

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)

Wednesday, March 25, 2026

Meeting Held Via Zoom

&

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, and Julie Johnson. **MEMBERS ABSENT:** Victoria Steffes and Theresa Marzahn. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Eric Weiss, Codi Erickson, Alan Adel, Bernie Grimme 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 AS DISSEMINATED, MADE (M), SECONDED (S), AND CARRIED (C).** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, 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, specifically the December 17th minutes and the SILC's Executive Committee March meeting minutes, **MOTION TO APPROVE THE SILC DECEMBER MINUTES AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM MARCH 5, MSC.** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, 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, the overall response rate for both CILs was 10.80% (ILC: 12.42% and WRIL: 1.82%), compared to a 19.48% response rate in the previous quarterly report. ILC reported a staffing change during this quarter, and surveys were not disseminated as scheduled. Efforts are currently underway to identify individuals

who did not receive surveys and to ensure they are distributed. ILC anticipates this response rate will return to previously reported levels.

Responses to the four rating questions were largely positive, with most respondents selecting “strongly agree” or “agree,” indicating a high level of satisfaction with services provided. Narrative responses to questions regarding what participants found most helpful reflected appreciation for both staff support and the services received. A limited number of responses indicated a lack of contact with staff or a need for additional assistance.

Regarding what was least helpful, the majority of respondents indicated “no comment” or “nothing.” A small number of responses noted concerns related to the length of time required to obtain services and staff capacity limitations.

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 8 months or 66.67% of the contract year. ILC has provided 72.8% of the service units needed and WRIL has provided 66.46% of needed service units, both CILs are on track to expend their full contracts.

CIL Quarterly Reports for Independent Living Choices (ILC) and Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL) 1st Quarter, October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025.

A chart was reviewed depicting the hours of core services provided during the reporting period. The chart indicated that no services were provided under the Nursing Home Transition or Post-Secondary Transition service areas.

During this quarter, a total of 78 new applicants were served, 31 of whom were age 25 or younger. The number of individuals who received services during the quarter included the following: Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD) – 20; Telecommunication Adaptive Devices (TAD) – 25; and Housing services – 59.

WRIL reported that participants primarily learned about IL services through family and friends. Referrals from Benefits Specialists and other sources continue to increase. WRIL staff participated in outreach activities in several communities, including counties identified as underserved, such as Lyman and Haakon. Two tours/open houses were conducted. WRIL is redesigning two outreach brochures. The report included one success story. Review of the organizational chart indicated that the position located in Pierre remains vacant.

Independent Living Choices (ILC) 1st Quarterly Report – October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025. The hours of services provided during the quarter in the core service areas were reviewed. There were zero hours of service reported for both Nursing Home Transition and Post-Secondary Transition service areas.

During this quarter, ILC served 267 new applicants, 44 of whom were 25 or younger. The total number of individuals served during the reporting period was 1,150. The number of individuals who received the following services during the quarter included: Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD) – 255; Telecommunication Adaptive Devices (TAD) – 195; and Housing services – 55.

ILC reported that participants primarily learned about Independent Living services through the “other” referral category, including county services, Department of Human Services (DHS), Children’s Home Shelter for Family Safety, Family Support programs, Volunteers of America (VOA), Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS), shelters, Activities of Daily Living Supports (ADLS), and similar sources. The next highest referral sources were family members or friends, followed by medical personnel.

ILC staff participated in and organized outreach events and engaged in activities to increase awareness of IL services throughout their service territory. Outreach efforts included several Tribal Nations and communities, such as Standing Rock, Cherry Creek, Wanblee, Martin, Flandreau and Todd County, as well as larger communities, Sioux Falls, Brookings, Harrisburg, and Aberdeen. Connections were also established with Lake Area Technical College, senior centers, Native American schools, housing/health offices, Department of Social Services offices, Veterans’ events, Indian Health Services (IHS), Union Gospel Mission, and provider agencies.

A success story was submitted highlighting the installation of a ramp for an individual, enabling them to safely leave their home. No open houses were held, and no new outreach materials were developed during this period. ILC reported two vacant orientation/mobility specialist positions; however, all Independent Living specialist positions are currently filled.

