

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)

Tuesday, June 23rd, 2026

Meeting Held Via Zoom

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DHS/DRS DHS Hillview Plaza/Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brett Glirbas, Joe Vetch, Richard Moeller, Kendra Gottsleben, CJ Moit, Matt Cain, Ryan Groeneweg, Brad Konechne, Tricia Eggers, Lance Sigdestad, Val Beeck Jennifer Lewis, Julie Johnson, and Theresa Marzahn.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Victoria Steffes. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Eric Weiss, Codi Erickson, David Smith (South Dakota Farmers Union), and Colette Wagoner. Interpreters were Julie Paluch and Alecia Barnes.

OPENING ACTIONS: Welcome & Introductory Comments: Ryan Groeneweg, SILC Chairperson, called the meeting to order and invited everyone to introduce themselves. Review and Approval of Agenda: Ryan asked if there were any changes/additions to the agenda, **MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA, MADE (M), SECONDED (S), AND CARRIED (C).** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, Richard, Val, Joe, Brett, Lance, Matt, and Brad. Nays: None. Review and approval of minutes: Ryan asked if there were any changes or additions to the two sets of meeting minutes, **MOTION TO APPROVE THE SILC MARCH 25 MINUTES AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM MAY 27, AS DISSEMINATED, MSC.** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, Richard, Val, Joe, Brett, Lance, Matt, and Brad. Nays: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was none.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: Reserved for sensitive/private or confidential matters; hearing no need, Ryan moved on.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were none.

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DRS) INDEPENDENT LIVING (IL)

SPECIALIST'S REPORT: Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report: The Centers for Independent Living (CILs) distribute a consumer satisfaction survey to all participants whose cases have been closed, including both successful and unsuccessful closures. The survey consists of four rating questions and two narrative questions designed to measure overall consumer satisfaction.

During this reporting period (October 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026), total closed cases for both CILs (Independent Living Choices/ILC and Western Resources for Independent Living/WRIL) successfully was 561 cases and 221 unsuccessful closed cases. The overall response rate for both CILs was 11% (ILC: 14.05% and WRIL: .56%); both CILs are reporting lower than the previous year. ILC had 85 survey

responses and WRIL had one. Responses to the narrative questions were limited to only ILC. Comments were mostly positive, e.g., friendly staff, having needs met, accessing supplies and easy to talk to staff. Both CIL directors provided comments that indicated efforts are being put in place to raise the response rate.

Status of CIL Contracts: The Division contracts with both CILs; the contracts contain funding sources of Part B funds and state match. These contracts start on June 1 and run through May 31st. The status of the contracts at 12 months, completion of the most recent state contract year. ILC provided 108.49% of the service units needed, they exceeded their contract. ILC's set aside for HMAD was \$225,923, however, they provided \$248,360 in HMAD projects, they exceeded their contract utilizing other funds to support these projects. WRIL provided 97.76% of needed service units, providing \$10,000 in HMAD projects, with a remaining \$5,003.52 that will be returned to the state.

CIL Quarterly Reports: Independent Living Choices (ILC):

The 2nd Quarter report (January 1 – March 31, 2026) from ILC was reviewed, including a chart outlining hours of core services provided, which indicated activity across all core service areas. During this quarter, ILC served 288 new applicants, including 61 individuals, age 25 or younger. Service delivery included 243 individuals receiving Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD), 168 receiving Telecommunication Adaptive Devices (TAD), and 52 receiving housing-related services, reflecting steady growth over recent quarters.

ILC reported that its primary referral source continues to be medical personnel, followed by family members and friends. In addition, ILC participated in or organized at least 17 community activities during the quarter, including collaborations with schools and senior centers, transition events, health fairs, and participation in a disability town hall meeting. Staff updates noted one current vacancy for an executive assistant position.

Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL):

The report from Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL) indicated that services were provided across all core service areas except for nursing home transitions, where no hours or individuals served were reported, highlighting an area for future focus. During this quarter, WRIL served 72 new applicants, including 32 individuals age 25 or younger, with a total of 311 individuals served overall. Service delivery included 10 individuals receiving Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD), 34 receiving Telecommunication Adaptive Devices (TAD), and 111 receiving housing-related services, demonstrating continued growth over previous quarters.

