

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)

March 26, 2025

Meeting Held Via Zoom

&

DHS/DRS DHS Hillsview Plaza/Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brett Glirbas, Joe Vetch, Theresa Marzahn, Richard Moeller, Kendra Gottsleben, CJ Moit, Matt Cain, Ryan Groeneweg, Brad Konechne, Julie Johnson, Tricia Eggers, Patty Kuglitsch, Val Beeck, Vicki Steffes and Jennifer Lewis. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Eric Weiss, Lyle Cook, and Colette Wagoner. The interpreters were Julie Paluch and Katie Peterson.

OPENING ACTIONS: Welcome & Introductory Comments: Ryan Groeneweg, SILC Chairperson, called the meeting to order. Ryan 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: Brett, Theresa, Val, Richard, Patty, Kendra, CJ, Matt, Brad, and Julie. Nays: None. Review and approval of minutes: Ryan asked if there were any changes or additions to the two sets of meeting minutes, there were none. The Executive Committee minutes outlined action taken to support Disability Awareness Day in the amount of \$130.00. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE SILC DECEMBER 19TH MINUTES AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES AND THE ACTION ITEM FROM MARCH 6, MSC.** Yeas: Brett, Theresa, Val, Richard, Patty, Kendra, CJ, Matt, Brad, and Julie. Nays: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ryan utilized this time as an opportunity to touch base on national developments. He invited comments or questions and wanted to remind everyone that events are being monitored. A question was asked about changes to either Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Independent Living (IL) services. Eric spoke to an executive order that would eliminate the US Department of Education, which is the source of grants for the Division.

Eric stated there are no anticipated changes to services, however, increases in people served and expenditures in the VR program has impacted the budget. Projections for state revenues are lower than previous years which will impact state department budgets. This may have an impact on the CILs in terms of the separate contracts with the Division to fund ramps and home modifications. The Division utilizes Ticket to Work reimbursement funds to support VR and IL services. There could be changes to the amount of funds awarded to the CILs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: This standing agenda item is utilized if needed for the SILC to have a closed discussion to address any matter(s) that is sensitive/private or confidential. Hearing no need, Ryan moved the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were none.

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DRS) REPORT, INDEPENDENT

LIVING (IL) SPECIALIST UPDATE: Jennifer Lewis provided a summary of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report. The Centers for Independent Living (CILs) disseminate the survey to all participants whose case has been closed. This includes successful and unsuccessfully closed cases. The survey contains four rating questions and two narrative questions to gauge consumer satisfaction. Unsuccessful closures include those who the CIL cannot reach, participant(s) moved, or did not complete services. The reporting period was October 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024. The survey response rate was 20.64%.

Responses to the four rating questions were positive. Responses to the narrative questions for both CILs included knowledgeable staff, timely services, need/appreciation of grab bars, lift chair, emergency alert pendants, and installation of ramps. The second question asked was what was the least helpful in experiences with IL services and comments included nothing/all was helpful, more time to explore transit options, waiting period to come off waiting list, better explanation of device, help with calls to Social Security.

Status of CIL Contracts: The Division contracts with both Centers for Independent Living (CILs); the contracts contain funding sources of Part B funds, state match, Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD) funds. These contracts start June 1 and run through May 31st. This report identified the status of the contracts between the Division and the CILs have completed 66.67% of the state contract year. ILC is on track to expend 100% of their contract, and WRIL is projected to be under. There are few more months in the contract cycle for the numbers to change.

Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL) Quarterly Report for 1st Quarter, October 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024: Charts were reviewed depicting hours of core services provided, number of recipients receiving services for each CIL. The charts displayed data from 2020 through 2024 for comparison, and what has been accomplished to date in 2025. Services were provided in most core services areas (nursing home transitions were low). Hours of services provided in all core service areas were reviewed, as well as the number of individuals receiving services in each core service area. Total new applicants this quarter was 51, with 37 new applicants who are 25 and younger. A total of 232 individuals were served this quarter. Twenty individuals received HMAD, 25 received telecommunication adaptive devices and 59 individuals received housing services.

WRIL participants learned of IL services primarily from family members/friends. This quarter shows an increase in referrals from Long Term Care Benefit Specialists. WRIL

staff participated in events this quarter in Pennington, Sully, Lawrence, and Butte counties. There were no open houses, developed marketing materials, or success stories submitted. WRIL staff participated in the Rapid City's Mayor's Disability Awareness and Accessibility (DAAC) meeting and the discussion involved projects in Rapid City and accessibility issues. The organization chart shows they are fully staffed.

Independent Living Choices (ILC) Quarterly Report for October 1 through December 31, 2024. The hours of services provided in the core service areas were reviewed along with the number of individuals served. The total new applicants for the quarter were 270, of which 44 were individuals who are 25 and younger. Total number of individuals served this period was 1074. Individuals receiving Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD) this period was 286, telecommunication adaptive devices/18 and housing services/61.

ILC participants learned of IL services primarily from family members, friends, and medical personnel. ILC staff participated/organized events or activities in Minnehaha, Brookings, Brown Davison, Bennet, Beadle, Coddington, and Union. There were no reported open houses, developed marketing materials, or success stories submitted. ILC staff participated in events where housing and transportation topics were discussed. The organizational chart showed the majority of positions filled.

IL Funding Sources: A budget page for SFY 2025 Funding Sources outlines funding sources utilized to support IL services in the state (Part C, Part B, Part B match, Social Security Reimbursement Funds (SSA), and other state funds). Columns displayed funds from the Division including Part B Funds, Part B match, SSA funds and the Ramp Project monies. Part C funds are based on the federal year, October 1st through the end of September, and Part B funds are based upon the state fiscal year, June 1st through the end of May. The report identifies Part B funds utilized in the SILC's resource plan to support SILC member travel, SILC meeting expenses, SILC's strategic planning and CIL staff training.

Last year the Division added funds through separate contracts with the CILs to support ramp projects. This line item, now termed Home Mods, was expanded to include Home Modifications (bathroom remodel, installation of grab bars, widening of doorways). These contracts are renegotiated annually with each CIL as the funding level is dependent upon available funds through the Division. This column includes \$600,000 to support these services.

CIL On Site Reviews: Jennifer reported that ILC's review was held in December and WRIL's was held in January. The reviews ensure compliance with federal regulations, state policies, and contract requirements. The review process involves checking organizational policies, audits, board meeting minutes, organizational charts, and consumer satisfaction survey results. Jennifer reviewed questions asked of each CIL in

terms of the participant files reviewed, meeting objectives, and percentage/score of meeting compliance. The majority of ILC's ratings were 95% or higher. New data points were added to the review to include length of referral date to application date, percent of cases reviewed receiving HMAD, TAD, total cases, closed cases and specific case closures (moved, died, criminal activity, non-compliant, disappeared).

Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD): Both ILC and WRIL are allowed to use up to 15% of their combined Part C and state funds for home modifications and assistive devices for participants. **ILC** set aside the maximum 15% of their funds for HMAD (\$226,985.80). As of December, ILC has paid out \$223,164.19, which means they are on track to meet their goal. WRIL set aside 10% of their funds for HMAD (\$53,468.62). As of the review, WRIL has \$41,235.77 remaining to expend before the end of the contract. WRIL has a waiting list of about 100 participants, and there are concerns about meeting their goal to provide enough HMAD. WRIL staff have assured the Division that they will meet the goal. The only corrective action was posting their most recent 990 form to their website.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CILs) UPDATES: WRIL: Codi mentioned issues related to staff on medical leave and the impacts of COVID, which has impacted staffing levels and operations. The onsite review has been completed, and the staff and board feel positive about their performance, with a few concerns. Staff are working with Jennifer to resolve issues around numbers/data to determine the most appropriate reporting methods. WRIL is working with the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Independent Living Program staff to ensure they meet reporting requirements. Staff are completing the Program Performance Report (PPR), which is due by March 31.

In terms of fundraising, WRIL has volunteers working at the Monument during events. Information is shared during these events, and feedback is good. WRIL was at full staff up until 2 weeks ago. Staff located in Pierre had to resign due to family issues, which requires staff to travel to cover this area. WRIL is currently working with one contractor. Despite this limitation, WRIL expects to complete the remaining projects and expend the rest of their HMAD funds before the contract deadline.

ILC: Matt reported that the three PPR's have been completed and submitted. ILC submits a report for ILC South (formerly Prairie Freedom Center), ILC North (formerly Opportunities for Independent Living) and ILC Native American (formerly Native American Advocacy Project). Demographics of individuals served:

Total Individuals Served:

- 2150 individuals were served.
- 1275 female and 875 male.
- 1,718 Caucasian and 206 Native American.

Disability Breakdown:

- Physical Disabilities: The highest percentage of individuals served had physical disabilities (1,343 individuals).
- Cognitive Disabilities: The second-highest category was individuals with cognitive disabilities (291 individuals).

Nursing Home/Institution Deterrence:

- 9 individuals moved out of nursing homes/institutions with assistance.
- 542 individuals avoided nursing home placement due to IL services

Age:

- Half of the individuals served were over the age of 60.

Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD):

- Total Expenditure: ILS spent \$985,600 on home modifications and assistive devices.
- Breakdown of Modifications:
 - 33 ramps
 - 72 bathroom modifications
 - 20 vehicle modifications
 - 83 other home modifications

A core service provided is peer support (one on one or group). There are 13 trained peer support counselors, with 18 peer support groups located throughout the service area. Transition services for youth/young adults with disabilities were provided, including the summer transition programs, offering 8 programs at different office locations.

ILC is the fiscal agent for the Department of Social Services Home Again program in two service areas. This has been challenging due to the amount of staff time needed.

Staff turnover for independent living specialists in expansion areas has increased, however personal attendant care workers have been very steady.

ILC's motorcycle raffle is underway. A total of 2,000 tickets will be sold at \$20 per ticket. Tickets can also be purchased through ILC or on their website.

ILC recently had the Assistive Daily Living Services (ADLS) waiver review. It was a good review with no findings or corrective actions.

Matt spoke to an increase in safety incidents. ILC has been addressing this by sending two staff to a home, meeting in public, or having participants come to the office. Staff

have been threatened and there have been incidents of entering a home with hoarding or other unsafe living conditions. Training is provided to new staff in addition to ongoing annual training. CJ spoke about Sheriff's providing staff safety training for similar agency staff. Lyle stated that the Cheyenne Eagle Butte VR program offers office space for traveling agency staff to meet with individuals. And, if individuals need a ride to the office, the program can provide transportation.

Some members talked about the use of cameras in their home who are receiving personal attendant care services. A question was asked about IL purchasing cameras for participants. There is nothing in regulations indicating that cameras cannot be purchased; this issue has not been brought up before.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SPIL) 2025-2027 MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Staff referenced the State Plan Section 1.4 Evaluation that was disseminated to members. This section speaks about what the IL Network partners will do in terms of monitoring state plan activities. Staff discussed activities conducted to date in terms of the bullet items. Staff shared a report utilized to gather information from IL Network partners to track activities conducted in support of the goals, objectives, and indicators. The report identifies the three goals, objectives, and indicators for each. Examples were provided of information gathered from members to demonstrate what staff collects and tracks. Staff reiterated the importance of collecting this information and utilizing it in the Program Performance Report/year-end report, in addition to monitoring progress made towards accomplishing the goals.

DIVISION OF REHABILITATION SERVICES (DRS), BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BVR): Eric provided this update, noting that the BVR is an advisory board for the VR agency. VR assists individuals with disabilities find employment. BVR responsibilities include advising the Division on the VR program's performance, developing goals and strategies, and evaluating consumer satisfaction with the services provided. The BVR met on March 12th. Meeting agenda items included updates from two Project SEARCH staff and their specific program and an update from Workplace Disability Network of the Black Hills new director. The meetings also have standing agenda items including updates on VR program initiatives, SILC and BVR staff report. The next meeting will be held on June 26th. Eric shared the state's boards and commissions portal and how to navigate the site, demonstrating how to look up information for the BVR and SILC. The site is <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COUNCIL (LRC) UPDATE: As requested by the SILC, Eric displayed the Legislative Research Council website and how to navigate this site. He displayed the schedule of committee meetings, 2025 bill listings for both the House and Senate, session calendar, and listing of the legislators and contact information. Committee meetings are posted under the schedule, identifying date, time, and

meeting agenda (if available). He displayed the 2025 House and Senate bill listing. The links to South Dakota's Codified Laws and the State's administrative rules are also available on LRC's site. There is the ability to create an account under the My LRC tab to follow and receive updates during the session. LRC's website can be accessed at: <https://sdlegislature.gov/>

DIVISION OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (DSBVI): Tricia provided this update. SBVI's Older Blind Program staff, Sandy Neyhart has announced her retirement, effective in June. Sandy attended a program managers conference in Virginia focusing on blindness and low vision, there were 32 states represented. Consumer satisfaction surveys will be disseminated March 31. Preliminary information identifies 86 applications for IL services and 81 closures this fiscal year. The CCTV lease/loan program has 196 machines available for loan to individuals over the age of 55 with vision loss. The CCTV program has guidelines that include steps to remove machines that have reached depreciation. Individuals who are leasing these machines are contacted and asked about acquiring ownership of the machines.

Sandy attended the DakotaLink Advisory Council meeting. DakotaLink staff advised Sandy to have the incoming program manager complete an application for the advisory council to maintain connections. Tricia attended the Coddington county interagency meeting, which meets monthly. This provides a great opportunity to meet other agency staff and learn about community resources.

BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (BSBVI): Ryan reported that the Board of SBVI met on March 14th via Zoom. Reports were provided on the SILC, Board Activities, Governor's Awards, and National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Deb Ver Steeg represented the B/SBVI during Disability Awareness Day at the capital. Board action items included committing up to \$5,000 to support the upcoming Governor's Awards and up to \$5,000 to support the 2025 NDEAM events. Membership updates included Cole Uecker submitting his letter of resignation, he serves as the Client Assistance Program representative. Nicole Nelson will term off at the end of June. Ryan will complete his first term in June and his name has been forwarded to the Governor's office for consideration of reappointment. The election of officers will take place during the June 13th meeting.

SILC STAFF UPDATE: National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM): The NDEAM Request for Proposal was issued in December and proposals were due February 2nd. Eleven funding requests were received, totaling \$48,575, with over \$16,000 in in-kind donations. The NDEAM Review Committee has representatives from BVR, SILC and B/SBVI and they met on February 19th to review the requests.

The NDEAM Review Committee has recommended approving \$48,575 for the NDEAM activities in 2025. The committee's recommendation was communicated with the

B/SBVI and the BVR. Staff reported that over the last five years, the NDEAM activities have consistently come in under budget. In the past, DRS has agreed to provide additional support if needed and graciously agreed to do so again, if needed.

MOTION TO APPROVE FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE 2025 NDEAM EVENTS IN THE AMOUNT UP TO \$5,000.00. Yeas: Joe, Theresa, Richard, Patty, CJ, Matt, Brad, and Julie. Nays: None.

BVR/SILC Nominations: The solicitation for BVR and SILC nominations was disseminated in January. The BVR received five nominations, which includes Allison White's nomination to replace Cole Uecker. Four of the five nominees were people with disabilities. The BVR will need two appointments to meet the minimal 15-member requirement. Brooke Lusk's term ends June 30th, and Cole submitted his letter of resignation. One of the new appointments must be a representative of the Client Assistance Program. The SILC received four nominations, and all four nominees are people with disabilities. The SILC will need one new appointment to replace Patty Kuglitsch, who will term off the end of June.

Governor's Awards Update: The Solicitation packet for the Governor's Awards was disseminated on March 10th and nominations are due on May 2nd. There were no changes to the nomination forms or categories, and the forms can be found on the Department of Human Services/Division of Rehabilitation Services website. The nomination forms can be accessed as a Word document or as a PDF/fillable Form. The link is: <https://dhs.sd.gov/en/rehabilitation-services/governors-awards>.

The Governor's Awards Review Committee will be convened by Zoom sometime later in May or early June. Staff will disseminate a doodle poll to identify a date that works for the majority of committee members early in May. Committee members include Kendra, CJ Moit and Joe.

Champion of Independent Living Services Award: The solicitation packet will be disseminated in the middle of May and nominations will be due June 27th. The Public Awareness/Outreach/Advocacy/Collaboration Committee is utilized to review the nominations.

Budget Update: Support services for the Board and SILC are provided through an agreement between the Division and Black Hills Special Services Cooperative. The current contract started January 1st, and it ends on December 31st. This budget runs on the calendar year. The budget pages disseminated showed no expenditures during January. Most expenditures fall later in the contract year, September through December, with expenses related to the Governor's Awards Ceremony, NDEAM and member related expenses with attending the Fall Conference.

Fall Conference: The 2025 Fall Conference will be held October 14-16 at the Ramkota hotel in Sioux Falls. One keynote speaker identified is Dr. Lester, who will focus on Personality Disorders, and he will be utilized for a few breakout sessions. There are discussions with Disability Determination Services staff about conducting a session on “How Best To Support a SSA Disability Claimant”. This would include DDS background, best practices/steps in the process that someone can do to assist a claimant with applying or throughout the adjudication of their Social Security Disability Claim/how to make the process easier; what gets overlooked, causing problems; how to support a claimant to resolve or avoid issues. “Save the Date” information will be disseminated towards the end of March; and registration information will be available sometime in August. The conference hosts tracks for VR, providers, and IL sessions. If SILC members are interested in attending, their expenses would be covered, i.e., registration fee, mileage, per diem and lodging.

OTHER BUSINESS: Patty raised a question regarding the equipment distribution program and suggested the recommendation of the adding carbon monoxide detectors to the list. The deaf community recently lost two members to carbon monoxide poisoning because they could not hear the detector. Her recommendation included detectors with flashing lights to make them accessible to those who are deaf or hard of hearing. A question was asked about exploring safety/security protocols further, having discussion/dialogue to help identify solutions, training events.

CLOSING ACTIONS: Future Agenda Items: follow up on the security/safety discussion. Next Meeting: staff sent out a doodle poll and needs a few more responses to schedule the next meeting. Adjournment: The Chair asked if there was any other business. There was none, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:30 pm.