Matt responded to a question regarding the shift in how participants learned about services. He explained that staff reviewed their coverage area and identified opportunities to expand outreach efforts. One example included staff visiting Union Gospel Mission on a monthly basis to engage with individuals and provide information about available services. Union Gospel Mission is an emergency shelter that provides shelter, food, and clothing.

Matt also apologized for the decrease in returned Consumer Satisfaction Surveys during the quarter and discussed efforts underway to identify participants who did not receive surveys and ensure dissemination. He anticipates an increase in survey responses in the next quarterly report.

Additional discussion addressed the trend of both CILs serving an increasing number of individuals with mental and emotional health needs, as well as individuals with multiple disabilities. Participants are requesting more intensive services, which typically

require additional staff time. Services provided have included housing assistance, assistance with Social Security benefits, and referrals to mental health centers. Lance also noted an increase in services provided to individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, as well as those with mental health needs.

IL Funding Sources: Jennifer referred to the IL Fund Sources handout for State Fiscal Year 2026. 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 SFY 2026 contract does not include Home Modifications funding because additional funds were not available.

On-site Reviews of the CILs: Jennifer explained the annual on-site reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with Sections 725(a) and (c) of the Rehabilitation Act, proper use of funds, and adherence to federal, state, and contract requirements.

Reviews follow a hybrid model, with consumer files reviewed on-site and supplemental materials reviewed electronically. Consumer files include applications, eligibility documentation, IL Plans or Waivers, goals, and service documentation. Additional materials reviewed include agency policies, board and staff composition, program income, time sheets, consumer satisfaction surveys, and required website postings.

Jennifer coordinates review dates with the CILs and state staff. CILs submit an Excel list of open and closed cases, which is uploaded into an Access database after formatting and validation. For the most recent review, 102 WRIL files and 119 ILC files were selected, representing both IL Plans and Waivers.

A standardized review form is used to assess eligibility, documentation accuracy, and timeliness of services. Following the on-site review, an optional exit meeting may be held. Following the on-site review, the CIL is given access to the review database to dispute findings by submitting additional documentation. DRS then prepares a draft report for CIL review before issuing a final report with findings and corrective actions. A summary of the final report is shared with the SILC, DRS leadership, and the ACL Program Officer when required.

More information will be shared at the next meeting after the reports are finalized and shared with the CILs.

FOLLOW-UP – SILC’S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE’S DISCUSSION – JANUARY 28TH MEETING. Ryan provided an overview of the Executive Committee meeting held in January, which was prompted by concerns raised during the December meeting regarding the statewide delivery of Independent Living (IL) services. To ensure both CILs were represented, Codi also participated in the meeting. Committee discussion

focused on service equity, fee-for-service funding structures, Part B funding, staffing challenges, and service territories.

During the meeting, members requested additional information and clarification regarding service provision and programmatic differences related to Home Again/Money Follows the Person (MFP), Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS), Activities of Daily Living Services (ADLS), home modifications, eligibility criteria, and billing processes. It was noted that this conversation will continue at the next scheduled meeting on April 9. Discussion points will include CIL territories, equitable service delivery, and review of additional data.

Ryan asked for a motion to approve the Executive Committee meeting minutes.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE SILC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM JANUARY 28. MSC. YEAS: CJ, Kendra, Richard, Val, Joe, Brett, Lance, Matt, and Brad NAYS: None.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING UPDATES: Independent Living Choices:

Matt reported that ILC is experiencing an increase in requests for services and referrals. In response, the ILC Board of Directors approved an increase in staffing, including the addition of one full-time position in Sioux Falls and adding part-time positions in Watertown and Brookings. These staffing additions are intended to provide increased assistance to participants and reduce staff workload.

The IL program review and the Activities of Daily Living Services (ADLS) review were recently conducted. The IL review identified areas for improvement related to the Independent Living Plan (or participant waiver). Efforts will focus on improving the documentation of participant goals and timelines. Supervisors are working with staff on these areas, and a training with Jennifer is scheduled for April 22. The ADLS review occurred earlier this week and was reported to have gone well. ILC's auditor was present during the review, and information was shared with him. The auditor noted that the review process is very comprehensive and is a strong evaluation instrument.

