://do1thing.com/topics/first-aid>

The Core Advisory Group (CAG) of Tompkins County advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all emergency preparedness activities. We welcome any interested people from the Tompkins County Community. For more information contact Jan Lynch 607-2722433; jan@fliconline.org

The Registry In-Home Assistance

The Registry is a program that matches people in Tompkins County that need in-home workers with individuals able to work in people's homes.

The Registry maintains a listing of in-home Caregivers who have been screened through a face to face interview and whose references have been checked. The Registry is a "pay out of pocket" program.

If you need someone to help with housekeeping or personal care, we have Caregivers that are available to assist.

The Registry is made possible by funding from the Tompkins County Office for the Aging and New York State Office for the Aging.

For more information, contact Teri at the Finger Lakes Independence Center at 607-272-2433 or email Teri@FLIOnline.org

Covid-19 Holiday & Travel Guidance from the Tompkins County Health Department

Downloadable resources are available on the Tompkins County Health Department website:

<https://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/factsheets/coronavirusdownloads>

Full guidance about the NYS Travel Advisory can be found here:

<http://tompkinscountyny.gov/health/movingforwardphases#traveladvisory>

Tompkins County Mental Health Department and Community Partners COVID-19 Resources

Click the link above to find useful information, links, videos, organizations, phone numbers and more.

How Sweet the Sound

Click the link above to hear Ithaca College music students perform "Amazing Grace."

Need a Public Notary?

Contact Cheryl Baker at FLIC at 272-2433 to make an appointment. Services are FREE.

[Donate](#)

Finger Lakes Independence Center, 215 5th Street, Ithaca, NY 14850

Phone: 607.272.2433

Email: info@fliconline.org

Website: www.fliconline.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/fingerlakesindependence