

NC Division of Services for the Blind Policies and Procedures Independent Living Older Blind

Mini Center Instructors

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Mini Center Instructors are vendors who meet Mini Center Instructor (MCI) eligibility criteria according to the Independent Living Program Specialist (ILPS). New Mini Center Instructors are required to complete New Employee Sensitivity Training (NEST) at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Raleigh within 12 months from their first date of work. Mini Center Instructors are selected and hired on an as needed basis by Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors.

Please note that although Mini Center Instructors are a valuable part of ILOB services, these Instructors are vendors and not employees of the Agency. Therefore, they are not guaranteed any work or pay, receive no benefits, and are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act. Instructors are hired only as needed to meet consumer needs and as funds are available.

ILRC's provide in-home instruction for consumers. In rare situations, Mini Center Instructors may work with individuals in the home. These exceptions require prior approval by the Independent Living Program Specialist.

Application process

The ILRC is responsible for properly screening potential Mini Center Instructors prior to forwarding a Mini Center Instructor application to the ILPS. If the ILRC has enough knowledge of the candidate to recommend the individual as a Mini Center Instructor, then a Mini Center Application (DSB-4057) is provided to the candidate. The candidate submits the application to the ILRC and includes a statement explaining why they will be a good candidate to be a MCI.

The ILRC also needs to include a statement with the application indicating why the individual is being recommended for consideration as a Mini Center Instructor and specifically describe her/his knowledge of the candidate as a potentially suitable Mini Center Instructor. This knowledge must include at least one of the following:

- The candidate is already known to the ILRC.
- The candidate provided three references, at least two of which are professional references, and the references indicated the individual would be suitable as a Mini Center Instructor.
- The candidate observed/volunteered at least three Mini Center days and was observed to interact appropriately.

The ILRC then sends the application and statements to the IL Program Specialist who reviews it. If any concerns are noted, these are discussed with the ILRC.

If the application is approved by the IL Program Specialist, the ILPS requests a criminal background check and drug screening by HR and copies the ILRC on the request. Candidates who do not pass the drug screen are not eligible to become a Mini Center Instructor. If the criminal background check yields any history, the ILPS will discuss the results with the ILRC. The ILPS will make the final determination on whether to accept the candidate. License or DMV id card checks are also required for all applicants. The ILRC can verify these documents.

Once all above criteria are satisfied, the ILPS will give final approval to the candidate. The ILRC may begin hiring the MCI according to established rates of pay and will refer the MCI to a NEST training when the ILPS requests referrals for the next scheduled training. Paid Mini Center Instructors must be entered in the case management system as a vendor prior to working in the Mini Center. Mini Center Instructors must also sign the "Confidentiality Statement for Mini Center Instructors and Volunteers" prior to accessing confidential consumer information. This document can be located in the Appendix.

Also see the policy on "Volunteers" for more information.

Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselor Responsibilities

Independent Living Rehabilitation Counselors provide support, training, coaching and evaluate the performance of Instructors. Each ILRC should have at least three individuals eligible to work as Mini Center Instructors who can serve their area. ILRC's are encouraged to seek diversity in their teaching teams.

ILRC's are responsible for referring new Mini Center Instructors for NEST training according to required time frames. If a new Mini Center Instructor does not attend NEST within 12 months of the first date worked, the individual may continue working in a volunteer status but may not be paid as a Mini Center Instructor until NEST training is completed.

A training allowance of \$260 is paid for attending NEST training which is intended to cover all costs associated with attending the training. The participant must participate with the full training in order to receive the stipend. Mini Center Instructors are expected to utilize travel to NEST at no cost to the agency. If the MCI and referring ILRC are unable to locate no cost travel (such as carpooling with DSB staff, etc.) the ILRC should contact the IL Program Specialist to discuss options. In rare circumstances, the IL Program Specialist may allow the payment of travel reimbursement when suitable

options cannot be found for the MCI to travel to NEST and when attending NEST poses an insurmountable hardship for the MCI in order to continue working. In these cases, the IL Program Specialist may allow the MCI to be reimbursed for actual travel costs or mileage reimbursement, whichever is less.

Mini Center Instructor Pay

Mini Center Instructors are paid an hourly wage. The rate of pay is based upon the Mini Center Instructor's completion of NEST, his/her experience, and independent status as determined by the ILRC. The current pay scale is below. Mini Center Instructors can be compensated for up to 8 hours for planning time while assisting the ILRC in making preparations for the centers i.e., securing materials, staffing cases, assisting in curriculum development and determining instructional assignments, etc. Mini Center Instructors traveling distances to Mini Centers that require 45-60 minutes one way are to be compensated for 8 hours, otherwise, they are compensated for 6 hours per class. Mini Center Instructors can receive mileage reimbursement for their travel. The ILRC should negotiate the amount and pay no more than the prevailing state rate. The Mini Center Instructor team members should carpool whenever feasible.

Hourly Wages for Mini Center Instructors

\$15.00/hour

A new instructor who has completed the application process and been approved by the Independent Living Program Specialist may be paid this rate.

Note: Instructors in this category must complete New Employees Sensitivity Training (NEST) within 12 months of the first date of paid work in order to be retained as instructors.

\$17.00/hour

Individuals who have achieved all of the below criteria may be paid this rate:

- Approved by the Independent Living Program Specialist
- Completed New Employee Sensitivity Training (NEST) and received satisfactory reviews on her/his participation

\$19/hour

Individuals who have achieved all of the below criteria may be paid this rate:

- Approved by the Independent Living Program Specialist
- Completed NEST training
- Has achieved independent status as determined by the ILRC. Independent teacher status means that the teacher has demonstrated the ability to serve as the lead instructor for at least 90% of all lessons covered on at least one occasion. Lessons may have been taught over the course of multiple Mini Centers.

- Has worked in Mini Centers for at least 140 hours (roughly four full Mini Centers). Travel hours to and from Mini Centers may not count towards the 140 hours.

\$20/hour

Individuals who have achieved all of the below criteria may be paid this rate:

- Approved by the Independent Living Program Specialist
- Completed NEST training
- Has achieved independent status as determined by the ILRC. Independent teacher status means that the teacher has demonstrated the ability to serve as the lead instructor for at least 90% of all lessons covered on at least one occasion. Lessons may have been taught over the course of multiple Mini Centers.
- Has worked in Mini Centers for at least 210 hours (roughly six full Mini Centers). Travel hours to and from Mini Centers may not count towards the 140 hours.

Relevant Forms

DSB-4057-ILR-ia	ILR/Mini Center Instructor Application
DSB-4033b-ILR-ia	ILR/Billing for Mini Center Instructors <i>and</i> DSB-4033b-ILR-instructions
DSB-4033a-ILR-ia	ILR/ILOB Travel Reimbursement for Mini Center Instructors <i>and</i> DSB-4033a-ILR-instructions
DSB-4052-ILR-ia	ILR/Mini Center Instructor Evaluation Form <i>and</i> DSB-4052-ILR-instructions