ILC provided staff training related to working with individuals with mental and emotional health needs, as well as safety in participants' homes. A cultural sensitivity training is scheduled for April 22.

Matt reported that the ILC Board of Directors approved an additional employee benefit by partnering with Employee & Family Resources (Des Moines, Iowa) for approximately 103 staff members and attendants. This benefit provides access to counseling services for staff and their family members, access to 30 master's-level counselors, and includes legal services such as assistance with will preparation.

ILC is involved with the PDR Youth Hunt, which provides an authentic hunting experience for youth with disabilities ages 12–18. Joe added that he has worked with Game, Fish and Parks on the Track Chair program. Track Chairs are available across the state and allow individuals with disabilities to access South Dakota state parks at no cost. The program is currently underutilized.

Matt reported that ILC has begun its annual Harley-Davidson motorcycle raffle. Over 500 tickets have been sold to date. Tickets are \$20 each, with a maximum of 2,000 tickets available. Members were asked to share information and promote the raffle.

ILC is also working with the City of Sioux Falls to provide home modifications and assistive devices. The city requested information regarding HMAD services provided over the past five years. Data shared indicated that ILC has utilized 22 approved contractors/providers, expended \$5,325,650 on HMAD projects during that time, and used \$642,996 in ILC reserve funds.

Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL):

Codi reported that the WRIL office located in Rapid City sustained wind damage, resulting in the office being closed for more than a month. During this time, staff worked remotely, utilizing Zoom to meet with participants or meeting with them at alternative locations as needed. Additionally, one staff member was out for approximately two months due to medical issues. As a result, Codi covered multiple territories, including Spearfish, and continued to travel to the Pierre office monthly.

Codi reported that a new staff member will accompany her on the next trip to Pierre, with planned stops in Philip and other smaller communities along the way to meet with participants. She stated that the WRIL Board of Directors has directed staff to meet with participants using the method that best meets their needs, including Zoom, phone, FaceTime, or other options, to ensure continuity of services. WRIL's Board is scheduled to meet tomorrow, and service delivery will be a key topic of discussion. Codi also noted that a significant number of WRIL participants have recently been hospitalized or experienced other medical issues. In response, staff have continued to meet with participants via Zoom when in-home visits were not feasible.

Codi addressed the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and current dissemination efforts. She sought feedback on the use of donated items and the possibility of offering incentives through a drawing to encourage increased survey completion and return rates. A comment was made referring her back to the WRIL Board, noting that this would be an organizational decision. Codi assured members that participant anonymity would be maintained. Another suggestion included adding a statement to the survey indicating that participants could voluntarily include their name and address if they wished to be entered into a drawing. She had no additional items to report.

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BVR) UPDATE: Eric reported that the BVR met on March 10th. The BVR serves as an advisory board to the VR agency. BVR responsibilities include advising the Division on VR program performance, assisting with the development of goals and priorities, and evaluating consumer satisfaction with services.

Agenda items at the March meeting included updates on Division initiatives, budget, and performance measures. An overview of operations was also provided by the Division's District Supervisor of the Sioux Falls District Office. Additional standing agenda items included the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) update and the BVR staff update. The next BVR meeting is scheduled for June 3.

Eric shared the State of South Dakota Boards and Commissions portal (<https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>) and demonstrated how to access both the SILC and BVR webpages, as well as other state boards and commissions.

DIVISION OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUAL IMPAIRED (DSBVI) UPDATE: Tricia reported that since the last meeting, Kama Kwiecinski, DSBVI's Independent Living Program Manager, submitted the required federal report. The report reflected that the program served 380 individuals and demonstrated that South Dakota exceeded federal target levels and national averages across all performance categories. Specifically, South Dakota achieved a 100% rate for independent living and adjustment training, compared to a national average of 81%, and a 99.41% rate for the ability to engage in daily activities, compared to the national average of 83%.