WRIL reported that its primary referral source was family members or friends, followed by community resources and benefits specialists. Staff participated in or organized

several outreach and community activities, including attendance at Rapid City Council meetings and outreach visits to nursing homes, apartment buildings, and medical offices. Staffing updates indicated multiple vacancies, including full-time Independent Living Specialist positions in both Rapid City and Pierre.

IL Funding Sources: Jennifer referred to the IL Fund Sources handout for State Fiscal Year 2027. Funding sources to support IL services in the state were outlined, Part C, Part B, Part B match, Social Security Reimbursement Funds (SSA), and other state funds. The contracts do not include Home Modifications funding because additional funds were not available. The chart outlines the total dollar amount awarded to each CIL, and funds that support the SILC outlined in the staff support agreement.

On-site Reviews of the CILs:

Jennifer provided an overview of the Division's role as the Designated State Entity (DSE) under the State Plan, responsible for receiving and distributing Part B funds from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and contractual requirements. As part of this responsibility, the Division conducts on-site reviews and implements fiscal controls to ensure funds are properly expended and documented.

The State Fiscal Year 2026 on-site review of Independent Living Choices (ILC) was completed in early February and included a comprehensive review of areas such as billing, policies, consumer satisfaction surveys, IL case files, audit findings, organizational structure, program income, and required policies (e.g., confidentiality and conflict of interest). Additional areas reviewed included staff roles in decision-making, staff training, timesheets, board involvement, meeting minutes, and HMAD program documentation.

The review found ILC to be in compliance with required policies, with strong board engagement in financial oversight and organizational governance. The Division also reviewed monthly billing against staff timesheets to ensure accuracy. ILC's HMAD policies and waitlist procedures were reviewed, noting 63 individuals on the waitlist and 242 HMAD projects completed since June 1, 2025. A total of 1,518 open cases were identified during the review period, with 119 cases selected for detailed review. Of those, most contained appropriate eligibility documentation; however, some deficiencies were noted in IL plans, including missing timelines, signatures, and documentation of client receipt, resulting in required corrective action. Training on these deficiencies was provided to ILC staff in April.

Additional data indicated that 718 cases were closed during the review period, with 515 successfully meeting goals. Approximately 26% of reviewed cases received HMAD services and 21% received TAD services. The average time from referral to application was 13.62 days, slightly above the 7–10 business day target outlined in the IL manual,

and the average case duration was 314 days, varying based on service needs. ILC also completed its required single audit and cost reporting, submitted in February 2026. Discussion included interest from a member in further understanding of the review process or providing more information to the SILC to assist members with obtaining a better understanding of what is involved in the review process.

A question was asked about the length of time between referral date to application date, and what the goal is. It was noted that the IL manual outlines 7 to 10 business days. It was explained that the number of days a case is open depends upon the needs of the individual and what services are being requested (providing a device vs providing a home modification for accessibility needs).

On-Site Review – WRIL: Jennifer reported that the on-site review of WRIL was conducted January 12–14 and included a comprehensive assessment of compliance areas such as IL case files, billing, consumer satisfaction surveys, organizational structure, board meeting documentation, program income, policies, and staff training records. During the review, it was noted that WRIL’s policy manual lacked documentation of review or approval dates, and a formal HMAD (Home Modifications and Assistive Devices) policy was not in place. The absence of an HMAD policy was identified as a key concern, as it should clearly define eligibility, waitlist procedures, prioritization criteria, and thresholds for minor projects.

At the time of review, WRIL had more than 100 individuals on its waitlist and had set aside 3% of its funding (\$15,003) for HMAD services but had not yet delivered any services. By final billing, WRIL provided \$10,000 in HMAD services and is required to return the \$5,003 balance to the state.

Case review data indicated that 439 cases were opened or closed between June 1 and November 30, 2025, with 102 cases selected for detailed review. Of these, 107 cases were closed, including 64 with goals met and 35 withdrawn. Only 84 cases had adequate eligibility documentation, and 97 included a statement of need. A small percentage of reviewed cases received HMAD services (3.92%) or TAD services (11.76%).

The average time from referral to application was 83 days—significantly above the expected 7–10 business days—and the average case duration was 314 days. WRIL does not meet the threshold for a single audit but is required to submit a cost report on expenditures, which had not yet been received at the time of reporting.

