

# SILC Meeting Minutes

## January 21, 2026

### Virtual Meeting

### Summary

#### Attendees:

- Council Members: Jean Schroeder, June Hermanson, Gina Lytle, Chris Johnsrud, Julie Williams, Scott Williamson, Tami Hoar (CIL Director), Savannah Smith, Nicole Lowrance
- CIL Directors: Margaret Keener, Scott Birkenbuel, Tami Hoar
- DET Staff: Lacey Conzelman, Julia Arnold, Chanda Hermanson, Hannah Stokes
- Guests: Molly Kimmel, Brent Morris, Dana Geary

#### Budget Report

- Hannah Stikes gave the financial report.
  - **SILC Budget – FY2025** as of December 2025
    - Consulting - \$98
    - Supplies/Materials - \$223
    - Travel - \$10,731
    - Honorariums - \$1,950
    - Meetings/Conference Costs - \$419
    - Education/Training - \$2900
    - Communication - \$0
    - Printing/Pub& Graphics - \$0
    - Repair / Maintenance - \$0
    - Other Expense - \$472
      - Total - \$16,793.00
      - 77% budget spent
- Julia Arnold indicated \$5000 has been deposit with the Billings Hotel and Convention Center for the August IL Symposium.
- Part B 2025 Contracts with CILs are 7.97% spend as of December 31, 2025.
- General Fund 2025 contracts are 15.76% spent as of December 31, 2025.
- IL Program Manager Administrative Costs \$18,580 (16.47% spent) as of December 31, 2025.

#### Reports/Planning:

- Molly Kimmel shared an update of the Olmstead Plan that is being generated for DPHHS. Additionally, she discussed and shared the data collected from the Olmstead Public Feedback. She provided suggestions for the SILC regarding ideas moving forward into the next Legislative session.
- Chanda Hemanson, Administrator of the DETD, gave a report of highlights within the Department. She shared DETD is focused on developing Montana as an Employment First state, highlighted the 406 Jobs initiative and DETD's role, the Disability Employment Meets Industry events the division hosted, and shared information on the development of Pathways to Paychecks for HS students exploring the trades and apprenticeships.
- Dana Geary shared information and answered questions on the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Harmlessness (PATH) Program housed within DPHHS.
- Lacey Conzelman explained the new set-up of the Town hall meeting to be held February 12<sup>th</sup>.

## Motions:

- Jean Schroeder made a motion to approve the Nov. 21, 2025, minutes as written. Scott Williamson made the second. The motion passed with an all-in-favor vote.
- Chris Johnsrud made a motion to open elections for the Vice-Chair and Secretary position. Jean Schroeder seconded the motion and an all-in-favor vote was cast and the motion passed.
- Tami Hoar made a motion to nominate Jean Schroeder for the Vice-Chairperson of the SILC. Savannah Smith made the second. Jean accepted the nomination. No other individuals were nominated.
- Jean Schroeder made a motion to nominate Julie Williams for the SILC of the SILC. Tami Hoar made the second. Julie accepted the nomination. No other individuals were nominated.
- Scott Williamson made the motion, and Tami Hoar seconded the motion for Jean Schroeder to serve as Vice-Chairman and Julie Williams to serve as Secretary of the SILC from January 2026 – November 2027. An all-in-favor vote was cast and the motion passed.
- June's motion for the SILC to commit \$5000 towards the development of a consumer satisfaction survey. Jean Schroeder seconded this motion. An all in favor vote was cast, motion passed.

## SILC Committee Reports:

- The Membership Committee reported that a youth individual completed the pre-application and appears to be planning to complete the application with the Governor's Appointment Office. Additionally, another individual applied to the Governor. Status of the processing of her application was unknown.
- The CIL Satisfaction Survey Committee updated the Board they had explored using an outside company to conduct the survey and it was determined this avenue was too expensive. Alternative options were discussed and June Hermanson proposed and made a motion for the SILC to allocate money to the development of the survey.
- Olmstead Committee update was given by Molly Kimmel. Her presentation indicated noted priorities generated from the commenting the Rural Institute conducted on the DPHHS Plan. Additionally, members reported that the Olmstead Working Group will be meeting with the Department of Commerce in early February.

## CIL Reports:

- Tami Hoar, Summit

Tami Hoar, Executive Director of Summit Independent Living reported they have been working on the PPR. Several of the staff put a lot of time into this report. She reported that the CIL database that the centers use is a great tool for gathering data, but it takes a lot of manipulation to really refine it and put it into a report to make it effective data. The purpose of the PPR is to give a good picture to the administration and community living, ACL, when they're reading the reports to know how effective those federal dollars are in our service area and that Summit has completed the things that it set out to do.

Due to staff members being out due to illness and/or disability Summit leadership staff have had to step in and provide a lot of guidance to the staff and payroll processing and making sure that things continue to move forward.

Summit's Missoula office is near completion with the construction. The building has recently had some water damage that had to be fixed. Summit has also recently struggled with IT issues.