During the current fiscal year, the Division has served 298 individuals, with 222 individuals currently receiving services. Since October 1, there have been 112 new referrals, with at least one referral originating from every county in the state.

A comprehensive Independent Living Older Blind (ILB) reporting system has been created and implemented to provide real-time visibility into caseload activity, service delivery, and expenditures. Consumer Satisfaction Survey results continue to reinforce the effectiveness of the ILB program, with an average satisfaction rating of 3.8 out of 4, reflecting an increase compared to ratings from the previous year. Tricia also reported that the Division is fully staffed. The most recent hire, located in the Pierre office, has completed all required training.

BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (B/SBVI) UPDATE: Ryan reported that the B/SBVI met on March 20. The Board elected to utilize an AI notetaker to capture meeting information; however, the tool did not function as expected. Ryan relies on the official minutes to prepare his report, and he shared that he did not have information to share at this time and will submit a report once the minutes become available.

One item Ryan was able to share was the Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion is hosting a 3-D Tactile Exhibition through May 1. This accessible art exhibition allows visitors to experience artwork through touch and sound. Visitors can explore raised surfaces, shapes, and textures using both hands while listening to audio descriptions through provided headphones. Ryan encouraged members to attend, this is the first exhibition of its kind in the state. Ryan reported that the next B/SBVI meeting is June 25.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SPIL): The current State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) is a three-year plan approved for Federal Fiscal Years 2025 through 2027. With federal approval, the plan became effective on October 1, 2024. The SPIL outlines three primary goals:

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

Colette requested that any SILC member who has engaged in activities related to these three SPIL goals inform staff so the information can be tracked as progress toward achieving SPIL objectives. Members were encouraged to share information today, regarding activities they have participated in or supported that align with these goals.

Lance reported that SD DROP will be hosting a golf tournament in July as a fundraiser to support summer camps for youth who are Deaf or hard of hearing. He encouraged members to participate and attend.

2028-2030 State Plan Development Activities:

Community Survey Results: The SILC reviewed preliminary results from the 2026 Community Survey, which was approved in September 2025. Survey data was collected through March 12, 2026. There were 50 respondents, with the majority identifying as people with disabilities. Respondents represented a range of ages and geographic regions across South Dakota, with most identifying as working-age adults.

Overall findings indicated strong employment and housing stability among respondents. No respondents reported experiencing homelessness, and most indicated that they live independently or with informal supports.

Key challenges identified through the survey included housing affordability, daily living support needs, accessibility, and transportation, particularly in rural areas.

Respondents reported needing assistance primarily with practical daily living tasks such as cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and attending medical appointments. Many respondents expressed interest in training and information related to disability rights, self-advocacy, and independent living skills. More than half of the respondents reported that they had not contacted a Center for Independent Living (CIL), indicating an opportunity for increased outreach and education.

Survey results will be used to inform SILC planning, outreach strategies, and the development of the 2028–2030 State Plan. Kendra suggested that when posting information on social media, members consider adding an image, graphic, or photo to increase visibility and engagement.

Review of the Draft “Goals, Objectives and Measurement Framework” Document: SILC staff presented the draft *Goals, Objectives, and Measurement Framework*, a planning tool intended to support development of the 2028–2030 State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL). The framework is designed to provide a structured starting point aligned with SPIL requirements and outlines proposed statewide goals, objectives to advance those goals, and measurable indicators to track progress.

Staff noted that the draft goals and objectives were informed by multiple data sources, including statewide surveys, needs assessments, monitoring reports, partner and consumer feedback, and other state specific data. Across these sources, consistent statewide barriers were identified, including inconsistent access to independent living services; challenges navigating services; housing and transportation shortages; workforce training gaps; rural and tribal service disparities; youth transition challenges; uneven delivery of Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD); and limited employer engagement.

Four draft statewide goals were presented. The goals focus on improving access and outreach; strengthening service navigation and coordination; advancing employment opportunities; improving transportation; addressing rural service gaps; and increasing cultural responsiveness.