The Division provided several recommendations, including strengthening board financial oversight, updating personnel policies, reviewing staffing levels to ensure adequate service delivery, and improving compliance with reporting requirements. As a result of the findings, updates and clarifications were incorporated into the SFY2027

contracts, along with revisions to the IL manual to further define core services and billing practices. Discussion also addressed factors contributing to delays between referral and application, including staffing shortages, and clarified that the timeframe reflects the period until application completion and eligibility determination, not initial contact.

A question was asked about the provision of training as a result of the findings, and the response was that primary areas included the need to update/review policies which is an internal operation of the organization, and clarifications were made in the IL manual (billings, explanation of services and what/how service units can be utilized). A question was asked about the length of time from referral to application date being 83 days, and Jennifer responded that hiring staff would help. Cody responded that staff attempt to contact individuals to schedule appointments within a couple of weeks. Further clarification was provided that the data point is referral to application, not first contact to schedule appointment. It was further explained that the first meeting with the individual typically involves completing the application and determining eligibility.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING UPDATES: Independent Living Choices:

Matt reported that ILC is actively conducting summer transition programs for youth with disabilities ages 14–21 across five locations (Sioux Falls, Watertown, Aberdeen, Brookings, and Mobridge). While each program varies slightly, all focus on building social, employment, safety, independent living, budgeting, and recreational skills. Total participation ranges from 50–60 youth, with positive feedback from parents who appreciate the programs' role in preparing participants for employment, independent living, and post-secondary education.

ILC continues its Harley Motorcycle Raffle fundraiser, with the motorcycle currently displayed in Watertown and ticket sales ongoing until all 2,000 tickets are sold. Operationally, ILC has served 1,696 individuals this federal fiscal year (October–September), completing 32 ramps and 63 accessible bathroom modifications, with total HMAD expenditures reaching approximately \$678,000. Funding sources have been diversified through partnerships and programs including Home Again, the Division of Long Term Services and Supports, ADLS, Family Support 360, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the HOPE waiver. Additional services include accessibility assessments provided on a fee-for-service basis. The agreement to provide Orientation and Mobility employment services through the state concluded in May.

ILC also supports community and recreational initiatives, including sponsorship of the PDR Youth Hunt for youth with disabilities ages 12–18. A partnership with Hy-Vee in Sioux Falls for Operation Helpful Smile is scheduled for July 1–7, with matching contributions offered on donations. Looking ahead, ILC plans to engage in strategic planning next spring in partnership with Maximizing Excellence.

Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL): Codi reported that WRIL has recently experienced staff turnover due to medical and other reasons and is actively engaged in hiring efforts. A new staff member for the Rapid City office has been hired and is starting immediately, and an intake specialist will begin in the coming weeks, while the Pierre position remains open. WRIL has also experienced changes in board membership, including the loss of a long-term member and another upcoming departure in August; however, a new board member is beginning this week and brings significant nonprofit experience.

In terms of funding diversification, WRIL continues to provide services through the ADLS program, utilizing pass-through funds, and administers a security deposit program. Efforts are underway to improve response rates for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey, including exploring strategies with input from the incoming board member. WRIL is also working with the Administration for Community Living (ACL) on various topics.

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BVR) UPDATE: Eric reported that the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR) met on June 3. The BVR serves in an advisory capacity to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency, providing guidance on program performance, assisting with the development of goals and priorities, and evaluating consumer satisfaction. The meeting agenda included updates on Division initiatives and budget, as well as a presentation from the Department of Education's Office of Special Education on Indicator 14, which tracks outcomes for students with disabilities one year after high school, including employment, post-secondary education, and independent living.

