

**STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL
MEETING MINUTES
Holiday Inn, Fargo & Virtual
August 4 - 5, 2022**

Call to Order: Russ Cusack called the meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Jan Beddes, Russ Cusack, Nancy Lundon, Ali Brown, Brittney Hogan, Angie Bosch, Leon Dietrich, Joe Yasenchack, LaRae Gustafson, Chelsy Sondrol, Shannon Cook

Members Absent: Brenda Boehler, Gillian Plenty-Chief, Emma-Leigh Miller

Non-Council Members Present: Scott Burlingame, Royce Schultze, Aimee Volk, Damian Schlinger

Approval of May 2022 Minutes: Nancy Lundon made a motion to approve the May 2022 SILC minutes as presented, Brittney Hogan seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Approval of the August 2022 Agenda: Brittney Hogan made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, Chelsy Sondrol seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Correspondence – Russ Cusack:

An email was received from Lake Region Corporation to see if we could assist with a grant from the state to develop a resource database for statewide hygiene supports as well as other accessible amenities in communities small and large in North Dakota. The goal is to build a mobile app to be shared with every DD and adult care provider to point users to the nearest accessible bathroom and its amenities to remove the worry of safe and clean hygiene areas when planning road trips, leisure activities, etc. Randy gave information on an app called Wheelmate which will be passed on to Lake Region Corporation.

Randy asked about a proposed administrative code change related to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) in which the language would take out the CRC Master's degree requirement. As he explained he has concerns that he feels the VR counselor position is an advanced position. He stated that there should not be any leeway with allowing reduced education. He stated the SILC should not allow anything less than a CRC requirement of a VR counselor. Damian (VR Director) responded by explaining that they are not getting rid of the CRC requirement, but they are doing a tiered approach. The federal guidelines state that for a Qualified Rehabilitation Professional VR can have entry level degree (which ND is not looking at going to at this time), Bachelor's (human service degree), or a Master's degree. Damian mentioned the reason they looked at this change was due to VRs turnover in the last eight years has been as high as 39%. The client is being transferred from counselor which is difficult to get clients placed in employment.

Discussion was held on individuals opinions on the matter. If individuals from the SILC felt strongly on the matter they could go to session and state their opinion.

Treasurer's Report – Shannon Cook: Reviewed the Treasurer's Report.

LaRae Gustafson made a motion to accept the Treasure's Report as presented, Leon Dietrich seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Schedule 2023 SILC Meetings – Russ Cusack:

Discussed the 2023 meeting schedule to stay with the first Thursday and Friday of February, May, August, and November. Meetings will be on Thursdays from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. and resume on Fridays at 9:00 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m.

- February 2-3, 2023 – Bismarck
- May 4-5, 2023 – Grand Forks
- August 3-4, 2023 – Fargo
- November 2-3, 2023 - Minot

Shannon Cook made a motion to accept the dates for the 2023 SILC meetings as presented, Nancy Lundon seconded the motion to approve. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

IL Survey Data Results – Aimee Volk:

Went through summary of results from the Independent Living (IL) Survey in order for the SILC to start thinking of the goals and objectives for the upcoming state plan for independent living.

Summary of Challenges and Successes – CIL Directors

The Center for Independent Living (CIL) Directors discussed what each of the center has worked on for the last two years, successes, barriers, challenges that they overcame and still struggling with, and how they expect the Independent Living landscape to change in the next two years.

Committee Breakout

Friday, August 5, 2022

Call to Order: Russ Cusack called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Leon Dietrich, Nancy Lundon, Chelsy Sondrol, Ali Brown, Shannon Cook, Angie Bosch, Brittney Hogan, LaRae Gustafson, Russ Cusack, Joe Yasenchack

Members Absent: Gillian Plenty Chief, Brenda Boehler, Emma-Leigh Miller, Jan Beddes

Non-Committee Members: Aimee Volk, Scott Burlingame, Royce Schultze, Damian Schlinger

Work on SPIL: Mission and Goals

The mission of the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is to lead the Independent Living Network (North Dakota Centers for Independent Living) by developing resources and advocating for full community participation of North Dakotans with disabilities.

Goal I: The Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living will improve service outcomes to North Dakotans with disabilities.

Goal II: The Statewide Independent Living Council and Centers for Independent Living will increase understanding of the independent living philosophy with those served and others supporting them.

Goal III: The Statewide Independent Living Council, Designated State Entity, and the Centers for Independent Living will collaborate with other disability organizations.

