

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC)

Tuesday, September 30, 2025

Meeting Held Via Zoom

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DHS/DRS DHS Hillview Plaza/Conference Room

Western Resources for Independent Living/Belle Fourche/Conference Room

MEMBERS PRESENT: Brett Glirbas, Joe Vetch, Richard Moeller, Kendra Gottsleben, CJ Moit, Matt Cain, Ryan Groeneweg, Brad Konechne, Tricia Eggers, Lance Sigdestad, Jennifer Lewis, and Theresa Marzahn. **Members Absent:** Val Beeck, Vicki Steffes, and Julie Johnson. **OTHERS PRESENT:** Eric Weiss, Codi Erickson, Mark Sternhagen, Lyle Cook, Jim Hoxie, Linda Hoxie, Sandy Neyhart, Kristy Anderson, Ryan Anderson, Steve Huffman, Janet Huffman, Sheila Powell, Jerry Powell, Larry Reuppel, Shari Reuppel, Frank Ward, Charlotte Ward, Dessie Hoxie, Konner Hoxie, Cheyenne Bertolotto, and Colette Wagoner. The 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 DISTRIBUTED – MADE (M), SECONDED (S), AND CARRIED (C).** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, 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, there were none. **MOTION TO APPROVE THE SILC JUNE 17 MINUTES AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 9, MSC.** Yeas: CJ, Kendra, Joe, Brett, Lance, Matt, and Brad. Nays: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mark Sternhagen announced the *Building Unity by Learning Together* event on October 21 at 7:00 PM at SDSU (Volstorff Ballroom West), sponsored by the Brookings Disability Awareness Committee and SDSU offices. He emphasized the importance of sharing disability-related information positively.

Lance shared that the *Bridging South Dakota* project received continued funding. This partnership project provides cross-training and outreach on sexual assault prevention and support for individuals with disabilities and Deaf individuals. Partner organizations include SD Network Against Family Violence & Sexual Assault, SD DROP, SD Urban Indian Health, The Compass Center, and Black Hills Workshop.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS: There were none.

REVIEW OF STATE'S OPEN MEETINGS LAWS: The SILC conducted its annual review of South Dakota's Open Meetings Laws as required by Senate Bill 74. The review involved examining the informational brochure from the South Dakota Attorney General's office, which was shared with all members prior to the meeting.

Colette presented an overview of the laws, covering key points such as the need for advance notice, rules for public participation, proper meeting recordings, and the difference between official meetings and executive sessions. She also outlined the six reasons for holding closed sessions, record-keeping responsibilities, and how to report violations. Similar reviews would continue at future fall SILC meetings.

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 a survey to all participants whose case has been closed; includes successful and unsuccessfully closed cases. The survey contains four rating questions and two narrative questions to gauge consumer satisfaction.

The reporting period was October 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025. The survey response rate was 19.29%. Responses to the four rating questions were mostly positive. She also reviewed responses received to the narrative questions (what was most helpful, what was least helpful) for both CILs.

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 on June 1 and run through May 31st. Jennifer reviewed the status of the CIL contracts report for the first, second and third month of the contract period. Both CILs are on track to expend their contracts after looking at the status of the 3rd month.

Independent Living Choices (ILC) 3rd Quarterly Report – April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025. The hours of services provided this quarter in the core service areas were reviewed. Total new applicants for the quarter were 300, of which 69 were individuals who are 25 and younger. Total number of individuals served this period was 1,190. The number of individuals received the following services this quarter: HMAD/282; TAD/179 and Housing/65.

ILC participants learned of IL services primarily through medical personnel and other which included county services, DHS, Vista Care, Union Gospel Mission, social security, LTSS, ADLS, Volunteers of America. The third highest area was family member/friends. ILC staff participated/organized events or activities in a number of counties, including several that were identified in the State plan as less served. There

was an open house held in June, and two success stories were submitted. ILC staff participated in meetings to discuss services, identified needs, HMAD devices, and other resources. The organizational chart showed most positions filled.

Western Resources for Independent Living (WRIL) Quarterly Report for 3rd Quarter, April 1 through June 30, 2025: Charts were reviewed depicting hours of core services provided. The charts displayed hours of service from the previous fiscal year for comparison. Total new applicants this quarter was 95, with 32 new applicants who are 25 and younger. A total of 246 individuals were served this quarter. The number of individuals received the following services this quarter: Home Modifications and Assistive Devices (HMAD)/18; Telecommunication Adaptive Devices (TAD)/41 and Housing/65.

