

SILC Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2025

Virtual Meeting

Summary

Attendees:

- Council Members: Jean Schroeder, June Hermanson, Gina Lytle, Chris Johnsrud, Julie Williams, Scott Williamson, Tami Hoar, Alice Lewis
- Absent: Heather Giese, Savannah Smith, Nicole Lowrance
- CIL Directors: Margaret Keener, Carlos Ramalho, Tami Hoar
- DET Staff: Lacey Conzelman, Anna Gibbs, Julia Arnold, Chanda Hermanson, Alice Lewis
- Guests: Molly Kimmel, Shyla Patera, Brent Morris, Desiree Dean, Jennifer Andrews, Gale Holzer, Cassie Wicks, Barb Sheridan, Jen Andrews, Doug McBroom, Travis Hoffman, Lindsey Carter

Budget Report

- Anna Gibbs gave the financial report.
 - **SILC Budget – FY2025**
 - Consulting - \$1,403
 - Supplies/Materials - \$1,777
 - Travel - \$4,453
 - Honorariums - \$50
 - Meetings/Conference Costs - \$2,281
 - Education/Training - \$-200
 - Communication - \$727
 - Printing/Pub& Graphics - \$1000
 - Repair / Maintenance - \$0
 - Other Expense - \$424
 - Total - \$11,914.00
 - 45.41% budget spent
- Julia Arnold indicated more SILC money has been spent but has not yet shown on the Project Detail Reports. She estimated that approximately \$17,739.51 of \$21,823 has been spent. This is 82% of the 2025 SILC budget.
- Part B 2025 Contracts with CILs are 82% spend as of October 31, 2025.
- General Fund 2025 contracts are 94% spent as of October 31, 2025.
- IL Program Manager Administrative Costs \$83,876 as of October 31, 2025.

Reports/Planning:

- A report was given on the highlights of the April Conference by Jean Schroeder, June Hermanson, Scott Williamson, and Tami Hoar. It was noted that June Hermanson was awarded the APRIL 2025 Advocacy Award winner.
- A report was given by Jean Schroeder, Gina Lytle, June Hermanson, and Julia Arnold on their attendance at the MYTransitions Conference.
- The Two-Year Planning Timeline was reviewed by the SILC.
- Julia Arnold shared the updated Quarterly Report that the CILs are presently using to share data with the SILC.

- Chanda Hermanson provided an update on happenings within the Disability Employment and Transitions Division, concerns about the future of the Department of Education and the potential Executive Order to close the Department, newly implemented 406 Jobs Program, and the importance of Employment First Initiative.
- Molly Kimmel shared an update of the Olmstead Plan that is being generated for DPHHS. Additionally, she discussed some updates about the plan and next steps that DPHHS will need to take.

Motions:

- Jean Schroeder made a motion was made to accept the May 21, 2025 meeting, seconded by Scott Williamson, and an all in favor vote was cast.
- A motion was made to accept the August 6th and 7th, 2025 meeting minutes as written by Tami Hoar, seconded by Jean Schroeder, and an all in favor vote was cast.
- The Policy and Procedure Committee presented changes to the Policy and Procedures. Tami Hoar made a motion, Jean Schroeder made a second, and an all in favor vote was cast for the changes and updates presented.
- A motion was made by Tami Hoar to pay the 2026 membership fees for NASILC, NCIL, and APRIL. Jean Schroeder seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.
- A motion was made by Tami Hoar, seconded by June Hermanson, and an all in favor motion was cast to move the election of the Vice-Chairman and Secretary to the January 2026 meeting due to meeting time constraints.

SILC Committee Reports:

- The CIL Satisfaction Survey Committee gave an update of their progress on the CIL Satisfaction Survey. The Committee has generated a draft set of questions that it hopes that each CIL will include in their Satisfaction survey and share the results with the SILC. There are six total questions. It was noted that a survey company was contacted, and the cost seemed expensive especially in this economy.
- The Policy and Procedure Committee shared the next set of revisions to the SILC Policy and Procedure manual. An all in favor vote was made to include the updates. The Policy and Procedure Committee shared the requirements of the SILC to have written Assurances and Indicators is almost complete. All but one requirement has been addressed and included in the Public and Procedure manual.
- The Membership Committee shared there are potentially three new candidates that Julia will contact to share information about SILC Board membership.

CIL Reports:

- Tami Hoar, Summit

Tami Hoar, Summit Executive Director, shared that the Summit Office is still under construction. Construction inside the building will be finished by the end of the year and construction on the outside of the building will start in the spring.

Tami went on to share Summit has been severely understaffed and presently a quarter of the staff is out on significant long-term medical leave. It is complicated and a strain on everybody to pick up the gaps. Additionally, the Medicaid personal care program is trying to get used to all the changes required. Summit is also undergoing some very significant IT updates, and coordinating between the offices has been challenging.

Summit has trained and started taking referrals in the Money Follows the Person (MFP) program. Summit has already made two successful transitions. By the MFP criteria, they are successful

transitions because they have made it out of the institution. Additionally, Summit is facilitating Living Well Classes in Polson and Missoula. Summit held a walking audit at the Wayfair State Park in Big Fork. The IL & Recreation Specialist has done presentations at the Montana Outdoor Recreation conference, worked on accessibility and universal design proposals on some trails in the Missoula area, working on trail access for accessibility and universal design in the Libby/Kutenai bridge access and parks in the area, and works with the Five Belly Land Trust on trail design and conservation. This work leads to community integration for people to have access to recreation opportunities into the communities. Base continues with their filming programs. They did do a presentation at the NCIL Conference in Washington, D.C.

Summit has been awarded several smaller grants and working on writing several larger grants as well.

- Carlos Ramalho, LIFTT

Carlos Ramalho, Executive Director of LIFTT, reported that LIFTT has survived this period of political uncertainty. The Board of Directors approved a plan to downsize by 30%, lay off staff, and interrupt or break 30% of the contracts to reduce expenses if needed. Carlos shared this was due to the uncertainty about funding and the lack of adjustment in grant money due to inflation and the cost of living. As LIFTT believed that grants would not be renewed, it went to a fee for service program which generates approximately \$30,000 a month extra funding.

Money Follows the Person (MFP) and growing the PCA program have been added to generate additional income. LIFTT has also opened a Thrift store. It is self-sufficient and has started bringing income to LIFTT. Due to the high volume of quality donations and the right person managing the program, LIFTT is planning to open a second thrift store in Glendive. Carlos Ramalho did note that some people do not like the idea and feel that LIFTT is mixing business with a Center for Independent Living and nonprofit services. He indicated that the law authorizes LIFTT to have profit activities provided that the funding obtained is returned to the operational activities.

Similarly, LIFTT hopes that the transportation program will become another fee for service program that will strengthen LIFTT and allow LIFTT to become more independent from the government funding and empower the aging and disabled in their vehicles. Carlos indicated that it has been difficult working with the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) and their report requirement when Federal money was drawn down.

LIFTT is completing the annual PPR, the 704 report. Although programs have grown, LIFTT staff have not received an increase of wages for two years. Carlos is very concerned as employees are resigning for better paying jobs.

Carlos asked if the SILC could become a think tank of alternative solutions for the centers and other organizations involved in providing independent living for the community.

Carlos did share that he published a few papers on academia.edu last year. From these LIFTT has received interest from Centers in Eastern Europe asking for technical assistance. He hope to explore additional connections, financial support, and partnerships to help this opportunity grow.

- Margaret Keener, NCILS

Margaret Keener, NCILS Director, shared NCILS had a great quarter. It was a long quarter getting the construction finished and everyone moved back into the Great Falls office from the July flooding. NCILS staff worked remotely until October 3rd. The office now has new flooring and is nicely painted. Staff continues to unpack while still providing the services NCILS staff normally provide.

Margaret shared that they've had great progress with the peer program. In July NCILS held the ADA picnic and in September NCILS held a storytelling workshop. The workshop helped people start, write, and talk about their stories. Hopefully it will better prepare individuals when it comes to advocacy and helping lawmakers to understand how the funds that they vote on affect people with disabilities.

The Montana Youth Transitions Conference was held in early November. It went really, really well. Margaret shared that she was impressed at how involved the youth were in the conference and in the sessions, she was blown away and amazed at the youth that we have in our state.

NCILS is hosting a Leadership Lunch on December 4th. Legislators from our region, local Great Falls and Cascade County leadership, and then also aides from Senator Daines' office, Senator Sheehy, and Representative Downing. A Living Well in the Community Class workshop series will start the first week of December as well. NCILS is also part of sending the youth to the APRIL conference. Six youth attended the APRIL Convention, and it was a great experience for them.

NCILS is transitioning from the Big Sky Bonanza to the Big Sky waiver program. NCILS has received an increase over all referrals for services that are provided. So, NCILS continues to be very busy.

- Scott Berkenbuel, Ability Montana

No report presented.

Public Comment

- None

Meeting adjourned at 4:35pm, next meeting to be held on January 21, 2026.