Additional updates were provided on transition-related activities, including the Youth Leadership Forum and other employment programs for youth with disabilities. The board was apprised of the required two-year updates to portions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) state plan. The meeting included the election of officers and recognition of outgoing members. The next BVR meeting will be held on September 15. Eric also demonstrated the State of South Dakota Boards and Commissions portal and how to access information for both the BVR and SILC, along with other state boards and commissions. (<https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>)

DIVISION OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUAL IMPAIRED (DSBVI) UPDATE: Tricia reported that the Division recently completed a restructuring of staff positions. As part of this process, two dual-role positions combining Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor and Independent Living Rehabilitation Teacher responsibilities (located in Rapid City and Pierre) were eliminated. A new Independent Living Rehabilitation Teacher position has been established in Rapid City. Currently, two rehabilitation teacher positions remain vacant -one in Rapid City and one in Aberdeen - and efforts are underway to fill these positions as quickly as possible. The restructuring also

included realignment of service territories across the state. Additional program updates were not available at this time.

BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (B/SBVI)

UPDATE: Ryan reported that the B/SBVI last met on March 25 and is scheduled to meet again later this week. No additional updates were provided.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SPIL): The current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) covers Federal Fiscal Years 2025–2027 and became effective October 1, 2024.

Current SPIL Goals:

- Increasing awareness of Independent Living (IL) services throughout SD;
- Ensuring that individuals with disabilities residing in South Dakota have access to IL services; and
- Engaging in collaborative, promotional, and advocacy efforts to support needed changes that enable individuals with disabilities to live as independently as possible.

Reporting Reminder: SILC members are encouraged to share any activities, events, or efforts related to these goals with staff. This information is tracked and included in the annual performance report (PPR).

Member Input: Members were invited to share recent activities and involvement supporting SPIL goals. Lance reported that SD DROP hosted a youth and high school camp for students who are deaf or hard of hearing at Lake Poinsett, where participants explored career opportunities, developed job and life skills, built friendships, and engaged in activities with peers. He also shared that SD DROP will host a four-person scramble golf tournament on July 18 in Harrisburg. Kendra discussed her ongoing involvement with the Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), where she has served as a delegate, team leader, and mentor. YLF provides high school students with disabilities opportunities to build leadership skills, increase disability awareness, explore employment, and connect with the adult service system. Brad shared information about the annual statewide Benefits Specialists training, noting that dates will be shared once finalized. He also highlighted his involvement with YLF, including presenting to youth on benefits and the impact of employment and earnings.

Colette reminded SILC members to report any activities or efforts related to SPIL goals to staff so progress toward achieving goals, objectives, and activities can be accurately tracked and included in state plan reporting.

2028-20230 SPIL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES: Initial Data Review Activity:

Development began with a comprehensive review of multiple data sources to identify

service gaps, barriers, and needs of individuals with disabilities in South Dakota. Sources included statewide plans, needs assessments, survey results, housing and census data, agency reports, and other relevant research.

Community Survey Distribution: The SILC Community Survey was approved in September 2025 and widely distributed starting November 17, 2025, through SILC networks, partners, social media, and disability-related organizations. Additional outreach occurred November 24, expanding to a broad range of stakeholders. As of March 12, 50 responses were received.

SPIL Committee Formation and Work: The SPIL Committee convened on June 16, consisting of SILC leadership, members, CIL directors, the DSE director, and staff. This group began the joint planning process, including reviewing IL network roles, SPIL structure, development timeline, and requirements for public input and submission. The committee is tasked with drafting/developing the next state plan.

SPIL Framework Overview: The SPIL is being developed using a structured framework:

- Goals: Broad statewide priorities
- Objectives: Measurable actions to achieve goals
- Measurements: Methods to track progress and outcomes

Next Steps: The committee will continue meeting regularly, with updates expected at the September and December SILC meetings. Current efforts are focused on developing SPIL goals.

SILC STAFF UPDATE: National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM): NDEAM is observed each October to promote inclusion and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. This is a joint initiative with BVR and B/SBVI, with shared financial support from both boards, the SILC, and the Division.

Funding Process: RFP issued in December; proposals due in February. Review committee (representatives from both boards and the Council) evaluated proposals and made funding recommendations. Eleven communities submitted funding requests. The total request was \$49,606. Final approved funding: \$46,356 (adjustments made to shared speaker costs).

One speaker contract has been finalized for Mitchell, Yankton, and Vermillion. Other communities are continuing planning; event details will be shared when finalized. Members are encouraged to attend local NDEAM events.

Governor's Awards: The Call for Nominations was issued in March and nominations closed May 1. This is a joint activity between BVR, SILC, and the Board of Service to

the Blind and Visually Impaired (B/SBVI). A review committee will meet June 30 to review nominations. The review committee includes: BVR: Shawn Lyons, Cole Uecker, Chris Olson; SILC: CJ Moit, Joe Vetch, and B/SBVI Board: George Seaman and Cherie Gerry.

The committee will recommend award recipients to the Governor for final approval. Upon approval, recipients will be notified and the awards ceremony will be scheduled.

Nominations Summary: Total received: 34 (compared to 25 last year; includes 2 duplicate submissions). Nominations are accepted year-round via the Division website or by contacting staff.

Budget Update: Support services are provided through a contract between the Division and Black Hills Special Services Cooperative (BHSSC). The contract runs January 1–December 31, with renewal options. The disseminated budget reports through April show minimal expenditures, which is typical. The majority of expenses will occur September–November, aligned with the Governor’s Awards Ceremony, NDEAM events, and Fall Conference travel and participation.

Annual Fall Conference: is scheduled for October 13–15 in Deadwood (The Lodge), and the theme is: *“Raising the Stakes: Advancing Employment and Independence for All”*. Conference details are available at: <https://www.sdrehabaction.org/fall-conference/2026-fall-conference>. SILC Member Participation: registration is covered by SILC, lodging will be direct billed to BHSSC, mileage and per diem will be reimbursed. Members interested in attending should notify staff to be added to the hotel list.

Miscellaneous Items: Colette shared her screen and displayed the SILC’s Facebook webpage, displaying information on ILC’s raffle and WRIL’s open position and encouraged members to visit the site and share it. The nominations for the SILC’s Champion for Independent Living Award are due on Friday. She encouraged members to forward information on upcoming events that can be shared on the website page.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND HONORING OUTGOING MEMBER: Ryan recognized CJ Moit and thanked her for her service on the SILC. CJ was appointed in 2020 and has been a dedicated and valued member throughout her tenure. She brought strong advocacy experience through her role with Disability Rights South Dakota and contributed to initiatives focused on accessibility and civic participation. Her involvement in training, advocacy, and advancing disability rights, along with her personal and professional perspective, added meaningful value to the SILC’s work. Others expressed their appreciation and thanked her. CJ expressed her appreciation to all members for their support.

Ryan passed the gavel to Eric, asking him to speak on behalf of the Executive Committee. SILC's officer positions consist of Chair, Vice Chair, and two (2) Members At Large. Eric introduced the proposed slate as Brett and Kendra/Members At Large, Matt/Vice Chair, and Ryan/Chair. All have indicated an interest in serving as officers again, if elected. He emphasized that nominations can be made from the floor, noting that each position will be taken one at a time.

Eric started with the position of Chairperson. He called for further nominations for the Chair position in addition to Ryan's name, two times. Hearing none – **MOTION TO CEASE NOMINATIONS AND ELECT RYAN AS CHAIR – MSC.** YEAS: CJ, Kendra, Richard, Val, Joe, Brett, Lance, Matt, and Julie. NAYS: None.

Eric moved onto the position of Vice Chairperson. Eric called for further nominations for Vice Chair, twice. Hearing none – **MOTION TO CEASE NOMINATIONS AND ELECT MATT AS VICE CHAIRPERSON – MSC.** YEAS: CJ, Kendra, Richard, Val, Joe, Brett, Lance, and Julie. NAYS: None. Abstain: Matt Cain.

Eric moved to calling for further nominations for the position of Member-At-Large, twice. **MOTION TO CEASE NOMINATIONS AND ELECT BRETT AND KENDRA AS MEMBERS-AT-LARGE – MSC.** YEAS: CJ, Richard, Val, Joe, Lance, Matt and Julie. NAYS: None. Abstain: Brett and Kendra.

Eric expressed appreciation to the officers for their continued dedication, time, and willingness to serve in leadership roles for another year. He acknowledged their commitment to the mission and work of the SILC. Following his remarks, the gavel was returned to the Chair.

OTHER BUSINESS: None

CLOSING ACTIONS: Future Agenda Items: please share agenda items/topics with staff. Next Meeting: a doodle poll will be disseminated to identify a date in September. Adjournment: Ryan asked if there were any objections to adjourn, hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 2:06 pm.