Goal IV: The Statewide Independent Living Council recruits and maintains an active cross-disability, consumer-controlled membership to ensure the Statewide Independent Living Council functions optimally.

Brittney Hogan made a motion to accept the mission and goals for the 2023 SPIL as presented above, Nancy Lundon seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous decision.

Quarterly Director's Report:

Scott for Independence, Inc.: See attached.

Angie for Freedom: See attached.

LaRae for Options: See attached.

Royce for Dakota Center for Independent Living: See attached.

Committee Reports:

Internal Affairs – Nancy Lundon: See Grid

External Affairs – Angie Bosch: See Grid

Governance Committee – Royce Schultze: Two new appointments were made in the last quarter, one in Quadrant 3 and one consumer/advocate

Open positions: One in Quadrant 3 and one consumer/advocate

State Rehabilitation Council – Russ Cusack: Met in July, reports from regional administrators were given. Numbers are increasing by the number of plans and the number of individuals gaining employment. They are down one day from getting individuals from eligibility to plan.

Committee on Aging – Royce Schultze: Member updates concerns seniors still doing takeout meals and home delivered when they can come to the centers. When the pandemic is officially over, the only ones eligible will be home-bound folks.

ND Assistive is receiving quite a few more referrals since hiring a marketing person. VAPS Director gave a presentation. They have a CPA firm hired to review any issues related to financial exploitation.

Traumatic Brain Injury Council – Shannon Cook: The strategic plan committee met to work on goals. They are working on supported decision-making documents.

Olmstead Commission – Scott Burlingame: The last meeting was held on July 19, 2022. They are putting together a stakeholder group. They will be doing town hall meetings to gather more information and input.

NASILC – Brenda Boehler: No report.

Brittney Hogan made a motion to adjourn and LaRae Gustafson seconded the motion to adjourn at 11:07 a.m.

The next SILC meeting will be November 3-4, 2022, in Minot, ND and will have the virtual option.

SILC Directors Report
Independence, Inc.
Scott Burlingame, Executive Director
8/4/22

A. Individual Services

Lenni came from a family where drug and alcohol abuse was prevalent. She brought those patterns with her into adult life, and has faced multiple consequences of these choices, including the removal of her four children from the home.

When she came to Independence, Inc., Lenni began working with our Peer Support specialist, Kenzie, on the goal of obtaining her driver's permit and budgeting. Lenni now has not only her driver's permit, but her license, a car, and insurance. She is also gainfully employed, getting ready to move into her own place, and will be bringing her children back into her home in the next few weeks. These have all been gifts of the active recovery she remains committed to, along with the hard work she has put in. Lenni is currently on the MARCO Board of Directors and is training to earn her own Peer Support Certification.



We transitioned a 67-year-old man home from the nursing home. He is on Medicaid but has an \$1100 dollar recipient liability which he could not pay monthly for services. He has tried to connect his VA benefits however they have not gone through. We connected him with First Light Home Health care as they have a VA lesion and can also provide some private pay in home cares.

We are working with an 18-year-old girl that was kicked out of her parents' house, however, is still a senior in high school. She was approved for ND Rent Help, and I helped her view and complete the application for her new apartment. She is employed and will work throughout the school year. She has attended our beyond program since 9th grade and she stated that it made her feel confident in knowing what she should do since being kicked out.

We are working with 23-year-old women who is attending Minot State University this fall and working toward a degree in English. We worked with her to complete the FAFSA application and helped to get her an apartment.

We have a long-term consumer who is using RAP grant to get a washer and dryer on her main level. She needed help with the grant application and help with cleaning out a space on her main level to put the new washer and dryer.

Lunch Pals for Children with Disabilities

Our lunch Pals for Children with Disabilities program is still being developed. We have 9 students signed up, but at this time we only have 4 Peer Mentors for them. It has been very difficult to find mentors who both are able to identify as a person with a disability and are able to commit to having lunch with elementary aged students twice per month.

B. Community Services

The Sound of Independence

Independence, Inc., in collaboration with the Minot Area Council of the Arts, presented the return of The Sound of Independence Live Music Festival on June 9th as part of the Downton Arts in the City series. The event included a diverse lineup of artists with and without disabilities and help promote inclusivity. Each act played for 20 minutes, and between each act, we had the chance to talk to the crowd about our services.

Access Surveys

We have begun to provide access surveys at polling locations in North Dakota thanks to a contract with P and A. We will be surveying 25 locations in our service area, with at least one site in each county we serve.

