



April 20, 2021

Milwaukee County Executive David Crowley  
901 N 9th St #306  
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Mr. Crowley,

I am happy to provide this letter of reference for Cindi Pichler who is applying to serve on the Aging & Disability Resource Center Governing Board. Last year, Ms. Pichler celebrated her 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary with Independence First. She has worked tirelessly with individuals with disabilities to ensure that their range of independent living needs are met.

Ms. Pichler developed Independence First's WisTech Loan and Demonstration services. As one of the largest independent living centers in the country, Independence First has been a leader in establishing comprehensive community based assistive technology services that are an alternative to the more traditional medical model. Because assistive technology permeates virtually every aspect of community living, from self-management to housing, transportation, work, recreation, communication and so on, the independent living philosophy of consumer control, dignity of risk, and self-determination is infused heavily into our AT program. Ms. Pichler has more than 30 years of experience with a broad range of medical devices and other assistive technology, research, clinical evaluation, and leadership with particular expertise in home based assessment.

As an center for living center (CIL), Independence First and Ms. Pichler's philosophy centers around consumer control; that is, belief that integration is a means to address the needs of individuals. Additionally, Ms. Pichler's vast experience of serving individuals across the lifespan puts her in line with DHHS's primary goals. She has been a leader at our agency in promoting the dignity of individuals, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status.

Ms. Pichler has accomplished quite a bit during her tenure with Independence First. She developed the BAT Cave, one of the most comprehensive collections of bathroom related assistive technology in the country. It has been heavily used for assessment, education and professional development. She co-authored two codes of ethics, one for CILs and one for Assistive Technology (AT) Vendors and Evaluators, co-developed AT Kits and trainings for Wisconsin's Aging and Disability Resource Centers and developed a web based home, vehicle school/work station assessment instrument. Ms. Pichler was instrumental in becoming a host for Wisconsin's only Microsoft Accessibility Resource Center, co-developed a rotating display of assistive technology designed to coincide with and illustrate resources for the national "disability of the month" and co-facilitates in depth AT trainings for four local universities.

As a consummate professional, Ms. Pichler belongs to and fully participates in the following associations: the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North American (RESNA), National Council on Independent Living, Commission on Rehabilitation Counseling and Association of Information and Referral Specialists.

I wholeheartedly recommend Ms. Pichler to the governing board; her experience and knowledge demonstrate her ability to contribute with the partners to ensure that Milwaukee becomes the healthiest county in Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Deb Langham'.

Deb Langham, COO