

SILC Meeting Minutes

August 6, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

Minutes

Attendees:

- Council Members: Jean Schroeder, June Hermanson, Chris Johnsrud, Julie Williams, Nichole Lowrance, Scott Williamson, Tami Hoar, Hannah Thompson, Alice Lewis, Gina Lytle, Savannah Smith
- Absent: Heather Giese
- CIL Directors: Tami Hoar Scott Birkenbuel, Margaret Keener
- DET Staff: Hannah Stokes, Julia Arnold, Desiree Dean
- Guests: Jeremy Morris (Rural Institute, T & TA)

Budget Report

- **SILC Budget – FY2025**
 - Consulting - \$98
 - Supplies/Materials - \$223
 - Travel - \$1,645
 - Honorariums - \$600
 - Meetings/Conference Costs - \$84
 - Education/Training - \$0
 - Communication - \$0
 - Printing/Pub& Graphics - \$0
 - Repair / Maintenance - \$0
 - Other Expense - \$472
 - Total - \$3120.92
- Part B Contracts with CILs are 74% spend as of July 31st, 2025. The Federal Fiscal year is 83.33% complete.
- General Fund contracts are 94% spent as of July 31st, 2025.
- IL Program Manager Administrative Costs \$65,346 as of July 31st, 2025.

Reports/Planning:

- Reports were given by Jeremy Morris, T & TA and Ohio Statewide Independent Living Council. He shared information regarding CIL Satisfaction reports and suggested different ways to conduct this survey. He answered questions and provided surveys and reports for review.

- Chris Johnsrud and Gina Lytle discussed the Disability Employment Conference they attended in May.
- Membership Committee shared they had reached out to a SRC member, and she forwarded the request on to several people she knew at Indian Health Service. Julia indicated no response had been received. Jean Schroeder shared that she and Julia had plans to visit the Indian Family Health Center. Board members discussed other potential individuals that might be interested in this Board position.
- Jean Schroeder proposed that a timeline of SILC activities be compiled so that no activities get missed and the Board agreed that this document would be helpful.

Motions:

- Scott Williamson made a motion to send three people to the APRIL Conference, Gina Lytle seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- June Hermanson made the motion to pay for three Board members to attend the MYTransitions Conference. Tami Hoar made a second, and the motion passed unanimously.
- After discussion Jean Schroeder made a motion to sponsor \$1700 in MYTransition Conference for youth and parent/guardian registration fees, \$2000 will be spent on the IL Symposium, and any money returned from the MYTransitions Conference and remaining money in the budget will be applied to the IL Symposium. Savannah Smith made the second and the motion passed, June Hermanson abstained from voting.
- By-laws edits were reviewed by Board members in attendance. Jean Schroeder made the motion to accept the edits as presented, June Hermanson made the second, and the motion passed unanimously.
- Jean Schroeder made a motion to approve the Policy and Procedure manual as reviewed during the 8-6-25 meeting. June Hermanson made a second and an all in favor motion passed unanimously.

SILC Committee Reports:

CIL Reports:

- Tami Hoar, Summit

Tami Hoar shared that Summit held its ADA picnic in June. In July in Missoula Summit hosted an 'Out to Lunch' event. The mayor came and read a proclamation, Legislative

staff attended and read an ADA statement. Travis Hoffman spoke encouraging to the Legislatures remember to do what they say. Additionally, Three Summit staff members joined with Ability and attended the NCIL conference in Washington D.C.

The Missoula Peer Group met with Mountain Lion Transit. The Peer Group conduct disability trainings every 4-6 weeks for the new drivers. Several peers in this group have been trained in advocacy and outreach. These peers held an accessibility audit at a local Missoula restaurant. A list is being compiled of the restaurants in Missoula that are inclusive for people with all disabilities. An accessibility audit was completed in Hamilton at the theater. As well as, the music festival, Zoo Fest, was held in late July in the Missoula area. The event was held at the Fairgrounds. Summit now has a contract with Missoula County to provide knowledge and training regarding accessibility at this (and similar events) in the future.

Tami shared she was interested in learning how Ability's philanthropic campaign goes. As funding continues to be concerning, Tami has advised Summit staff to not get too downtrodden and to take one day at a time regarding what is and is not happening with the Administration. It is important to continue to focus on the consumers. Additionally, with the plan for redetermination to occur more frequently, it is imperative that consumers read their mail. Thus, Summit has started a 'Mail and Munchies' workshop monthly to help consumers review and understand their mail.

- Carlos Ramalho, LIFTT
 - No report shared.
- Margaret Keener, NCILS

MARGARET KEENER shared NCILS had a great quarter except for the recent flood of the building. Margaret shared this happened due to some flash flooding in Great Falls. Services will continue remotely, and employees are doing their best to meet consumers' needs.

This year, one of NCILS main goals was to support the SPIL goals. Specifically, NCILS is working to increase outreach. NCILS launched a new website to better reach unserved and underserved Montanans. The new website reflects the goal highlighting that NCILS works with people with all sorts of disabilities. The new website is www.ncils.org. NCILS has also published a revised brochure and adopted an additional logo. NCILS will keep the old logo as well because it shows where NCILS serves.

Additionally, NCILS has been participating in several community fairs. NCILS participated at the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind fair, at the Summer Institute in a panel presentation about resource providers and at the teacher resource fair, and at both high school fairs in Great Falls. NCILS will participate in the Veteran's stand down in September.

The new format of the Quarterly Reports helped NCILS better track the consumers served. NCILS has had an increase in referrals.

Another NCILS goal is to build the peer program, hosting at least one monthly activity. In June NCILS held a safety training and in July the ADA picnic. The picnic received good coverage on the news and we're able to visit and collaborate with community partners and then also visit with consumers. One of our consumers developed some disability Pride Month stickers that were shared and highlighted on the news as well.

NCILS collaborated with Disability Rights Montana. DRM attended the picnic and were interviewed for some podcasts and the local news. DRM shared some of the stories about networking and advocacy. Margaret Keener shared that David Carlson has also indicated that due to the collective efforts, several items in the 504 lawsuit were changed. Presently the 504 law cannot be considered unconstitutional and now on hold. So, raising your voice really does matter. In August NCILS is going to host a workshop to help consumers write their stories. These workshops are very empowering and personalizes how services and resources help out people with disabilities.

NCILS is also hosting A Living Well in the Community class in September in the Great Falls area. Several trainings are planned to include safety and understanding the ADA and what people's rights are. A NCILS employee participated in the ADA Symposium, please contact NCILS if you would like this information. In October we'll have one of our leadership luncheons where we invite legislators, local community leaders, and consumers to meet and talk about what's being worked on and what disability community wants to communicate with those leaders in response.

This summer MYLF Step 1 and Step 2 were held to help those in the transition process from HS to post-secondary education. Nineteen attended Step 1 and 10 participated in Step 2. Lastly, the SILC money that was allocated will be used for a retreat/training to work on our yearly plan. This event will be held next week.

- Scott Birkenbuel, Ability Montana

Scott Birkenbuel shared updates about Ability's recent July activities. The Butte office held its ADA picnic mid-month. It was well attended and many Butte Silver Bow providers tabled at the event as well. Likewise, Ability staff attended the NCIL conference in Washington, D.C.

Business-wise our consumer count is consistent. IL has a variety of groups going on. Ability is hosting a Men's Group, Women's Group, and a newly launched Youth Group in Bozeman. Butte is hosting a Living Well class and another class will start soon in Helena.

Scott Birkenbuel shared the Ability podcast listenership continues to increase. In the last year, the podcast has had 1,332 new downloads. The Podcast has subscribers in 34 states, with the top states are Montana, Colorado, Wyoming. The Podcast has also been downloaded in 13 countries. The listeners are 70% female, 23% male, and 7% are undeclared.

The self-directed care program continues to face challenges. With redetermination happening annually it is causing stress for consumers. Ability is using the state's EVV system, which is very poor. Ability is looking for a new EVV system for our program. PCA turnover continues to be a challenge. It is difficult to find PCAs and Scott Birkenbuel shared he believes this is due to the pay.

The recreation program at Camp Bullwheel is having a great summer. The recreation coordinator at Fort Harrison has a group coming about every two weeks all summer long. Ability has a great team of volunteers to row and help fish. Ability is hosting a thank you event at Camp Bullwheel to thank you to those who donated Camp Bullwheel to Ability. Hosting Chef Eduardo Garcia at this event.

Scott Birkenbuel shared that with the political environment we're in that he is feeling the pressure do more and better resource development. Ability received the Subaru Share the Love Grant for \$20,000 and then received some smaller donations totaling just under \$20,000. Ability has also submitted a VA grant and several more are presently being written and will be submitted later this month. Ability is working with Urbana Group, a development company, to start our pursuit of philanthropic dollars.

Scott Birkenbuel is starting the budgeting process for next year. The funding streams have been pretty stable all this year. Even though there's all this unrest in Medicaid. He shared that Ability is anticipating level income through next year, although he is budgeting for a 10% decline just to be safe.

Additionally, Ability continues to strive to be better known in the community. Ability continues to work on social media, and improve the newsletter. The website is complete, although it continues to grow, be updated, and add more features to it.

Public Comment

- None

4:08pm Meeting adjourned