City Election

In the run up to the Minot City Council and Mayoral election, we asked each candidate to respond to the question “If you are elected, how will you work to make Minot a more accessible community to people with all types of disabilities?” Of the 7 candidates running for office, 6 responded, and we shared the answers on social media.

In collaboration with the Minot Alliance of Nonprofits, we also hosted a candidate forum. At that event, the candidates had to answer a bunch of questions regarding issues that matter to people with disabilities.

Disability Awareness in Elementary Schools

Kate and Haley provided disability awareness to 503 students in 5 local elementary schools. This training provides a story about a student with a disability, followed by the opportunity for students to ask questions. The goal is to both inform about disabilities, and to build better inclusion by focusing on similarities.

Airport Emergency Drill

On 6/22 we were able to participate in an emergency drill with the Minot airport. In this case, there was a couple of “events” that responders had to be part of. We worked to bring in volunteers for the event who were people with lived experience and use their responses to this in order to impact how future response times went.

Community Events

During the summer we have had the chance to attend many events including PRIDE on the Inside, a Health Fair and Blood Drive at the Moose Lodge, a PTSD awareness walk, the Juneteenth Celebration, the State Fair Children's Day, and National Night Out. Each of our events are a combination of outreach and disability awareness.

Disability Pride Month

In July, we celebrated Disability Pride Month. Disability Pride Month is an annual worldwide observation used to promote awareness of disability as an identity, a community, and a culture. We honor the pride felt by people with disabilities as they take charge of their own destiny.

We highlighted disability friendly TV Shows, Movies, Books, and Social Media pages in order to encourage people to explore more realistic views of disability than are normally portrayed in the media.

I was interviewed by KXNEWS about the month, and you can see the story here:

https://www.kxnet.com/news/local-news/youre-okay-the-way-you-are-taking-pride-in-having-a-disability/?fbclid=IwAR0VL8tYRBOQN_FmpWnk5i6lg5JEI6eKc2JbQoHtOGSx2386D7axk-yR-c

Upcoming Events

Celebrating Independence Picnic: On 8/9 from 11-1 at our office parking lot we will be celebrating all that we do. We will be presenting our Advocate and Youth Advocate of the Year awards. We have been able to get donations so that everybody who attends will get a free hotdog from the Fun on the Bun hotdog stand. We will also have The Scoop Ice Cream truck selling ice cream.

A Building Dreams Event: A Night with Stephanie Land: 9/27 at 6pm. This event, part of our Building Dreams Capital Campaign, will include our keynote speaker, Stephanie Land. Land is a best-selling author, journalist, and economic justice advocate. Her bestselling debut memoir *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay, and a Mother's Will to Survive* recount her harrowing saga as a single mom navigating the poverty trap. Her unflinching testimony exposes the physical, economic, and social brutality that domestic workers face, all while radiating a parent's hope and resilience.

C. Other

At the May Staff Meeting we had Eric and Zac from Project Bee give an update on their services. Rich Berg from the United Way talked about the new program that uses Door Dash to deliver food to people in need. Cindy from the Pursuit Church talked about programs to help people with car repairs.

At the June staff meeting we had a representative from the Senior Medicare Patrol come in and talk about some of the common scams that are being faced by seniors and people with disabilities. We also had Sargent Foley from the Minot Police Department come and talk about the Mental Health First Response Team.

At the July staff meeting we had a staff from the Minot VR-Vision Services come and explain that program to us.

Our newest Board Member is Judge Ashely Beall. Judge Beal is an attorney and the Municipal Judge for Minot. A few weeks ago, I went and sat in her court room, and she made multiple referrals to our office for people who are facing jail time without services. In her private practice, she is the only local attorney that specializes in Social Security advocacy.

Freedom - ND SILC Director's Report – August 2022

We have started having Young Adult Gatherings this summer. Four of our five offices will host events for 18–24-year old's. The event in Fargo has already been held with excitement and energy for future gatherings. We are targeting this age range as young adults are the future of the independent living movement. We reached out to people who are or have worked with us in the past, sent fliers to community partners and will have booths at local colleges as they welcome students back to campus.