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) program did get off and running and has had some successful transitions. Summit has referrals happening all the time. Additionally, Summit had one amazing outcome that started with an individual in the MFP program. The individual was then deemed to be not eligible to continue with MFP but the Summit staff continued to work with that individual. She moved into an apartment here in Missoula last week, transitioning to her own apartment. It was a huge success for Summit staff.

The position of a Pre-ETS/Youth Specialist position has been offered, and the person will be working soon. Thus, Summit will have a contract with Voc. Rehab to start doing Pre-ETS work.

A new Living Well in the Community class just started here. Summit also entered into a contract with the Missoula Parks and Recreation that focuses on individuals with IDD. As spring approaches Summit will start working on adaptive recreation and access work with the Land Trust.

- Carlos Ramalho, LIFTT

No report presented.

- Margaret Keener, NCILS

Executive Director of NCILS, Margaret Keener, shared NCILS completed and submitted the PPR for the Administration of Community Living. Additionally, she shared that one of the center's goals this year would be to expand community knowledge of NCILS. Margaret felt NCILS achieved this goal with help from the increased outreach and new website. As a result, NCILS saw approximately just under a 10% increase in referrals. NCILS will need to hire new staff and adjust to the increased workload. Likewise, NCILS served individuals with disabilities in all 17 of the service area counties. NCILS received a comment back from our ACL Project Officer that it served a wide range of people with disabilities.

During the past year, NCILS also focused on building their peer program. NCILS worked to have more community activities, groups, and training opportunities than held in previous years.

In December NCILS held a leadership luncheon. Twenty-five individuals with disabilities visited with local leaders ranging from state representatives and senators, the city and county council members, and the mayor of Great Falls. It provided an opportunity to discuss issues affecting people with disabilities and creating awareness. Individuals of all ages attended.

NCILS is hosting a Living Well in the Community class in Great Falls. Upcoming events include a class for individuals to understand the ADA and what their rights are under the ADA. NCILS is also developing a care advisory committee to have input on trainings and activities to host.

All the staff are back in the Great Falls office after the flood and NCILS is back up to full services in a nice new office.

The Montana Youth Transitions Conference was held this year in Butte. The feedback from the surveys indicated many people had a good experience. NCILS continues to build the peer program. NCILS also set a goal build relations with the Native American communities in the service area. Two staff members participated in a Resource Fair on the Rocky Boy Reservation. They visited with individuals about the services provided as well as the Native American Task Force.

Additionally, all NCILS staff members participate in at least one task force. NCILS is working to include consumers and peers in the task forces. Rack cards have been developed to distribute at the resource fairs that talk about the task force. The peer advisory council we'll be distributing that information.

The Region II Transitions Committee continues to meet. This committee works in collaboration with several community partners including MT Job Service, Center for Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, several of the local schools and special needs cooperatives.

- Scott Berkenbuel, Ability Montana

Scott Birkenbuel, Executive Director of Ability Montana reported their PPR done and submitted. He highlighted that Ability reported a 30% increase in consumers served over the past year. He said that a large part of the increase was better recordkeeping by the staff.

Ability Montana started their annual audit. October, November, December, Ability received a \$99,800 VA recreation grant, a \$50,000 unrestricted foundation grant, and an unrestricted \$5,000 grant from Bozeman Health. Several additional grant applications are being worked on for submittal. Additionally, Ability is setting up meetings with potential philanthropic donors.

As knowledge of Ability grows, it is getting invited to community organizations to speak about centers for independent living, who Ability is, and things Ability does.

Ability continues to push to expand the engagement on the website. Ability received a Google advertising grant for \$10,000 for online advertisements. Google gives you the money, but you need to spend it with Google. It allows Ability to be on the top of search pages when key searches related to disability independence are entered. Additionally, Ability just had a meeting with our marketing people to develop more engaging advertisements.

The podcast continues to grow. The Helena office hosted a Legislative Open Houses. Three Legislators attended. Additionally, Lindsey Carter from DPHHS attended. This was a great opportunity to visit about Ability and CILs in general. The next Open House will be in Bozeman.

During the last quarter Ability did two walk audits in Ennis and Bozeman with the help of the Rural Institute.

Ability continues working with Money Follows the Person and have completed several transitions. One was highlighted on the website. The VA program continues to grow. With referrals people are constantly coming into the program. There is a lot of turnovers as many involved are older veterans. Presently, Living Well classes are being offered. The peer program is fairly solid. A men's group, women's group, and a peer book club in Helena are being held. Additionally, a youth program is being developed.

The adaptive downhill skiing program is being held in Phillipsburg. Planning for the summer includes scheduling events at our adaptive fly-fishing camp. Veterans grant funds allow Ability to hire a recreation coordinator at Ft. Harrison who is going to be bring veterans once a week all summer.

Then our Let's Talk Disabilities Monologue performances are going to be held in Butte and Helena this year.

#### Public Comment

- None

Meeting adjourned at 3:30pm, next meeting to be held on April 29 and 30, 2026.