

Paul Spooner is the executive director of the MetroWest Center for Independent Living Inc. He has over thirty years of experience working at centers and in disability rights, serving as administrator and engaging in peer counseling, information and referral, and systems advocacy. In addition, he has been a national trainer for over fourteen years, working with ILRU, the Independent Living Research and Training Center in Houston, a national training center on Disability, in the areas of independent living, disability legislation, independent living center management, standards and indicators for centers, computers, web design, computer networking, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Paul was a leader of students with disabilities during his undergraduate years in the 1970s at Southeastern Massachusetts University. During the late 1970s he became involved in the independent living center movement, working with others to start and incorporate Independence Associates, an independent living center serving southeastern Massachusetts.

In the late 1980s, Paul received his Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from Assumption College and became active in a number of national organizations working on disability legislation. He was President of the National Association of Independent Living in 1992. In 1993, he became Vice President of the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the largest national organization representing the independent living community. From 1997 to 2001 he served as President of NCIL and during that time presented testimony before Congress on disability issues and represented the independent living community at numerous national events.

As a colleague remarked, "Paul Spooner is a relentless champion of independent living, ever fierce and forthright in demanding equal rights and dignity for people with disabilities, always occupying a front position on the front line of change."