Fargo

- Decluttering IL Skills classes began earlier in July and will run for six weeks. Merri, IL Advocate is planning for two Living Well IL Skills Classes this fall with one group for adults, the other class will be made up of students from Fargo Public and West Fargo Public schools. The class is being offered both in person and on Zoom.
- A staff member from the Small Business Administration met with a few consumers in July for Freedom In Action to share information and knowledge on starting a business.
- 25 people attended a Red Hawks Game in July for Freedom In Action.
- The Fargo Ronald McDonald house staff invited us over for a tour of their home and discussion on how to include volunteers with varying disabilities.
- An art class began on July 6, it is offered from 5-6pm on Wednesdays and will finish in August. Attendees will be working on art pieces to show at the fall event.
- There have been 8 **MFP** transitions since the last meeting. Working with 9 referrals.
- There have been 13 **ADRL** transitions since the end of May. Working with 16 referrals.

Jamestown

- There has been
 - 1 **MFP** transitions since the end of May. Working with 5 referrals.
 - 1 **ADRL** transitions since the end of May. Working with 1 referral.
- Ashley, our new IL Advocate, is doing well, learning more each day and is a terrific addition to our team.
- 40 plus people enjoyed a picnic and visit by the ice cream truck for Freedom In Action in July.
- The Jamestown office will be moving down the hall to a larger office space and hope to be in their new office in October

Lisbon

- Jill Bergemann, IL Advocate was hired for our Lisbon office, her first day was June 27. Jill has spent time in Fargo completing training and multiple staff have spent time with her each week in the Lisbon office. We are excited to have Jill on our team.
- There has been
 - 0 **MFP** transitions since the end of May. Working with 1 referral.
 - 1 **ADRL** transition since the end of May. Working with 0 referrals.

Wahpeton

- Joyce held an IDEA training to parents of children in Special Education.
- A few consumers enjoyed a trip to the zoo in July for Freedom In Action.

Wahpeton *Consumer Story Spotlight*

From Joyce, Independent Living Advocate

One Mom's Struggle to Help Her Daughter Play

In a meeting in the Spring of 2019, Madison's mom, Alesha Asche along with Joyce Wolter, Independent Living Advocate at Freedom Resource Center, began discussions with the Milnor Elementary School regarding the playground that was not accessible for Madi. At the time she was in kindergarten. The school was cooperative, and they left that meeting feeling confident that something would be done. Milnor was planning a new playground; this should have been easy. It turned out it was anything but easy.

In September 2020 after the new playground was installed, Alesha contacted Joyce and stated that Madison was still struggling on the playground. The school was doing what they thought to be right, but they were not understanding that the Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF) on the surface of the playground was not working for Madi, among other issues, Alesha had no other recourse but to send a complaint to the United States Attorney's Office in ND, with Joyces assistance.

In May of 2022 the States Attorney's office issued a settlement agreement, it stated, "The settlement agreement resolves an ADA complaint alleging that the newly constructed playground at the Milnor Public School is inaccessible to students with disabilities, and that the School District failed to provide accessible transportation to a student with a disability for a field trip." Under the terms of the settlement agreement, the School District will make modifications to the playground by September 1, 2022, to bring it into compliance with the ADA. Further, when transporting students with disabilities who use mobility devices, the School District will use vehicles with features such as lifts or ramps to properly assist and secure these students."

Madi's mom stated, "A lot of people don't understand disability rights. A lot of people feel that what they did in the past is acceptable. People with disabilities often just try and get by, just try and deal with it, because they are often not heard or understood, on a daily basis. This is not only helping Madi but anyone who comes after her." What made Joyce Wolter more excited than anything was the heartwarming thank you from one mother to another. Alesha thanked Freedom and Joyce for opening the door for them.

ND Ramps

- 2 ramps have been placed since the last meeting.

Fall Event

Freedom's People's Choice Awards event will be held in person at the Avalon Event Center in Fargo. It will be held October 6th starting with a social hour at 5:30. We plan to kick off the awards and plated dinner at 6:15 and end the night out with entertainment from **The Front Fenders**.

We will have an online silent auction starting the week prior to the event. It will be accessed through an app during the event so people can continue to bid, then ending it at 9 pm for people to be able to take home their winnings. The public can participate in the silent auction online throughout the entire time and doesn't need to be present to win. Our emcee for the evening is Scott Burlingame from the Minot CIL. We are working on putting together a Nominee Committee to help with judging. So far 3 people have committed- we want at least 5. We also have our nomination form up on the website at www.freedomrc.org under "Events" for people to nominate someone for one of our awards. This is open to the public in our service area. The deadline to nominate someone is August 25th. Tickets are also on sale for the event and can be purchased by going to our website. Tickets at just \$75.

