



CT State Independent Living Council (CT SILC) Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

3:00 PM

Board Members Present: Gretchen Knauff, Chris Blake, Carmen Correa-Rios, Michelle Johnson, Corey Lee, Mark Linabury, Rich Luby, Jaclyn Pinney, Darrell Ruopp, Kim Smith, Ron Sparks, Melissa Thompson, Emily Zambrello

Board Members Absent: Farrah Garland, George Michna*

***Denotes non-voting member.**

Staff: Molly Cole, SILC Executive Director; Michele DuBois, Data Coordinator/Office Administrator

Guests: Charlie Conway, Executive Director - Access Independence (AI); Sharon Heddle, Executive Director - Disabilities Network of Eastern Connecticut (DNEC); Peter Nye, Independent Living Program Officer - Office of Independent Living Programs, Administration on Community Living (ACL); Melissa Cullen-Carter, Program Director – Access Independence (AI)

ACTION	AGENDA ITEM
Call to Order	The meeting was called to Order at 3:03 pm - Quorum established.
President's Remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gretchen Knauff welcomed everyone, opened the meeting, and reviewed the agenda and welcomed the new Board members.
Good News	Mark Linabury and Corey Lee shared positive news with the rest of the board.
Public Comment	There was no public comment.
Minutes from February 19, 2025	Motion to accept the minutes by Michelle Johnson. Carmen Correa-Rios seconded. ACTION: The minutes were approved. Mark Linabury abstained.
Treasurer's Report	Mark Linabury reviewed the Financial Report Summary for the period ending February 28, 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CT SILC's financial position at the end of February 2025 remains very good. • Funds owed by the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) were collected through March 31, 2025. • The bank account has been reconciled through February 28, 2025, without any issues. ACTION: Corey Lee moved to accept the treasurer's report. Jaclyn Pinney seconded. Question was asked and discussion commenced to clarify for new Board members where funding comes to support the CT SILC. There was no objection to the Treasurers Report.
Presentation: Peter Nye	Peter Nye from the Office of Independent Living Programs, Administration on Community Living (ACL) presented. Peter is the Independent Living Program Officer for Regions 1 (including Connecticut) and 5 (Midwestern states) and manages Part B



