

SILC Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

Summary

Attendees:

- Council Members: Jean Schroeder, June Hermanson, Chris Johnsrud, Julie Williams
- Absent: Hannah Thompson, Heather Giese, Nichole Lowrance, Scott Williamson, Tami Hoar
- CIL Directors: Scott Birkenbuel, Margaret Keener, Carlos Ramalho
- DET Staff: Hannah Stokes, Lacey Conzelman, Julia Arnold
- Guests: Tom Osborn, Angie Brakefield, Jessica Kechely, Erin Bley, Melissa Dale, Valery Roman-Cruz, Mackenzie Jones

Budget Report

- SILC Budget – FY2024
 - Consulting - \$0
 - Supplies/Materials - \$0
 - Travel - \$5,565
 - Honorariums - \$3,400
 - Meetings/Conference Costs - \$1,175
 - Education/Training - \$0
 - Communication - \$200
 - Printing/Pub& Graphics - \$825
 - Repair / Maintenance - \$0
 - Other Expense - \$418
 - Total - \$11,583
 - Remaining Balance to Spend: \$10,240
- SILC Budget – FY2025
 - Remaining Balance to spend 100%
- Part B Contracts are 9% spend as of December 31st, 2024.
- General Fund contracts are 29% spent as of December 31st, 2024.
- IL Program Manager Administrative Costs \$10,240 as of December 31st, 2024.
- ARPA funds are 100% expended as this is one-time funding & will not to be renewed.

Reports/Planning:

- Angie Brakefield, Jessica Kechely, Erin Bley, Melissa Dale, Valery Roman-Cruz, Mackenzie Jones provided information on Montana Disability and Health Program and associated programs (Asthma, Nutrition, Tobacco Prevention, and Falls Prevention).
- Chanda Hermanson provided an update on Legislative happenings.

Motions:

- Quorum was not present at meeting; June suggested motions were made in the meetings and cast an electronic vote:

- Motion to send a letter of support for the Montana Empowerment Center. June Hermanson made the motion to send the letter, Jean Schroeder seconded the motion.
- Motion to pay membership for APRIL and NCIL. Jean Schroeder made the motion to pay the APRIL and NCIL membership, June Hermanson seconded the motion.

SILC Committee Reports:

- Tom Osborn gave an update on the Olmstead Committee. He indicated that the Committee has a direction and a timeline for sending letters to the other department Directors.
- Julie Willaims and Julia Arnold shared the Policy and Procedure Committee is working to update and correlate the by-laws and Policy and Procedures. Should have updated documents for the May meeting.
- Chris Johnsrud shared the Executive Committee has an upcoming meeting in February. Additionally, he discussed advocacy versus lobbying as we are presently busy in the legislative session. Chris mentioned the possibility of setting up a committee for the CIL Evaluation.

CIL Reports:

- Tami Hoar, Summit
 - Tami could not attend this meeting as Summit is moving today to new location. She will update the SILC at the next meeting.
- Carlos Ramalho, LIFTT

LIFTT has a new vision and mission statement that was approved on January 9, 2025. Living Independently for Today and Tomorrow's (LIFTT) mission as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Center for Independent Living serving Southeastern Montana is to empower aging and disabled individuals to live independently through education, support and other opportunities.

LIFTT reported it works with many of the Montana Disability and Health Programs that presented during the SILC meeting today. LIFTT received a grant from the Montana Department of Transportation to purchase two vehicles. We have a grant in place to plan an ADA accessible rural transportation program from the National Aging and Disabled Transportation Center. The mission statement of these programs is to bridge the transportation gap in rural Montana.

The most successful new program that LIFTT has in operation since July 2024 is the Diabetes Prevention Program. We started with a small grant, and we already have fifteen participants attending classes. Part of the Diabetes Prevention Program is a breakfast and lunch program, serving thirty meals a day. One of the achievements of the Diabetes Prevention Program is a low glycemic cookbook.

