



## Minority Youth and Centers for Independent Living (MY-CIL) Project Webinar

### Independent Living Services for Minority Youth with Disabilities: Strategies and Success

March 22, 2022

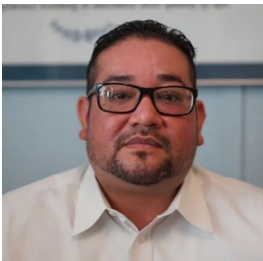
3:00 to 4:30 p.m. EST

#### Speakers



**Edgar Cantero, Southern California Resource Services for Independent Living (SCRS-IL) consumer**

Edgar, from Lynwood, California, graduated from Lynwood High School in 2019 and is currently pursuing an associate degree in child development at Compton College. Since high school, Edgar has used all services available to him to have academic and adult success. He connected with SCRS-IL after leaving high school and received guidance, training, and college support through these services. Edgar joined a college support program, where he found that he wanted to learn about child development and one day work with youth.



**Rudy A. Contreras, M.A., chief executive officer of SCRS-IL**

Rudy is a Marine Corps Combat Veteran that has served as an advocate for the disability community for more than 20 years. As the chief executive officer of SCRS-IL, one of the 28 Centers for Independent Living in California, Rudy has developed innovative programs that focus on the successful transition for youth with disabilities. His work has primarily focused on developing the first STEM programs for youth with disabilities and designing college and employment programs that ensure successful transition into post-secondary life. While the SCRS-IL founders believed that “Everyone has a Future,” Rudy believes that his mission is to ensure a future of opportunities for all people with disabilities.



**Brooke Curtis, associate director for training and publications for the IL-NET National Training and Technical Assistance Center at Independent Living Research Utilization (ILRU)**

Brooke has co-authored numerous publications for independent living; co-presented for ILRU’s Disability, Diversity, and Intersectionality project; and facilitated several ILRU survey projects studying CIL management and operations, notably CIL responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and transition from institutions during the pandemic. In addition, Brooke helped plan various learning collaboratives for CILs operated by ILRU, including the MY-CIL learning collaboratives. Brooke received her bachelor’s in biology from DePauw University and her master’s in biomedical informatics at the School of Biomedical Informatics at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.



**Dave Estrella, director of college transitions with SCRS-IL**

Dave is a longtime youth advocate for higher education access and the director of college transitions with SCRS-IL. Since joining SCRS-IL, he has focused on providing youth with disabilities with training and advocacy to continue their education and independence beyond high school. At SCRS-IL, he has been instrumental in bringing STEM to the disability community. Currently, he oversees the first Center for Independent Living–led college-based program for people with developmental disabilities at Compton and Cerritos College.



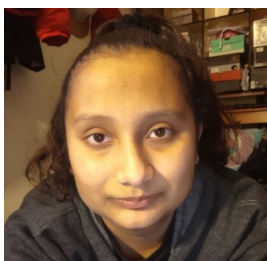
**Sharonlyn Harrison, Ph.D., MY-CIL consultant to the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York**

Sharonlyn is among the leading scholars on CIL services to racial and ethnic minorities. For the MY-CIL project, she is a consultant to the Center for Independence of the Disabled, New York and is responsible for engaging with the MY-CIL stakeholder advisory group and participating in knowledge translation activities. Most recently, Sharonlyn completed Disability, Diversity and Intersectionality in CILs, a research project for ILRU designed to document best practices in services, programs, and outreach for racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse groups. Previously, she was a transition specialist and associate director for research and evaluation with Michigan’s University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Wayne State University, where she worked with schools with diverse student populations on transition to post-secondary education and adult life. Sharonlyn was also a special education teacher consultant developing a program for transition. Currently, she is adjunct faculty at Wayne State University, American University, and Georgetown University, where she teaches or conducts research and evaluation projects around matters of diversity and equity. Sharonlyn has received special recognition for her research in minority communities from the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University and the Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research, and she was an invited chair of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council’s multicultural workgroup.



**Frank Martin, Ph.D., health researcher at Mathematica and the Center for Studying Disability Policy**

Frank’s work primarily focuses on disability policy, vocational rehabilitation, transition-age youth, and independent living outcomes. At Mathematica, he has worked on health and disability policy evaluation projects for federal clients, including the Administration for Community Living; the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research; the Rehabilitation Services Administration; the U.S. Department of Labor; and the Social Security Administration. He has direct service experience working with and for people with disabilities. Frank has published articles in the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, Disability Policy Studies, Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, and Patient Education and Counseling.



**Samantha Mendoza, SCRS-IL**

Samantha, from Maywood, California, graduated from Maywood Academy in 2018 and currently attends Compton College, where she is pursuing an associate degree in cosmetology. Through her passion for drawing, Samantha became interested in nail art and design. When she graduated from high school, Samantha used SCRS-IL services that helped her plan and set her goal of going to college and opening a nail salon one day. Samantha will receive her certificate of cosmetology in spring 2022.

---