	<p>and Part C grants for Connecticut.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot answer questions about federal funding cuts or appointed officials • Encouraged sharing success stories to advocate for funding. • Stressed the importance of well-written Program Performance Reports (PPRs). • Monitoring visits are intended to help grantees improve, not to intimidate. • Open communication is vital, Peter welcomes questions and success stories. • Emphasized the importance of peer mentoring and imagination in independent living.
<p>Executive Director's Report</p>	<p>Molly Cole gave the Executive Director's report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract and Reports: The CT SILC portion of the PPR is complete but is awaiting completion from the Designated State Entity (DSE). It will be completed and submitted within a few days. <p>The CT SILC audit is in draft form and needs to be reviewed by the Finance Committee before presentation to the board at the next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects: The Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance (CCDLA) continues to meet weekly during the legislative session. • Supported Decision Making (SDM): The supported decision-making bill is stalled, with no public hearing scheduled. Efforts will resume next year to push for reconsideration. <p>A four-part webinar series is ongoing, with the third session scheduled for March 20th, focusing on vocational rehabilitation applications. The fourth and final session will take place on April 3rd, covering health and lifestyle choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging and Disability: Participation remains active in various aging and disability initiatives, including efforts with the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities and the AgeWell Collaborative. • Katie Beckett Waiver Work Group: Efforts to eliminate the waiting list for the Katie Beckett waiver have progressed, with recommendations successfully included in a bill. Legislators introduced a five-year study before taking action, which delays immediate implementation. • Webinars and Training: Multiple upcoming events are planned, expanding on previous efforts in supported decision-making. A two-part webinar series focused on human trafficking has been scheduled, and some members have already registered. Additionally, discussions are underway with the Connecticut Hate Crimes Division to organize a webinar addressing hate crimes impacting people with disabilities. Board members are encouraged to suggest additional topics and speakers. • Strategic Plan: Efforts are being made to identify and engage a strategic planner. An interview is scheduled with one potential planner, but there is an interest in considering additional candidates.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Federal Cuts: The impact of federal funding cuts on the CT SILC and CILs remains uncertain. A working group is developing strategies to help people navigate potential budget reductions. Board members interested in contributing to these efforts are encouraged to participate. ● Medicaid/Social Security Rally: The CT SILC, in collaboration with advocates from the disability and aging communities, organized an awareness rally to highlight the potential impact of Medicaid and Social Security reductions on affected individuals.
<p>Committee Reports</p>	<p>DATA TECH COMMITTEE – Michele DuBois</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The committee continues to meet regularly, bringing together CILs to improve data-sharing strategies and collaboration. ● CILs are working together to align data-sharing practices across organizations. ● The goal is to better utilize data to effectively communicate the impact of CIL's work and advocacy efforts. ● Recent improvements have resulted in cleaner, more accurate reporting in PPR submissions. ● Continued efforts are being made to refine reporting processes and strengthen data consistency. <p>EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE – Kim Smith</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meetings continue, with a focus on touring emergency shelters rather than distributing go bags. ● Webinar series on human trafficking is scheduled. The flyers are complete and distributed and registration is open. ● Additional training sessions and shelter evaluations are in development. ● Exploring assistive technology options, including emergency fire blankets. <p>EQUIPMENT REPAIR WORK GROUP – Farrah Garland (Written Update) / Darrell Ruopp</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Wheelchair Council is focused on the new bill that strengthens the current wheelchair repair bill, focusing on enforcement measures. ● The bill aims to improve emergency repair accessibility, expedite shipping for replacement parts, and require monthly service reports from providers. ● Industry resistance has led to adjustments in enforcement provisions, but advocates continue to push for transparency. ● Concerns have been raised about misleading service promotions, particularly regarding in-house repairs. ● A meeting with the task force and council is scheduled to discuss ongoing issues and push for accountability within the wheelchair repair industry. <p>SPIL COMMITTEE – Chris Blake</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussed hiring for strategic planning and funding issues. ● Reviewed evaluation tool, identified glitches, and ensured CILs complete reports



	<p>by month's end.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SPIL committee reviewed goals and ongoing matters. • Reports cover January-March, due in April; addressed submission concerns.
Discussion: By-Laws	<p>The conversation covered several key topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Membership: Data Tech should include only CILs employees along with the Board. Ad Hoc committees like Bylaws need further classification. Executive and Finance are the only standing committees per the bylaws, with discussions on adding Data Tech and SPIL. • Discussions on whether Data Tech should be considered an official committee or a working group/project of the CT SILC and CILs. • Policy Review: Non-CT SILC members must provide expertise and meet participation requirements. Conflict of interest concerns were highlighted. Further clarification needed before voting. • Committee Structure: Some groups may be reclassified as work groups or projects rather than committees. • Video Participation: Proposal for mandatory video withdrawn due to objections. <p>ACTION: Tabled Committee Policy Review for next meeting. ACTION: Board of Directors review the Policy and Conflict of Interest Form by next meeting to discuss and vote on any revisions.</p>
Discussion: Web Design, CT SILC	<p>The CT-SILC is redesigning the Website. An item discussed was coming up with a “tagline” for the CT SILC. Ideas were given and will be sent to the board to vote on.</p> <p>ACTION: Distribute options and vote next meeting.</p>
Other Announcements or Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supported Decision Making (SDM) Webinar is tomorrow. Still time to register. Spread the Word. Currently, we have fifty-eight registrants. • A teacher who attended the last webinar suggested a one pager on SDM. A one-page document was developed showing our continued efforts to develop useful resources. • A large rally in Washington and corresponding events across the country and in Hartford is scheduled for next Saturday. • Special thanks to Peter Nye for attending and speaking at our Board meeting.
Adjourn	<p>The meeting adjourned at 4:57 PM.</p>