This year the Board and LIFTT employees are composed of eighty percent with significant disabilities. For five consecutive years we have been experiencing a growth in the number of individuals served information and referral and individuals on all groups enjoying the services provided by LIFTT. One of the reasons is the extreme population growth in Yellowstone County.

The total number of consumers served last year was 795, in the first quarter of this year we are already serving 317. The number of individuals served in Yellowstone County is the highest of all the eighteen counties we serve followed by Dawson County. The two locations where LIFTT has offices. We are experiencing higher number of individuals that disclose dealing with multiple

disabilities. LIFTT provided 66 individuals Vocational Rehabilitation services, in the first quarter of this current fiscal year LIFTT has served 57.

Four LIFTT team members successfully participated in the Legislative Day. LIFTT is remotely submitting testimonies and written information to the legislators to help them make informed decisions about issues LIFTT is concerned about.

- Margaret Keener, NCILS

North Central Independent Living Services have been busy. Just recently, a Living Well in the Community class reunion was held. We invited folks going back to 2010 who have graduated from this class. And it was received very well. We coupled it with our Legislative Luncheon. We had three legislators attend, great opportunity for folks to visit about their concerns.

We have two staff members attending the facilitator training right now for Living Well in the Community class. NCILS would like to add a class in Havre. We're working on building our Peer Mentoring and Counselor program. We have them start by going through the Living Well in the Community class.

Our goal is to host an event every month, including educational and wellness classes. This month's activity is Legislative Day. Today we had 14 individuals attend Legislative Day, both consumers and NCILS staff. For the next month we are going to have emergency preparedness education.

NCILS participated in walkability audit with Montana Disability and Health Program in Lewistown. We have three existing benefits planners right now that are certified. We have explored the potential of expanding this program. It's important to consumers to understand how Social Security benefits, Medicaid, other benefits are affected by working.

NCILS is working on the website. NCILS referenced other CIL websites for inspiration. We are including items such as staff, the 5 CORE services, the action alert, committees, taskforces, an on-going news feed, upcoming events, and Living Well in the Community classes.

I've asked all my staff to join a task force including those who are involved in the self-directed program. We have employees that focus on five core IL services, and we have employees who work with the SD path community first choice. So, we have a lot of involvement with our staff in the task force. And we are promoting that with our consumers to get involved to have that consumer interaction.

We opened a new office in Heart Butte and have a staff member. It is connected with the Heart Butte school district and on the Reservation. This has created a lot of good community ties. We're getting a lot of response, especially for our self-directed program. People are very excited and we have been getting a lot of new referrals.

- Scott Birkenbuel, Ability

Ability has finished their PPR report. Programmatically LIFTT started a recreation program three years ago. Last summer we seventy different people with different disabilities. It was started by a couple of college friends who are now in their late seventies. One of these gentlemen designed

adaptive equipment to take a friend fishing and now Ability has the adaptive equipment that was designed and built. These same gentlemen this month donated the camp to Ability Montana to continue its mission. We got their real estate and equipment and cash totally \$622,000 worth of donation.

Additionally, this winter we launched adaptive ski program at Discovery Basin. It's still a fledgling program. We have trained volunteers and people are out skiing.

Ability is sponsoring a podcast, Let's talk Disability. Presently Ability is doing a legislative update once a week. These podcasts have been listened to in five states and one country in Europe.

Monologue presentations will be held in Butte and Helena again this year. It's can be an emotional roller coaster listening to some of these stories, but very impactful.

Then of course we wrapped up our ADBC grant with the Rural Institute last month. Presently Ability is working on a revalidation project for Medicaid with the Optimum system, reach out to Ability with questions. Additionally, Ability is conducting an evaluation of the payroll system to upgrade it. It has numerous features including a piece where employees can do many trainings electronically.

Public Comment

- None

6:57 pm Meeting adjourned, next meeting to be held in conjunction with the SRC. Date and time to be announced.