WRIL participants learned of IL services primarily from family/friends. WRIL staff participated in outreach activities in various counties including counties identified as less served. There were no open houses, however marketing was conducted through radio. The organization chart shows they are almost fully staffed.

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.

CENTERS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (CILs) UPDATES: Matt shared the following updates. Preliminary numbers for the end of the fiscal year reflect 1996 people received services. The MYCIL project targeted the identification of out-of-school minority youth with disabilities ages 14-24 and reconnecting them with IL services. ILC serves the nine Tribal Nations, which was a great match. ILC staff are organizing youth peer support groups to assist this age group. The annual motorcycle raffle is complete, and the winner of the bike was from Oklahoma. This raffle earns between \$20,000 - \$25,000. ILC conducts in-house staff training, and the next training will be held in November, and it will focus on Safety and Self Defense. Other training will focus on leadership/professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and substance abuse.

ILC has had an opening in the Mobridge office since July. They have paid over \$1600 in advertising for this position. ILC received 3 applications and conducted 2 interviews. It might be time to explore moving this position to Pierre. It is the end of the fiscal year, and staff increases were provided.

WRIL: Codi referred to the position in Pierre on the organizational chart that identifies it as open. She reported that the position is filled, and staff training will be conducted. WRIL has several fundraising events coming up for the organization.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING (SPIL) MONITORING AND

EVALUATION: The State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) 2025–2027 covers federal fiscal years 2025–2027. It outlines how federal, state, and other funds support Independent Living (IL) services statewide and describes collaboration between CILs, the Division (Designated State Entity), and the SILC. The plan includes goals, objectives, and activities to guide efforts over the 3-year period.

Individual Training Plans: Staff reminded members that one of the SILC indicators outlined in the SPIL requires maintaining individual training plans for all SILC members. Each year, staff distributes the training plan and requests members to complete and return it. The updated training plan will be sent out following this meeting. If you have already submitted yours, no further action is needed.

Program Performance Report (PPR): The PPR is an annual report completed jointly by the Division and the SILC and submitted to the Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Office of Independent Living Programs (OILP). It summarizes SILC activities, outcomes, and identified needs. Work on the report will begin soon, and input from members on SPIL-related participation will be needed. A draft of the report will be shared with the SILC for review before the December meeting, where final approval will be requested.

BOARD OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (BVR) UPDATE: Eric provided this update, noting that the BVR is an advisory board for the VR agency. BVR responsibilities include advising the Division on the VR program's performance, developing goals and priorities, and evaluating consumer satisfaction with the services provided. The BVR met earlier in September and agenda items included Division Initiatives/project updates, annual review of the SD's Open Meetings Laws, update from the Transition Services Liaison Project, and an overview of the Brookings District office. The next meeting will be held on December 3rd. Eric shared the state's boards and commissions portal and demonstrated how to navigate the site, which can be found at: <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/>

DIVISION OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (DSBVI): Tricia reported on an opening in the Pierre office for a SBVI VR Counselor/Rehabilitation Teacher. A concerted effort has been made to raise awareness of SBVI's services and referrals are starting to increase. The CCTV program has 191 machines, of which 103 are out on loan to those meeting financial need, and 62 machines are being leased for \$30/month. The remaining machines are waiting for referrals. Since October 1, 2024, the IL Older Blind program has served 520 individuals, the youngest recipient is 21 years old, and the oldest recipient is 102. The IL program has a 90% success rate with 152 closed cases.

Consumer Satisfaction & Program Updates for 3rd Quarter: 50 consumer satisfaction surveys were sent; 21 returned (42% response rate) with an average satisfaction rating of 3.63 out of 4. Positive comments were received regarding the impact of services and staff dedication. Some consumers requested follow-up training or device support, which teachers are addressing.

Success Stories: A 102-year-old continues to live independently due to support from a rehab teacher. A 42-year-old blind individual transitioned from a nursing home to living independently in his own apartment with SBVI and partner agency support.

Community Partnership: Watertown's peer support group partnered with the local transit system to provide free transportation for members attending meetings. SBVI's program manager completed orientation in blindness training, and she will work with fiscal staff to improve her understanding of IL fund management. Work will begin on year-end reports.

BOARD OF SERVICE TO THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED (B/SBVI): Ryan reported that the B/SBVI met on September 12. The agenda included Board member updates, review of the SD's Open Meetings Laws, SILC Update, and committee updates. Program updates included the Older Blind Independent Living Program and the VR program. A counselor was hired in Rapid City, outreach was conducted in Pine Ridge, job placements slowed due to limited employment specialists, support was provided to a client to attend an out of state conference, and the intake packet is being updated.