Options RCIL - August 2022 SILC Report

Community Education Training:

Heather and Heidi hosted a Landlord training in Devils Lake. They had 4 different presenters from four different agencies. The ND Department of Labor and Human Rights, ND Legal Aid and ND Rent all provided information and training, along with Heather presenting on "What is Options." This proved to be a good model and will be utilized again for Landlord trainings within Options service area.

Accessibility/Home Mod evals:

Brooke completed fourteen home modification evaluations, two city ADA compliance surveys and one business survey. Six of the home mod evals were for bathroom remodels and eight were ramp modifications with one ramp built successfully.

Option's staff changes:

Options has been busy hiring several new staff. We welcomed Sarah Benick to the MFP position, based out of GF. We still have another position out of the Devils Lake area to hire.

Two staff retired on the MN side and also rehired for both positions.

We still have a Cavalier IL Specialist opening still. We moved Tami Staven to the new ACL Rec/Leisure position in ND. Mike Peterson our former receptionist position is still open also. As well as an Equipment Specialist position open.

Relocations/Diversions:

Options transitioned 43 individuals out of nursing facilities this fiscal year to include MFP/ADRL.

Home modification success stories:

Marcia completed home mods of a walk-in shower, a new ramp, a small set of steps with railings on each side, and a small deck attached to her home. The entire project cost about \$9,000, and we were able to obtain funding so it didn't cost the consumer anything.

Marcia worked with a 92 year-old man by searching for a contractor who said he could build a ramp in couple days and all he wanted was to be paid for materials he purchased. The end result was we were able to get this gentleman a new ramp put on his house in two days, and the contractor only charged this consumer \$300. This was the fastest, most inexpensive project Marcia ever helped with!

Marcia worked with an 84 year-old widow who had a roof that leaked so bad several of her ceiling tiles on the interior of her modular home were stained and sagging as well. We obtained a USDA grant in November of 2021, and were able to get her home reroofed in December. In March, 2022, USDA increased the amount of their home repair grant from \$7,500 to \$10,000. In May, 2022, the roofer replaced and repaired the damage done to the interior of her home. Due to this, we were able to reapply to USDA to obtain another \$2500 to repair some additional damage to her ceiling that appeared over the winter and get the carpet replaced on her front steps.

Employment:

Marcia is working with a young man, 24 years old, who was approached by a business owner in our community who wanted to know if he was interested in a job at his computer store. We are working with Vocational Rehabilitation to assist this young man through their customized employment program to work at this computer store disassembling computers and sorting the parts for resale. He will be supported by staff from HAV-IT as long as he needs this job coaching assistance.

Dakota Center for Independent Living – August Director’s Report

Staff at DCIL

14 total with one opening (11 full-time and one part-time in Bismarck, two part-time in Dickinson but would like the Branch Office Coordinator full-time)

Services Provided

Five core services plus

- Brain Injury Awareness
- Brain Injury Panel
- Traumatic Brain Injury Support Group
- Cross Disability Panel
- Assistive Technology Booth
- Accessibility Assessments
- Driver's Permit Training
- Voter education Training
- Computer/cell Phone Training
- Disability Etiquette
- Social and Recreation Activities
- Representative Payee
- Money Management Training
- Medicare Part D Enrollments
- Apply for SSDI/SSI
- Tax Returns
- Renters Rebates
- Men's and Women's Coffee Club

Community Education

Set up assistive technology booth in Mercer, Emmons, Oliver, Hettinger, and Kidder counties.

Staff presented on Disability Etiquette to the Mandan Progress Organization.

For the anniversary of the ADA, staff set up tables for our assistive technology and 50 informational bags with brochures of DCIL, oversized postcards with accessible parking information, and home accessibility standards. This was held at Dykshoorn Park in Mandan.

Videos were posted on Facebook from 6 consumers talking about how the ADA has helped them and what else needs to be done. Two businesses talk about an accommodation they made to make entering their business more accessible, wide aisles and lower counters.

Technical Assistance

Staff completed 504 assessments in Glen Ullin and Dickinson.

Staff will do accessibility assessments of 25 polling sites in our quadrant.

Staff attended the Interim Legislative Procedure and Arrangements Committee. John Boyle gave an update on the progress of the accessibility work being done. 3 Three single-family bathrooms are in progress. 2 will have baby changing stations, and 1one will have an adult changing station-Virginia is the only other state to have an adult changing station in the US. The lift in the Brynhild Haugland room will be removed, and a ramp will be installed.