Staff emphasized that the document will continue to evolve as additional input is provided, public comment is gathered, and further discussions occur among the SILC, DSE, and CILs. The SPIL submission timeline was reviewed, with a due date of June 30, 2027. The planning process was identified as critical to allow sufficient time for drafting, public comment, revisions, and required approvals.

The SILC was not asked to approve the draft goals at this time. Instead, members were asked to review the framework, assess alignment with identified statewide needs, and provide feedback, suggested revisions, and proposed objectives and indicators to inform continued SPIL development. Discussion then moved to the composition of the

SPIL Planning Committee. The committee includes the SILC Chair, both CIL Directors, and the DSE Director. The DSE Independent Living Specialist and SILC staff provide technical assistance and additional support to the committee.

It was noted that since the previous SPIL development cycle, some committee members have termed off. Lance volunteered to serve on the SPIL Planning Committee.

SILC STAFF UPDATE: Program Performance Report (PPR): The SILC approved the annual Program Performance Report at their December meeting and submitted it on January 16th. The report was due to the Administration for Community Living by January 31. The PPR serves as a performance measurement tool for Independent Living programs, capturing both quantitative and qualitative data to assess activities, achievements, resources, and needs. It also helps identify training and technical assistance needs for SILCs. We are still waiting for word from ACL regarding approval or the need for changes.

SILC and BVR Nominations Process: The call for nominations was issued in January, with submissions due February 20. The SILC will require eight appointments or reappointments after June 30, and the BVR will require ten appointments or reappointments to meet membership requirements.

Both bodies received new nominations, including nominees who are persons with disabilities. All nomination materials have been forwarded to the Division and submitted to the Governor for review and consideration.

Budget Update – Support Services Contract: Staff and administrative services are provided to the BVR and SILC through an agreement between the Division and Black Hills Special Services Cooperative (BHSSC). The contract operates on a calendar-year budget cycle and includes up to four one-year extension options, if continued services are needed.

The 2025 budget was disseminated and included additional pages detailing actual expenditures. Budget line items clearly separate BVR and SILC costs, including member travel, meeting expenses, and strategic planning. The SILC budget also includes a CIL Staff Training line item to support training needs for Centers for Independent Living staff.

2026 Calendar Year Budget: A separate budget was provided for the 2026 calendar year. To date, there has been one expense, attributed to the SILC, related to financial support for the 2026 Disability Awareness Day event held at the Capitol in February. Additional expenses are expected later in the year as meetings and events occur.

Historically, the majority of BVR and SILC expenditures occur during September, October, and November, aligning with key activities such as the Governor's Awards Ceremony, National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events, and Fall Conference attendance by BVR/SILC members and CIL staff.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) Update: The NDEAM Review Committee (BVR, SILC, and B/SBVI) met on February 26 to review funding requests from 11 communities totaling \$49,606.00. After review and adjustments for shared speaker costs and non-allowable expenses, the NDEAM Review committee recommended \$46,356.00 in funding.

The NDEAM Review Committee's funding recommendation of \$46,356.00 was reviewed and accepted by the BVR. The recommendation will be shared with B/SBVI for consideration of additional financial support. The question was raised as to whether the SILC would consider providing financial support for the 2026 NDEAM events. After discussing the amount of available funds under the SILC's strategic planning line item, **MOTION TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE 2026 NDEAM EVENTS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,500.00, MSC.** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, Val, Brett, Lance, Matt, Julie and Brad. Nays: None.

Governor's Awards: The call for nominations for the 2026 Governor's Awards was issued on March 16, with nominations due by May 1. This is a joint effort of the BVR, BSBVI, and SILC, with nominations available year-round on the Division's website.

A Joint Review Committee will review submissions and forward recommendations to the Governor's Office for final selection. Committee members include representatives from BVR, SILC, and BSBVI. Kendra volunteered to serve on the Governor's Awards Review Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS: Brad spoke to the 2026 Work Incentives Trainings coming up starting in April through May and held in various locations across the state. He will forward the flyer to staff to share. Staff announced the Fall Conference is scheduled October 13-15, 2026, and will be held in Deadwood.

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 June. Adjournment: The Chair asked if there were any objections to adjourn, hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.