The Rehabilitation Center for the Blind recently hired two staff members. SBVI's case file review showed strong compliance and improved timeliness. Work is underway on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment for the Division and board. Several board members will be attending the Fall Conference in October. The board will meet again on December 5th.

Champion of Independent Living Services Award Presentation: Recipient: Jim Hoxie was honored as the 2025 Champion of Independent Living Services.

- Guests Present: Linda Hoxie, Sandy Neyhart (nominator), Joanna Jones, Kristy Anderson, Steve and Janet Huffman, Conner, Charlie Ward.
- Award Background: Established in 2015, the award recognizes individuals or programs that promote independent living. To date, eleven individuals and one program have been honored.
- Nomination Process: Ryan Groeneweg described the nomination and selection process, noting Jim's long-standing advocacy and service.
- Jim's Contributions:
 - Retired forester from Spearfish, SD, who became legally blind.
 - Completed rehabilitation in 2017 and began advocacy work.

- Co-authored *Grandpa's White Cane* with Joanna Jones.
 - Delivered over 130 presentations across North America.
 - Mentored individuals and trained others in disability awareness.
- Guest Remarks: Attendees shared personal reflections and praised Jim's impact on disability rights and service systems.
- Closing: Jim expressed gratitude for the recognition and support. Ryan encouraged future nominations and thanked everyone for attending and promoting the independent living philosophy.

STATE PLAN FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING 2028-2030: The next State Plan cycle will be FFY 2028-2030. The submission date is June 30, 2027. Initial development work has begun. A draft Community Survey document was shared with the Council and the following items were outlined:

- Intended for dissemination by end of 2025 or early 2026.
- Purpose: Gather input to inform State Plan development.
- Compared to the 2022 version, the new draft includes 16 questions (up from 15), with updates to questions 13–15 to better capture educational priorities, interest in services, and contact information for follow-up.
- Staff asked about edits or other changes, there were none offered.
- There was consensus to finalize and move forward with the survey.

The second item included a draft Guidance Document – Responsible Practices for SILC Support: SILC staff explained the following points:

- The guidance document was drafted to establish financial and operational practices for SILC. The SILC does not have a policy manual or a financial policy.
- The purpose is to promote transparency, protect integrity, and ensure proper use of funds.
- Content includes:
 - SILC staff responsibilities
 - BHSSC organizational processes
 - Expenditure and reimbursement procedures
 - Fiscal management roles and safeguards
- The document emphasizes separation of duties and appropriate checks and balances.
- Staff requested the Council to consider the approval or adoption of the document.

MOTION TO ACCEPT THE GUIDANCE FOR RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES FOR SILC SUPPORT DOCUMENT, MSC. Yeas: CJ, Kendra, Joe, Brett, Lance, Matt, and Brad. Nays: None.

SILC STAFF UPDATE: National Disability Employment Awareness Month: Communities across the state are planning events. Eleven communities were awarded

funds to support an event. A listing of events was shared, sent out via email on September 23rd to all board and council members. Members were encouraged to attend events if they were able to do so. Governor's Awards Update: The recipients have been announced, and the awards ceremony will be held on Wednesday, October 8, 2025, in the Capitol Rotunda in Pierre. A post ceremony event will take place at the Capitol Lake Visitor's Center.

Recipients include:

Jim Hoxie, Spearfish - Outstanding Individual with a Disability
Shawn Lyons, Pierre - Outstanding Employee with a Disability
Eagle Butte Co-op Association, Eagle Butte - Outstanding Small Private Employer
Ken's Superfair Foods, Aberdeen - Outstanding Large Private Employer
City of Belle Fourche, Belle Fourche - Outstanding Public Employer
Steve Hilton, Piedmont - Outstanding Transition Services Award
Sandy Neyhart, Sturgis - Distinguished Service Award

SD Public Broadcasting will livestream the ceremony. The link is already posted on their website located at: <https://www.sdpb.org/>

The 2025 Fall Conference will be held in Sioux Falls at the Ramkota Hotel – October 14- through the 16th. To date, there are 5 SILC members registered.

Budget: 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 will end on December 31st. The budget pages disseminated via email show expenditures through the month of August. There have been few expenditures to date. Most expenditures will be coming related to the Governor's Awards Ceremony, NDEAM, CIL staff training, and SILC member expenses with attending the Fall Conference.

OTHER BUSINESS: There was none.

CLOSING ACTIONS: Future Agenda Items: please share agenda items/topics with staff. Next Meeting: a doodle poll was disseminated to identify a date in December. Adjournment: The Chair asked if there were any objections to adjourn, hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm.